

# Museum News: Frankie and Charlie Cash

By C. w. (Bill) Smith

Sometimes you meet people that are a matched pair. With such a high rate of divorce and “live-ins” in our society today it is a pleasure to meet a couple who stayed together for the whole “nine yards.” That was the case of Frankie and Charlie Cash, long-time residents of Sanderson.

Charlie was born in Del Rio on July 3, 1926 and Frankie was born in Rockdale, Texas, on April 10, 1933. Charlie’s parents, Henry Webster and Alpha Yoas Cash had moved to Sanderson in 1923 for Henry to work on the railroad as a pumper. His grandparents were from South Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia and Texas. Henry and Alpha had four children, Mamie, Mozelle, Lois and John Henry. Charlie and his sister Vera were born after they moved to Sanderson, but in 1928 the family moved away. The elder Cashes moved back in 1947 and remained until Mr. Cash passed away in 1952.

Charlie joined the U. S. Navy in World War II and was recalled for the Korean conflict, serving on the USS Essex from a home port in Oregon. They had met when Frankie came to Sanderson to visit her sister, who had married Charlie’s brother. Charlie and Frankie married in Everett, Washington, on January 28, 1952 and spent almost 55 years together, until Charlie passed away in January of 2006. She said she had to have her father’s permission to marry, since she was only 17, but her family loved him, just as they loved his sister.

Frankie’s parents were from Texas, but her Grandfather Shelander had emigrated from Sweden. Her other grandparents were from Alabama or were native-born Texans.

Charlie joined the water service of the railroad in 1948, and then transferred to the engine division and worked as a switcher engineer at El Paso for some time. He spent a total of 42 years on the railroad, mostly driving both steam and diesel engines. The family moved back to Sanderson to stay in 1961.

He and Frankie were long-time members of First Baptist Church in Sanderson where he could be seen almost on a daily basis after his retirement tending to the grounds and keeping the building in good shape. Frankie served as a Sunday school teacher for 40 years and many children passed through her classroom. She also served as a Vacation Bible school teacher for many years and as church clerk.

In their various times living in Sanderson they called several places home, including the Lemons home, which is now the Terrell County Museum. In a visit to the Museum a few years before she passed away, Frankie described how the building was divided into two apartments, with the Lemons sisters living on one side and Frankie and Charlie living in the other. They were only there from the fall of 1953 until the spring of 1954, but she said the time was memorable. For most of their time in Sanderson in later years they called the house at 501 Kerr Street as their home, and it always had a beautifully manicured yard, as was Frankie and Charlie’s habit.

While Charlie spent 42 years with the railroad, Frankie was also busy with her church work and as secretary to the Superintendent of TCISD, a position she held for 32 years. When she retired from the school district in 1994 the school board honored her by naming the Superintendent’s office building the Frankie Cash Administration Building. The building is now the EMS headquarters.

Frankie and Charlie were blessed with two children, Mitzi and Jim, six grandchildren, and at the time of her death in 2013, 16 great grandchildren. Besides loving her grandchildren and great grandchildren, according to her obituary “she loved to read, work in the garden, crochet, sing hymns, spend time in the Word of God and visit with family and friends.”

Frankie and Charlie Cash were wonderful people and first-class citizens of Sanderson and Terrell County. They built a life here, but shared it with other members of the community...hearts of gold. The morality that they



*Frankie Cash and Jimmy Rapp, one of her former Sunday school students in a photo taken shortly before her death in 2013.*

practiced...faith, love and charity...stood well through their journey as our friends and loyal citizens and supporters of our city and our county. The younger generations should take notice and learn a lesson from the gleaming example set by Frankie and Charlie Cash.