

William Sidney Harwood (d. 1963) and the Farm

by Marcia Ticknor

Introduction: William Sidney Harwood was the father of Webb and Ralph Harwood. Ralph lived on the farm at 285 Textile Road until his death. After Ralph died, the estate was settled by selling the property to Avis Farms. The following photos show the barn, prior to it being destroyed; the silos, which are still standing; and the house before and during its move to a new location.



In 1906 William Sidney Harwood purchased the farm at 285 Textile Road in Pittsfield Township from the Allison Estate. In 1907 he married Amanda Hertler and moved to the farm. They constructed a house in 1913 where they lived and raised their family consisting of Webb Sidney, Harrison Hertler, Ralph Holden, Sidney William, Helen Marie, Elizabeth Belle, & Maurine Amanda.

William Sidney was descended from William Webb Harwood. William Webb Harwood came to Michigan in 1824 where he located in Ypsilanti and started the first grist mill in the village. He also started the first school in Ypsilanti. In 1834 William Webb moved to Pittsfield Township where he settled in a log cabin home on Michigan Avenue. This property is still owned and occupied by a Harwood.



William Sidney was a very prosperous farmer. In 1917 he went to Dearborn to personally drive back his first farm tractor, one of the first in the area. In 1918 before rural electric power was available, he installed a battery electrical system. The family also was the first in the area in the early 1950s to have a completely electric kitchen installed -- including a dishwasher!

William died 11 January 1963 and is buried in the Harwood Cemetery on the corner of Textile and Campbell Roads. William's wife Amanda was quite interested in photography. Amanda died in 1979.

William Sidney's son Ralph continued to farm until Ralph retired in the 1980s. Ralph died 25 December 1992 after being in the Evangelical Nursing Home in Saline for about 2 years.



During the time Ralph was in the nursing home, the house stood empty. After settling Ralph's estate and selling the property to Avis Farms, there still remained the question of what to do with the house. Brandon Geddes, descendent of another of Pittsfield's Pioneer Families, moved the Harwood house to his property on Thomas Road where he has restored it and is living in it today.

The Harwood family was active in local politics and community activities. Many of the items of historical importance from the Harwood family were donated to the Saline Historical Society since the Pittsfield Township Historical Society did not exist at that time.

Some of the information for this article comes from Records of the Hertler & Harwood Families by Donald L. and Elizabeth Harwood Katz and from The History of Washtenaw County Michigan (Chas Chapman & Co., 1881).

