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Wills Passmore, One and Two: The name is “Wills,” not William or Willis. The elder Wills was a talented bachelor who was born in the early 1850s and died about 1909. The younger Wills, a great nephew of the former, was born in 1927 or 1928 and is still farming near Taylor’s Bridge in southeastern New Castle County.

Sarah (“Sadie”) Mitchell (1858–1944), my grandmother’s younger sister, married Henry C. (Harry) Passmore, and they had two sons and two daughters. Their farm was just off Old Kennett Road near Snuff Mill Road. Harry’s bachelor brother Wills lived with them. The Passmores’ younger son Pusey (1898–ca.1979) adored his Uncle Wills, and when he and his wife, Dora, had a son of their own, he was named Wills. About 1920, the Passmore family moved to Concord Pike just north of Talleyville and bought a farm that is the present site of the Concord Mall and Widener University. Pusey Passmore also leased a farm west of the Pike owned by Woodlawn Trustees, and here Pusey established a thriving ice cream business in the 1930s under the name Lynthwaite Farm. His first cousin twice removed is James I. Mitchell, who runs the Creamery at Woodside Farm, famous for its rich ice cream made from the milk of the farm’s Jersey cattle.

The first Wills Passmore was a teacher and an inventor. He invented and manufactured a school-sized globe of the world, which showed clearly the rotation and the revolving of the earth and was a great teaching tool to explain day and night, the seasons at various latitudes, and as an aid in the study of climatology. These units were nicely made, and a few are still in existence. Wills also owned an early Stanley steamer, a Model EX of about 1906. He understood it and made out well, but apparently the gasoline-burning Stanleys of that period had a tendency to backfire. One day he took it to Stanley agent D. Walter Harper in Philadelphia to have some boiler work done. When Harper’s mechanics dropped the burner, they were confused. In all the valleys of the grate was plastered insulation, most likely felt or asbestos. Harper inquired what that was for. Wills told him it prevented his burner from backfiring. From that time on, all Stanleys left the factory with insulation on the grate, and we continue that practice today, using a fiberglass product.

The younger Wills loved farming, as did his father, but farms on Concord Pike were becoming completely impractical. About 1963, he moved south with his wife, Joanne, and their three daughters. They bought a farm near Taylor’s Bridge, a few miles southeast of Odessa and became very active in the farming community of downstate Delaware. Joanne held many responsible positions in the Grange and was an active volunteer and Board member of the Delaware Agricultural Museum. She followed my late cousin Betty Roberts in keeping the tiny Appoquinimink Friends Meeting in Odessa open as an active place of worship.

Unfortunately, Joanne Passmore died a few years ago. Sometime later, Wills married Grace Caulk, a widow who was also widely known in the Delaware farming community. Wills is still farming, and both he and Grace remain active in farming organizations. Wills is still an untiring volunteer at the Delaware Agricultural Museum in Dover. Although I seldom see him, I am very proud of my second cousin.