



# The CABHC Patch

## News from the Community Archives

December 2022

### The Mystery of Muggins



**CABHC: HC04606**  
Belleville High School  
basketball team with  
Muggins (detail), 1920

There are [at least five photographs](#) from the early 1920s in the Community Archives' collection which feature the same bulldog. Usually he appears as the mascot of some sports team or other, and in only one of the photographs is he identified by name. That name is Muggins.

There are some overlaps in the surnames of team members between the photographs, but no one family name appears in all five, creating a small mystery as to who Muggins belonged to, and why he starred so frequently in group photographs of the time.

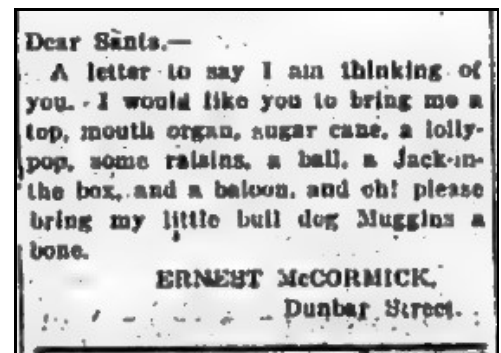
Now that we have so many newspapers available online and searchable, it is possible to search for an uncommon word like Muggins to see if any information about this popular pooch was ever published. And...success! On December

19th, 1922, some letters to Santa Claus were published in *The Daily Ontario*, including one from Ernest McCormick. He wrote:

*Dear Santa.—*

*A letter to say I am thinking of you. I would like you to bring me a top, mouth organ, sugar cane, a lollypop, some raisins, a ball, a Jack-in-the-box, and a balloon, and oh! please bring my little bull dog Muggins a bone.*

*ERNEST McCORMICK*  
*Dunbar Street*



**CABHC: Daily Ontario** Letter about  
Muggins the bulldog, 19 December 1922

While other letters on this page were all from children, it is noteworthy that Walter Ernest McCormick was at this date 40 years old. Perhaps the letter was written by (or on behalf of) his 12-year-old son, Empson?

[Belleville's city directories](#) tell us that Ernest McCormick worked for the photography business owned by his father, Robert McCormick. There are [many examples of the studio's work](#) in the archives' holdings.

Now we know that Muggins was owned by a family of photographers, his presence in so many of the group photos of the early 1920s is suddenly entirely understandable. The McCormicks, it seems, were determined that Muggins would earn his place in Belleville's recorded history!

## Recent Additions to the Archives

**2022-082** Mary Lu Toms collection, 1907-1985

**2022-083** City of Belleville and Township of Thurlow records, 1836-1996

**2022-084** City of Belleville assessment roll, 2013

**2022-085** Coxon family deeds and postcard collection, 1896-1985



## Ghost Buildings

Have you ever noticed the traces left behind by old buildings on existing ones? This recently-digitized slide of the former Belvedere Hotel on Front Street in Belleville is a good example of this phenomenon, with the clear outline of another building imprinted on the south wall of the hotel.



CABHC: 2021-023-161 Hotel Belvedere at 360 Front Street, Belleville, c.1987

An earlier photograph from the collection of Nick and Helma Mika shows the other building: home in 1975 to Mark's Fish House and the T & J Variety Store. The Belvedere itself was destroyed by fire on 24 November 1994 with the loss of four lives. All that now remains of these particular ghosts are their photographs.

CABHC: HCM00010 Hotel Belvedere at 360 Front Street, Belleville, c.1975

## Top tips on online resources

**How to use the archives  
(even when they are  
closed!)**

Amanda Hill



In a talk to the Quinte Branch of Ontario Ancestors in October, archivist Amanda Hill shared some helpful hints on getting the most out of the Community Archives' web-based services such as Flickr and the Internet Archive. The Zoom presentation was recorded and is available online at <https://vimeo.com/761620277>.

