

Schmitt Descendants Hold Family Reunion

The descendants of Johanne Schmitt and Anna Maria Ruder Schmitt gathered recently for a family reunion at the K.C. Hall in Port Lavaca.

The family was among thousands of German immigrants who left their homeland in 1845-1846 and sailed to Texas to start new lives. After a journey of three to four months, the families landed at Indian Point, later to become the port city of Indianola.

The family shared in the tragedies of disease, inadequate shelter and shortages of food and water that plagued these immigrants upon their arrival. Some lost their lives in the 1975 and 1886 hurricanes that destroyed Indianola.

Johanne Schmitt drowned just prior to leaving Germany, and his widow went ahead with the plans to come to Texas with their five children. Her life ended three years later on the prairie near Indianola. It was said that she froze to death while searching for a calf. A severe winter storm had developed, and it is an historic fact that the bay froze over during that storm.

Children of the couple were Elizabeth Schmitt, who married William Andrew Hill; Theresa Schmitt, who married Andrew Rasmussen; Henry Schmitt, who married Josephine Ludwig; and Margaret Schmitt, who

married Thomas Franklin Harrison. Johanne Baptist Schmitt left the area, and it is thought that he volunteered to fight in the Mexican War.

The descendants of these families met for the first time in 1986 with 300 in attendance. Representatives of Henry Schmitt and Margaret Schmitt Harrison families attended the reunion this year. Henry Schmitt changed his name to Smith in 1850 when he became a naturalized citizen of the United States.

A trip to Budesheim, Germany, the birthplace of these ancestor was taken recently by Mr. and Mrs. Don Bitterly of Baytown, who were guests at the reunion. An album of photographs taken during the trip was on display.

Mrs. H.C. Smith, 94, of Port Lavaca was the oldest member in attendance. Lillian Bouquet DuBilier of Seguin was the oldest direct descendant in attendance. Shelby Smith, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mark Smith was the youngest, and the Owen E. Smith Sr. family had the largest family group in attendance.

The W.H. Smith Sr. family was in charge of arrangements, with assistance from the John P. Smith and Louisa Smith Braden families of Seguin, all descendants of Henry and Josephine Smith.

*Error in this article -
Theresa Schmitt married
Samuel Mc Bride*