Donald and Virginia Stroble Farm

In 1936, Donald Eugene Stroble and Virginia Mae Needham Stroble purchased 3 ¼ acres of land on Goslon Road (now Skylark Road) adjacent to their Pfafftown farm and began construction of a new house. On May 2, 1937, the Winston-Salem Journal reported that the Strobles “are now in their rock veneered home at Pfafftown. This is one of most attractive rural homes in this section, and is located in a beautiful oak forest ….” The stones used for the veneer were collected from the land and fit together individually, giving the house a distinctive cottage-like appearance. Ornamental plants enhanced the yard around the house. Virginia was a charter member of the Friendly Garden Club, a lifelong member of the Garden Clubs of North Carolina, and a member of the National Rose Society. Many of the flowers and trees she planted still grow on the farm.

In the years prior to building their own house, Don and Virginia owned land in Pfafftown but lived with Virginia’s parents in the log house she had grown up in, just ½ mile north of their future home site. Their farm of about 75 acres produced tobacco, soybeans, and sorghum cane. They also raised cattle and hogs. The Stroble farm was noted as “one of the best ‘average’ farms in [the] County;” Don was able to feed his livestock from the farm’s output, a cost saving measure important during the Depression.

Don Stroble was born in Georgia in 1887 and moved to Winston-Salem in 1912. He was hired for the Journal’s composing room, rising to its foreman. When the Journal and Sentinel merged in 1927, he moved to the Sentinel composing room, where he operated a linotype machine until his death. Don was also a deacon at the Pfafftown Church of Christ and volunteered time with Pfafftown schools. He was president of the Vienna Township Sunday School Association. On Friday nights he treated his children with fruit, candy, and a dime. He died at age 54 in 1942, just five years after the Strobles moved into their stone house. A tribute to him published by the Journal, noted that he “crammed much noble living … and civic activity” into his life and that he had a “keen sense of loyalty to his employer, his community and to higher ideals. He thought, lived and worked in terms of the higher good.”

Virginia Needham was born in Surry County in 1891 and moved to Forsyth County in 1899. She and Don married in 1913; she gave birth to the first of their five children the following year. Beginning in 1937, Virginia began to foster children for the Forsyth County Welfare Department. By 1954, she had provided a temporary home for about 100 children who ranged in age from babies to teenagers. Many of the children had special needs and...
developmental delays. Lillian Noell, a member of the department’s staff, said “She has never turned us down yet, and I don’t want to be working when Mrs. Stroble doesn’t take children.” She maintained relationships with many of the children after they left her care; one went on to foster children of his own because the Stroble “home had meant a great deal to him.” Like Don, Virginia modeled a life of service for her children, both biological and foster.

Four of the Stroble children lived to adulthood, although tragically Mary Elizabeth died in 1926 at age eight. Donald Jr. became the “father of the house” after the death of Don Sr.; he owned the stone house until his death in 2000. Like his parents, he was very involved in the community, serving as an elder and board chairman for Pfafftown Christian Church; leading a Boy Scout troop; and in the 1930s playing violin in the Pfafftown Orchestra. Bill, too, served as an elder for Pfafftown Christian Church and led a Boy Scout Troop. Virginia served the community through her work as the Director of Vienna Village Assisted Living and later as Executive Director of the Forsyth County Heart Association. James Carroll worked for R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. for 23 years and also was a member of Pfafftown Christian Church. All three boys served in the armed forces during World War II.

The Stroble children honored the legacies of their parents, Don and Virginia, by following their examples of civic engagement and community work for “the higher good.”

This information is also available at the Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission web site: www.ForsythCountyHRC.org