

John Henry Rathgens

John Henry Rathgens Family

Among the many emigrants to this country in 1845 were Paul John Henry Rathgens, born in Lubeck, Germany, November 11, 1827. He was a seaman and obtained his U.S.

naturalization papers in New York City, in 1849.

His wife, Alice Ellen Owen, was born in County Cork, Ireland, on May 15, 1830. She came to America with a group of other Irish emigrants in 1845, as an orphan girl. The only relative that was mentioned was a cousin, Lady Clara Todd, who was married to a nobleman and lived in London.

Their first child, Thomas Henry, was born February 20, 1853, at Brazos "St. Yago," Texas, a community on the Brazos River. Later, the family moved to Indianola, where seven other known children were born. Only four children survived the epidemics of Cholera and Yellow Fever. Harry (Thomas Henry), John, Henrietta (Nettie), and Alice Ellen. Alice Ellen was the only one of the children to marry and have a family. This was the W.H. Smith Family of Port Lavaca.

Harry Rathgens was a sea captain like his father, and lived in Indianola. After the 1886 storm, he and his mother moved to Port Lavaca and went into business with his brother-in-law, W.H. Smith, Sr. The family owned several houses in Indianola which were torn down and moved to Port Lavaca. The one used as their home was built on the same lot where a great grandson now has a medical practice. Some were rent houses.

All of the members of this family, except Alice Ellen Smith, are buried in the Old Town Cemetery near Indianola. Mr. Rathgens died in Indianola in 1879. John died on a train near El Paso in March, 1886 and Nettie died in Indianola in October 1886. Alice Ellen Smith died in Port Lavaca in July 1905. Mrs. Rathgens died in Port Lavaca in 1909 and Harry died in Port Lavaca in July 1923.

This family had great courage and deep faith, and is always remembered by their descendants with affection and pride. *By Mrs. R.A. Stevenson Jr.*