

## How Homer Met Mary

*The question married couples are always asked is, “How did you meet?” My father, Homer Bullock, and my mother, Mary Florence Rector, would reply thusly: “We met when a group of lumbermen, including Homer, came to Mary’s farm to cut down trees.” To my knowledge, additional information such as who were the men and why did they cut down the trees was never discussed.*

When I came to Penn Yan in 2013 to research my family history this was one of the first research areas I addressed. Looking through the YCHC’s extensive archives I found one interesting document and also some interesting entries when searching and reading some of the diaries that Mary E. Collins had transcribed. I collected and copied that material but never did anything with it. During the COVID-19 lock down with nothing to do, I thought getting back into this would be a good way to pass the time.

### Cogent entries in the Charles E. Guile 1908 diary

#### Wed. Jan. 1, 1908

..... I went to STEPHEN RECTOR & met Uncle HERMAN BULLOCK at Fathers & we went over the price of pine & estimated the unit. & I got home at 7. P.M. .... The roads are very rough.

#### Tues. Jan. 7, 1908

..... I met S. RECTOR in regard to his timber. .... It snowed some P.M

#### Sat. Jan. 11, 1908

..... Rector was here & we made a contract with him for a piece of pine & with Uncle HERMAN BULLOCK to cut it up for us.

#### Sat. Jan. 18, 1908

..... I settled up with Uncle HERMAN BULLOCK A.M. & WARNER .....P.M. I settled up with Father Finton

### People named in the diary

**Stephen M. Rector** was Mary’s father, my maternal grandfather. He lived on Hoyt Road about 3 miles southeast of Second Milo and 6 miles northeast of Crosby.

**Herman Bullock** was Homer’s father, my paternal grandfather.

**George W. Finton** was Herman Bullock’s brother-in-law; Herman’s wife, Drusilla, was George’s sister.

**Charles E. Guile** was George’s son-in-law; married to George’s daughter “Hattie”. That’s why he called Herman “Uncle Herman”.

**T. Warner Windnagle** was also George’s son-in-law; married to George’s daughter “Mattie”.

The above except Rector lived in Crosby on the East Lake Road; all within less than a mile of the presently abandoned Viking Motor Inn.

A **summary** of these four Guile diary entries: Guile, Windnagle, and Finton were bargaining with Rector to buy his “piece of pine”. Furthermore, Bullock was to “cut it up”.

We do know that in 1908 Herman Bullock was in the portable sawmill business. He and his team would take the sawmill to the timber, fell the trees and cut them up into salable lumber. The photo to the right shows a steam engine drawing a thresher going south on what is now Rt. 14A through Second Milo. Note the Second Milo Baptist Church and the rural school house to the left behind the thresher. Herman would have his steam engine pulling his portable sawmill.



Without a doubt, the document to the right was signed by S. M. Rector and Guile & Windnagle on the January 11, 1908 meeting mentioned in the Guile diary. The main points in the document are:

Guile & Windnagle will purchase certain timber from Rector for \$1,226 (approx. \$35,000 in today's dollars)

Timber must be removed by January 1, 1911

Guile & Windnagle can use the barn, stables, and house at the nearby Snyder farm

About this time in early 1908 Guile and Windnagle were spreading their wings. For years they had been working with their father-in-law, George Finton, in his basket making businesses. In February of 1908 they, as Guile and Windnagle would purchase Seneca L. Pratt's basket making business in Penn Yan. It wasn't long after that the two basket factories in Crosby were shut down.

Sometime in 1908, Herman and Drusilla purchased land on the Isle of Pines located 40 miles off the southern coast of the island of Cuba. They and some family members, including Homer, travelled to the Isle in December of 1908. They stayed until the summer of 1909.

I have concluded, that Herman's portable sawmill team, including Homer, "cut up" the Rector "piece of pine" during the spring and summer of 1908 before the trip to the Isle of Pines. Furthermore, that Homer was billeted at the Snyder house near the Rector house and shazam **Homer met Mary**.

They are shown on the right as they looked in 1911.

PDBullock – April 18, 2020  
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AGREEMENT Made this 11th day of January, 1908 between Stephen M. Rector of the town of Milo, Yates County, New York, party of the first part, and Guile & Windnagle of Penn Yan, N. Y., party of the second part:

The said Rector hereby sells to said Guile & Windnagle all the pine timber and <sup>some</sup> wood upon the farm formerly belonging to Jacob T. Rector, deceased, situated in the town of Milo at the price of Twelve Hundred and Twenty-six Dollars (\$1226.00). Said Guile & Windnagle have until January 1, 1911 to cut and remove said timber. No hemlock to be cut. Due care to be exercised to protect trees not cut. Guile & Windnagle have the privilege of using the south part of the barn on the farm lately belonging to the late Hawley Snyder for storage purposes until May 15, 1909. The said Rector reserves the right to the granary therein and access thereto. Said Guile & Windnagle are also to have the right to use the stables in said barn as they may need them until the timber is cut and drawn. Party of the second part is to use due caution with reference to the use of lanterns or other lights about the barn and no smoking is to be allowed about the barn. The said Guile & Windnagle are to have the use of the house on the Snyder place until the timber is cut and worked up. They are to have the use thereof without rent unless the said Rector shall have an opportunity of renting said house but in that event they are to have the first privilege at a price <sup>rate</sup> not to exceed Twenty Dollars per year. *for a period of not less than six months from April 1, 1908*

Guile & Windnagle  
S. M. Rector

