

The Bullock Diaspora

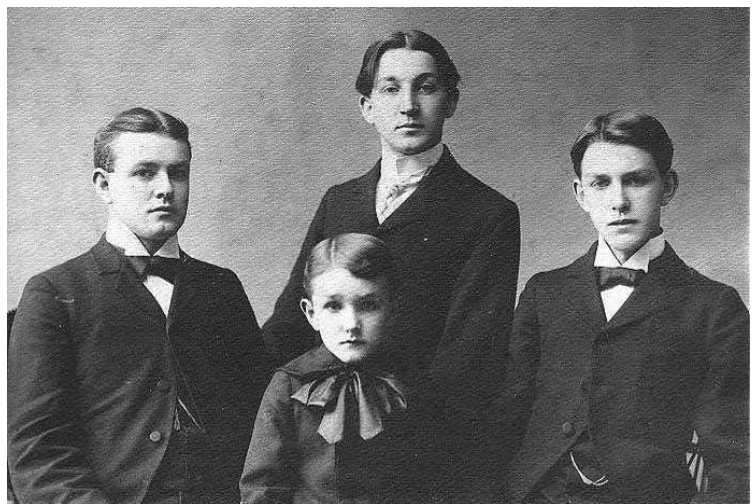
By Paul D. Bullock

In 1892, the Herman and Drusilla Bullock family was living on Keuka Lake on the East Lake Road about 7 miles south of Penn Yan, NY. The New York State Census of that year lists the Bullock household as follows: Herman, 44, basket manufacturer; Drusilla, 41; Joseph, 19; William, 17; Edgar, 14; Edith, 13 and Homer, 4. Helen was born three years later in 1895. Herman and Drusilla were my grandparents, Homer was my father, and the rest were my aunts and uncles. The Bullocks were all living together in Barrington in 1892 but in 1908, sixteen years hence, Herman and Drusilla would decide to pull up stakes and move to a foreign land. We will explore the impact this had on each of the children in the family.

The Bullock's situation and how they fit in the community in 1892 might best be described by quotes from "History of Yates County, NY", edited by Lewis Cass Aldrich, 1892, pages 633 and 456. "Bullock, Herman, of Barrington, a prominent fruit grower, was born, in Yates County, N. Y., March 25, 1848, a son of Calvin and Lucinda (Simpson) Bullock. His father was one of the early settlers of the county, a farmer by occupation, and had a family of nine children, six of whom survive. He died in the county in 1867, and his wife in 1882. Both were members of the Baptist Church. Mr. Bullock married in 1871, Drusilla Finton, a native of this county, born in 1851. By this marriage five children have been born; viz.: Joseph, William, Edgar, Edith and Homer. In 1880 Mr. Bullock engaged in the saw-mill and basket business, employing some thirty-five hands. He has cut material for about 900,000 baskets this year up to date, and will cut about 5,000 more this fall. He and his wife are members of the Baptist Church." "The basket factories deserve more than a passing notice. The proprietor of one is Herman Bullock, that of the other George Finton. Ten years ago the baskets were bunched up in dozens and sold by the dozen - a small pony business. But the demand has grown so rapidly that the mills have been furnished with all modern machinery for manufacturing baskets, and the largest logs are sawed and sliced out and turned until ready for the baskets; and this year the output of baskets from both factories is 1,500,000, giving employment to twenty-five or thirty men and to fifty or sixty girls. The Bullock mills do the sawing and cutting for the McMath and Morgan factories at Penn Yan. The Finton mills furnish the Niagara Grape Company with 100,000 baskets annually."

First, we'll follow the movement and accomplishments each child of Herman and Drusilla from 1892 until 1908. A table summarizing the when and where of each child and Herman and Drusilla is attached.

1. **Joseph** (my uncle Joe), the oldest, graduated from Dundee high school and attended the Keuka Institute. He



Back: Joseph, William and Edgar

Front: Homer

taken in about 1895

then received a B. A. from Colgate University, in Hamilton, NY in 1898. The next year he taught at a private school in Norwalk, CN. He married Katherine Worden in 1899 and started his administrative career as principal of the East Bloomfield, NY Academy for the school year 1900 - 1901. The next two years he was principal of the Shortsville, NY high school. In 1903 he came back to Barrington to help his father, Herman, in his grape growing and portable steam-driven saw mill businesses. Herman had sold his basket factory to George Finton's son-in-law, Charles E. Guile in 1899. Joseph rented a house on the East Lake Road near the Bullock homestead until he purchased his Uncle Henry Bullock's home on the East Lake Road in 1907 after Henry died. This property contained thirteen acres of which five was in grapes. In 1908, Joseph was growing grapes on his own property and helping his father with the saw mill.

2. **William** (my uncle Willy) graduated from Dundee high school then received a PhB from Colgate in 1899. After graduating William spent a year in New York City working in real estate. In 1901 he married Alta Rae Cooley and started his teaching career as principal of the Middlesex, NY high school for the school year of 1901-1902. After two years at Middlesex, he did the same at North Cohocton, NY for two years. After a year (1905-1906) as principal at Cuba, NY high school, he began his six years as principal at the Palmyra, NY high school. In 1908, William was principal at Palmyra.
3. **Edgar** (my uncle Edgar) graduated from Dundee high school and then from Colgate Academy in 1897. In 1898, he took a trip to Europe with fellow Colgate Academy graduates. He then graduated from West Virginia University with a B. S. in mechanical engineering in 1904. After graduating, he worked for Westinghouse Corporation in East Pittsburgh, PA for a few years. During this time, he was feeling "poorly" so his sister, Edith, came to East Pittsburgh to take care of him. *Edgar's daughter says that "poorly" was used by friends and relatives to describe his condition; he had TB.* In 1908, Edgar was either in East Pittsburgh or back in Barrington.
4. **Edith** (my aunt Edith) probably graduated from Dundee high school as her brothers did. There is a record of an Edith Bullock in the Dundee Class of 1902 which would make her 23 when she graduated. As was the custom of the day she didn't go on to the university. She probably worked in the home and helped with the grape and saw mill businesses. When she went to care for Edgar in East Pittsburgh she met Robert T. Elliot. Robert also was a graduate of West Virginia University and came to work at Westinghouse with Edgar. Edith and Robert were married in 1909. In 1908, Edith was living in Barrington with her parents.
5. **Homer** (my father) didn't graduate from Dundee High school as his siblings did. He may have attended there but in the school year 1905-1906, when Homer was seventeen, he attended high school in North Cohocton where William was the principal. Similarly, in the 1906-1907 school year, he attended Cuba high school. He never completed his high school education. In 1908, Homer was living in Barrington helping his father, Herman, in the grape vineyards and with the portable saw mill.



Edith
taken in about 1905



Helen
taken in about 1910

6. **Helen** (my aunt Helen), the youngest, was only thirteen in 1908. She was probably just completing the 8th grade at the Barrington #7 one-room school in Crosby. She probably would have attended Dundee high school the fall of 1908.

In 1908, E. Ben Knight was singing the praises of the Isle of Pines, trying to sell property there. His newspaper ads promoting the Isle were filled with phrases extolling the virtues of the Isle such as “seldom above 80 degrees or below 60”; “\$25 per acre compared to \$200 per acre in California”; “abundance of springs of pure water”; “natural irrigation” and “the deep water harbor on the island.” The Isle of Pines (now the Isle of Youth) was a small (about 30 by 40 miles) island off the southern coast of Cuba. At one time it was a layaway spot for pirates and some say that it was the inspiration for Stevenson's Treasure Island. The 1904 treaty after the Spanish-American war called for main large island to be property of Cuba but the disposition of the Isle of Pines was left up in the air. The land companies were counting on the Isle of Pines becoming part of the U. S. Unfortunately for them, in 1925 the

U. S. Senate ratified the Hay-Quesada Treaty which recognized Cuban ownership of the Isle of Pines.

Herman and Drusilla were interested enough that Herman made at least two trips to check out the Isle with Knight. In 1908, the Bullocks purchased a plot of land through Knight one mile east of Santa Fe, Isle of Pines, Cuba. Their plan was to be “snowbirds” spending winters on the Isle of Pines and summers in the U. S. to visit their children and friends. They were also interested in becoming tropical fruit growers. In preparation, Herman and Drusilla sold their home and property in Crosby on the East Lake Road (18 acres with 6 in grapes) to their son William.

Just why Herman and Drusilla made this move was probably for all of the following reasons:

- They wanted to retire in an exotic place
- They wanted to get away from the cold winters.
- Either one or the other was ailing and needed a change of climate.
- Their son, Edgar, felt “poorly” and needed a change of climate.
- They were enticed by E. Ben Knight’s ads about the Isle of Pines.
- A new career for Herman in tropical fruit growing.



Drusilla and Herman
taken in about 1919

The first family trip to the Isle was in December 1908 when Herman, Drusilla, Edgar, Edith, Homer and Helen boarded the steamer Campania from New York City to Cuba. They were accompanied by

Mrs. E. Ben Knight; Mr. Knight was already there. In May of 1909, Drusilla, Edith, Homer and Helen returned to the States. Herman and Edgar came back later. Again in the fall of 1909, Herman, Drusilla, Homer and Helen went back to the Isle and returned to the States the spring of 1910. Herman and Drusilla lived on the Isle until the early 1920s.

Now let's track each of the children's lives following the decision by Herman and Drusilla in 1908.

1. In 1911, **Joseph** took the job as Superintendent of Schools for Yates County. Joseph and Katherine lived in Barrington until they moved to Penn Yan in the mid-1920s. Joseph retired from the superintendent's position in 1948 and died in 1952.
2. In 1912, **William** had left Palmyra to become principal of the Hastings-on-Hudson, NY high school. While living in Hastings he received his M. A. degree in education from New York University and was working toward a PhD. In about 1917, William took a job as an accountant at the Stamford Brass Works in Stamford, CN. That was during WWI when the Brass Works was producing ordinance products for the Army. He remained there until he took the job as principal of the Manchester, NY high school in the late 1920s or 1930. William left Manchester in about 1938 and taught at a one-room schoolhouse in Milo until he retired in 1943. His first wife, Alta, died in 1937 and he married Harriet VanArsdale in 1942. He died in 1958. He kept the Bullock property on the East Lake road until he died; he never really lived there but spent many summers and holidays there.

3. We can't pin down with specificity what **Edgar** did in the time between May of 1909 to about 1913. We do know that he was in Phoenix, AZ at the time of the 1910 Federal Census in April of that year. He was working as an engineer in a furniture factory in Phoenix; exactly how long he was there is unknown. He was back on the Isle of Pines in about 1913 working with Herman in implementing wood veneer making in a small crate factory. In about 1918, Edgar was hired to build and manage the Pine Box Lumber Co., a large crate manufacturing plant, owned by a pineapple grower in Havana. In 1919, he married Elizabeth Rahmig; Elizabeth was a U. S. citizen who was working for the owner of the plant in his Havana office. Edgar held the position of plant manager until he died in 1939; he was part owner in the later years.



Standing: Edgar, Edith, William and Homer
Seated: Joseph, Drusilla and Helen
taken in 1924 at the time of Herman's death

4. **Edith** married Robert T. Elliot in 1909 and moved to Brooklyn, NY where Robert was an inspector at the Brooklyn Naval Yard. In about 1915, they moved to Arlington, NJ where Robert had a job as inspector of naval materials. Herman and Drusilla would often stay with them there while visiting the States; in fact, the Bullocks were there when Herman died in 1924. In the mid-1920s Robert and Edith bought a farm in Wycombe, PA. After Herman died, Drusilla spent many years with the Elliots in Wycombe. She died there in 1941. Edith and Robert lived on the farm until they both died in 1963.
5. Prior to going on the first trip to the Isle, **Homer** had met his future wife, Mary Rector. He was working for his father, Herman, on the portable saw mill at S. M. Rector's wood lot. After taking the second trip, Homer decided to stay in Barrington. He married Mary in 1911 and became a tenant farmer a few miles away in Milo, NY. In 1918, they moved to Waterloo, NY where Homer was a conductor on the Geneva-Seneca Falls trolley. Less than a year later, Homer and family moved to the Isle of Pines where he helped Edgar manage the large crate factory. In 1924, they returned to the States where Homer used tropical hard woods to make wood-turned novelties; he brought back a large supply of this wood from the southern part of the Isle of Pines. When this business wasn't successful, Homer and family moved to Waterloo and he became manager of the Singer Sewing Machine store in Geneva in 1928. They moved to East Bloomfield, NY in 1934 where Homer used his tropical woods to make items sold at the Roadside Craftsmen. After working in a defense industry plant during WWII, Homer opened his own wood business in Holcomb, NY in 1945. He died in 1957.
6. **Helen** probably spent another eight or nine months on the Isle from the fall of 1910 to the spring of 1911. In the fall of 1912, she went to live with her brother William and his wife in Hastings-on-Hudson, NY so she could get her high school education. After high school, Helen attended Adelphi College while in Hastings. She did consider the Isle as her home base; in 1916 an item in the Dobbs Ferry Register read: "Miss Helen Bullock, of the Isle of Pines, is at the home of her brother, Professor W. W. Bullock, of Hudson Heights." Helen lived with William until he moved to Stamford, CT; she then went to live with her sister Edith in Arlington, NJ. While in high school in Hastings, Helen met Hugh R. Brown; they were married in 1924. The Browns lived in Hastings for many years; Drusilla lived with them for a while. In the 1950s the Browns moved to Wycombe to take care of the ailing Elliots. Helen died in 1968 in Buffalo, NY.

In summary:

1. **Joseph's** life was not changed much at all by the 1908 decision. He may have remained a vineyardist longer if his father were still next door doing the same thing. His move back to school administration may have occurred later in his life.
2. **William's** life was changed a quite a bit since he and Alta were *in loco parentis* to Helen for at least 5 years in Hastings-on-Hudson. They may have enjoyed it since they themselves had no children but still it changed their lives.
3. **Edgar's** life was changed dramatically. He followed his parents to the Isle of Pines, found his life work and he found a wife. He and Elizabeth had a big impact on the lives of the people

there, both the Americans and those native to the Isle. Also, the climate on the island probably made him feel less “poorly.”

4. **Edith**’s life was not changed significantly. There was some impact in that the Elliot home both in Brooklyn and Arlington was often the home base for her parents as they came back and forth from the Isle. Edith did care for Drusilla as she grew older but she probably would have done that anyway.
5. **Homer**’s life was impacted a lot. The collection of hard woods he brought back from the southern part of the Isle of Pines in 1924 was an important part of his life. He turned and sold bowls, plates, candlesticks, etc. from that wood from 1924 until 1943. The wood was beautiful and he loved working with it. After Homer died in 1957, my brother Phil tried to work with some of left over pieces. They just crumbled from dry rot; they died with Homer.
6. Without a doubt, **Helen**’s life was dramatically impacted. It’s hard to imagine the effect on a teenager of being separated from their parents even though they are being lovingly cared for by relatives. She weathered the storm and produced five very impressive children.

PDB

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Bullocks - When and Where - 1892 through 1915

Year	Herman and Drusilla	Joseph	William	Edgar	Edith	Homer	Helen
1892-1895	Barrington	Barrington Colgate Univ.	Barrington Colgate Univ.	Barrington	Barrington	Barrington	Barrington
1896	Barrington	Colgate Univ.	Colgate Univ.'	Barrington Colgate Academy	Barrington	Barrington	Barrington
1897	Barrington	Colgate Univ.	Colgate Univ.	Colgate Academy	Barrington	Barrington	Barrington
1898	Barrington	Colgate Univ. Norwalk, CN	Colgate Univ.	Europe	Barrington	Barrington	Barrington
1899	Barrington	Norwalk, CN Barrington	Colgate Univ. NYC Real Estate	Barrington	Barrington	Barrington	Barrington
1900	Barrington	Barrington E. Bloomfield, NY	NYC Real Estate Barrington	Barrington West Virginia Univ.	Barrington	Barrington	Barrington
1901	Barrington	E. Bloomfield, NY Shortsville, NY	Barrington Middlesex, NY	West Virginia Univ.	Barrington	Barrington	Barrington
1902	Barrington	Shortsville, NY	Middlesex, NY	West Virginia Univ.	Barrington	Barrington	Barrington
1903	Barrington	Shortsville, NY Barrington	Middlesex, NY N. Cohocton, NY	West Virginia Univ.	Barrington	Barrington	Barrington
1904	Barrington	Barrington	N. Cohocton, NY	West Virginia Univ. E. Pittsburgh, PA	Barrington	Barrington N. Cohocton, NY	Barrington
1905	Barrington	Barrington	N. Cohocton, NY Cuba, NY	E. Pittsburgh, PA	Barrington E. Pittsburgh, PA	N. Cohocton, NY Cuba, NY	Barrington
1906	Barrington	Barrington	Cuba, NY Palmyra, NY	E. Pittsburgh, PA	Barrington	Cuba, NY Barrington	Barrington
1907	Barrington	Barrington	Palmyra, NY	E. Pittsburgh, PA	Barrington	Barrington	Barrington
1908	Barrington	Barrington	Palmyra, NY		Barrington	Barrington	Barrington
1909	Isle of Pines	Barrington	Palmyra, NY	Isle of Pines	Isle of Pines Brooklyn, NY	Isle of Pines	Isle of Pines
1910	Isle of Pines	Barrington	Palmyra, NY	Phoenix, AZ	Brooklyn, NY	Isle of Pines	Isle of Pines
1911	Isle of Pines	Barrington	Palmyra, NY		Brooklyn, NY	Barrington Milo, NY	Isle of Pines
1912	Isle of Pines	Barrington	Palmyra, NY Hastings, NY		Brooklyn, NY	Milo, NY	Hastings, NY
1913	Isle of Pines	Barrington	Hastings, NY	Isle of Pines	Brooklyn, NY	Milo, NY	Hastings, NY
1914	Isle of Pines	Barrington	Hastings, NY	Isle of Pines	Brooklyn, NY	Milo, NY	Hastings, NY
1915	Isle of Pines	Barrington	Hastings, NY	Isle of Pines	Brooklyn, NY Arlington, NJ	Milo, NY	Hastings, NY

Bullocks - When and Where - 1915 through 1950

Year	Herman and Drusilla	Joseph	William	Edgar	Edith	Homer	Helen
1915	Isle of Pines	Barrington	Hastings, NY	Isle of Pines	Brooklyn, NY Arlington, NJ	Milo, NY	Hastings, NY
1917	Isle of Pines	Barrington	Hastings, NY Stamford, CN	Isle of Pines	Arlington, NY	Milo, NY	Hastings, NY Arlington, NJ
1918	Isle of Pines	Barrington	Stamford, CN	Isle of Pines	Arlington, NY	Milo, NY Waterloo, NY	Arlington, NJ
1919	Isle of Pines	Barrington	Stamford, CN	Isle of Pines	Arlington, NY	Waterloo, NY Isle of Pines	Arlington, NJ
1924	Arlington, NJ	Barrington	Stamford, CN	Isle of Pines	Arlington, NY	Isle of Pines Milo, NY	Arlington, NJ Hastings, NY
1925	Wycombe, PA	Barrington Penn Yan	Stamford, CN	Isle of Pines	Arlington, NY Wycombe, PA	Milo, NY	Hastings, NY
1928	Wycombe, PA	Penn Yan		Isle of Pines	Wycombe, PA	Waterloo, NY	Hastings, NY
1930	Wycombe, PA	Penn Yan	Manchester, NY	Isle of Pines	Wycombe, PA	Waterloo, NY	Hastings, NY
1934	Wycombe, PA	Penn Yan	Manchester, NY	Isle of Pines	Wycombe, PA	Waterloo, NY E. Bloomfield, NY	Hastings, NY
1938	Wycombe, PA	Penn Yan	Manchester, NY Milo, NY	Isle of Pines	Wycombe, PA	E. Bloomfield, NY	Hastings, NY
1939	Wycombe, PA	Penn Yan	Milo, NY	Isle of Pines	Wycombe, PA	E. Bloomfield, NY	Hastings, NY
1941	Wycombe, PA	Penn Yan	Milo, NY		Wycombe, PA	E. Bloomfield, NY	Hastings, NY
1945		Penn Yan	Manchester, NY		Wycombe, PA	E. Bloomfield, NY Holcomb, NY	Hastings, NY
1950		Penn Yan	Holcomb, NY		Wycombe, PA	Holcomb, NY	Hastings, NY Wycombe, NY