

# Message in a Bottle

## Biographical Series on Tyler County Folks

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## Frankie Kindle – Tyler County Genealogist

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There are no strangers in Frankie's life. She will engage anyone in conversation as though they were life-long family. Some even joke about her jovial loquaciousness.

"What are you going to preach about today?" Irene Sheffield has asked at Woodville's Nutrition Center.

Though ready to chat anytime and anywhere, she is not burdensome. She has no vanity, no need to showcase herself. She is just so full of concern.

Like so many in Tyler County, she loves every facet of its people's history, with a special passion for genealogical studying at the Heritage Village. She never tires of searching out the lineage of anyone.

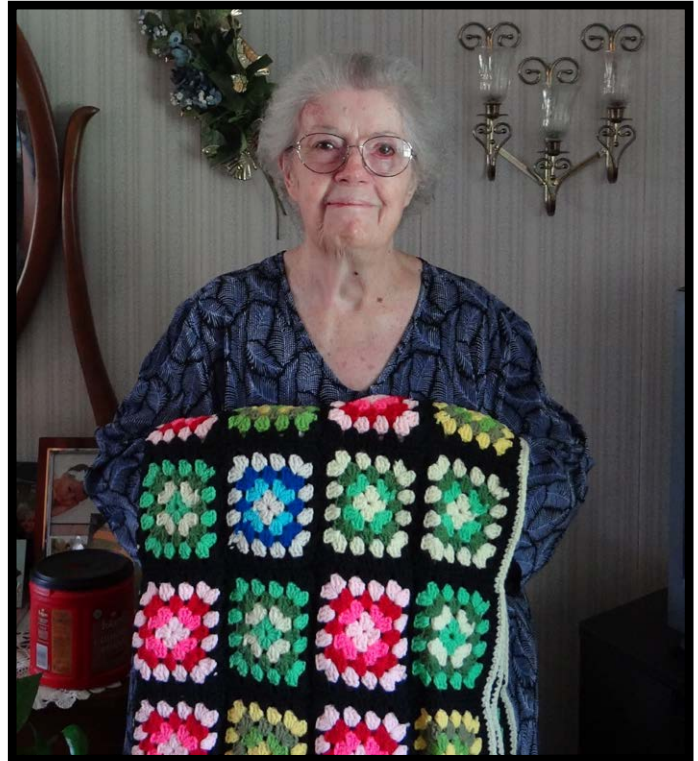
Look at it like this. Treasure hunters, like bargain hunters, get an adrenaline rush every time they find a rare coin or piece jewelry from the seashore sand. That is how Frankie feels when she makes a genealogical connection between people.

"Every time I help someone and make a connection," she said of her genealogical excursions, "it puts cold chills up and down my spine." She pauses to smile. "When you can put the missing link together for someone." The joy in her eyes flickers and she waves her hands with emphasis, this time extending her left hand, flicking her fingers up and toward you.

Unlike inexperienced speakers that do not coordinate well their hands with their speech, every gentle gesture that Frankie uses reflects a nuance of her message. She has a unique way of flicking her hand and fingers upward, as if sharing a ripe plum, nudging her hand toward you a couple of inches with a quick couple of jerks. This sweet gesture is as if she was handing you a ripe plum from a tree, urging you to taste its juicy nectar, as if saying, "Take it! You will love it."

When she flicks her wrist in that characteristic manner, it is usually the result of a witty exchange and her own unique silent confirmation that you yourself saw the point without more words. That is, as she intently watches you, and you "get the point" she just made, she flicks her wrist up – sharing the plum – acknowledging that the communication has come full circle.

The plum tasted good, didn't it? – and, yes, it was nice talking to her.



It's attractive and the mark of acute intelligence, the result of a long life of engaging people.

She was born three miles northwest of Warren over 80 years ago. After growing up in Warren, she moved to Beaumont. She worked for the Henke and Pillot Grocery Store and then the Beaumont Credit Bureau.

She married, had her first daughter Margie, then divorced.

After moving to Houston, she worked for the credit department at Sakowitz and then for that department at Sears.

In Houston, she met and married Frank Martin Kindle. Frank retired from the railroad in 1987 and they moved back to Warren in 1988. He loved gospel singing. They were together for 44 years until his passing in 2005. And by him, she had her second daughter Pam.

Since returning to Warren, she began in earnest her lifelong interest in genealogy at the Heritage Village. "My mother talked about genealogy," she reflected, musing over how she and her mother would contemplate their history. The Village contains all of the census records of the county and more.

On her mother's side, Frankie's great-great-grandfather Isaac Gant built the Barclay Cabin in 1842 for James Barclay (1816-71), the first house in Tyler County! Barclay's house was also his office as he worked as the Indian Agent for Alabama Indians. The 1840s saw the height of the Second Great Awakening that led to the expansion of several Christian denominations.

Also on her mother's side, Frankie's great-great-grandfather Dave Woolley came to the Hart Mill community north of Ivanhoe via the old Fire Tower Road in 1861, the year the Civil War began and the first Battle of Bull Run. He was a charter member of Mill Creek Primitive Baptist Church in 1862, the same year the U.S. income tax started. He homesteaded in 1873, the year that Ulysses S. Grant began his second term as president, and Wolley bought the place in 1893.

Frankie's great-grandfather George Washington Woolley was born in 1858. In the 1880s, he and his buddy were "rafters" who cut logs and tied them together and floated the logs from Kimble Creek to Village Creek to the Neches River and then down to Beaumont.

The Tolar Cabin was just across the street from the McClure property and was a kind of bed and breakfast back then. Today you can see it at the Heritage Village in Woodville.

"We walked to the Tolar Cabin two, three times a year," Frankie said. Think about that when you visit the Heritage Village. There are a few people still here today who remember when a few of the buildings at the Village were not mere tourist attractions. Frankie was a docent at the Village too. What a heritage!

When she is not searching some yet-to-be-found treasure in her lineage or in the genealogy of a friend, you can find her at the Nutrition Center in Woodville. For the last ten years she has been the unofficial ambassador. Regulars often point out a new person to Frankie, who then introduces the newcomer to the center's activities and resources, which are plenty.

Whether it is Bingo, pillow stuffing for veterans, or – her favorite – playing dominoes, Frankie is always ready. She joked that she has some issues with Precinct 1 Commissioner Martin Nash, who has the domino trophies in his office.

When Nash was asked, he readily responded, "Anything she wants. She is quite a person. I'd do anything for her. We kid each other a lot."

"I enjoy getting people together," Frankie said. "If you need something or need to know something." That is Frankie. "I am a Retired and Senior Volunteer Program representative (RSVP, [seniorcorps.gov](http://seniorcorps.gov)) and represent Tyler County for them under DETCOG." Seniors can sign up and join the largest volunteer network in the U.S. and even get free insurance between one's home and volunteer station.

As seen in the picture, Frankie accepts Afghans upon which she sells chances-to-win in order to buy more pillow stuffing for the pillows she and her RSVP crew stuff for the VA hospital in Houston. Just another way of “making connections between people.”

So goes Frankie about her business of “connecting” with her own family, connecting people to their heritage, and to one another. That leads to this, not truly an afterthought. Perhaps we all are related to Frankie too, if we trace our lineage back far enough. For in Adam and Eve do we not all share a common beginning?

Can you see her now, flicking her hand up and toward you, confirming without words the thought of our mutual heritage? We are all connected, you know. We have Frankie to thank, and those like her, who are ever ready to connect us with each other and to our roots – if you let her, perhaps, even back to the beginning in Eden.