

Johann Henry Schmidt IV, born in Germany in 1829, came to Indianola with his mother and other siblings in 1845. The family left Germany to avoid the compulsory military service and the unrest of their country. The father, a wine maker, drowned at the dock just prior to their departure, but the courageous mother brought her family to America as planned and settled at Old Town. Mrs. Schmidt is said to have frozen to death in December 1849 during a freak cold spell that came up while she was looking for a calf.

Mr. J. Henry Schmidt changed his name to "Smith" when he became a citizen of the U.S. in 1850. He married Josephine Ludwig in 1851 and the couple had sixteen children, most of them born in Indianola. The family lived on Copano Bay at Old St. Mary's for a time during the Civil War, where Mr. Smith ran the mailboat. A Yankee gunboat was stationed in the harbor, but as there was no fighting in the area, the sailors began entertaining the young ladies at parties aboard ship. On one of these occasions, the ladies got word to their men, who returned home, dressed in ladies clothes, and captured the gunboat. Henry brought home a teapot as a souvenir, treasured by the Smith family to this day.

Henry and Josephine lived in Port Lavaca after Indianola was abandoned and are buried in the old Port Lavaca Cemetery.

William Henry Smith was born at Indianola, December 21, 1858. He spent most of his youth at Indianola, absorbing much of the colorful and tragic history of the city, as told many times to his

PAGE 4

children and grandchildren. On May 18, 1881, he married Alice Ellen Rahtgens at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Indianola. They bought a house in Indianola where several of their children were born. After the 1886 storm, the family moved to Port Lavaca and rebuilt their house on Commerce Street, where it stands today.

Mr. Smith, "Pappy", as he was affectionately called by his grandchildren, was a saloonkeeper in Indianola. He was serving his community as County Commissioner at the time of the 1886 storm. After moving to Port Lavaca, he and his brother-in-law Harry Rathge owned and operated a lumberyard and ship chandlery. Later, his son W. H. Smith, Jr., joined him in the business.

In 1917, Mr. Smith organized the Port Lavaca Channel and Dock Co., the first corporation to obtain a charter from the State of Texas. This historical event necessitated a special act of the legislature. About the same time, the Smith-Ullrich Dredging Co. was organized and the Smith Harbor was created. Later, some of Mr. Smith's sons started the Smith Brothers Seafood Co.

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Smith, Sr. are both buried in the Old Port Lavaca Cemetery, as are most of their eight children. Their youngest child, Loretta Rae Elder, is the only surviving member of the immediate family.

She has recently moved to Victoria and makes her home with her daughter. There are a number of descendants still living in Port Lavaca.