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HISTORICAL HANDBOOK
OF THE
VAN VOORHEES FAMILY
IN THE
NETHERLANDS AND AMERICA



HISTORICAL HANDBOOK - VAN VOORHEES

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
BY
STEPHEN J. VOORHIES

THE
VAN VOORHEES ASSOCIATION
1935

This is an offset reprint, without correction or change, of the original Historical Handbook published in 1935 by the late Dr. Oscar Voorhees. It is hoped that a new and revised book will be prepared in time, but meanwhile we are glad to make available again the original one.

The Van Voorhees Association

December, 1972

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by the
VAN VOORHEES ASSOCIATION
Organized January 16, 1932

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ERRATA
THE HISTORICAL HANDBOOK

Page 18. Middle line. Read Jan "Kevers or Kiers;" omit "Kier-
stead."

Page 39. Second paragraph of Uncle Hilbert's letter, the term
translated Alten Maelen may better be rendered "everybody."

Page 50. In the third paragraph, line seven, read 1867 instead of
1887.

Page 72. Second line. For Richmond, Indiana, read "Franklin."

Page 97. Fifth line from bottom. For Samuel Voorhees, M.D.,
read Stephen Voorhees.

Page 119. Last line. For six read "sixty."

FOREWORD

The plan to form a Van Voorhees Association was approved at a meeting held in the Church House of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Flatlands, Brooklyn, New York, January 16, 1932. The organization was completed by the election of officers and an Executive Committee at a second meeting held in the Empire State Building, Manhattan, May 21, of that year.

The immediate objective of the Association was to arrange to commemorate fittingly in 1935, on or near the site of the original family homestead in Flatlands, the 275th anniversary of the arrival in New Netherland in the early summer of 1660 of Steven Coerten, who came from the Manor of Voorhees, Province of Drente, Netherlands, with wife and seven children, and their settlement a few months later in Flatlands, Long Island.

It was decided to encourage an inclusive organization by inviting to membership not only all who bear the Voorhees name, however they may spell it, and wherever they may reside, but also all collateral relatives who can trace their lineage back to this common ancestor.

As few families of today have easy access to the Genealogy of the Van Voorhees Family published in 1888, the Association arranged during its first year to issue a Condensed Genealogy, wherein are traced in compact form the lines of descent from Steven Coerten of all persons bearing the Van Voorhees name so far as they appeared in the large volume or could be ascertained, carrying the lines in some cases to the ninth generation. This work has proved of great value to the officers of the Association, and has enabled many applicants for membership to trace their lines of descent back to our common ancestor. Invitations to membership have been extended to nearly two thousand descendants of Steven Coerten, and certificates have been issued to more than four hundred applicants, all but twenty-six of whom have been able to trace their family lines completely.

In addition to an extensive correspondence the officers have arranged and held fifteen Rallies; five in New York state, six in

New Jersey, two in Ohio, one in Illinois, and one in Washington, D. C. At all of these the objects in view have been explained, and at some of them important papers have been read on special lines of family history, involving much research. Several of these have been given publicity in local papers. Of such value did this new material seem to the officers, especially that concerning those members of the family who have attained a degree of prominence, that it was deemed fitting to assemble it in form for publication. This Historical Handbook is the result.

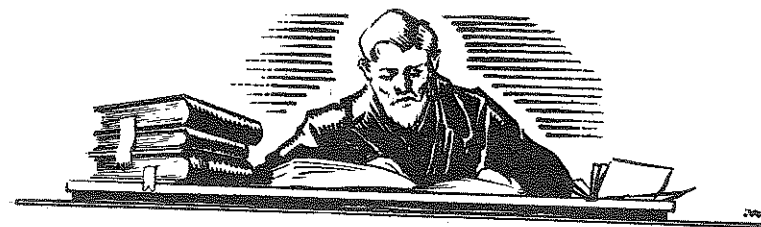
No attempt has been made to compile a connected history of the family. A competent historian is awaited. It is hoped that the stories assembled will serve to arouse interest, and to encourage a wider feeling of kinship in view of a common inheritance.

All the writers are of Van Voorhees ancestry, and with two exception, all bear the name, as does the artist who designed the illustrations. May the book encourage not so much pride of ancestry as pride in achievement.

Those who have wrought to complete this work hereby express sincere thanks for all the assistance accorded them. While no names are mentioned, all are assured of deep gratitude for their helpfulness.

New Brunswick, N. J.
May 15, 1935.

OSCAR M. VOORHEES,
Compiler and Editor.



I

THE FAMILY GENEALOGIST AND HIS WORK

IT IS fortunate that there is available so complete and valuable a genealogy of the Van Voorhees Family as that monumental work compiled by Elias W. Van Voorhis and published in 1888, but now out of print. In its preparation the author spent much time and practically all his fortune. The work proved far greater and costlier than he had anticipated.

The author, Elias William Van Voorhis, bore the name of his father who had been a successful business man in New York City. He was a grandson of William Roe Van Voorhis of Fishkill Village, New York, who had been a major of the 149th New York State Infantry in the War of 1812.

William Roe Van Voorhis was in the sixth generation of the Van Voorhees Family in America. He was a great grandson of Johannes Van Voorhees and Barbara Van Dyck of Freehold, New Jersey, who was in turn the fourth son of Coert (the eldest son of Steven Coerten) and Marretje Van Couwenhoven.

In 1730, when forty-seven years of age, Johannes Van Voorhees removed from Freehold, New Jersey, to Dutchess County, New York, where he had purchased for 670 pounds an estate extending from the Hudson river northeasterly beyond the village of Fishkill, about six miles in all, containing "2790 acres more or less," and became the progenitor of the Fishkill branch of the family. He signed his will Johannes Van Voorhees, which his descendants promptly contracted to Van Voorhis.

THE AUTHOR

Elias W. Van Voorhis, Jr., was born in New York City, May 28, 1844; his mother's maiden name was Maria Louisa Barker. He was the youngest of three children. An elder brother, Barker Van Voorhis, served as an ensign throughout the Civil War, and an elder

sister, Sarah A., married John C. Brintnall of New York City. Elias Van Voorhis was a student at the College of the City of New York, later at Columbia Law School, from which institution he received his LL.B. May 17, 1863, and he was admitted to the New York bar three days later. He became a member of the New York Historical Society, the Pennsylvania Historical Society, the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, and the Holland Society of New York. He never married. He died October 26, 1892, in his forty-ninth year, survived by his sister, and by a son and a daughter of his deceased brother, Barker.

Mr. Van Voorhis' interest in the family led to his publication in 1881 of a volume entitled "Notes on the Ancestry of Major William Roe Van Voorhis of Fishkill, N. Y.," and a little later of "Tombstone Inscriptions from the Churchyard of the Dutch Church, Fishkill, N. Y." Both volumes came from the Knickerbocker Press, and were printed for private distribution only.

An extensive correspondence, following the publication of these books, resulted in the accumulation of much genealogical data, and later in the resolve to compile a more complete work which he titled: "A Genealogy of the Van Voorhees Family in America."

In the Introduction, dated March 1, 1888, the author tells something of the effort required to finish the work. While acknowledging the valued assistance of numerous correspondents, he expressed regret that the neglect of others necessitated many omissions.

THE GENEALOGY

The book is a quarto of 725 pages, and contains as a frontispiece a fine steel engraving of the author; and also two maps, of 1638 and 1878, showing a portion of the Province of Drente¹ in the Netherlands. The location of the village of Hees is plainly indicated with a castle nearby on the older map.

The Genealogy is in two parts. The first part of twenty-five pages, consists of introductory matter, something respecting sources of information concerning members of the family in Holland, translations of letters received from them, and such information as had been secured respecting Steven Koerte, as the name appears on the passenger list of *De Bonte Kou* on its voyage from Holland to the New

¹This province is spelled on the earlier map, Drentia; on the later, Drente. Other spellings are Drent and Drenthe, but the "h" is not pronounced.

World, which commenced April 15, 1660. A list of ten children of Steven Coerten, and another of eighty-six grandchildren, numbered consecutively in Roman numerals, with husbands and wives so far as then known, concludes this part of the volume.

Part Second, which fills the remaining pages of the book, contains genealogical data respecting these eighty-six grandchildren and their descendants, many lines being carried to the eighth generation. The last sixty pages are devoted to an index.

The system adopted has merit, though leaving much unused space on many pages. Genealogies of more recent date give fuller information on fewer pages. However, the value of the work cannot be too highly esteemed.

SOURCES

In preparing his Genealogy Mr. Van Voorhis had access to the extensive data concerning branches of the family that had been gathered by the late Teunis G. Bergen of Brooklyn, much of which is to be found in his great work, "The Bergen Family," first published in 1866, and in an enlarged edition in 1876. Antie Eldertse (Van Voorhees), in the third generation from Steven Coerten, had married Hans Bergen, and many facts respecting her ancestry and relationships were printed in a footnote on pages 138-40 of the enlarged edition.

In 1881 Mr. Bergen published a more inclusive work entitled, "Register of the Early Settlers of Kings County to 1700." All that had appeared in the earlier work respecting the Van Voorhees family, and much in addition, is found in the later book. However, little information is given concerning those branches of the family that had removed from Long Island to other sections.

In his Introduction to his Genealogy the author wrote:

"The writer does not claim the work to be complete—few genealogies are—but having exhausted all known sources of information, and having written for family records to all the members of the family whose addresses he has been able to obtain, he has thought it advisable to publish what he has collected, in the hope that some other member of the family may some time in the future take it up where he has left it and bring it to fuller completion for the benefit of the Van Voorhees posterity."

In the early pages of his work the author printed many extracts from histories of New Amsterdam, New York, and Long Island; the New Netherlands Register, the Documentary History of New

York, and other sources, copying usually with great care the names as therein found and spelled. In the earliest documents the family name does not appear. To make the meaning evident the name Van Voorhees was frequently added within marks of parenthesis. For his purpose the method was justified, for it saved him from the charge of misquoting. Such literal accuracy is not necessary in this work. Later studies make it possible for us to come a little closer to the facts as the documents reveal them.

THE SPELLING OF NAMES

In the preparation of his Genealogy Elias Van Voorhis became familiar with Dutch carelessness in the spelling of names. Those who kept church records seemed less careful than did the keepers of civic records. Van Voorhees was spelled in many ways, and Voorhees in several others. This is puzzling, for clergymen of those days were well educated and scholarly. This, however, would not be guessed by those who study the records they have left behind. Parents were entered in one way when a child was baptized, and in a very different way when later other children were presented. It therefore becomes necessary to find what may be deemed the correct spelling, and show more consistency than the records exhibited.

It is evident that the Dutch were much given to home or pet names, which were often entered in church and civil records, and also in wills. A further difficulty appears when Dutch names were replaced by English equivalents. To illustrate, the German Rudolph became Ruloff in the Dutch, though spelled in several ways, and Ralph in English. Fantastic spellings at times appear, as Luijkes for Lucas, which later became Luke. It is not thought necessary to copy all these unusual spellings.

THE NAME VAN VOORHEES

No document has yet been found to prove that our common ancestor used the name *Van Voorhees*. He was registered on *De Bonte Koe* as Steven Koerte, and similarly when making his first purchase of land, though all documents indicate that his father's name was spelled *Coert*. His will is not extant, but on a copy of a document of 1679, five years before his death, the name is written *Steven Coerten*. On the same document his oldest son's name was written *Coert Stevensen*. These were considered the correct forms at that time, thereafter Coerten and Coert most frequently appear.

In correct Dutch usage *Coerten* and *Stevensen* were masculine, and *Coerte* and *Stevense*, feminine. This our genealogist had not learned, for he used *Coerte* and *Stevense* for both sons and daughters. This error we hope to avoid.

It now seems that the name *Van Voorhees* was first used by relatives in the home land when addressing letters to those in America, as will be noted when these letters are quoted in another chapter. They were written to Coert, the oldest son, whose education in Drente was more thorough than that which his brothers and sisters enjoyed. But neither he nor his brothers adopted Van Voorhees as a surname; nor did all his sons. His oldest son signed his name *Steven Koerten*. Several documents indicate that his second son used *Albert Coerten* consistently, while his third son signed his will *Gerrett Coerten*. No signature of his fourth son, Cornelius, has been found, but many of his descendants were known as *Van Voorhis*. When purchasing a tract of land in 1730 his youngest son was named *Johannes Koerten*, though, when entering in the family Bible the names of children born between 1704 and 1713, he wrote *Van Voor Hees*; three younger children were entered as *Van Voorhees*, and thus he signed his will in 1755. Shortly before this other families, especially those living in central New Jersey, had accepted the abbreviated name, *Voorhees*.

It is thus evident that the name, though having its origin in Drente, is American, and not Dutch as our genealogist believed. There is but one Van Voorhees family in this country, for all are descendants of Steven Coerten—from the manor of Voorhees in Drente.

THE CONDENSED GENEALOGY

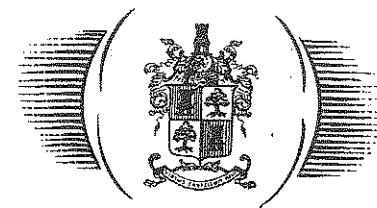
Because Elias Van Voorhis's monumental Genealogy of the Van Voorhees Family in America is not readily available, one of the first projects of the Van Voorhees Association was to compile a Condensed Genealogy of the family, which includes the information in the larger work arranged in abbreviated form so that family relationships can be readily traced. It was published in the summer of 1932 in a limited edition, and has enabled many applicants for membership to trace unbroken lines of descent from Steven Coerten, the common ancestor of the family in America.

The method used in the Condensed Genealogy has many advantages, the names of sons only appear, usually with their wives, grouped in their respective generations, Steven Coerten being in the

first generation, and his five sons, four of whom were also immigrants, composing the second. This is in accordance with the general American practice. It should be borne in mind, however, that in a genealogy all who are in the same numerical generation were not necessarily contemporaries.

Though Elias W. Van Voorhis was a Life Member of the New York Historical Society, to which he donated copies of his books, its records do not contain any recognition of his work, nor was any resolution of appreciation adopted at the time of his death. Thus far nothing has been found to indicate that his correspondence has been preserved—a cause for sincere regret. No doubt he received many letters during the four years of his life subsequent to the publication of the Genealogy. His correspondence would prove invaluable to those who are looking forward to the preparation and publication of another and more complete Genealogy of the Van Voorhees Family brought down to date. The compilers of such a work would be greatly aided by having access to the sources of information available to Mr. Van Voorhis, such as family Bibles and wills, and his personal correspondence.

If a new genealogy is to be published it must be the result of concerted endeavor. No one member of the family could hope to do all the work unaided, much less to bear the entire cost of publication. Perhaps 1938, the fiftieth anniversary of the first edition, will see the work accomplished.



II

THE FAMILY COAT OF ARMS

THAT Elias W. Van Voorhis was the first to publish a coat-of-arms of the Van Voorhees family is clearly stated in the Genealogy. In explanation he wrote on November 18, 1886, to Miss Josephine L. Voorhees of Amsterdam, N. Y., a letter which contains a few statements in addition to those in the book itself. Hence it is quoted in part.

“When I was in England in 1872, it occurred to me to ascertain if the Voorhees or Van Voorhees family in Holland had ever in the past been entitled to any arms. To that end I caused a search to be made at the St. James College of Heraldry for arms, if any, belonging to the Holland family of Van Voorhees, and on the return of the search received the following description of the Van Voorhees arms with a herald’s certificate under the seal of the College:

VAN VOORHEES

*E^c aux 1. & 4. de gu, á la tour d’or ouv’ du champ.
aux 2. & 3. d’argent, a l’arbre arr’ de sinople.*

The translation of this in English terms is
Quarterly, 1st and 4th gules—a tower d’or (of gold) opened of the field.

2nd and 3rd argent (of silver)—a tree eradicated vert.

Crest, A tower d’or. Motto—Virtus Castellum Meum.

In English, Virtue my Castle.

“As there was only one Van Voorhees family in Holland, which in early times (we know not how early) took its name from residing ‘voor’ (meaning before or in front of) the village of Hees, it follows clearly that the arms above were those of the family, and as such, all of his descendants are equally entitled to their use.

“As to the immigrant, Steven Coerten, Van Voorhees, or his parents, or his family in Holland, being wretchedly poor or oppressed I am in a position to deny it *in toto*. Steven Coerten, six months after his arrival at New Amsterdam, now New York, purchased of Cornelius dircksen Hoagland, a farm or bouwery, with a residence

thereon. . . . He was shortly after his arrival made a deacon of the Church at Flatlands, and also a magistrate of the town—facts which to my mind go to prove that he was a man pretty well off in this world's goods, but was also above the majority of his fellow townsmen in culture and education. In a paper recorded at Albany of which I have a translation he is styled 'The Worshipful Steven Coerten' (Van Voorhees). As to his family in Holland, I have a translation of letters written in Holland to his brothers in Flatlands, dated 1684, 1687, and 1699, which show that the family were both prosperous and well educated. . . . So, cousin, you see we need not be ashamed of our immigrant ancestor, or his family in the fatherland, and as to the arms given above, we have an undoubted right to their use."

On the receipt of the certificate from the College of Heraldry Elias Van Voorhis had a drawing made in the form now familiar, and printed it on a chart, and also in his book on William Roe Van Voorhis. It has since been widely used by members of the family.

Later researches add something to the information here given regarding the family and its name in the Netherlands, as is revealed in the next chapter. Something also should be said respecting the ancient document quoted in part above. It is folio 136 in Volume XXXIII of New York Colonial Manuscripts, a photostat of which has been secured. It was prepared and executed before three Justices on October 10, 1679, to affirm the ancestry and good character of Jan Elten of Kingston, N. Y., who was about "to depart for the Fatherland." It bears the signatures of five men, "all natives of the land of Drenten," who were therefore competent to testify in the case, since Jan Elten's parents had lived in the village of Zwigel in that province.

The first signer was designated in the document as "the Worshipful Steven Coerten, 79 years old," and the last, his son, as "Coert Stevensen, 42 years old." The appellation of Worshipful was applied only to Steven Coerten. The other signers were William Roeloffs, Jan Strycker, and Jan Suebering. This title, applied to our ancestor, the oldest son of Coert Alberts, gives some indication of the status of the family in the Netherlands, and also of the respect accorded this member in the land of his adoption.

During recent years Louis P. De Boer, A.M., LL.B., a native of the Netherlands but for many years a citizen of the United States, a careful writer on Netherland genealogies, has studied with care

available records in the province of Drente with interesting results, as set forth in the next chapter. This search has not been exhaustive, and many other data may yet be found. The correctness of Mr. De Boer's findings have been affirmed in general by J. A. Brouwer, *Rijks Archieven in Drente, at Assen*, the provincial seat. He asserted that the name *Voorhees* is not now in use in the Netherlands. In the records of Dikninge Abbey it was spelled *Averees* or *Overees*, and we have the further suggestion that it "may be allied to the family name *Averes*, *Overes*, and *Verhees*, which occur."¹

RESPECTING HERALDRY

A coat-of-arms was the insignia used by a military leader in the early middle ages for the guidance of his followers. Later it became recognized generally as a family emblem. Only noble families possessed them. While the shield design, which in the most ancient instances was self-adopted by nobles, represented the entire family of the original bearer, and all descendants were hereditarily entitled to use it, sometimes different sons adopted varying crests, since the crest, unlike the shield, was of a more personal nature. In that event, while the descendants of all the sons used the same shield, those of each branch often used different crests. Later arms were adopted, or granted in consequence of knighthood conferred on the field of battle or by a sovereign. The daughters became entitled to use the arms of the families into which they married, and their sons carried down those respective emblems. It frequently happened that descendants of younger sons of an armorial family, after several generations, forgot the arms of their ancestors, and adopted their own designs. All such arms fall short of the dignity that attaches to the more ancient arms of their ancestors.

In the course of time arms were registered to prevent improper use, and the Herald's College in England came to be recognized as having more power than any similar institution on the continent. In the Netherlands the Burgundian Heralds exercised large influence. Their authority came to an end and all royal authority as well when the seven united provinces of the Netherlands became in 1581 the Dutch Republic. Thereafter no fixed regulations were adopted governing heraldry. It soon became the custom for the schepens—the city

¹From a letter written October 2d, 1934, by Hans Van de Waal, M.A., "Prentenkabinet der Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden."

and county magistrates—to affix their wax seal to all deeds and papers attested by them. If a person who had no arms was made a schepen he was practically obliged to assume a coat-of-arms, and these remained in almost all instances the arms of the family.

No record has as yet been found indicating by what authority Coert Alberts, or an ancestor, was accorded the arms attested by the St. James College of Heraldry. A tradition persists in the family of one of the name, who visited Drente some decades ago, that they were given because of heroic deeds in warfare, for which there had been abundant opportunity. The castles were evidently the insignia of the male line. What family, allied by marriage, is indicated by the oak trees, has not been learned. The helmet above the shield is that of an Esquire, a title that in England ranks below that of Knight.

Respecting the arms, the following was read at a Voorhees reunion held in New Jersey in the summer of 1905, an account of which appears in another chapter.

The field of the shield was quartered and tinctured and blazoned most nobly; Two quarters emblazoned with oak trees, and two were with castles resplendent, Noting a union of lines of equal position and standing. The crest of the shield was a castle, while beneath on the scroll was the motto. Firm set, of deep root, were the oaks, unheeding the winds that assailed them, While under their wide-spreading branches they offered protection and shelter. The castles on red fields told plainly of strength to protect and to cherish; But the motto gave voice and expression to a meaning wider and deeper; For not in the oak or the castle, but in his own heart a man's strength is. In the 'robur,' the oak of the Romans, was seen manly courage or virtue. So their motto in letters resplendent claimed Virtue, their castle or fortress; And 'Virtue my Castle or Fortress'—the motto we proudly inherit: Surely a beautiful motto and one to be ever remembered, One to be cherished and loved by all their long line of descendants.



A HOUSE AT HEES, PHOTOGRAPH 1908

III

ORIGIN OF THE VAN VOORHEES FAMILY¹

THE Van Voorhees family is one of that group of eminent old Dutch families of colonial New York whose sturdy character was a potent factor in the making of our colonial and subsequent history and in the upbuilding of this great nation. It is an ancestral line of noble origin in which any descendant may take just pride.

Ethnologically, the present kingdom of the Netherlands is divisible into three sections, inhabited by the Friesians, Franks, and Saxons respectively. Prior to the arrival of the Germanic Friesians perhaps as early as 1200-1000 B.C., that country was inhabited by Kelts and by mixed peoples of the seaports. About 342 B.C. the Belgae settled south of the Rhine and were joined by kindred Frankish tribes from the middle Rhine. Julius Caesar's campaign in northern Gaul in 57-52 B.C. drove many of the Belgae and Franks across the river, which forced the Friesians northward, with the result that Netherland south of the Zuyder Zee is inhabited today chiefly by Frankish people, mixed with the Keltic and other earlier peoples and subsequent infiltrations of Friesians and Saxons. When the westward expansion of the Saxons from Thuringia terminated late in the seventh century A.D., their dominion extended in Westphalia as far as the Ruhr river and in the Netherlands it embraced about three-fourths of the province of Groningen and the provinces of Drenthe and Overijssel. Thus, the Saxon blood, speech, and customs prevail today in those areas. The Friesians prevail in western

¹By Calvin I. Kephart, LL.M., D.C.L., Ph.D., member of the bar of the District of Columbia, and Past-President of the National Genealogical Society, from data derived from authentic sources, chiefly by Mr. Louis P. De Boer, an authority on Dutch genealogy. Mr. Kephart is a member of the Association through his great grandmother, Ann Voorhees who married Benjamin Hyde. She was a great-great-granddaughter of Jan Stevensen Van Voorhees of Flatlands.

Groningen, Friesland, northwestern Gelderland, North Holland, and the Franks in the remainder of Gelderland, Utrecht, and South Holland. In consequence of the religious persecutions in France during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, thousands of Huguenot families were added to the population of the Netherlands.

Taken as a whole, the population of northern Netherlands is probably more purely Nordic than the nations to the east or south. The *Lex Saxonum*, in its most primitive form, survived the longest in the rather barren country of Drenthe. The peculiar and characteristic supreme court of Drenthe existed through all the ages, ancient, middle, and modern, until 1795, the end of the Dutch Republic. It was named the *Et Stoel* or Seat of Law. The minutes of this court are contained in the *Ordel Bocck*, or ordeal book or book of sentences. Because Drenthe was sparsely populated, even the most trifling matters were treated by this court; for example, the grazing of cattle in the few fertile valleys.

In southern Drenthe, between Ruinen and Echten, is the small town of *Hees*. In its vicinity are some brooks and good grazing areas. When the Saxon tribes settled down, they took up the land, which, as the feudal ages progressed, passed more and more into the hands of the relatively few, later known as the nobility. The progenitors of the Van Voorhees family thus gained a large tract of land and established a manorial estate centering on the village of Hees, from which they took their name. By the 15th century this property had been subdivided into three manors, named *Voorhees*, *Middlehees*, and *Achterhees*, according to their location (fore, middle, and after or behind Hees). Each was inhabited by a branch of this family, whose name was *thoe Hees*, meaning "at Hees," just as the English name Atwater was derived from "at the water."

Christianity was brought first to the inhabitants of the present Netherlands about A.D. 696, when the bishopric of Utrecht was founded. In the confusion that followed the disintegration of Charlemagne's Carolingian empire, the bishops of Utrecht gained secular power in A.D. 944. In A.D. 1024 the bishop of Utrecht became lord of Drenthe, where the people were at this belated hour emerging from their Saxon heathenism. The Premonstratensian and Cistercian Monks, popularly known as "The White Friars" and "The Gray Friars," obtained large land holdings in Drenthe under the bishop's sanction and founded monasteries there. Between 1400 and

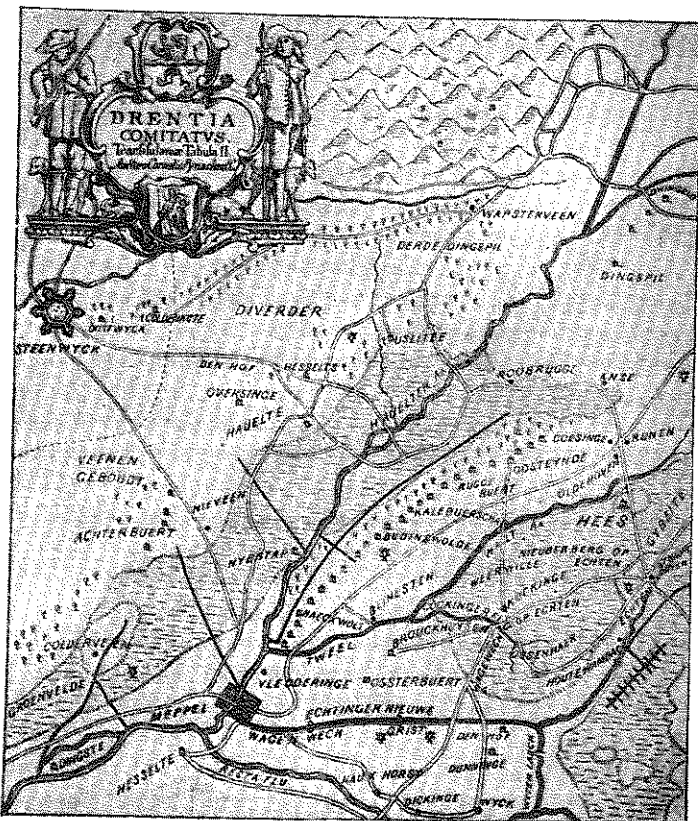
1500 the monastery of Dikninge in Drenthe was granted overlordship of the three manors at Hees, and the branches of the ancient family that owned them became feudatories to that monastery, to which they paid a nominal annual rental, with the appellation of meyer or steward, i.e., one who manages the affairs of a landed estate.

In 1536, the heirs of the Burgundian dynasty that had gained the supremacy in the Netherlands and had in 1486 for the first time called the meeting of a constitutional body, the Lords States General, obtained from the bishopric of Utrecht the supremacy over the land of Drenthe. But the religious orders were left in full possession of their land holdings there by Emperor Charles V, king of Spain and Lord of the Netherlands, grandson and heir of the last of the Burgundians.

In noble family names in the Netherlands, the preposition *thoe*, an early form, means "at" and *van* means "of." In plain citizenry family names the latter means "from." *Thoe* corresponds with the High German *zur* still found in noble family names. "At the" in the latter language is expressed as *zur dem* or simply *zum*, as in *zum Ried*. Similarly, in the Dutch *thoe der* became *ter* and *thoe den* became *ten*, while the later *van der* became *ver*. Examples are the *ter Linden*, *ten Broeck* and *ten Eyck*, and *ver Donck* family names. Names with the preposition *thoe* are very few in the Netherlands now. Instances are those of Van Harinxma *thoe* Sloten, Van Begma *thoe* Kingma, and Van Wageningen *thoe* Dekema, all Friesian noble families. In 1574, coincident with the rising spirit of nationalism among the Dutch, the family name of *thoe Hees* began to be changed to *van Hees*, meaning "of Hees," although it was not until the next generation that the new form gained general use.

In 1555 Philip II, king of Spain, received, at the abdication of his father, Charles V, such rights in the Netherlands as the latter had possessed. In 1568 the United Provinces, which then included Belgium, began their revolt against his rule. In 1581 the seven northern provinces, including Drenthe, deposed Philip II as their king. In 1584, when the Dutch Republic was formed under the sovereignty of the Lords States General, William the Silent, Prince of Orange, became supreme commander of the army and navy of the republic and also executive or stadtholder of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, and Gelderland. At the same time his brother, Jan the Elder, Count of Nassau, became stadtholder of the three northern-

most provinces, Drenthe, Groningen, and Friesland. The war with Spain in the Netherlands was waged with varying success, and it required many years to establish the republic on a firm basis. Not until 1598 did Jan's son and successor, William Louis, stadtholder of Drenthe, Groningen, and Friesland, secularize the Drenthe property of the former orders, which had moved out of the county during the Reformation period. All of the income of the former orders was dedicated to education under the supervision of the stadtholder and the estates of Drenthe.



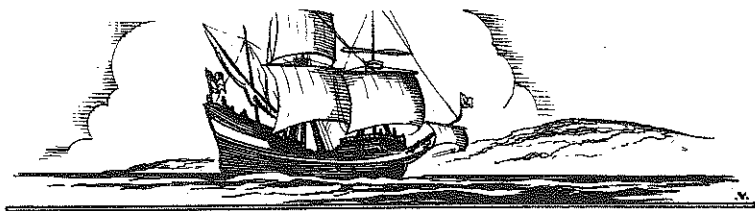
Map of a part of the Province of Drenthe, Holland, showing the location of the village of Hees. From the Atlas Le Theatre du Monde, by Guillaume and Jean Blaeu. Amsterdam, 1638.

Reduced from an illustration in the Van Voorhees Genealogy.

As early as 1542 we find the name of Coert thoe Hees in the Ordel Boeck, Vol. II, pages 10 and 15, involved in a land transaction with a Hendrick Luekens, Jr. He must have been born about 1495. His forename of Coert was carried down succeeding generations to the shores of America. His son Jan thoe Hees, born circa 1525, appears in the court records in the years 1558, 1573, and from 1575 to 1578. Among the latter's children were Coert, Jan, and Hilbert. Coert, born circa 1550, must have died early, leaving minor children. Jan is shown in the Ordel Boeck, Vol. VII, page 128, in the session held at Anloe eight days after Saint Magnus in 1604, as having died a short time earlier, leaving orphan children. Hilbert apparently took over the stewardship of the manor of Voorhees after his brother Coert's death, for he is mentioned in 1584, and in that office in 1592, when it was still nominally under the monastery of Dikninge. After the secularization of these estates in 1598 Coert's heirs apparently succeeded to the manor of Voorhees, for in 1619 Albert Coerten (Albert, son of Coert), born circa 1573, was meyer of that property, while Jan Coerten (Jan, son of Coert) was meyer of Middelhees and Coert was meyer of Achterhees. Albert Coerten was meyer of the manor Voorhees around 1640, and from 1650 conjointly with his elder son Coert Albertse, born about 1595. Apparently the father died in 1662, leaving six out of nine children surviving, and this son then became sole meyer. This was two years after the latter's son, Steven Coerten, the eldest of seven children, had emigrated to America. Upon the demise of Coert Albertse in 1676, Jan Coerten, brother of the emigrant, became meyer of Voorhees Manor and remained such until 1700.

Similar lists of meyers of the manors of Middelhees and Achterhees are of but little interest to the Van Voorhees descendants in America. However, those estates continued in the care of the same family in direct male lines and later in female lines for many decades.

It is quite probable that a more comprehensive search at Assen, the capital of the province of Drenthe, would disclose considerably more data relating to the early history of this family. Pending any such further research, the information set out above, which takes the line back continuously to just prior to 1500, should afford much pleasure to all descendants and inspire them to greater effort in honor of this outstanding family name, past and present.



IV

STEVEN COERTEN'S MIGRATION¹

NO RECORD has been discovered of the influence that led Steven Coerten, the ancestor of all who bear the Van Voorhees or Voorhees name in America, to leave in the year 1660 the manor of Voorhees in the province of Drente to make a new home in America. Inheriting the patient, sturdy and self-reliant character of the Lowlanders who had expelled the Spaniards, and had adopted the evangelical Christian faith as it had been reestablished by the Reformation, Steven Coerten had no doubt long pondered over the question of migrating to the new world, where he and his family might acquire better land and live a freer life, less circumscribed by European conventions. The perils of the long voyage were well understood, but the call to adventure could not be denied. In time the momentous decision was reached; he and his family would seek a new home in New Netherland. Preparations were begun with the purpose of sailing in the spring of that year.

There were heart burnings to be sure. It was not easy to give up a home and life in which the family had known much of happiness. But once the decision was made, the family set itself resolutely to the task of preparing for the trip. Their descendants two centuries and three-quarters later are in a position to appraise the results. The sacred command to honor father and mother bids us offer filial reverence and a due meed of praise to those worthy souls through whom, in the mystery of the generations, we have drawn our lives. They were God-fearing and persistent, and we give them honor.

Clues are not wanting to the influences that encouraged this migration. However commodious the homes at Hees they could not

¹An address by Wheeler N. Voorhees given at a rally held in Brooklyn, May 20, 1933, and since rewritten.

continue to expand to accommodate growing families. Though two of Steven Coerten's daughters had married, seven children remained, of whom one son only had grown to manhood. There were growing families in the homes of brothers and sisters. Some must look elsewhere for places for home making.

For a third of a century Dutch families had been removing to New Netherland, where there was room in abundance. Of conditions there many encouraging reports had been received. One written in 1624 may be quoted in part:

"We were much gratified on arriving in this country. Here we found beautiful rivers, bubbling fountains flowing down into the valleys, basons of running water in the flat lands, agreeable fruits in the woods, such as strawberries, walnuts, wild grapes, etc. The woods also abound with acorns for feeding hogs, and with venison. There is considerable fish in the rivers. Good tillage land. Had we cows and hogs and other cattle that are to be sent to us we would not wish to return. If you come hither with your family you will not regret it."

Twenty-five years later, in 1650, Cornelius Van Tienhoven, Secretary of the Colony, published a pamphlet intended to encourage families to migrate thither. He described the lands in the New World, and the crops they would bear. He advised migration in the late winter so that planting might be started soon after arrival. He described how each could settle in the most economical manner according to the practice of the country, and thus earn a living. Information was given regarding house plots, building plans, planting, and the probable expenses involved. Farming and other utensils were named, together with their cost in the colony. That cattle were available was stated, and also something respecting their cost. Families were advised to provide for two years in case crops failed the first year. And further he encouraged people of wealth to remove to New Netherland as the English were moving to New England, and to aid those who had no means to defray the cost of passage and other expenses, and thus provide for a large body of working people.

It is easy to believe that a copy of Van Tienhoven's pamphlet found its way into Steven Coerten's home at Voorhees manor, and had much to do with his decision to become an adventurer in the new world.

Much was involved in this decision. Household goods that could not be taken along must be disposed of and many purchases made.

Ample funds must be available either as cash or credit. Dutch thrift has made all this possible. Busy days of preparation lessened the distress of mind the members of the family felt as they thought of partings and farewells. All was duly completed before the day of departure.

Then came the journey to Amsterdam, overland via Meppel to the Zuider Zee, and thence by boat to the mouth of the harbor—the Ij (pronounced Y)—through which the Amstel makes its way to the sea much as the Hudson does through the upper and lower bays. Up this they sailed to the docks of the Dutch West India Company, where were also its warehouses and office.

Here Steven Coerten and his family assembled for official inspection, and a final decision as to the cost of the passage. The rate was 36 guilders for each adult, but what reduction was made for small children is not stated.

It was a wholesome family that presented itself that day before Van Ruyven, the company's agent, for all passed inspection, and Steven Coerten, his wife, and seven children, were entered upon the company's books and on the passenger list. There were also Steven's daughter, Hendrickje, and her husband, Jan Kevers—Kiers or Kierstead as later spelled—who also had decided to become adventurers. Quite possibly it was for them a wedding journey. With the exception of the eldest son, Coert, the other children were ten years of age or younger. How we might wish to see a picture of this interesting group from Drente!

Now they behold for the first time the ship that for six, perhaps eight long weeks was to be their sea-tossed home. *De Bonte Kou* was a trim and sturdy vessel that had been in the service at least three years, and was to know much subsequent voyaging.

No description of this ship has been found. If it resembled others of the time it was about 170 feet long, 49 feet beam, and about 20 feet depth of hold. There were two decks, a high stern and low bows, three masts and a long bow sprit. The vessel was deemed seaworthy, and those who took passage were expected to endure many limitations, and to enjoy only such comforts as Dutch vessels of the period afforded.

The business completed Steven Coerten and his family go aboard and see for the first time the conditions amid which they are to live during the voyage. They examine the bunks where they are to

sleep, the tables at which they are to eat, and the decks where children may play, and men and women take needed exercise. All this is new to them. Their education in things nautical has just begun.

Soon the men begin examining the capstan and the windlass, and other gear for hoisting the sails. They observe the sailing instruments, the compass, the cross, staff or astrolabe, the sand glass, rules and dividers, the spy glass, the log line, and the 600 foot head line for soundings. There were also to be seen maps and charts of the North Sea, the English Channel, and of the Atlantic Ocean with the various routes to the coast of America plainly marked thereon.

Wednesday, April 15¹, the day for sailing, has now arrived. Mindful of advice to prepare for emergencies, Steven Coerten has secured extra supplies of food which are safely stowed away after the custom of the time. All are ready to watch the work of weighing anchor, hoisting sails, and easing the vessel out into the channel. The older children gather about their father as he explains the meaning of it all. The momentous voyage has begun.

Soon Schreyers Hoek comes into view with its "Tower of Tears," erected in 1569, where friends and relatives of sailors and passengers were accustomed to gather, and, with much weeping, join in solemn farewells. For most of the adventurers on *De Bonte Kou* farewells were final, for they never had opportunity to return to meet again those who were bidding them God speed.

Thus passing down the Ij the vessel sailed into the Zuider Zee and was headed northward, until at Texel Strom, a pilot was taken aboard, and the North Sea entered. Later they sailed through the Strait of Dover, past Plymouth, where thirty-eight years earlier the *Mayflower* had tarried a few days before proceeding on its eventful voyage; and then on past Land's End and out upon the broad Atlantic.

Before this, all had become accustomed to the ways of the ship. The women had gained experience in caring for children in restricted quarters, and the men had tried their luck at fishing to replenish the tables. If there had been seasickness at the first it had been forgotten. All were interested in reports of progress, for the end of the voyage was constantly in mind.

¹This was April 4 according to the calendar now in use. The Netherlands continued old style until 1700; Great Britain until 1752.

All passengers had long since learned that the southern course was to be taken, for that had been found most favorable. It is thus described in an early document:

"The Course lies toward the Canary Islands, thence to the Indian Islands, then toward the mainland of Virginia, steering right across, leaving the Bahamas on the left, and the Bermudas on the right, where the winds are variable with which the land is made."

They had also had abundant opportunity to become acquainted with Captain Lucas, and with some members of the crew; and, more important still, to learn to know their fellow passengers, something of the reasons for their voyage, and their plans for settlement in the new world.

There were on board a company of eighteen soldiers, one with a wife and three children. The number of the crew is not stated. Fortunately the ship's passenger list has been preserved, and reveals the presence of five families, in four of which there were twenty-three children--though Steven Coerten's son Coert may be counted as an adult. There were nine single men, if Coert be counted, three of them in the employ of Roeloff Swartwout, a farmer from Gelderland who was returning after a visit to the home land, but of whose family nothing is stated. One other man is listed as a servant, one as a tailor, and one with a family as a shoemaker. There were also three maidens. Four of the families were from Drente, the fifth from Gelderland.

There were therefore in addition to the soldiers and sailors, forty-nine passengers, twenty-one men, five wives with twenty-three children, and three maidens. Twenty-nine, including a servant from Meppel, were from Drente, four from Gelderland and one from Zeeland. The four mothers could count on the young wife of Jan Kiers and the three maidens to help them with the care of the children.

Thus amid increasingly friendly surroundings Steven Coerten and his family were carried forward, rejoicing when breezes were favorable, and keeping up courage when winds were contrary, or storms lashed the deep into a fury. The vessel proved staunch, the sailors faithful, and in the end the anticipated harbor came into view.

When conditions proved especially favorable six weeks were sufficient for the voyage. Hence we may believe that about the first of June *De Bonte Kou* sailed proudly into the lower bay, past Sandy

Hoek, with Coney Eylandt to the right; then through the Narrows, and the inner harbor until she came to anchor off the southern tip of Manhattan. How all were impressed with the view of the fort over which floated the ensign of the Dutch West India Company, within which was the Dutch Church; and with the glimpses they had of the city lying beyond! This was indeed a far-away colony of the Fatherland. They were happy at the thought that they were to sustain at this outpost of civilization the loved and cherished characteristics of the Dutch Republic.

When all necessary formalities had been observed Steven Coerten led his family ashore, and was greeted by representatives of the company. It may be that members of the Council, and perhaps also the doughty Director General, Peter Stuyvesant, came down to welcome them. Domine John Megapolensis and members of his consistory were there to give friendly counsel, and to advise as to their movements.

If Sunday were near they remained in New Amsterdam and worshipped with the congregation in the Church in the Fort, giving devout thanks that the long voyage was safely over. They then made acquaintances that later proved helpful. But as they had planned to settle in New Amersfoort they sought early in the week to begin the journey thither. So one beautiful June morning they made their way to the ferry, were rowed across the East River, and at the ferry house found conveyance that took them up the hill to the little hamlet of Breukelen, and so on through Midwout until the plains of New Amersfoort greeted their eyes. They were near the place that was to be their home.



THE FLATLANDS REFORMED CHURCH

NOTE--The octagonal church illustrated on page 22 served the congregation for eighty-six years. The church that replaced it in 1794 continued until 1848, when the present church was erected.



V

STATE AND CHURCH ON LONG ISLAND¹

MUCH attention has been given to the early settlements on Long Island, and several comprehensive works are available. Histories have been published of the Reformed Churches at Brooklyn, Flatbush, New Utrecht and Gravesend, which recount the beginnings of the several settlements, and of the development in them of civic and religious activities.

Our interest centers in that portion of the island between Jamaica Bay and the East River, for there many immigrants from the Netherlands secured lands and made their homes. The earliest settlement was made near an open area that, following the English occupation in 1664, was named Flatlands. It was first called New Amersfoort, after a city in the Province of Utrecht, near which Wolphert Gerritse Van Couwenhoven, one of the earliest patentees, was born. He arrived in New Netherland in 1630, and near a tract purchased in 1636 many of his descendants have lived during all the succeeding generations. In 1930 they joined in celebrating the 300th anniversary of his coming to America. Not a few of his descendants bear the name Conover. A grand-daughter of Wolphert Gerritse married the oldest son of Steven Coerten, and became the ancestress of many of the Van Voorhees name.

Soon other communities began to attract settlers. Breukelen was settled in 1637, Gravesend in 1645, Bought (Bushwick) in 1648, Midwout in 1652, and New Utrecht in 1657. Midwout, as shown on the accompanying map, was centrally located, and was therefore selected as the place of residence of the ministers who served the churches of the section.

¹The story of the beginnings of the civic and religious life of western Long Island was recounted in several addresses at Van Voorhees Rallies by Harry Stephen Vorhis, Secretary of the Association, and an honored Elder in the Flatlands Church. A serious illness, from which he is happily recovering, deprives us of the privilege of reading the story as he would have written it.

In accordance with the Dutch method, church and civic life were closely associated. The Elders of the Church usually served as magistrates also, and the Deacons were made responsible for the poor of the entire community. This simple form of organization continued until the English occupation in 1664. Thereafter new methods were introduced, and the use of Dutch names was discouraged. The people, however, held to the name Amersfoort for several generations, but finally Flatlands came into general use.

In 1665 all of Long Island and part of what is now Westchester County, was designated Yorkshire and divided for court purposes into the East Riding, the North Riding and the West Riding. These civil divisions continued for eighteen years. Then in 1683 the territory in and about New York was divided into counties, the western end of Long Island being called Kings County, with boundaries about as they are today. The names New Utrecht and Gravesend were not changed, but the other villages became known officially as Brooklyn, Flatbush, and Flatlands.

The Reformed Protestant Dutch Church had its beginning in New Amsterdam in 1628 when Rev. Jonas Michaelius, sent by the churches in old Amsterdam, gathered into a consistory the elders and deacons whom he found in the community, and began holding services in a loft over a horse mill. This church under succeeding clergymen continued to minister to the religious life of Manhattan and surrounding communities. Now known as the Collegiate Reformed Church, it still exists in Manhattan, being the oldest church of uninterrupted activities along the Atlantic seaboard, if not in the entire United States.

On February 9, 1654, Rev. John Megapolensis organized the people of the three villages of Amersfoort, Midwout and Breukelen into a collegiate church. Thereafter services were held with some regularity in the three places. The first church was erected at Midwout in 1655. Rev. Johannes Theodorus Polhemus became the first settled minister shortly after his arrival from Brazil that year. In 1660 the congregation in Breukelen withdrew from the collegiate arrangement, and built its own church. The next year the people of Amersfoort began building a church. Funds to complete it being inadequate they appealed to the Director General and Council of New Amsterdam for assistance. The document has been preserved, bearing date June 4, 1663. The Council responded promptly, voting on June 7 the sum

of 250 guilders. This action was certified on the margin of the document over the signature of Peter Stuyvesant, Director General, and C. V. Ruiven, Secretary. The church was completed that year.

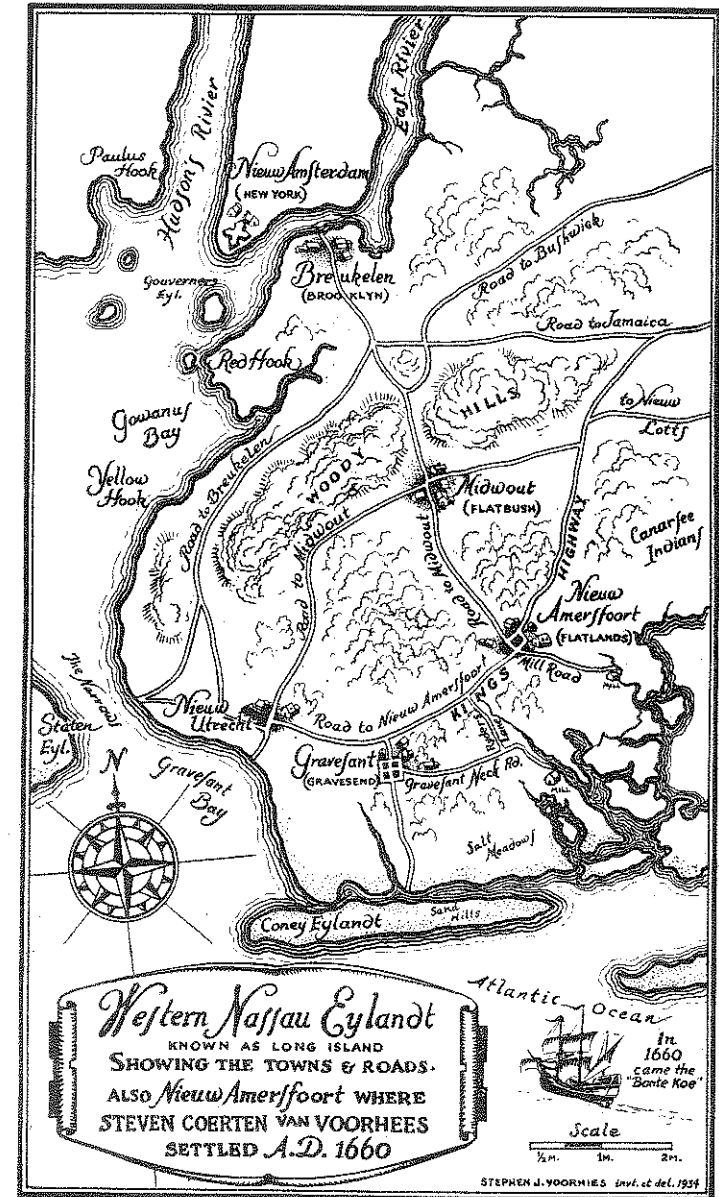
A church at New Utrecht was organized in 1677, and one in Gravesend about twenty years later, though a request for an organization had been made as early as 1660, and occasional services were held in the Session House that belonged to the community.

For about thirty years the church families at Amersfoort were called together by the beating of a drum. On August 25, 1686 a subscription was taken up by Coert Stevensen and Jacob Stryker for money for a bell. The original subscription list, preserved among the papers of the Flatlands Church, shows that Steven Coerten's widow contributed f. 18, Coert Stevensen for himself and his son Albert f. 48, Lucas Stevensen f. 30, and that the total was florins 556. It also states that the bell was brought to Amersfoort on the 27th of August, 1686, by Jan Alberts (Terhune).

The original church was octagonal in form, which in the Netherlands signified a free church. The more prominent early settlers were buried within it; others were buried around it. There can be little doubt that Elder Steven Coerten was buried in the old church.

It was in New Amersfoort that Steven Coerten, on his arrival in the new world, proposed to make his home. As the Dutch were then in possession he knew that he would find civic conditions not unlike those with which he was familiar. The language spoken was that of the fatherland. The church was newly organized and feeble, and as yet without a stated place of worship, but he and his family were ready to join it and thus add to its strength. We now know that many of his descendants were to live in that community and worship in that church through all the generations that have succeeded.

The Flatlands community maintained many rural characteristics until near the beginning of this century when it was absorbed with the Borough of Brooklyn into Greater New York. On its spacious grounds a large and well equipped Church House, and a commodious parsonage indicate healthy church activities, and the adjoining cemetery, a constant reminder of the loyal generations of the past, insures to the church freedom from encroachments. Descendants of families that began worshipping there during the Dutch period find inspiration when privileged to gather within its sacred walls.





VI

THE FAMILY ARRIVES AT NEW AMERSFOORT

WHEN Steven Coerten came to New Netherland it was with the purpose to make his home in New Amersfoort on the Island of Nassau where a number of Dutch families had been living for some years. An inducement, in addition to the evenness of the land, reminiscent of the fatherland, and its bordering on that body of inland water now known as Jamaica Bay, also reminiscent of the Zuider Zee, was the fact that land tenure was fairly certain, and there were opportunities to purchase meadow and pasture lands, and also a home and a business.

It was a happy group indeed that, after six or more weeks on shipboard, and a brief stay in New Amsterdam, arrived at the new settlement, and was welcomed by former fellow citizens of Drente, and by others whom they soon came to know as neighbors who were already well settled in their new homes with a hopeful look toward the future.

There was first father Steven Coerten, a patriarch indeed! At sixty years of age he was the head of a large and interesting family. Then came his daughter Hendrickje, and her husband, Jan Kiers, eagerly seeking a place where youthful energy might find suitable opportunity for initiative. Then came the oldest son, Coert, who had encouraged the family migration. He too was ready to face the vicissitudes of pioneer life in the new land. The name of the mother of these older children has not been learned.

Then came Willempie Roeloffse Suebering or Sebring, Steven's second wife, and the mother of six sturdy children. She willingly shared the fortunes of her husband in the new world. During the long voyage she had kept her brood in health which was much to her credit. We now know that they all grew to maturity, as did one other son, Abraham, born after the family had arrived. These chil-

dren were introduced to their neighbors as Lucas, who was ten, Jan, Albert, Aeltje, Jannetje, and Hendrickje. This is the order in which their names appear in Mr. Bergen's books, and in the Genealogy of the Van Voorhees Family. It may be the order of their birth, though there are reasons to indicate that the three girls were older than Albert, and that Aeltje and Jannetje were twins. On the *De Bonte Kou* passenger list ages only were given—22, 10, 8, 6, 4, and 2. As this accounts for only six when there were seven, the suggestion that two were twins has been made. That there was also a son Abraham was asserted by Mr. Bergen, and accepted by Elias Van Voorhis in his genealogy, but no dates respecting him have been found.

Now on the soil of the new world at New Amersfoort Steven Coerten and Mother Willempie, with their vigorous brood shod in wooden shoes, and dressed as fashion decreed for the well-to-do of Drente, looked about for a location for a home. Before winter set in he made a purchase, as will be told in another chapter, and soon all the home furnishings they had brought with them, and additional purchases, were duly distributed, and the routine of pioneer life had begun. Each child found a place in the family economy, and began the real task of becoming adjusted to the new environment.

A point of interest was the Dutch Reformed Church that had been organized at New Amersfoort six years before their coming. A warm welcome was prepared when it was noised abroad that the minister, Rev. Johannes T. Polhemus was coming on Sunday to hold a service in a neighboring loft, and consult with the people about the church they were to build when funds would allow. Toward this the family contributed from its savings, and offered in addition timbers from the wood lot so that the work went forward and was completed about three years later.

A year after the church was built a great change took place in the political status of New Netherland, including New Amersfoort. In 1664 a British man-of-war came to anchor off the tip of Manhattan facing the guns of the Dutch fort, and demanding the surrender of the colony from Peter Stuyvesant, the testy governor. It mattered not how proud the Dutch, nor how brave their governor, superior British cannon backing an imperial demand made surrender inevitable.

While many loyal Dutchmen wept when they beheld their flag replaced by the English ensign, they had one triumph with which to console themselves. The far-seeing pastor of the Church of Man-

hattan, Rev. John Megapolensis, whose son had studied at Harvard and knew something of English rule, secured the inclusion in the articles of capitulation of a clause insuring the independence of the Dutch Reformed Church. Though the burgers of New Amsterdam, and of New Amersfoort as well, had to accept a new government and avow a new allegiance, the ancient church order, coming out of the Reformation through the independence of the United Provinces under William of Orange, and finding its latest interpretation in the rules adopted in 1619 by the Synod of Dordrecht, was still to prevail. Thus a strong bond of union with the Fatherland was to hold, though former political ties must thereafter be relinquished.

NEW AMERSFOORT

Some historians hold that New Amersfoort was the earliest white settlement on Long Island. Reference to an early map of Kings County shows that it is located several miles inland, near the shores of Jamaica Bay, a landlocked body of water having access to the Atlantic ocean through a narrow inlet at what is now Rockaway Point.

New Amersfoort was on the site of an ancient Indian village, called Kaskachague, at the crossing of two ancient Indian trails. From that village as a center, one trail led southwestwardly toward Gravesend and beyond to the Narrows near Fort Hamilton, and northeastwardly to the East River at Newtown Creek, corresponding generally to the present Kings Highway; the other led northwestwardly in the general direction of the present Flatbush Avenue toward what is now downtown Brooklyn, and southeastwardly a short distance to the "Shell Banks" at Mill Island on the shores of Jamaica Bay. The banks, still in evidence, were immense heaps or banks of oyster, clam and other sea shells, the refuse of an extensive "sewan" or "wampum" manufacturing industry carried on by the Indians from time immemorial. Here the Canarsie Indians, the native bankers of the period, had their "mint." In this vicinity they laboriously cut out and polished the shell beads called sewan or wampum then used as money throughout the Atlantic seaboard. This Indian currency has been found as far north as Hudson Bay and Alaska.

This far inland location became the site of a very early, if not the earliest, white settlement on Long Island for a very sound reason. Long Island generally was quite heavily wooded and much of it stony and difficult to till. To clear and prepare the land for cultivation

would involve much time and strenuous labor. At this crossing of Indian trails, however, were several small, treeless prairies or plains several thousand acres in extent, of rich black soil, elevated slightly above sea level, surrounded on the northeast and southwest by forest-bordered streams, and on the south and east by sedge meadows and the waters of Jamaica Bay. Some of the land had been crudely cultivated by the Indians. Here the early Dutch immigrants found lands ready for immediate cultivation with a minimum of labor—almost a complete counterpart of the lands in Holland which they had left for homes in the New World.

Amersfoort was a town in Holland whence had emigrated in 1630 one Wolphert Gerritse, who with Andreas Hudde, probably acting as agents of the Dutch West India Company, obtained from Indian chieftains, in 1636, deeds to several thousand acres of land in this section. He gave the name of his native town to the new settlement.

The date of the first permanent settlement at New Amersfoort is not definitely known. The earliest arrivals undoubtedly came for purposes of trade. There is evidence that as early as 1624 farmers were cultivating fenced-in lands leased from the Indians. By 1636 Indian chiefs had been induced to deed away the patrimony of their people. The generation intervening between 1636 and 1660, the year Steven Coerten and his family arrived, afforded sufficient time for the establishment at Amersfoort of a considerable community of Dutch farmers, artisans, hunters and fishermen.

STEVEN COERTEN, LAND OWNER

Our common ancestor must have been possessed of substantial means, or at least of excellent credit, for it is of record that, on November 29, 1660, within six months after his arrival, he purchased from Cornelius Diercksen (Hooghlant) for 3400 guilders (\$2000)—a very considerable sum of money for those days—several scattered parcels of land aggregating some thirty-one morgens, or sixty-two acres; also, a house, houselot and brewery. The deed of conveyance was written in Dutch and, accompanied by an English translation, is recorded in book B of Flatbush records at page 27. A copy of this quaint and interesting document follows:

"Praise to God. In Midwout, November 29, 1660, A.D., Appeared before me Adriaen Hegeman, herein Secretary of Midwout and Amersvoort in New Netherland, and before the hereafter named witnesses, Corneles Diercksen Hooghlant on the one side and Steven

Koerten on the other; the said Cornelis Dircksz Hooghlant acknowledging that he has sold and he, Steven Koerten, that he has bought of him, a parcel of maize land situate within Amersfoort, between the bowery of Wolffert Gerritsen Van Couwenhoven and Frans Jensen, Timmerman (carpenter), wide on the west side thirty-six rods, on the east side thirty-two rods, large nine morgens; further a piece of woodland situate north of the land of Elbert Elbertsz, south of Frans Jansz, wide on the east side thirty-two rods, on the west side twenty-four rods, running from the maize land to the land of Spysser, about west-northwest, large seven morgens; a piece upon the Flats, lying between the Town and Jan Martensz, wide thirty-eight rods, large ten morgens; a piece of Meadow situate between Spysser and Jacob Van Couwenhoven, large five morgens: amounting together to thirty-one morgens: together with the house and house-lot lying and being in the Town of Amersfoort, and the hay ricks, with the brew house and all the brewing implements, kettles, tubs, vats and all that belongs thereunto, with a wagon, plow and iron harrow, with two oxen, together with the grain that is at present sowed upon the said land and four schepels of pease and four schepels of buckwheat. This above is sold with everything thereon that is earth-and-nail-fast; and further with such active and passive obligations and equities, as the seller has possessed the same to the date hereof according to the transport thereof, for which purpose it is herein mentioned: in which it shall be surrendered to the purchaser on the day of transfer. This aforesaid land, house-lot and house and the above are sold and shall be surrendered to the purchaser free and unincumbered, without any burdens resting thereupon or emanating therefrom, savings the Lord's right.

For the purchase of this aforesaid land and rights Steven Koerten, purchaser of the aforesaid land and belongings, promises to pay to the aforesaid Corneles Dercsen Hooghlant, or to whosoever may acquire his title, the sum of 400 guildens, Holland money and 3000 guildens in good strung negotiable sewan, viz., in four installments: the first installment of 400 glds. Holland money payable by exchange in Holland in the next coming summer; and the second installment in May 1662, 1000 glds; and the third installment in May 1663, 1000 glds; and the fourth installment in May 1664, 1000 glds.

For the accomplishment and fulfillment hereof the parties on either side, each in his capacity, pledge their persons and property, nothing excepted, in subjection to all laws and judges. Thus done and executed in Midwout upon Long Island, in presence of Witnesses hereunto invited, December 4, 1660, A.D.

"Cornelis Diercksen
Steven Koers
Nicholaes de Meyers
Aucke Yans"

It will be noted that the down payment for these lands was exactly nothing, and that the bulk of the deferred payments—3000 guilden (guilders)—was payable in "sewan" or strings of Indian money.

The affairs of Steven Coerten seem to have prospered. In 1664 he became a Magistrate, a post of dignity and influence. In July of that year the Dutch surrendered New Netherland to the English. The change in sovereignty from Dutch to English caused considerable uncertainty as to the validity of land titles. In 1665 the inhabitants of New Amersfoort applied to the English governor at Albany for a patent of confirmation. Under date of October 4, 1667, Governor Nicolls issued a patent, known as the Nicolls Charter, to eight named inhabitants of "Amersfort als Flatlands." *Steven Coerten* and *Coert Stephens*, his oldest son, were two of the eight patentees named in the Charter which confirmed in the town and the inhabitants thereof title to their respective land holdings.

During his lifetime Steven Coerten acquired several other tracts of land in and about Flatlands. His sons and daughters married into the "best families" of the settlement and appear also to have prospered. In 1673 the Amersfoort or Flatlands Town records were destroyed by fire, wiping out much evidence of prior land transfers, and making the tracing of early land titles very difficult. Steven Coerten died on February 16, 1684, at the ripe age of eighty-four, possessed of several tracts of land in and about Flatlands, as is evidenced by later conveyances made by his heirs. He left a will datd August 25, 1677 of which no copy is extant.

His sons and grandsons appear also to have had a flair for real estate. Thus it came about that in the third generation members of the Van Voorhees family in Flatlands were among the largest landholders of the landed aristocracy of that day. Several tracts of land that were purchased before 1725 remained in the family until about 1850, when they were partitioned among the several heirs who from time to time during the latter half of the last century disposed of them to land development companies. To this day two worthy descendants of Steven Coerten in the eighth generation live on a corner lot that may be part of the house-lot and brewery, the homestead, purchased by Steven Coerten in 1660.

Long after the English occupation in 1664 the Dutch inhabitants clung tenaciously to their native customs and language. The descendants of Steven Coerten in the third generation following his death

in 1684, conforming to the English custom and to the requirements of English law, gradually adopted "Van Voorhees" as the family name. This is revealed in family letters and in deeds to land recorded in the early part of the 18th century. As an example, Garrett Coerte, grandson of Steven Coerten, and son of Coert Stevensen, purchased in 1703 a farm of ninety-six acres at New Utrecht lying northwardly from the New Utrecht Dutch Reformed Church. The deed runs to "*Garrett Coerte*." He died in 1704 owning the farm, which was conveyed in 1713 by "*Koert Van Voorhuys*, eldest Son and heir of Garret Koerte, deceased." From this time on, Van Voorhees or Voorhees, though variously spelled, became the family name of the descendants of Steven Coerten. However, one branch of the family was known for a time as Stevenson, and another branch—descendants of Eldert, oldest son of Lucas Stevensen—still bear the name Eldert.¹

THE FAMILY GROWS

In this world no family remains stationary, and changes were to be expected in that of our common ancestor. Shortly after the arrival Coert Stevensen made the acquaintance of Marretje Gerritse Kouwenhoven, a granddaughter of Wolpert Gerritse Van Kouwenhoven, who had been one of the largest landowners of the section. Her family did not oppose his attentions. A little later the bans were published and the wedding day announced. Pastor Polhemus arrived in due time and the marriage was solemnized, very possibly the first in the new church. If the Domine's record of marriages had been preserved the date could be stated. It was no doubt recorded in a family Bible, but that too seems not to have been preserved. We must be content with the fact, and with the further statement that in the home that Coert Stevensen made on a corner of the Kouwenhoven or Couwenhoven plantation nine children were born and grew to manhood and womanhood.

As it happened an extended law suit was necessary to compell the executor of grandfather Couwenhoven's estate to make full payment to the heirs. When this was done Coert Stevensen became one of the well-to-do men of Amersfoort. The assessment roll of 1675 shows that his estate was larger by 15 pounds than that of his father.

¹Two sections of this chapter—"New Amersfoort" and "Steven Coerten, Land Owner"—were read by Ralph S. Voorhees, A.M., LL.B., at a rally held in New York City June 30, 1934.

A year later the situation was reversed, for the father, having added twenty-five acres to his holdings, was assessed for 25 pounds more than the son.

Eight years passed after Coert Stevensen's marriage before Lucas, the second son, took upon himself the responsibilities of a home. In 1671, when twenty-one years of age, he married Catherine Hansen Van Noortstrand, and settled in Flatlands, not far from his father's home.

During the decade that followed marriages occurred in quick succession. In 1773 Jannetje married Jan Rollofse Schenck, and they made their home at Flatlands. Within a year Aeltje married Barrent J. Van Ryden or Ryder, and removed to Ryder's Lane on the way to Gravesend. If these sisters were younger than their brother Albert, they were married at the early age of sixteen. If older than he they were but eighteen.

Then in 1676 the youngest daughter, Hendrickje, married Albert Albertse Terhune. They lived first at Flatbush, and then about 1684 removed to near Hackensack, N. J. Here, after the birth of their eighth child, Hendrickje died, and Albert Terhune married again in 1793, and five children were born. In 1705 he married a third time and one daughter, Annetje was born the following year. This name will be noted, for by the second marriage there were two daughters of essentially the same name, the first dying in infancy.

The significance lies in the fact that Steven Coerten seems to have had two daughters named Hendrickje. The first had married Jan Kiers and they came to America with her father, but had no children. Elias Van Voorhis knew of this marriage, and also of Hendrickje who married Albert Terhune. He therefore concluded that she had married a second time after the death of Jan Kiers. But as his will has been discovered as probated in 1704, after the death of the second Hendrickje, the conclusion was incorrect. Steven Coerten therefore had two daughters named Hendrickje, the one by his first wife, and the other by the second, which the custom of the time did not oppose. Some facts respecting the older Hendrickje will be noted in a letter from the home land quoted in a later chapter.

Two years after the marriage of Hendrickje Stevense and Albert Terhune, Jan Stevensen married Cornelia R. Wizzelpenning, who did not survive the birth of a son Stephen. On October 8, 1680, he married second, Femmetje A. Van Nuys, and they lived on the road

toward Flatbush on a portion of the ancient highway now called Amersfort Place.

That same year Albert Stevensen married Barrentje Willemse, who did not survive the birth of a daughter, Cornelia. In 1681 he married second Tilletje R. Wizzelpenning, a sister of his brother's deceased wife, Cornelia. Two children were born to them, both named Stephen, as the first born did not survive. In 1684, when thirty-two years of age, Albert Stevensen removed to a plantation near Hackensack, N. J. He was the first of the sons of Steven Coerten to leave the Island of Nassau and make his home in New Jersey. There in 1693 he married third Helena Vander Schure.

On February 16, 1784, three years after Albert's first marriage, Steven Coerten died, having lived fourteen years beyond the scriptural age of three score years and ten. There were then thirty living grandchildren in America, nine in Coert's family, five in Lucas's, two in Jan's, four in Aeltje's, five in Jannetje's, four in Hendrickjen's, and one in Albert's. He was a patriarch indeed. When past middle life he had left the home of his ancestors in Drente, had founded a home, and made an enviable name for himself in the new world, had seen his children grown to maturity and settled in homes of their own. He indeed rejoiced in a growing group of thirty grandchildren, all inheriting something of his Dutch sturdiness, and destined to perpetuate his blood through many generations.

CHART

ILLUSTRATING THE GROWTH OF THE FAMILY OF STEVEN COERTEN

The dates on this Chart are for the most part those given in the Van Voorhees Genealogy. A few corrections have been entered, but there has been no opportunity to examine the data to be found in other genealogies. Where exact dates are not given the years of birth are partly conjectural.

Some errors are noted when the order of the birth of the children in a family is not known. The children of Steven Coerten are entered in the order in which they appear in the Family Genealogy, though it is believed that two daughters, Aelte and Jannetje Stevense, were older than their brother Albert.

The sons of Steven Coerten are designated, as in the Condensed Genealogy: A, Coert; B, Lucas; C, Jan; D, Albert, and E. Abra-

ham; and the grandsons by the numerals—1 to 26—therein given them. If all their birth dates had been known they might have been numbered chronologically.

An evident error appears in the order of the children of Lucas Stevensen and his second wife, Jannetje Minnes, as given in the Family and the Condensed Genealogy. The son Minne was listed as younger than Albert, who was born May 10, 1698. But Minne was married on April 25, 1717—at seventeen if this order were correct. A record recently received gives his birth year as 1696, in which case he was twenty-one when he married and removed to New Brunswick, N. J. Roeloff, his brother, was evidently older, for he was married in 1715, and two years later was ordained a Deacon at the organization of the Reformed Church in New Brunswick. The birth date given him on the Chart, 1693, is however conjectural. As a result of this rearrangement the numbers given these three brothers are not consecutive.

This form of Chart was adopted to illustrate graphically the remarkable growth of Steven Coerten's family of grandchildren. It will be noted that during the year 1683 a child was born in five of the seven families, and that in the two other families a child was born during 1682 and also during 1684. A / after a name indicates that the child died in infancy.

The officers of the Association are aware that in this book complete accuracy has not been attained. They therefore invite corrections and may later take occasion to print a table of *errata*, to be sent to those who request it, and especially to libraries.

Some inconsistency in the spelling of names is admitted, due to inconsistent records, and also to the curious flourishes that make some signatures difficult to decipher.

The type of this Chart is being held with the purpose of reprinting it with additions and corrections in such form that the line of descent of the purchaser may be typed thereon. A number of orders have already been received at \$1.00 each. Those sending them have consented to the delay that the Chart may be perfected.

CHART

Illustrating the Growth of the Family of
STEVEN COERTEN, 1600-1684

A. COERT STEVENSEN, 1637-1702

- 1664 m. MARRETJE GERRITSE VAN COUWENHOVEN, bap. Apr. 10, 1644; d. 1708.
 1665 STEPHEN 1 m. Agatha Janse; m. 2d. Eva.
 1667 MARRETJE m. December 11, 1861, Jacob Remsen.
 1669 ALBERT 2 m. Sarah W. Cornell; m. 2d. April 26, 1683, Willemijntje Suydam.
 1672 GARRET 3 m. Mensie Janse; m. 2d. April 16, 1687, Joost R. Van Brunt.
 1674 ALITJE m. Johannes Willemse; m. 2d. April 16, 1687, Joost R. Van Brunt.
 1676 NEELTJE b. June 30; m. Garret R. Schenck of Monmouth Co., N. J.
 1678 CORNELIS 4 bap. June 23; m. Antje Remsen.
 1680 ANNETTE bap. Dec. 5; m. Jan Rapalje of Brooklyn.
 1683 JOHANNES 5 b. April 20, m. Barbara Van Dyke; m. 2d. May 2, 1744, Sarah Van Vliet.

B. LUCAS STEVENSEN, 1650-1713

- 1671 m. CATHERINE H. VAN NOORSTRANT.
 1673 ELDEBT 6 m. May 5, 1704, Snytje Hermans. Lived in Jamaica. Descendants named Elderts.
 1675 JAN 7 bap. Feb. 19; m. Oct. 10, 1697, Ann Vanduykhuyzen; m. 2d. Mar. 5, 1704, Mayke R. Schenck.
 1679 STEPHEN bap. Sept. 16./
 1679 HANS 8 bap. Sept. 7; m. May 17, 1715, Neeltje Nevius. Lived at New Brunswick.
 1681 JANNETJE bap. Nov. 19./
 1683 WILLEMTJE bap. Nov. 19./
 1686 ANNA b. April 26; m. June 5, 1709, William Couwenhoven.
 1687 CATRYNTJE m. May 3, 1712, Roelof Nevius. Lived near New Brunswick.
 1689 m. 2d. JANNETJE MINNES, bans January 26.
 1690 ELSJE./
 1691 KEINSCH; m. May 22, 1714, Johannes Van Noorstrand.
 1693 ROELOF 10 m. April 26, 1715, Helena Siothoff. Lived near New Brunswick.
 1694 WILLEMTJE bap. Nov. 16; m. Martin Nevius, bans Aug. 27, 1715.
 1696 MINNE 11 m. April 23, 1717, Antje Wyckoff.
 1698 ALBERT 9 b. May 10; m. May 10, 1720, Arriante Ditmars; m. 2d. 1722, Catryntje Cornell.
 1703 m. 3d. CATHERINE VAN DYKE.
 1705 ABRAHAM 12 m. Neeltje Cortelyou.
 1707 TEUNTJE, bap. June 26./

C. JAN STEVENSEN, 1652-1735

- 1678 bans. March 17, CORNELIA R. WIZZELPENNING, d. Jan. 7, 1680.
 1679 STEPHEN 13 bap. Dec. 20, m. Catrina m. 2d. Sarah.
 1680 m. 2d. Oct. 6, FEMMETJE A. VAN NUYSSE.
 1683 AUKE 14 bap. May 21, m. - two sons.
 1684 WILEMTJE bap. Feb. 24, living in 1723.
 1686 JAN 15 bap. May 2, living in 1723.
 1687 ROELOFF 15; (d. 1772) m. Antje.
 1688 MAGDALENA, living in 1723.
 1690 LUCAS 16 m. ? living in 1723; one son Simon.
 1691 ALBERT 17 m. ? living in 1723; one son Aaron.
 1693 ABRAHAM 18 m. Snytje Vanderveer.
 1695 FEMMETJE, living in 1723.
 1696 JACOBUS 19 bap. Mar. 24, m. Maria, m. 2d. Nelly.

D. ALBERT STEVENSEN

- 1679 m. BARRENTJE WILLIAMSE.
 1681 Cornelia, bap. Oct. 14; m. April 17, 1703, Jorriaen L. Westervelt.
 1681 m. 2d., April 24, TILLETJE WIZZELPENNING.
 1683 STEPHEN bap. Oct. 28./
 1685 STEPHEN 19; bap. April 12; m. Oct. 10, 1707, Jannetje Alyea.
 1687 JANNETJE, m. Oct. 4, 1712, Gerrit A. Ackerman.
 1694 WILLIAM 20 m. Apr. 19, 1718, Susanna Laroe; m. 2d. Jan. 26, 1728, Marie Van Gelden.
 1695 MARGRIETJE, m. April 17, 1716, Peter Alyea.
 1699 LUCAS, 21 bap. Feb. 26; m. July 30, 1726, Annatie Kip.
 1700 JACOBUS, 21; m. Aug. 5, 1732, Jannetje Ackerman.
 1702 RACHEL, bap. Oct. 6; m. Julian Ackerman.
 1704 ALBERT, 22 bap. July 27; m. May 24, 1735, Cornelia Van Giesen.
 1706 PETRUS, 23 bap. Nov. 3; m. May 25, 1734, Gesjean Romeyn.
 1708 ISAAC, 24 bap. Aug. 1; m. Oct. 6, 1730, Ursetlje Romeyn.
 1710 FEMMETJE, m. Jacob Vanderbeek.
 1713 WILLEMTJE, m. Cornelis Bougaert.
 1714 JAN 25 m. May 18, 1725, Elizabeth Van Orden.

AELTJE STEVENSE

- 1673 m. BARRENT JURIANZ RYDER.
 1674 STEPHEN SCHENCK; m. May 20, 1692, Gerrit J. Dorlant.
 1675 MARTEN SCHENCK; m. Dec. 2, 1703, Mrs. Cornelia Van Wessel Lapardus.
 1677 WILEMTJE SCHENCK; m. Peter Wyckoff.
 1681 STEPHEN SCHENCK, bap. Oct. 2./
 1682 JOHANNES SCHENCK, bap. Nov. 5./
 1683 NEELTJE SCHENCK, bap. Nov. 23; m. Oct. 5, 1712, John Wyckoff of Raritan, N. J.
 1686 STEPHEN SCHENCK, b. Jan. 20; m. Sept. 26, 1713, Antje Wyckoff.
 1688 ALTJE SCHENCK.
 1690 ANTIJE SCHENCK.

JANNETJE STEVENSE

- 1672 m. JAN M. SCHENCK.
 1673 JANNETJE SCHENCK; m. May 20, 1692, Gerrit J. Dorlant.
 1675 MARTEN SCHENCK; m. Dec. 2, 1703, Mrs. Cornelia Van Wessel Lapardus.
 1677 WILEMTJE SCHENCK; m. Peter Wyckoff.
 1681 STEPHEN SCHENCK, bap. Oct. 2./
 1682 JOHANNES SCHENCK, bap. Nov. 5./
 1683 NEELTJE SCHENCK, bap. Nov. 23; m. Oct. 5, 1712, John Wyckoff of Raritan, N. J.
 1686 STEPHEN SCHENCK, b. Jan. 20; m. Sept. 26, 1713, Antje Wyckoff.
 1688 ALTJE SCHENCK.
 1690 ANTIJE SCHENCK.

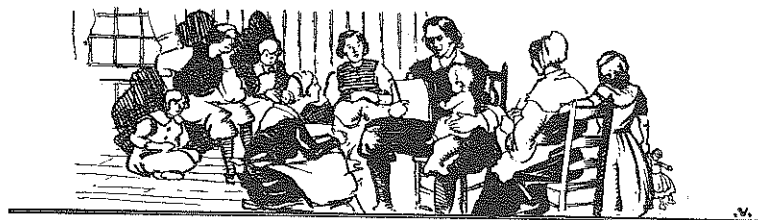
HENDRICKJE STEVENSE

- 1675 m. ALBERT ALBERTSE TERHUNE, bap. 1651, d. at Hackensack, N. J., 1709.
 1676 JAN TERHUNE, m. Sept. 1699, Elizabeth Barthol.
 1679 WILLEMTJE TERHUNE, bap. April 2.

- 1680 ANNETTE./
 1681 STEPHEN, b. April 4; m. Oct. 8, 1707, Lydia DeMarie.
 1681 ALTJE; m. April 22, 1699, Jacob Zabriside.
 1682 GERRIT, b. Aug. 13; m. Nov. 29, 1701, Abram Hauseman.
 1684 WILEMTJE, b. Aug. 13; m. Oct. 7, 1704, Jacob Boughart.
 1686 MARITJE, b. Aug. 31, m. Mar. 29, 1707, Hendrick Bartholet.
 1690 RACHEL, b. Aug. 20; m. July 1770, Jan H. Hoppe.

F. ABRAHAM STEVENSEN

- 1685? m. ALTIE STRYKER.
 1687? JOHN; m. 26 Jannetje Kershow. Lived near Blawenburgh, N. J.



VII

LETTERS FROM THE HOME LAND

THE Dutch families in New Jersey and New York made little effort to preserve the letters received from their friends and relatives who remained in the Netherlands. Tunis G. Bergen states that three letters preserved in the Van Voorhees family were the only ones he had discovered in his examination of old papers and documents in the possession of descendants of Dutch settlers in King's County.

Three letters were stated by Elias Van Voorhees to be among his papers, two written by Hilbert Coerten of Drente to his nephew Coert Stevensen, Van Voorhees, dated April 13, 1684, and February 9, 1687, respectively, and a third, also directed to Coert Van Voorhees, and written about thirteen years later by Rev. Casparus Van Zuuren or Zueren who had been minister of the Reformed churches of the section, including Flatlands, and hence knew the family well.

In the Van Voorhees Genealogy a synopsis of the contents of the first letter is given, and translations of the third, "literally, . . . preserving the Dutch idiom. Quaint in form, these are scarcely understandable. A freer rendering is here given.

Hilbert Coerten of Voorhees was a younger brother of Steven Coerten, our ancestor. He wrote the first letter on April 13, 1684, six months after receiving a letter assuring him that his brother Steven, his wife, and the other members of the family were in good health, and included many items of interest respecting members of the family in the home land, who were for the most part doing well. This will be noted for six months later Steven Coerten had died—a fact of which his brother was ignorant when he wrote.

Uncle Hilbert was particular to mention many relatives and friends, ten as having died, eight couples as being married, and several children as having come to the various households.

The second letter, written three and a half years later, is reproduced in modern English for the light it throws on conditions in the home

land. When this letter was received the family had been in America nearly twenty-seven years. Coert Stevensen was the head of the family, a man of nearly fifty, with nine children of his own, the youngest about four years of age.

The letter, dated February 9, 1687, was directed to "Coert Stevense Van Voorhees' and wife—with God's blessing—at the new land on Long Island, under the jurisdiction of New York."

THE LETTER OF UNCLE HILBERT

"Honored Nephew: I write again, to tell you how much we are interested in your welfare, and to let you know that I have received the letter you sent by Pegleg Prefect, and understand what you have written respecting your welfare and that of your family. I understand that your son is married, though hardly twenty years of age, and that you have bought for my nephew and niece, Jan Kiers and his wife, Hendrickjen Stevense, a dwelling for which they are to pay six hundred guilders, and land where there is room to pasture three cows. I wonder how Jan Kiers has already gained so much. It must be very good land to make it possible for him to earn two thousand guilders since he arrived. I shall be pleased to have you tell us about the land and its fertility.

"I am pleased to say that we are in good health, including my brothers, Jan Coert, Wesvel Coert, and Albert Coert; and Alten Maelen is also fairly well. My uncle, Hendrick Alberts of Tweel is also very well, and also uncle Luytgen Alberts who resides at Haecxwolt, and Aunt Mergin at the Hague, Aunt Gertien at Oshaer and all her household.

"Your sister Mergin Stevense who has left me, wished me to tell of her situation. She still resides at Dwingelo, and is younger for all her years. She expects soon to go to live at Buywsk on the Scheldt to become Sheriff.

"You have written to know about Jan Kiers' house at Steenwyck. I have sold the house to Hendrick Bonjaus, and have arranged that Jan Coersen should write you how matters stand and what were the incidental costs of the sale. Jan Kiers will receive about three hundred carolus guilders. He will write also to inquire of Jan Kiers what to do with the money.

"Hendrick Rorken of Ruinen would like to have a letter from you as he has not heard from his brother's wife nor their children, and he is anxious to know if they are alive and prosper.

"I must tell you of a very mournful event. A great judgment has come on the land of Groningen and Eunderland and Ostveerf. A

¹This is the first documentary reference to Van Voorhees as the name of the family, and confirms the spelling, *Coert*.

great gale from the northwest swept over and flooded the land so that people and cattle of all the towns have scarcely been saved alive. At Groningen the water stood upon the streets and the land is at present in a very sorrowful state. It is said that four thousand people were drowned and so many cattle that it seems a great pity. God the Lord has chastised the land, but it is the people's fault as they would not concern themselves about the state of the fatherland. This is the worst about which we have to complain. Otherwise things are about as they were when you resided here.

"My beloved nephew, we hope you will write again, and direct to Amsterdam, instead of to Swal, in care of Hildebrandt Van Dykes, for he lets us know by post when letters are at his house. The widow Wesvel Alberts of Voorhees wishes us to write that she is doing well. Write again concerning your sisters and brothers who are living in your great land, and I will reply as to our welfare. I have four children by my last wife, and our Jan has married a daughter of Nagle and they have four children; and our nephew has five children, and Albert at The Hague has two children.

"With God's blessing, your affectionate uncle,

HILBERT COERTE OF VOORHEES.

The letter of Pastor Van Zueren was written thirteen years later, when Coert Van Voorhees, beyond sixty with a goodly family of grandchildren, is a man of parts in his adopted country, for had he not been sent to represent his town to the conference with Governor Colve at Albany in 1674 that was to be the capital of the state? And was he not highly esteemed as a member of the Reformed Church of Amersfoort, now renamed Flatlands? This letter was directed:

"To Coert Stevens Van Voorhees and Wife, residing at New Amersfoort, on the Island of Nassau."

THE LETTER OF PASTOR VAN ZUEREN

"My esteemed friends: Your letter of the 26th of August of last year was received four months ago. Thank you for your terms of endearment and I wish to respond with similar affection. You speak truly when you encourage us to be patient when we realize the source of our misfortune. It requires no less courage to bear the yoke of the Lord, when he chastises us for our sins, and it is no cause for gladness but for sorrow that our housekeeping is neglected. It is the will of the Lord that our adversity should result in our sanctification.

"You have evidently prospered in your home and your children, since they are healthy, doing well and well married. With respect

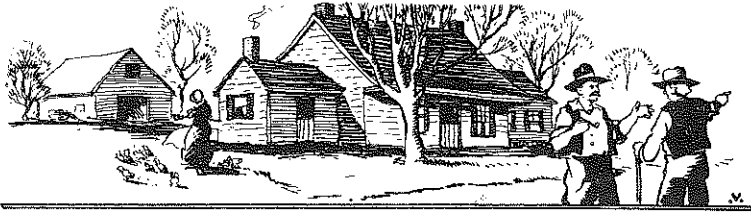
to our own children, Johanna is now twenty years of age, they are fast becoming men and bring much difficulty as one is in the other's way, but we pray that God and His Son and Heavenly Spirit will give us bread sufficient—more we do not require. The years bring no improvement to my wife, who is sickly. I have again been able to preach for about half a year, but with difficulty, owing to my indisposition and my passing years. I hope the Lord will continue my strength so that I may perform my duties without sorrow. We are now enjoying peace. The famine of 1698 has been followed by a fruitful year, 1699, but the country is burdened with taxes and trade remains impeded.

"In your old neighborhood, many difficulties have arisen, which set friend against friend. It now seems that the Earl of Bellomont will be brought to court. It causes much animosity that those who were inferior should come to places of authority. A new governor may change all this. I believe it is best for one to be neutral so as not to be involved in difficulty. I give this advice to you, as to others who have written me. I keep myself outside of all factions and regret sincerely that in such a favored land growing churches should be shaken and restless.

"I hear that in New York there is a serious epidemic, and I trust that you and all the good people will escape; and I pray that God Almighty will so move your hearts that peace will be restored through the Gospel of Peace and the Messenger who proclaims this peace. To all your loving children to the end of time, peace. Greet all the friends in New Amersfoort for us."

While these letters are few we are indeed grateful for them, and for the view they give of conditions in the ancient province of Drente, where many relatives were still living.

After this look backward our eyes turn forward that we may follow further the fortunes of the family in America.



VIII

THE VAN VOORHIES FAMILY AT GRAVESEND

COERT STEVENSEN, the eldest son of our common ancestor, Steven Coerten, lived at first on land which he had purchased in Amersfoort, on the easterly bank of the tide-water creek known as Stromme-Kill. Then on March 8, 1691, when over fifty years of age, he purchased for £295 from John Tilton Jr. all his estate in Gravesend Neck, consisting of four fifteen acre lots and the house thereon. He later added another lot adjoining, and so had a farm of nearly seventy-five acres.

John Tilton's father had come to Gravesend in the retinue of Lady Deborah Moody, and the son, about to move to Monmouth County, New Jersey, reserved the right of possession for a year unless he should sooner move to his new home. Coert Stevensen did not move to the newly purchased farm, but remained in his early home the rest of his days.

In 1664 he had married Marretje Van Couwenhoven, and nine children were born between 1665 and 1683—five sons and four daughters. Their oldest son, Stephen Coerten, when less than twenty years of age, married Agatha Janse, and in 1693 purchased of Wesereel Pietersson forty acres adjoining his father's land on the west, and lived thereon, thus founding the Voorhees line in Gravesend. Several of his sons spelled their names Voorhies, as do many of their descendants to this day. One family later shortened the name to Voris.

In 1699 Coert Stevensen Van Voorhees, then past sixty, conveyed part of his farm to his oldest son, Steven C. Voorhees, and the remainder to his second son, Albert, who had married first, Sarah Cornel of Flatlands, and twice thereafter. In all, he had a family of fifteen children. Four sons and six daughters grew to maturity, and for the most part moved to New York or New Jersey.

Stephen C. Van Voorhees, after the death of his wife, Agatha Janse, married a much younger woman, Eve, who by his will was to

have the use of his estate during her lifetime, after which it was to be equally divided between his two sons, Koert and Jan. As the former left the section, Jan secured possession of all the land his father had owned, and also that of his uncle Albert. Thus he came to possess most of the land in the Sheepshead Bay section of what is now the borough of Brooklyn, lying between Avenue U, Sheepshead Bay, and east to Ocean Avenue. Until recently some of his descendants have owned portions of this tract, and several families still live in the vicinity. Voorhies Avenue in Sheepshead Bay bears the family name.

About 1730 Jan Stevense built an unpretentious house near the northwest corner of the property, on the north side of the present Neck Road, facing south, as was then the custom. This house with later additions remained until a few years ago when it was razed in connection with street openings. Its site was on Neck Road near the intersection of Avenue V and East 21st Street. The main doorway of the original house is depicted in one of the murals that now adorn the Bruckelen Room in the Towers Hotel—a room in which a Van Voorhees Rally was held on May 20, 1933.

In this house Jan Coerten Van Voorhies and Sytie his wife raised their family of three sons, Stephen J., John and Jacobus. Stephen J. and John Voorhies married, sisters, Phebe and Jane Ryder, daughters of Bernardus Ryder, whose land was just north of the Voorhies farm. After the death of their father, Stephen J. occupied the family homestead, and four children were born during the years preceeding the Revolution. By a curious circumstance the house became known as

THE HESSIAN HOUSE

After the battle of Long Island in August, 1776, the British were in full possession of Long Island, and the towns that comprise the present Borough of Brooklyn—Brooklyn, Flatbush, Flatlands, New Utrecht, and Gravesend—were all within the enemy's lines. Homes and barns were frequently robbed, and British officers and men, and at times their prisoners, were quartered upon the people whether they would or not. All the farmers could raise was in demand. Though many of the inhabitants were patriots at heart, for the sake of their homes they were under the necessity of being neutral. Many of the younger men, however, stole away and joined the continental army or the militia.

Stephen J. Voorhies had been a member of the King's County militia before the outbreak of the war, and never swerved from his allegiance to the colonies during their long struggle for independence. Hence he had great satisfaction in being present when the British evacuated New York in November, 1783. He may not have been at home when his little daughter, Yonnette, died. The only record is of her baptism on May 9th of that year.

Prior to the battle of Long Island, as a measure of protection and safety, General Washington ordered the harvested grain of the King's County farmers to be stacked in the fields ready to be burned and their cattle to be driven beyond the expected lines of battle.

When the soldiers apprised Phebe Voorhees of the general's order, to insure a supply of milk for the baby, they allowed her to retain one cow provided she was kept hidden, either in the cellar or in a bedroom. After the battle, Stephen J. Voorhies found himself near his home and was given leave to see what had happened to his family. A Hessian soldier had discovered the cow and was about to drive her off when Stephen J. appeared on the scene. In the altercation that followed the Hessian was killed, and his body was buried that night under the back bedroom. Stephen J. then hurried back to his company.

It was because of this story, which has come to be a tradition, that the Voorhies home became known as the Hessian House.

After the war was over two other sons were born to Stephen J. and Phebe Ryder Voorhies—John S. in 1780, and Stephen S. in 1787. In the course of the years the three daughters, Seytie, Jane and Eva, married and made homes elsewhere. Stephen J. built a house on his property for his eldest son, Jacobus, and some years later another for his son Stephen. The latter, near the homestead to the east, and also facing Neck Road, still stands in a fine state of preservation, and is known as "Glen Iris" by its Scottish owners.

Stephen J. Voorhies continued in possession of all his real estate until his death in 1816. His will probated shortly thereafter shows bequests of equal sums of money to each of his daughters, a devise of ten acres of land including the house he had built for his son Jacobus, then deceased, to each of the latter's sons; the remainder to be divided between his two living sons, John S. and Stephen S. Voorhies. The writer has a copy of this will, and also an indenture signed by John S. Voorhies and Adrienne Voorhees (note the spell-

ings), which gives to Stephen S. Voorhies as his share of the estate six parcels of land—one including the house in which he lived, adjoining other parcels he had left to his other male heirs—the whole comprising about forty acres. Stephen J. Voorhies's holdings approximated one hundred acres.

John S. Voorhies, the second son of Stephen and Phebe Ryder Voorhies, remained on the homestead with his parents. He married Adrienne, a sister of Peter J. Voorhies of Rocky Hill, Somerset County, New Jersey, who had married his oldest sister, Eva. Thus the two families of cousins were doubly related.

Stephen S., the youngest son of Stephen and Phebe Ryder Voorhies, became the custodian of family letters that his great-great grandfather, Coert Stevense, had received in 1684 and 1687 from his Uncle Hilbert, who was then living at the ancient Manor of Voorhees in Drente, Netherlands. They were loaned to Mr. Teunis G. Bergen when he was accumulating material for his great work, "The Bergen Family," but were never returned. Fortunately they were described in the Van Voorhees family genealogy, and are reproduced in another chapter. Their loss was sincerely regretted by their rightful custodian, and by his descendants who are deprived of the privilege of seeing them.

While Gravesend was first settled about 1643 by the English under Lady Deborah L. Moody, much of the land was soon purchased by Dutch families. As the early settlers did not plan to organize a church, and as the Dutch could not worship in English, they began Reformed Church services in 1656, but nearly a century passed before a regular minister was secured. Several churches were under the necessity of sharing the ministrations of one pastor. These occasional services were held in the Session House, erected by the town after 1666 within the Village Square, several religious organizations sharing its use. Many of the families continued their membership in the Flatlands Church until 1762, when under the leadership of Rev. Martinus Schoonmaker, a Reformed Church was erected, also within the square. Soon thereafter Jan S. Voorhies and Seytie his wife transferred their membership to Gravesend. In 1768 he was chosen a Deacon, and four years later was ordained an Elder. From that time forward many members of the family throughout the generations have been loyal supporters of the church, a goodly number serving as members of its Consistory.

In 1840 a Sunday School was begun in a chapel maintained by the church in Gravesend Neck, and during ninety-one of its ninety-four years the superintendents have been members of the Voorhees family. They were in order, John S. Voorhies in the sixth generation, Peter Dumont Voorhies and Jaques Van Brunt Voris in the seventh, Jacobus Voorhies in the eighth, and Stephen Robin Voris in the ninth. Edward Bennett, who served thirty-four years following Jacobus Voorhies, had a Voorhees ancestry, though he did not bear the name. This is indeed a remarkable record.

A Van Voorhees Rally was very appropriately held on October 19, 1934, at the home of Miss Maude E. Voris on Neck Road, at which the main portions of this chapter were read by the hostess of the day.



IX

VAN VOORHEES FAMILIES IN NEW JERSEY

CONDITIONS in the early years of the eighteenth century encouraged the removal of many Dutch families from the western portion of Long Island. In not a few the number of children was large, and early marriages were not infrequent. Places for home-making had to be found. Some went farther eastward on Long Island to Jamaica and Oyster Bay, a township that then as now extended from the Atlantic Ocean to Long Island Sound. Some went northward across the sound to Westchester and the counties beyond, but the majority went to New Jersey where political conditions were quite favorable, and much good land was to be had.

All of Steven Coerten's five sons remained near Flatlands, except Albert and Jan. In 1684 Albert removed to a plantation along the west bank of the Hackensack river near a place called Kinderkamack, situated a few miles north of the present city of Hackensack, later the county seat of Bergen County, New Jersey. In the process of time many new communities have been formed in that section. Albert's home was near the present Borough of Oradell. Kinderkamack remains only as the name of an important highway running northward through the section. All of his thirteen children made their homes in the northern counties of New Jersey. The early families at first spelled the name Van Voorhis; many later dropped the Van.

Albert Van Voorhees was one of the two Elders chosen in 1686 at the organization of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Hackensack, his colleague being Theodore Brinkerhoff. Many of his descendants have been prominent in the church life in Hackensack and neighboring communities.

Late in life, Jan Stevensen lived for a time on an estate situated a few miles west of New Brunswick, but his will was probated in New York in 1735. Before 1700 a large migration had set in from

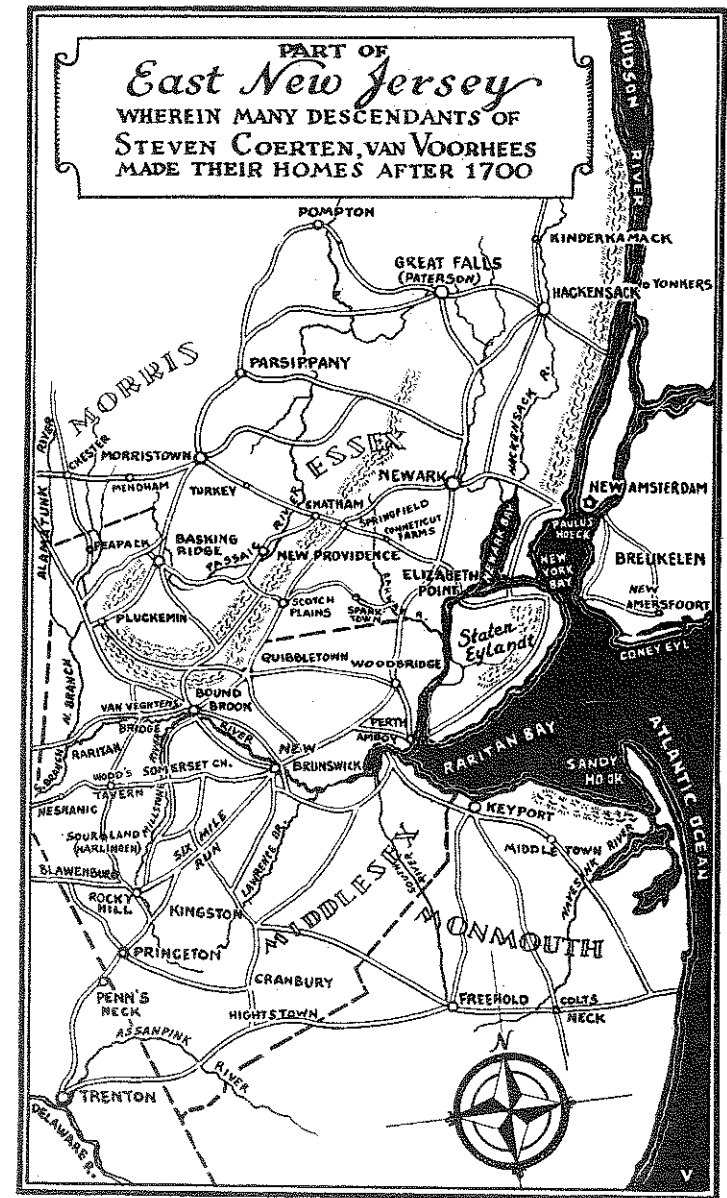
Long Island to Middlesex, Somerset, and Monmouth counties in central New Jersey. Middlesex and Monmouth counties bordered on the Raritan bay and were of easy access from New York by boat across the lower bay. Somerset county lay to the north and west of Middlesex, with the Raritan river as its main artery to the sea. The Raritan is formed by the junction of a North Branch, which flows southwardly through the length of Somerset county, with a South Branch which, though it rises farther north than the North Branch, joins it from the south at a point nearly thirty miles inland from its mouth at Perth Amboy. This ancient capital of East Jersey, was a principal gateway to the entire region. New Brunswick, twelve miles to the west, on the southern bank of the Raritan, was the principal inland town. At the head of navigation and at the dividing line between Middlesex and Somerset counties, this town was deemed of such commercial importance that in 1730 it received from King George II of England a charter as the "City of New Brunswick," the two hundredth anniversary of which was elaborately celebrated in 1930.

A mile northwest of the city on the Somerset county side of the river was "the Landing," which became a shipping point for grain and produce raised farther inland, much of which was brought down the river on flat boats during high water of the early spring. Here later an important mill was erected known for many years as the Voorhees mill.

Much of the land in Middlesex, Monmouth, and Somerset counties was fairly level and, though more rolling than land to which the Dutch had been accustomed, it attracted them by its fertility. When Somerset county was set off from Middlesex by an act of the New Jersey Assembly that convened at Perth Amboy in May, 1688, a reason for the act was thus stated:

"Forasmuch as the uppermost part of Raritan River, is settled by persons whom in their husbandry and manuring their land, (are) forced upon quite different Ways and Methods from the other Farmers and Inhabitants of the County of Middlesex, because of the frequent floods that carry away their fences on their meadows, the only arable land they have, and so by consequence their interest is divided from the other inhabitants of the said county, . . ."

It was therefore enacted that the territory within carefully prescribed bounds



"be divided from the said County of Middlesex and hereafter be deemed, taken, and be a County of this Province; and that the same be called the County of Somerset."

So far as known, this is the only instance in the history of the state when the presence of Dutch settlers determined the erection of a new county, which, however, received the name of an English shire.

It is not known when the first member of the Van Voorhees family removed to this section of New Jersey. Possibly near 1700. From that date onward, Van Voorhees families began to arrive in increasing numbers. A few statements respecting them may be of interest.

The Reformed Dutch Church at New Brunswick, when organized in 1717, was in association with an earlier church begun about 1699, located three miles westward on the main highway, now the Lincoln Highway, that ran from New Brunswick by way of Kingston and Princeton to Trenton, then as now at the head of navigation on the Delaware. The records of this church in New Brunswick are remarkably complete. In 1887, after the celebration of its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary, the minister, Dr. Richard H. Steele, published a volume containing his Historical Discourse, and other addresses delivered on the occasion, and also an appendix containing lists of families, officers, and members for the entire period.

In a note on page forty Dr. Steele states that of the children of Lucas Van Voorhees six came to New Brunswick and vicinity and were members of the church at its organization in 1717. He names four sons—Hans, who had married Neeltje Nevius; Roelof, who had married Helena Stoothoff; Minne, who had married Antie Wyckoff; and Albert, who had married Catryntje Cornell—and two daughters, Catalyntche, who had married Roelof Nevius, and Willemtje, who had married Martin Nevius.

In a paragraph of his address Dr. Steele makes this interesting statement.

"Perhaps no name is more prominent in our early records than that of the distinguished Elder Minne Van Voorhees, one of the ancestors of the large family of this name in this section of the State. He came to this vicinity from Long Island about the year 1715, and two years after, on the organization of this church, we find his name on our list of communicants. He resided at first on the property now known as the College Farm, and was the proprietor of a large tract of land in that vicinity, including the mills below the city; subsequently he removed to New Brunswick, and resided here until his

death, which must have occurred about the year 1734. He was a man of great prominence in the church, elected to the office of elder when quite a young man, and a ruling spirit in the congregation. In the controversies which Mr. Frelinghuysen sustained in the early part of his ministry, he found in Minne Van Voorhees a staunch and intelligent supporter. From the fact of his cooperation with his pastor, the inference is natural that he was of a kindred spirit. Tradition reports him to have been very gifted in prayer and exhortation. His memory was so retentive that he was able to repeat nearly the entire sermon after hearing it preached. When Mr. Frelinghuysen was exhausted with his excessive labors, he would frequently call upon Minne to take the evening lecture in one of the neighborhoods, and he would conduct the services with great edification. His name was very precious in the church for several generations, and he has left behind him even unto this day a savor of great piety."

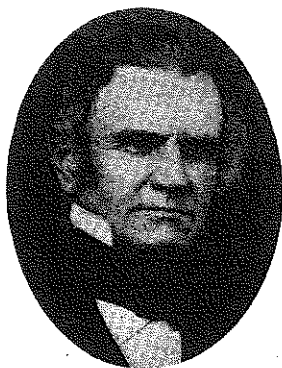
The number of men of the Van Voorhees name who served in the Consistory of the New Brunswick Church is quite surprising. Roelof Van Voorhees, an older brother of Minne, was chosen a Deacon at the organization in 1717 and an Elder in 1725; and Albert, a Deacon in 1725 and an Elder in 1734. During the century and a half at least eighteen men of the Voorhees name served as deacons and sixteen as elders. A number of these were in office for several terms of two years each. During the same period, 138 of the name were in the membership of the church, some for many years.

For a time these families continued to be known as Van Voorhees, as the records of baptism show, but from 1750 on, most of them dropped the Van, retaining Voorhees only as the family name. Several variant spellings are noted.

In six other early Reformed Churches in the Raritan Valley members of the Voorhees family found opportunity to show devotion to the Christian faith. The Church of Six Mile Run, on the road from New Brunswick to Princeton, was the Christian home of several prominent families, but its early records are not available in the same fullness as those of the New Brunswick Church, some of them having been destroyed by fire. Much is also learned respecting the Raritan Church at Van Vechten's Bridge, now at Somerville, with records beginning in 1699, the Sourland Church, later Harlingen, the Hillsboro Church at Millstone, the Church on the North Branch, later at Readington, and the Church at Bedminster, in the northern part of Somerset county. Families of the Voorhees name were connected with all these churches.

This is true also to a lesser degree of Middlesex and Monmouth Counties. The English and Scotch settled in them in larger proportion, and many Dutch families became associated with Presbyterian and other churches. Almost as much can be learned respecting these families from church records, as from their activities in civil life.

An important chronicler of the early days of the section westerly from New Brunswick was Hon. Ralph Voorhees of Franklin township in Somerset County, in which the Six Mile Run Church is located. He was a great grandson of Minne Van Voorhees, and though a farmer was for a term a member of the New Jersey State Legislature, and later a lay Judge of the Somerset County Court.



HON. RALPH VOORHEES
1796 - 1878

For many years he accumulated historic data respecting the section and its early families. Much of this was first published during 1873 in a magazine printed in Somerville, entitled *Our Home*, in a series of twelve articles, later republished with corrections in the *New Brunswick Daily Fredonian*, from 1874 to 1876, and again after the author's death in the *Somerset County Historical Quarterly*, with corrections and notes by the editor, Abram Van Doren Honeyman, whose Dutch ancestry will be recognized in his name. Those articles contain much of general information, and not a little of special interest to members of the Van Voorhees Association. Shortly before his death many of the documents that Ralph Voorhees had accumulated were borrowed by someone who claimed to have a special need for them, but, as no receipt was taken, the family has never

been able to regain possession of them. This is indeed to be regretted, but it is fortunate that Ralph Voorhees had examined their contents with so great care, and that his articles were published while he was still living.

The Van Voorhees Association has as yet made no effort to accumulate ancient documents. It is known that a large supply of papers and memorabilia is in the Ralph Voorhees Library of Rutgers University, which may be examined at any time.

One document, however, has been presented that is of great interest because it bears date, February 23, 1738—nearly two hundred years ago. It is a photostat of a deed for a tract of 345 acres conveyed by Nicholas Lake of New Brunswick to John Van Voorhees of Somerset county, the consideration being "four hundred and twenty-seven pounds current money of the Province of New York." This tract was situated about five miles north of Princeton along a branch of Bedens Brook near the present village of Blawenburg. Part of it remained in the family for three generations. In 1889, this tract with adjoining property was purchased by the State of New Jersey as a site for an "Epileptic Village," now an important public welfare institution.

John Van Voorhees was, it is believed, the only son of Abraham Stevensen, the youngest son of Steven Coerten, our immigrant ancestor. The land descended through his third son, Abraham, to his grandson, David Voorhees, and was one of the very productive farms of the section. The deed above referred to is in the possession of David Voorhees's children. The photostat was presented by the oldest son, Mr. J. Stanley Voorhees of New York City, one of the Founders of the Van Voorhees Association.

The officers of the Association desire to be informed of other historic documents for the light they may throw on the history of the period.

In the years following the War for American Independence, many venturesome descendants of early Voorhees settlers in New Jersey made their way to Central New York and to Western Pennsylvania, and thence to Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and to states farther south and west. Of some of those who bear the Voorhees name something will be told in other chapters. Only a few families, whose stories are of more than average interest, can be singled out for comment at this time.



X

THE DUTCH COLLEGE ON THE RARITAN

THAT New Jersey was the only one of the thirteen colonies to have two colleges was due to Dutch settlers who so loved their home land that they could not be content to join educational forces, either with the Episcopalians who organized King's College in New York in 1754, or the Presbyterians who two years later moved the College of New Jersey, which they had conducted at Newark for a decade, to Princeton.

Queen's College, chartered in 1766, and begun as a school in 1770, was the only institution of higher learning in the colonies that owed its origin directly to Dutch influences. In it, however, the Dutch language was never officially used. Its beginnings were hampered by lack of adequate financial support. Soon came the war for American independence, and when, in December 1776 New Brunswick was occupied by the British, the college was closed, though a semblance of activity was continued elsewhere. It was not reopened until 1786. During the trying years that followed little could be done, but the organization was maintained in spite of discouragements.

In 1811 a new building on a new site was occupied by the College and the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church under an agreement that served for a time, but was not intended to be permanent. In 1825, in view of a gift that then seemed large made by Col. Henry Rutgers of New York City, it was given his name, and as Rutgers College it soon attained strength and influence.

College and Seminary continued in the Queen's building until 1856, when the Seminary was removed to Hertzog Hall, a new building constructed for the purpose on a new campus only a few hundred feet to the north. The college thereafter rejoiced in a completely separate life, and was much benefitted by the change.

In 1864 the work was broadened by the addition of the New Jersey College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts, established by

the State under the Federal Land Grant Act. As educational needs developed courses and schools were added, until in 1924 it became known as Rutgers University, with a College for Women—New Jersey College—begun in 1922 on a new campus a mile to the south.

The agreement with the state of New Jersey made a farm for experiments in agriculture necessary, and the Trustees in 1865 chose land just beyond the city limits that in the early days had belonged in succession to several members of the Voorhees family.

Before 1825 three of the Voorhees name had graduated at Princeton—Stephen Van Voorhees in 1765 who became a clergyman, Abraham G. Voorhees in 1809, of whose family nothing has been learned, and John Van Dyke Voorhees in 1813, who became a surgeon in the United States Army, and served on General Andrew Jackson's staff. He died in 1820 in Pensacola, Florida.

The first of the name to graduate from Queen's College was Ira Condit Voorhees of New Brunswick, in the class of 1817. He attained prominence as a merchant in his native city, and a window was placed in the First Reformed Church as a memorial to him and his wife, Anna Holbert Voorhees. A son, Charles H. Voorhees also of New Brunswick, was a physician of more than usual attainments.

The next of the name to graduate from Rutgers were John V. Voorhees, 1840, Robert Voorhees, 1841, and Henry V. D. Voorhees, 1847. Robert was an orator of note, and Henry, his brother, became a clergyman of distinction. All these were descendants of Jan Lucas Van Voorhees.

In 1847 Nathaniel W. Voorhees also received his degree. He was a descendant of Minne Lucas Van Voorhees, as were his second cousins, J. Newton Voorhees, 1854, and his brother William Brownlee Voorhees, 1860. John N. Voorhees, 1856, became a lawyer, and his brother, Henry Martyn Voorhees, 1859, a clergyman. They were descendants of Abraham Lucas, and also through their mother, of Coert Stevensen, through his son Gerritt Coerten Van Voorhees.

Willard Penfield Voorhees, 1871, became a justice of the Supreme Court of New Jersey; Foster M. Voorhees, 1876, was governor of the State from 1889 to 1892, and Edward B. Voorhees, 1881, was professor of Agriculture at Rutgers and head of the Federal and State Agricultural Experiment stations there. Judge Voorhees was a descendant of Jan, and the others of Minne Lucas Van Voorhees.

From this time forward the number of Rutgers graduates bearing the Voorhees name increased so rapidly that in 1932, when the most recent Alumni Catalogue was published, it listed a larger number of Voorhees alumni than of any other name except Smith. The Smiths, however, represent several racial and family lines, while those of the Voorhees name have a common ancestor.

Among the generous benefactors of the College was Abraham Voorhees of the Six Mile Run Church. He was a descendant of Lucas, through his youngest son, Abraham, who married Neeltje Cortelyou, and before 1726 settled a few miles west of this ancient church. Their third son Jaques, married Nellie Van Doren; their second son, Abraham J., married Grace Opie; their son Abraham, born in 1787, did not marry, but lived in the neighborhood until his death in 1867 at the age of eighty-one. He bequeathed to the College \$25,000, which was used to create the "Voorhees Professorship of History and Political Science"; and from his residuary estate a fund of over \$54,000 was received and set aside to aid worthy students who were candidates for the Christian ministry, and for other purposes. His tombstone bears the appropriate inscription, "A Friend of Education."

In 1893 Ralph Voorhees, who was blind, a brother of Nathaniel W. Voorhees, 1847, and an uncle of Foster M. Voorhees, 1876, and Edward B. Voorhees, 1881, and of several other graduates of Rutgers, gave to the college the Library building that bears his name. After his death in 1907 his widow, Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees, contributed an amount sufficient to double the capacity of the library, and the enlargement was completed in 1928. At her death in 1924 it was found that she had generously endowed the New Jersey College for Women at New Brunswick, including a provision for the erection on its campus of the beautiful Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees Memorial Chapel. Other amounts were set apart for fellowships, for scholarships, and as a loan fund.

Another benefactor of the college should also be mentioned. Mr. P. Vanderbilt Spader of New Brunswick, a member of the class of 1849 who did not graduate, in 1887 gave his library valued at \$15,000 to the college, and by his will bequeathed a fund of \$10,000, the income to be used to maintain and increase the Spader Collection. This became available after his death in 1890.

Mr. Spader, whose grandmother was Alletta Voorhees, was a near relative of Abraham Voorhees, the donor mentioned above, both being descendants of Abraham Lucas and Neeltje Cortelyou Voorhees.

The Voorhees family has indeed made some worthy contributions to Rutgers College in New Jersey, that from its beginning has borne witness to the sustained loyalty of the Dutch to the cause of higher education.



XI

THE FIRST CLERGYMAN

THE first member of the Van Voorhees family to enter the Christian ministry was Stephen Van Voorhees, a great grandson of Lucas, through Jan and Isaac, whose older brother Peter was an ancestor of Senator Daniel W. Voorhees of Indiana.

Stephen Van Voorhees was born at Six Mile Run in 1740. When over twenty years of age he entered the College of New Jersey at Princeton, about ten miles from his parents' home, and graduated with the class of 1765. Three years later, in August 1768, he received the degree of Master of Arts.

Before that time the New Jersey families had begun to drop the Van. As Stephen Voorhees, our first college graduate began his work as a teacher. His first school, so far as is now known, was in "Hackensack at the Bridge," as is stated in an advertisement in the *New York Journal or General Advertiser* of January 14, 1768. His assistant, Francis Barber, continued the school after Mr. Voorhees had withdrawn to conduct a school in New York City. Here again our information is obtained from an advertisement in the *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury* of October 9, 1769.

Stephen Van Voorhees did not continue this school long, for in 1772 he was licensed as a Christian minister by the General Meeting of Ministers and Elders, that later became a Classis, and the next year became minister of the Reformed Dutch Church of Poughkeepsie. Here he married Elizabeth Matthewman, and their son John was baptized at the Poughkeepsie church in 1776, but did not long survive.

That year he resigned his charge and accepted the pastorate of the Rhinebeck Flats (now Rhinebeck) Church, where he continued for eight years. During the Revolution he was outspoken in his adherence to the cause of the colonies. In 1784 he accepted the pastorate of the Philipsburg and Cortlandtown churches in West-

chester county. The Philipsburg church was afterwards known as the Sleepy Hollow church at Tarrytown. The church building is still standing, though it is now used as place of worship during the summer season only. It was brought into public notice through the tales of Washington Irving who lived nearby and worshipped there.

Rev. Stephen Voorhees did not continue many years in the pastorate of the church at Tarrytown. He was too zealous for the full results of the Revolution, and ventured to use the English language when baptizing a child. As this was not in accordance with the ritual he was charged with violating customs and usages that were deemed binding if not sacred. The controversy that followed this transgression became so sharp that in the interest of peace he withdrew and returned to New Jersey in the hope of finding greater liberality.

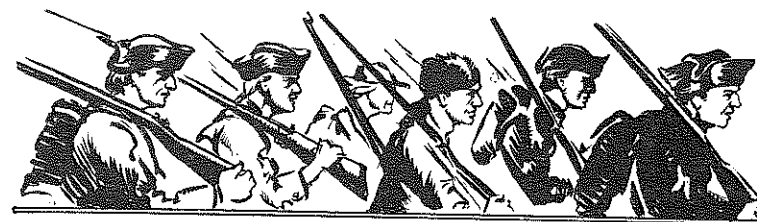
Mr. Voorhees's last charge was over the Presbyterian churches of Kingston and Assampink, near Princeton, New Jersey. He was installed at Kingston on June 12, 1793. Two of the members of the congregation at the time were Coert Voorhees, and Coert Voorhies. He died November 23, 1796, when only fifty-six years of age, and was buried in the yard surrounding the church.

In preparing his genealogy, Elias W. Van Voorhis made the curious error of listing Rev. Stephen Voorhees in two places, with two different lines of descent. The one given above accords with the records at Princeton, where he was listed as a son of Isaac Voorhees of Six Mile Run, and as having married 2d., Elizabeth Clausen.

As Stephen had two pastorates in New York State, our genealogist was led to link him with a Westchester branch of the family, as a son of Koert Voorhees, a grandson of Coert Stevensen through his son Garret. This Westchester family early adopted the abbreviated spelling, Voris. As Rev. Stephen was a son of Isaac, and was always known as Van Voorhees or Voorhees, he could not have belonged to the other family also. There are those who believe that the New York State family should trace its line to Jan Stevensen, through his son Stephen, who married Ann Baldwin, and settled in Westchester county. Of him our genealogist failed to find any record. The line appears on page 23 of the Condensed Genealogy.

Throughout the generations since the death of Rev. Stephen Voorhees many of the name have served in the Christian ministry, some

of whom receive casual mention in these pages. Many others have held positions of responsibility in churches of several denominations. As yet no effort has been made to compile accurate lists. There are at least ten clergymen of the Voorhees name now in the active Christian ministry, six of whom are members of our Association.



XII

IN THE WAR FOR AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

DURING the years following the English occupation of what had been New Netherland, people of Dutch antecedents lived under a flag that they could with difficulty think of as their own. Of necessity they yielded to English sovereignty, and, as it protected them and their churches in their rights as evangelical Christians and did not interfere seriously with their civil rights, they finally in all honesty gave allegiance to the new government. Many of them, however, retained a keen remembrance of the fatherland and clung tenaciously to the Dutch language and customs, in many instances through several generations, adopting the English as business required, but in home and church persistently using the more familiar Dutch.

These facts need to be recalled when the history of the years preceding the Revolution is studied. The average Dutch family was too politic to encourage open or violent opposition to British rule, but its members had profound reasons for sympathy with those leaders who later stood firmly for what they deemed the constitutional rights of the colonies. When the break came, after the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord, the battle of Bunker Hill, and a year later, after the Declaration of Independence had been adopted, descendants of those who, by fighting against Philip II of Spain, had helped to establish the Dutch Republic of the sixteenth century, were equally zealous in the struggle against Great Britain to help establish on a firm basis the American Republic of the eighteenth century. And when a new flag, the Stars and Stripes, was adopted to replace the British ensign, a deeper loyalty to the new government was born. In the great conflict for American Independence descendants of Dutch immigrants fought with zeal and perseverance.

One other effect may be noted. The common tongue, still spoken of as English though by no means universally adopted, was no longer the language of a people across the sea only, but of their

own country also. In a more vital sense their neighbors of other nationalities—German, Scotch, Irish, even English—were their fellow-citizens. Their old love for the language of the Netherlands gradually weakened, and by 1800, English had come to be quite generally spoken in many homes, and also in some of the churches.

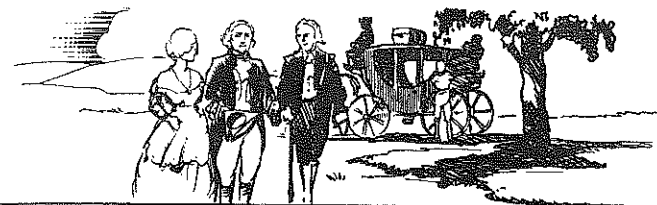
This will serve as introduction to a brief reference to the services rendered by men bearing the Voorhees name in the War for Independence, not as differing from that of their neighbors of similar ancestry, but as showing a kindred spirit of patriotism.

In the course of the generations many household stories of heroic military exploits during the Revolution have been well nigh forgotten, but the public records of military service contain conclusive evidence of the abiding patriotism of the Van Voorhees family.

Natives of New Jersey very naturally have fuller knowledge of her records than those of other states. In a book compiled in 1872 by William S. Stryker under orders of Governor Randolph, entitled "Officers and Men of New Jersey in the Revolutionary War," we find listed in the continental army, the state troops, or the militia of New Jersey, the names of eighty soldiers bearing the name of Voorhees, though spelled in several ways. Some twenty attained military rank. Nearly half of these were listed as from Somerset county, thirteen from Middlesex, five from Monmouth, three from Bergen, two from Hunterdon and one from Sussex.

At a rally of the Van Voorhees Association held on Saturday, May 27, 1933, at the Washington Headquarters at Rocky Hill, near Princeton, N. J., Miss Amanda L. Voorhees of New Brunswick read the roster of those who had thus served, with a brief record of each. No attempt has yet been made to trace the family connections of all these eighty men. Nor has there been occasion to list the men in the service who had married women of the Voorhees name. Their patriotism was as keen as was that of the men, and merits equally careful recording.

A search of the records of the State of New Jersey discloses the name of only one man bearing the name of Voorhees whose toryism was so marked that his property was confiscated and sold, and of only one other who went to Canada.



XIII

FRIENDS OF WASHINGTON

HOW often it has happened that the important activities of women in the progress of humanity have failed of adequate record. This is especially true in times of war. The actual fighting falls to the men, though women are equally patriotic and render assistance that is vital.

The story here related is not of fighting, but reveals rather a woman's ministrations to the needs of leaders in the revolutionary struggle, and may be accepted, not as an isolated instance, but as characteristic of the women of that period, and of other periods as well. It occurred in Dutchess County, New York, where an aged patriot, Colonel John Brinkerhoff, was numbered among the close friends of General George Washington. This friendship had its beginning when the colonel offered the comforts of his home to General Washington while on an important mission to New England.

John Brinkerhoff was in the fourth generation from Joris Dirksen Brinkerhoff who came to New Amsterdam in 1638 and settled in Breukelen, where he became a leading citizen, and the first Elder in the Dutch Reformed Church that had its beginnings before 1660. A grandson of Joris Brinkerhoff, Dirck or Theodorick, later made his home in Flushing. His sons went northward, and settled near Fishkill, N. Y., on land their father had purchased for them. The second son, John, who was born in 1703, married on March 12, 1725, Jannetje Van Voorhees, a daughter of Johannes Van Voorhees, the youngest son of Coert Stevensen, who was the oldest son of our common ancestor. Johannes, with his wife Barbara Van Dyke, after residing many years near Freehold, N. J., removed in 1730 to a large estate that he had purchased in Dutchess County, and became a neighbor to the Brinkerhoffs. Of this estate something is told in the chapter on "The Family Genealogist," who was a great-great-grandson of Johannes Voorhees.

Johannes Koerten, as he styled himself when he purchased the estate, was not consistent in the spelling of his oldest child's name. In recording her birth on September 15, 1704, he wrote of his "*Dochter Janetie Van Voor Hees*"; when recording her marriage on March 12, 1725, he wrote "*Myn Dochter Jannetie*"; but in his will she was *Jannetje Brinkerhoff*. That will was signed John Van Voorhees, but the inscription on his tombstone reads John Van Voorhis, and thus many of his descendants continue to write it.

John Brinkerhoff and Jannetje Van Voorhees established their home about three miles northeast of Fishkill, near where a century or more later the hamlet of Brinkerhoff grew up around the railroad station of that name. The stone house he erected a dozen years after their marriage still stands, bearing the year 1738 in one of the gables. As it was near a main highway leading toward Boston, many men of note passed the estate.

John Brinkerhoff, with the aid and encouragement of his wife Jannetje, became a man of means for that time. In the French and Indian wars he attained the rank of colonel. During his absence from home, his wife exhibited high qualities of leadership and industry, and helped bring to the house a reputation for hospitality and good cheer. Both she and her husband were staunch members of the Reformed Church of Fishkill that dates back to 1716.

When the war for American Independence broke out, Col. John Brinkerhoff was over seventy years of age, and hence too old to reenter the service, but his firm support of the cause of the colonies found expression in many ways. He early sought occasion to entertain General Washington and his staff. Friendship thus begun ripened into intimacy, and the general seldom passed without spending a night in this hospitable home. Jannetje thus enjoyed opportunities to bring comfort and cheer to the general-in-chief, by such services as a good housewife delighted to render.

In Number 61 of a series of "Historical Sketches," published in the *Poughkeepsie Eagle* of February 14, 1874, Benson J. Lossing, the historian, stated that on October 3, 1778, General Washington wrote from "Col. Brinkerhoff's, Fishkill," an important letter to General Lincoln, appointing him to the command of the troops for the defense of Charleston, S. C. Other letters written at the time were headed, "Headquarters, Fishkill," during the days that a division of the army was encamped there.

Lossing stated further that General Washington occupied the bedroom behind the parlor, and that it had remained practically unchanged. He also mentioned the tradition that Jannetje Brinkerhoff "always went to Washington's room after he retired and tucked the bed clothes round him to keep him warm."

There were frequent occasions for the expression of the intimacy between the venerable Colonel and the stalwart General who was nearly twenty years his junior, during the months that the headquarters of the Continental Army were at Newburgh, less than ten miles away.

Colonel Brinkerhoff lived to rejoice at the final departure of the British troops from New York in November 1783. His death occurred in May, 1785, when he was in his eighty-third year. Jannetje Voorhees Brinkerhoff survived him more than seven years. She was pleased indeed when George Washington became president of the United States. The encouraging effects of the new government under the constitution were becoming evident, and she could feel that she had not lived and labored in vain. Her death occurred at the family home near Fishkill on November 11, 1792, when she was in her eighty-eighth year. She outlived all her children, but her grandchildren, and their descendants throughout the generations have been glad to recall her generous character and helpful activities.

This story is given place here to illustrate the position of women in the progress of families and of society. While the majority of the incidents are of men, we do not forget the mothers in their homes and the women of their families whose courage and loyalty helped make possible the achievements that are recorded.

Jannetje Voorhees Brinkerhoff thus becomes a type of the women of the generations whom the Van Voorhees Association delights to honor.



XIV

CAPTAIN PETER VOORHEES, HERO AND MARTYR

NEAR the close of the war for American Independence a pathetic incident occurred near New Brunswick, in which Captain Peter Voorhees, an ardent soldier of bright promise, was sacrificed on the altar of patriotism. He was a native of that city, a son of Lucas and Catrina Vandervoort Voorhees, and a grandson of Minne Van Voorhees, whose helpful interest in the Reformed Church is noted in an earlier chapter.

At the outbreak of the war, though under twenty, Peter Voorhees enlisted in the local militia, served with distinction, and was promoted to the rank of Captain in the First Regiment of the Second Establishment of continental troops. During the summer of 1779 he had accompanied General Sullivan on his expedition against the Indians in Western New York. The country was much encouraged by the success that attended the campaign.

He had returned with his command and was at his home when on October 26th the community was alarmed by an incursion of a British cavalry troop, that has since been known as Simcoe's Raid.

Lieutenant Colonel John Graves Simcoe, leading a detachment of about eighty loyalist horsemen, had crossed the Kill from Staten Island to Elizabethport shortly after midnight, and penetrated about thirty miles inland to a crossing of the Raritan, about ten miles west of New Brunswick known as Van Veghten's Bridge, where they destroyed some boats, and wantonly burned the ancient Dutch Church of the Raritan. They then turned southward, and at Millstone burned the Somerset County Court House with all its precious documents.

The local militia, known as minute-men, under Col. John Neilson, who had recently married Catherine, a great granddaughter of Lucas Stevensen Van Voorhees, was hastily mustered to do what it could to protect the city, and harrass the raiders. Captain Voorhees, under instructions, followed them closely as in the afternoon they sped

toward New Brunswick, burning farm houses and buildings along the way. Before reaching the city they turned toward South Amboy, from which place they crossed the Raritan Bay to Staten Island, though without their commander.

Simcoe had detached a small company to oppose Captain Voorhees, and when his horse was caught leaping a fence, instead of taking him prisoner, they so hacked him with their sabers that he died that evening at his home. The incident aroused deep resentment, for when Colonel Simcoe, stunned by a fall from his horse that had been shot under him, was in the hands of his pursuers, they held him prisoner of war, and guarded him carefully from a body of angry citizens who felt that he deserved the fate that his men had meted out to their friend and fellow citizen, Captain Voorhees.

Captain Moses Guest of New Brunswick, who had helped in the capture of Colonel Simcoe, and who had served for a time as ensign under Captain Voorhees, a few weeks later wrote some verses which he afterwards published in a volume of "Poems and Journal." They are here quoted, being headed:

LINES ON THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN PETER VOORHEES

Alas, grim death has caused us to deplore
The brave, intrepid Voorhees, now no more;
He's gone, we grieve, the generous youth has fled,
Untimely sent to number with the dead.
Just as gay pleasure, dressed in all her charms,
Sat smiling by the youthful soldier's side,
But death! ah cruel death it him denied!
Just in his bloom to Death becomes a prey,
His icy hand no longer would delay.
So the loved meads, which flourished in the vale,
All gay appear, waved by the gentle gale;
But when the mower, with his scythe comes on,
He cuts—they fall—and all their beauty gone.
Long, long, blessed shade will freedom's sons admire
The virtues which did once thy breast inspire.
Thy aged mother mourns her absent son,
And sorrowing goes e'er since the deed was done;
Thy buteous sister too, with piteous grief oerspread,
Laments, alas! her friend and brother dead!
She with the hapless maid whom thou designed
E'er now in loves blest nuptials to have joined,
Together oft lament thy cruel fate,
As the fond turtle mourns her absent mate.

But why lament thy cruel fate,
 Since spotless laurels deck the hero's tomb;
 He stands aloft, high on the roll of fame.
 Voorhees, brave Voorhees, yes that is a name
 To patriots dear, and New Brunswick's boast;
 Defending which he fell by Britain's host:
 Those cruel tyrants bravely did oppose,
 Has oft in battle dealt them deadly blows;
 All toil and hardship freely did endure,
 Gainst savage tribes his country to secure:
 But now we trust his soul has gone to rest,
 In realms above, and happy with the blest
 Angelic host, from war and tyrants free,
 In bliss complete, where all is harmony.
 O! may we meet again on that blest shore,
 And join in hymns of praise to part no more.



XV

THE WILDERNESS TRAIL

CAPTAIN DANIEL VAN VOORHIS

AMONG the virile characters of the Revolutionary period was Daniel Van Voorhis of Oyster Bay, New York, who led a seafaring life for a time, suffering many hardships during the War, and when it was over enjoying for a time quieter life in New Jersey. Then, when nearly fifty years of age he treked to Western Pennsylvania, and became a pioneer along the Monongahela. That he was the progenitor of a large family is evident to any one who studies even casually pages eleven and twelve of the Condensed Genealogy. His descendants write the name Van Voorhis.

Daniel Van Voorhis was in the fifth generation in America—a grandson of Cornelius Coerten, the fourth son of Coert Stevensen Van Voorhees. His father, Daniel, had married Femmetje Bennett, and removed to Oyster Bay township. Daniel, their fourth son, was born there July 6, 1738. Respecting his young manhood little is recorded, except that he took to the sea, was engaged in carrying produce to the city, and in time became part owner of a vessel. He was past thirty when in 1769 he married Sarah Voorhees Brett, a young widow, eight years his junior. She was his second cousin, a granddaughter of Johannes Coerten Van Voorhees who had recently removed to Fishkill, N. Y. Sarah was a niece of Jannetje Van Voorhees Brinkerhoff, of whom something has been told in an earlier chapter. They had two children, Samuel Newton, born in 1774, and Sarah, born in 1777. The mother died when the daughter was but four weeks old.

Because of their father's frequent absence, his children found a home at Fishkill with their grand parents, Coert and Catherine Filkin Van Voorhis.

The story of Captain Daniel's services during the Revolution cannot be told with much fullness for we have only a few brief para-

graphs in a volume published in 1893 by a great-grandson, John S. Van Voorhis, M.D., entitled, "The Old and New Monongahela." On page 203 this is stated:

"Captain Daniel Van Voorhis . . . was in the prime of life during the days of the Revolution. He was an accomplished scholar, and especially versed in the science of navigation, as his books now in existence at the old homestead fully show. Captain Van Voorhis followed the sea as captain of a merchant vessel for many years, and during the Revolution was taken prisoner three times by the British—twice having lost his vessel and cargo. At one time, being hard chased by a man-of-war, he raised the signal of surrender, but, before it was recognized by the enemy, a canon ball carried away the post against which he was leaning. At one time he, with several others, was banished to an island, from which they escaped only to be re-captured, though shortly afterwards released."

In another paragraph, on page 187, it is stated that he was "taken prisoner three times by the British, and each time suffering a total loss of his vessel . . . With two other captains as prisoners, he was taken to some Spanish island for safe-keeping, from the dangers of which they escaped only to be re-captured."

Respecting these experiences we would like to know more, and trust that other records will soon be brought to light.

THE SETTLEMENT ALONG THE MONONGAHELA

On July 12, 1780, Daniel Van Voorhis married Mary Newton, and soon made a new home on Rancocas Creek, New Jersey, about twelve miles from Philadelphia. Here three sons were born. In 1785, after affairs with the Indians became more settled following the defeat they suffered at the battle of Big Timbers on the Maumee in Northern Ohio, at the hands of General Anthony Wayne, Daniel Van Voorhis journeyed to Western Pennsylvania and purchased land on Pigeon Creek near the Monongahela river in Washington County, which has remained in the family continuously nearly one hundred and fifty years. The following year, with wife and small children, the youngest less than a year old, he treked westward to this estate. Of this he wrote on a fly-leaf of a little history of New York, printed in London, thus:

"Moved my family out into the backwoods in the month of October in the year of our Lord 1786. Daniel Van Voorhis."

Thus at the age of fifty-two did our captain succeed in getting so far from the sea that never again did the roar of its breakers sound

in his ears. His was an adventure almost as momentous as that which his great-great grandparents had undertaken a century and a quarter before. It is not known that he ever returned to visit his relatives in the east.

Three years later a daughter was born in the log house at Pigeon Creek, but she did not long survive, nor did her mother. So Captain Daniel was again bereft, this time with three small children to be cared for. In 1791 Nancy Myers accepted responsibility for their mothering, and a few years later the family home needed enlarging to receive two additional children, a daughter and a son. Not many years later the original log cabin was replaced by a house of larger proportions in which members of the family lived for nearly half a century.

Captain Daniel Van Voorhis lived a third of a century after removing to the Monongahela region—until 1817, when he was past eighty years of age. His children had grown to maturity and all were married except the youngest son, Isaac, whose marriage occurred within a few months. In the course of the years many of their descendants have gone far from the Monongahela homestead, but they have cherished the memory of those pioneer days, and have kept alive the feeling of kinship. Seven years ago, at the call of H. Morris Van Voorhis, D.D.S., then of Morgantown, W. Va., the first of a series of reunions was held, and others followed each year until 1933 on the Saturday preceding Labor Day. On some occasions nearly 200 have been in attendance. The officers have shown interest in the plan of the Van Voorhees Association to commemorate in 1935 the 275th anniversary of the coming to America of our common ancestor.

A TREK TO KENTUCKY

In the days of difficult and irregular communication many who ventured into the wilderness were not careful to send extended reports of their adventures and few of their messages were preserved. Nor were the letters sent by the folk back home cared for more diligently than those that had been sent from the Netherlands a century or more before. Thus it happened that a generation or more after the migration pioneer families had only traditional knowledge of their line of descent, and in many cases the connection has proved difficult to discover.

The officers of the Van Voorhees Association learned in 1932 from Mr. M. J. Voris of Richmond, Indiana, that members of his family had not yet been able to establish a connection with the family in New Jersey. He could trace the line back to Albert Voorhees or Vorhis who had gone to Conewago in Pennsylvania, near the present city of Gettysburg, and had then removed to Kentucky, and before 1790 made his home in Pleasureville, having married Ann Banta. But who was Albert's father? If tradition was correct his name was Cornelius.

Shortly after the publication of the Condensed Genealogy, Donald Sinclair of Highland Park, N. J., a descendant of Albert and Ann Banta Vorhis, noted on page twenty-five the name "Albert b. 1753"—the oldest son of Cornelius and Lena Voorhees of Harlingen, N. J. From the genealogy of the Banta family he learned that the year of Albert Voorhees's birth was given as 1753. Information from the two sources were in agreement, and the fact was duly announced in an article in the March 31, 1933, number of the *Messenger-Gazette* of Somerville, N. J.

Shortly thereafter it was learned that Clarence R. Voris of Fairbury, Ill., had already come to the same conclusion, stating on page nineteen of his typewritten monograph that two weeks had intervened between Albert's birthdate, March 25, 1753, as given in the Banta genealogy, and April 8, the baptismal date in the Harlingen, N. J., records as quoted in the Van Voorhees Family, page 554. Mr. Voris was pleased to have an independent corroboration of his conclusions, and applied at once for membership in the Van Voorhees Association.

Thus Albert Voorhees, son of Cornelius and Lena of Harlingen, N. J., was a grandson of Albert Janse, the fifth son of Jan Steven- sen, who was in turn the fourth son of Steven Coerten, our common ancestor.

The most striking part of this story has to do with a trek to Kentucky in which Albert Voorhees and Ann Banta had a part. Before this, however, he had a rather distressing experience in the War for American Independence. He is believed to be the Albert *Vorris* who enlisted early in 1776, when in his fourteenth year, in a Pennsylvania regiment of Rifle Men, that had been recruited to protect the Province, but was marched to New York and participated in the Battle of Long Island on August 27th. The regiment suffered

greatly, and Albert Vorris was wounded, and detained in a hospital for many weeks. Of further military service there seems to be no record.

After the war he went to Conewago at the time when many families had decided to remove to Kentucky. The leader of one party was Hendrick Banta, a man of great force of character, who had moved from near Hackensack in Bergen County to Bedminster township in Somerset about 1755, and was three years later chosen as an Elder when on Christmas day, 1758, a consistory was constituted for the new Reformed Church of Bedminster. A few years later he took his growing family to Conewago, Pa., near the present city of Gettysburg, and then, in 1780 or 1781, led an expedition to Fort Harrod, later called Harrodsburg, in Central Kentucky, in the neighborhood of the White Oak Spring, a mile above Boonsboro, which spring is "twelve feet square at the top and 100 feet deep, boiling up pure, cold and fresh, and flowing off in a large and constant stream."

The trek of that Dutch Company of nearly 150 years ago was over a long and difficult trail, southwestward, through the Shenandoah Valley and the Cumberland Gap to Central Kentucky nearly 600 miles. The men drove their cattle before them while they led pack horses on which women and children rode, amid such belongings as they deemed indispensable.

The Banta contingent was something like that of Jacob in Bible times. When his eldest son died, and his widow was killed by a falling tree, leaving nine children, Hendrick, the grandfather, assumed responsibility for them. Of his nineteen living children twelve accompanied him, five under twelve years of age; also nineteen grandchildren, almost all of them under twelve.

Shortly after their arrival his son Jacob, who had married Catherine Voorhees, was tomahawked, and for several seasons they suffered much from hostile Indians. The marvel is that such a large proportion of them survived.

These Dutch settlers found themselves at a disadvantage when they sought to secure land on which to settle, and hence in 1783 forwarded a petition to the Continental Congress asking for a grant of land in Ohio. Hendrick Banta was the first of the 103 signers to this petition. In addition to Albert Vorhis, the following members of the family are among the forty-six who affixed their signatures—John Vorhis, Junior, Luke Vorhis, John Voreis, Sophia Voreis,

widow, Cornelius Voreis, Francis Vorees, and James Vories; and the names of Rulof and Cornelius Voorhis are listed among 105 others who intended to join the company.

Before many months a tract of about 10,000 acres was secured from John Boone, a brother of Daniel Boone, and soon thereafter families of the "Low Dutch Colony" began making their homes on it. It was located in Henry county in and around Pleasureville, about forty miles east of the present city of Louisville.

Some years later the company petitioned the Classis of New Brunswick for a minister that a Reformed Church might be organized. Though a minister was sent to visit them, an organization proved impossible of maintenance and shepherding at such a distance, and so most of them became Presbyterians. The petition, dated August 13, 1795, was signed by eight men, all of sturdy Dutch families.

The list of settlers sent with the petition contained many Dutch names familiar to Somerset and Middlesex county families of today.

Albert Vorhis was thirty years old when on April 2, 1783, he married Ann Banta, a granddaughter of Hendrick, then a young woman of sixteen. Their fourteen children were born between 1784 and 1812. Our Indiana friends are descendants of Peter, the twelfth child, who was born in 1808. Arthur Sinclair is a great-great grandson of Mary Voris, the fourth child, who was born February 1, 1790.

Dutch thrift overcame great difficulties in that new country. When Hendrick Banta died in 1805, aged eighty-four, his second wife, Antie or Anna Demarest—the mother of thirteen children, nine sons and four daughters, outlived him. To her he bequeathed all his lands and also all his "personal estate of every sort and kind." Albert Voris, Cornelius Banta, and John Voris were named executors in the will. Thus the concluding days of this mother in Israel, whose life spanned the distressful years of the Revolution, the removal to Pennsylvania, the trek over a wilderness trail of 600 miles to Kentucky, and until that territory had become one of the United States of America under a republican government, were lived in peace and comparative plenty. Her children and grandchildren rose up to call her blessed. During all her days she had lived in close association with members of the Voorhees family, some of whom had shared her hardships, and others were her companions at the end of her life's journey.



XVI

A TALE FROM THE WAR OF 1812

THE loss of Fort Dearborn was one of the early tragedies of the War of 1812. Built in 1802 at a bend of the Chicago river, and not far from Lake Michigan, it was occupied by a small body of United States troops but was abandoned on August 15, 1812, because the commander of the garrison felt unable to cope with the warlike Indians. In spite of all efforts to pacify them they went upon the war path, attacked and massacred both soldiers and civilians, and then destroyed the fort and several adjacent buildings.

Not far from the place where the massacre occurred a Replica of Fort Dearborn was erected within the grounds of the Century of Progress exposition, and attracted wide attention. During a visit there in June 1933, the writer was surprised to see "Dr. Isaac Van Voorhis" posted over the entrance to one of the rooms, and to note in another room the pay roll of a company of the First Regiment of Infantry of the United States Army for the months of April, May and June, 1812, "Dr. Isaac Van Voorhis, Surgeon's Mate" was fourth on the roll, and "Killed in action, August 15, 1812," was opposite the name. The amount due was \$90.00.

Interest thus aroused led to an examination of the Van Voorhis Genealogy, where it appeared that Surgeon Isaac Van Voorhis was of the Fishkill, N. Y., branch of the family. He was the oldest son of William Roe Van Voorhis, who was in turn the grandfather of Elias W. Van Voorhis, the compiler of the genealogy.

Isaac Van Voorhis was born near Fishkill, N. Y., February 22, 1790. He was educated in the academy in Newburgh, N. Y., studied medicine, and when about twenty he enlisted in the United States Army as a surgeon. Soon thereafter he was sent with his company, commanded by Captain Nathan Heald, to Fort Dearborn. He was in this service when war with Great Britain was brewing, and at its outbreak early in 1812.

The Army of the Northwest was then put in command of Brigadier General William Hull, who had been governor of the Michigan territory. He took several companies from Dayton, Ohio, to Detroit, and ordered Captain Heald to evacuate Fort Dearborn and join him there.

That conditions in the service were not encouraging is evident from a letter written on October 11, 1811, by Surgeon Van Voorhis to a friend in Newburgh, which was published in the *Newburgh Political Index* on November 17, 1812. In this letter two statements are prominent: One, of the great possibilities of the Middle West, and the other, of the treacherous influence of British traders upon the Indians.

Dr. Van Voorhis wrote in part as follows:

"In my solitary walks I contemplate what a great and powerful republic will yet arise in this new world. Here, I say, will be the seat of millions yet unborn; here the asylum of oppressed thousands yet to come. How composedly would I die could I be resuscitated at that bright era of America's greatness—an era which I hope will announce the tidings of death to fell superstition and dread tyranny.

"I cannot also but notice the villany practiced in the Indian country by British agents and traders. You hear of it at a distance, but we, near the scene of action, are sensible of it. They labor by every unprincipled means to instigate the savages against the Americans, to inculcate the idea that we intend to drive the Indians beyond the Mississippi; that in every purchase of land the government defrauds them. Their united efforts aim to the destruction of every trading house and the prevention of the extension of our frontier. Never till a prohibition to the entrance of all foreigners, and specially British subjects, into the Indian country takes place, will we enjoy a lasting peace with the credulous, deluded and cannibal savages."

This was written ten months before the tragic event that resulted in the author's sudden death, which occurred during the "Massacre of Fort Dearborn." The story is told by Joseph Kirkland, after carefully comparing all available records, in a book entitled "The Chicago Massacre of 1812—a Historical and Biographical Narrative of Fort Dearborn (now Chicago)" that was published in 1895 by the Alhambra Book Company of that city.

It was on August 9, 1812, that Captain Heald received orders from General Hull to evacuate the fort. This fact evidently became known to the unfriendly Pottawotamie Indians. On the 14th Captain William Wells arrived from Fort Wayne with thirty friendly Mami Indians.

who were to guide the soldiers and members of the little community after they had evacuated the fort.

Captain Heald's forces consisted of forty-four regular soldiers and twelve militiamen. There were in addition in the settlement about thirty men, women and children, including McKenzie, who had been a trader there for several years.

The company marched out of the fort early Saturday morning, preceded by Captain Wells with half of the Indian escort, the remainder following after the soldiers and the wagon train. They had gone forward between the sand-dunes and the shore scarcely more than a mile and a half when they were ambushed by Indians who had secreted themselves behind the dunes, their number being estimated at between 400 and 500.

Though the soldiers fought bravely, it was soon evident that the company was overpowered and Captain Heald surrendered, but not until all the militia, twenty-six regular soldiers, and two women and twelve children had been murdered, including Captain Wells, Ensign Ronan, and Surgeon Van Voorhis. The surgeon's horse was shot under him, he was wounded in the leg, and then cruelly scalped by one of the Indians.

Nearly all those who surrendered were later redeemed at Detroit. Among them were two women, one the wife of Captain Heald, and the other a relative of Captain Wells, and their stories of the encounter are incorporated in Mr. Kirkland's narrative, as is also the official report of Captain Heald.

Surgeon Van Voorhis is spoken of as a young man of great merit. In the article in the *Newburgh Political Index* it is stated that "he possessed an enterprising and cultivated mind and was ardent in support of the interests and honor of his country. When asked if he was willing to go to the garrison at Fort Osage several hundred miles up the Missouri river, his reply was: "I am ready to serve my country wherever my services are required." So far as is known now he was never sent farther west than Fort Dearborn.

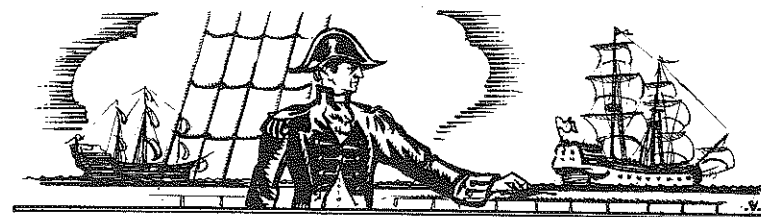
In several reports the name of the surgeon is written Voorhees or Van Voorhees, though the family in Fishkill and vicinity had come to spell it Van Voorhis. In no account is anything stated respecting the burial of the dead. Under the disturbed condition of the country it is presumed that the bodies were interred near where they fell. There is no evidence that the conditions were such that the

body of Dr. Van Voorhis could be claimed by his family and brought to his native place for interment.

This case indicates the slowness with which news then traveled. On August 16, the day after the massacre at Fort Dearborn, General Hull surrendered his army of the Northwest at Detroit, but this fact did not appear in the New York papers until August 31—15 days later. Later still an official report was given out.

A search of the pages of the New York *Evening Post* reveals that the first news respecting the Fort Dearborn disaster was published on September 24, nearly six weeks after the event.

This story may be accepted as typical of many others that are not so well known. It illustrates the fact that patriotic fervor persists from generation to generation. Elias Van Voorhis, a brother of the surgeon's father, had served in the Revolutionary Army, and died in a British prison in New York in 1778. Jannetje Van Voorhis Brinkerhoff, of whom something is told in another chapter, was a sister of the surgeon's great grandfather. In the generation following him Barker Van Voorhis served with honor in the United States Navy. Later wars have had their victims, and also their heroes. We now remind ourselves that there are finer loyalties than those of armed conflict. The family motto, *Virtus Castellum Meum* is still a worthy watchword, for we well translate *Virtus* as courage that conquers with spiritual weapons.



XVII

A VOORHEES IN NAVAL ANNALS

FEW careers in the annals of the United States Navy are so checkered as that of Philip Falkerson Voorhees, who was born in New Brunswick in 1792, entered the service as midshipman when but seventeen, served with distinction and high ability for more than half a century, and yet was the victim of such injustice that two presidents of the United States had to intervene to save him from being retired in semi-disgrace. As yet the Van Voorhees Association has been unable to learn who were the parents of this Captain Voorhees.

Attention was turned to him by the editors of the "Dictionary of American Biography," who wish to include an account of his career in their work, sixteen volumes of which have already appeared.

Joining the Navy in 1809, Midshipman Voorhees saw active service during the War of 1812, before he was of age. He had part in the capture of the "Macedonian" by the "United States," and of the "Epervier" by the "Peacock," and was duly awarded a medal by the Congress.

In April 1828, he was promoted to the rank of Commander, and ten years later to that of Captain. He was assigned to the frigate "Constitution" on its first cruise, during which he assisted in rescuing the stranded British steamer "Gorgon" in the LaPlata river.

In 1844, Captain Voorhees captured an armed Argentine squadron after it had fired into his convoy. He released the squadron after an apology, but detained the cruiser, which had aggravated the assault by firing under a false flag. His determined action was highly praised by United States diplomatic and consular representatives and by foreign naval officers in South American waters.

However, as Argentina and Montevideo were at war, and the "Congress" was there to protect American interests only, his act was

officially censured by Commodore Turner, who ordered him to take his vessel to Norfolk, Virginia. As he went instead to Annapolis, he was twice tried by Court Martial. In the South American case, for which he had been censured, he was not convicted, but for failing to repair to Norfolk, and for "allowing the crew to be punished illegally," he was convicted, and sentenced to be dismissed from the navy, and at the same time, "In consideration of his character for integrity, his gallant service as an officer and his long continuance in the Naval Service without reproach or dereliction of duty he was recommended to the merciful consideration of the confirming power."

"In pursuance of this recommendation President James K. Polk on September 29, 1845, commuted the sentence of dismissal to five years suspension without pay or emolument from that date."

Against this action Captain Voorhees protested. He had not allowed the crew to be punished illegally; i.e., by flogging, but had only entered on the log that the order of the Secretary of the Navy would be obeyed, if a case occurred. And moreover, his taking his vessel to Annapolis was due to stress of weather. The pilot he had taken on board was absolutely unable to get to Norfolk, or even to Hampton. And as soon as his vessel reached Annapolis Captain Voorhees had reported his plight to the Secretary of the Navy, and later sailed for Norfolk.

On a second review of the case, President Polk, on the 7th of January, 1847, pardoned Captain Voorhees, restoring him to all his rights, privileges and pay. And he was permitted to publish his defense made at his second trial.

After this vindication he was sent to the Far East as commander of the U. S. S. "Plymouth," and among other duties was ordered, while in Chinese waters, to escort to his destination Mr. John Balistier, who had been appointed special agent and envoy to Cochin, China, and had him and an interpreter on board from February until July, 1850. This long cruise in an unhealthy climate was most trying, and being relieved of the care of Mr. Balistier by the arrival of the "Jamestown," Captain Voorhees sailed for the United States, under discretionary, though not specific, orders. Though this was essential to his own health and that of his crew, he was mildly reprimanded, though not censured.

In 1853, while in command of the frigate "Savannah," sailing from Boston for San Francisco, "he was commissioned to carry Charles

Eames, Esq., U. S. Commissioner to the Sandwich Islands." Mr. Eames "messed throughout the voyage, and while the ship remained in San Francisco a period of six months in the cabin." For this, as in the case of Mr. Balistier, Captain Voorhees was under the necessity of appealing to Congress to reimburse him for expenses paid out of his own purse, and then had to wait until he could be repaid after special appropriation bills had been enacted and approved.

On September 13, 1855, when sixty-three years of age, Captain Voorhees was placed on the reserved list with furlough pay. This he believed to be an act of injustice, and at his request his case was reviewed by the Naval Retiring Board, which, after allowing all the old charges to be rehearsed, recommended that he be retained on this list.

Here again he protested against evident injustice, and his case was reviewed again, under direction of President James Buchanan, by Attorney General Jeremiah S. Black. His opinion, dated October 15, 1848, indicates that he became thoroughly indignant at the treatment to which Captain Voorhees had been subjected. He was scathing in his denunciation of the injustice that had been meted out to him by reviving old charges, in effect trying him a second time when whatever of error had been charged against him had been wiped out by President Polk's pardon. When Attorney General Black had finished his review in an opinion of over 4,000 words, the vindication was complete. No whisper had been uttered against the Captain's family life, his financial integrity, or habits of sobriety. Its closing words are:

"The offenses which show him to be wanting in mental ability and moral principles are flogging and falsehood, and the record relied on to prove it show him to be guiltless of both. The history even of the American Navy hardly contains another instance where one man has been the victim of so many blunders."

This report was dated October 15, 1858.

President Buchanan approved the findings of Attorney General Black and recommended to the Senate that Captain Voorhees be restored to his rank, and given such back pay as was due. On December 22 of that year he was placed on the Reserved List, and so continued until his death on February 26, 1862, in his seventieth year. At the outbreak of the Civil War he requested to be assigned to active duty, but this his age and health did not allow. He was buried at Annapolis with full Naval honors.

On May 12, 1834, Captain Voorhees had married at Annapolis, Maryland, at the home of the bride's mother, Mrs. Deborah Randall, Anne Randall; the officiating clergyman being Rev. J. G. Blanchard of St. Anne's Episcopal Church of that city. He was then forty-two years of age. Thereafter he considered Annapolis his home.

There were two children, Philip Falkerson Jr., who became a patent lawyer in New York, but left no descendants. A daughter, Eliza Frances, married Hollins McKim of Baltimore. They had a large family, and many of their descendants survive. Mrs. Voorhees had a "family tree," but this has been lost, and the connection with the Voorhees family has not yet been discovered.

After the death of Captain Voorhees in 1862, his widow applied for a pension, which was approved by a committee of the House, but failed of approval by a similar committee of the Senate. A bill was introduced in Congress on December 13, 1883, allowing her a pension of \$50.00 per month from that date, but it was never passed.

THE
EVANGELINE
OAK



NEAR
THE "POSTES
ATTAKAPAS"

XVIII

THE FAMILY IN LOUISIANA

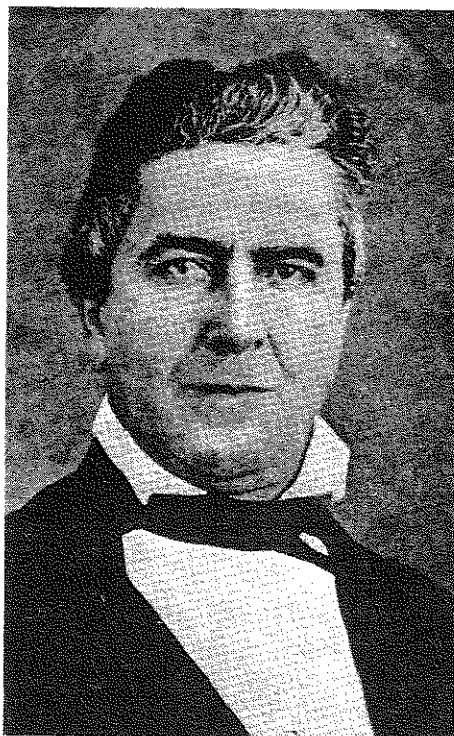
AMONG the great grandchildren of Coert Stevenson Van Voorhees was Cornelius, a son of Abraham, who removed with his wife, Aeltie Couwenhoven, from Flatlands to the vicinity of Princeton, New Jersey. They had one son, Daniel, born in 1749, who married 1st Sarah Gordon, a sister of Peter Gordon, who rose to the rank of General in the Revolutionary War. Daniel also enlisted and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in Captain Chambers' company of Middlesex county militia. They had one son, Peter Gordon Voorhees, who removed to Lexington, Kentucky.

Daniel Voorhees married 2d Eva Couwenhoven and they had two sons, Cornelius and William. The father died in 1782, when Cornelius was but seven, and his brother William only two years of age. When they grew to manhood, William removed to Lyons, New York, and Cornelius to Kentucky, and then to Central Louisiana, where in 1803 he married Aimee Gradenigo, of a distinguished Italian family. Several of their descendants have become members of the Van Voorhees Association. One of these, Bennett J. Voorhies, Esq. of Lafayette, Louisiana, a great-great grandson of Cornelius and Aimee Voorhies, responded to a request for an account of the family in Louisiana, which is here printed.

BY BENNETT J. VOORHIES

The tradition in the Voorhies family in Louisiana has been that our ancestor, Cornelius Voorhees, Sr. was born in Kentucky. But as the date of that event was July 18, 1775, and as his father, Daniel Voorhees, served in the Middlesex County militia, the removal of the family to Kentucky must have occurred after the War for Independence had been won. Of the home in Kentucky little has been learned.

It is known, however, that the urge of the spirit of adventure and the desire to explore a new land and clime possessed Cornelius Voorhees in his young manhood, and he migrated to the Parish of St. Landry, Louisiana, where he met and married Aimee Gradenigo, a direct descendant of a distinguished family of Doges in Venice. Tradition has it that he journeyed to Venice with his bride, and



JUDGE CORNELIUS VOORHIES
1804 - 1886

that because of her station in life, that of nobility, she was asked to renounce her marriage, sever the marital bonds, and disavow the commoner, her sturdy Dutch husband; but this she never did, and instead returned with him to Louisiana where she continued to live until she attained the advanced age of ninety-three.

Cornelius Voorhies, Sr., was first sheriff and afterwards parish Judge of Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana, which position he held until the time of his death.

Regularly, once every two years, he would journey on horse back to Lexington, Kentucky, to visit his relatives, and on his last visit there, when sixty years of age, he died on August 26, 1835, and was buried in the State of his youth.

Out of the union of the marriage between Cornelius Voorhies and Aimee Gradenigo were born nine children—William, Clarissa, Amelia, Peter G., F. Horace, Marguerite, Eulalie, and Cornelius Jr., several of whom were prominently identified with public affairs, but it would appear that Cornelius Voorhies Jr., attained greater heights in his profession, and became the better known throughout the State.

Cornelius Voorhies Jr., was born on July 22, 1804, and on July 18, 1826 was married to Cidalise Mouton, who was a direct descendant of that gallant Acadian, Salvador Mouton, an exile who migrated from Nova Scotia to Louisiana in 1753, due to British hostilities, and who braved death itself rather than renounce his faith, his king and his country. He received a limited education and at an early age began the study of law in St. Martinville, being admitted to the bar in 1825. He first located in the Parish of Lafayette where he practiced for four or five years, and then removed to St. Martinville where he devoted himself to the practice of law for several years. He was a member of the Louisiana House of Representatives from 1832 to 1833, District Attorney from 1842 to 1844, member of the State Constitutional Convention in 1845, Judge of the 14th Judicial District Court from 1846 to 1854, when he was elevated to the Supreme Court bench, and served as a Justice until his death in 1859.

From the time of the marriage of Cornelius Voorhies to Cidalise Mouton, to the present time, many of the Voorhies name in Louisiana have married into French-speaking Acadian families. With Louisiana environments and French-speaking relatives, the Dutch language was soon forgotten, and Dutch customs and religion yielded to those of Nova Scotia.

After his marriage, Cornelius Voorhies moved to the Attakapas Country of Louisiana (Atac-a-pas, signifying "Man-eater" in the Indian tongue), so-called because of that blood-thirsty tribe of Indian warriors that had roamed over the plains. His home and

manner of living are depicted in "Acadian Reminiscences and the True Story of Evangeline," written by his son, Judge Felix Voorhies, follows:

"My father's house stood on a sloping hill, in the center of a large yard, whose finely laid rows of china trees, interspersed with clusters of towering oaks, formed delightful vistas. On the declivity of the hill the orchard displayed its wealth of orange, of plum and peach trees. Farther on was the garden, teeming with vegetables of all kinds, sufficient for the need of a whole village.

"I can yet picture that yard, with its hundreds of poultry, so full of life, running with flapping of wings and with noisy cacklings around my mother as she scattered the grain for them morning and evening.

"At the foot of the hill, extending to the Vermillion Bayou, were the pasture grounds where grazed the cattle, and where the bleating sheep followed, step by step, the stately ram with tinkling bell suspended to his neck."

The children of Cornelius Voorhies Jr. and Cidalise Mouton were Edgar, Albert, Alfred, Martin, Felix, Marie Cornelia, Marie Amelie, Charles, and Louis Voorhies.

Of these, Albert, born January 23, 1829, and Felix, born January 1, 1839, gained the greater prominence. Felix Voorhies, the author of "Acadian Reminiscences," was an ornament to the legal profession. He studied law in St. Martinville and was admitted to the bar in 1860, and from that time until his death in 1899 he practiced law in St. Martinville, and at Lafayette. He received his education at St. Charles College, Grand Coteau, Louisiana, and Springhill College of Mobile, Alabama. He enlisted in the confederate service in 1861, in Company C, Eighth Louisiana Regiment, was assigned to duty in Virginia, and continued in active service until the latter part of 1862, when he was discharged on account of disability. After recuperating he again entered the service in the latter part of 1863 as Captain of the Independent Cavalry Company, and was stationed in Louisiana for about a year. Later he was detailed to bureau duty. After the war Colonel Voorhies returned home and resumed his law practice. In 1874, he was elected representative of St. Martin Parish in the State Legislature, and served one term.

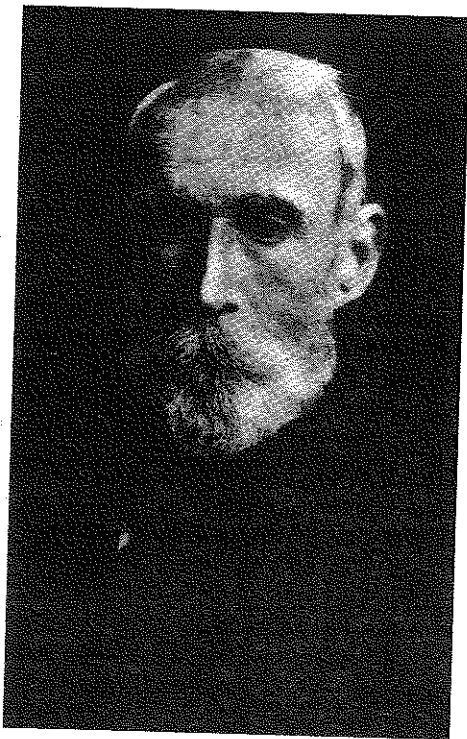
Colonel Voorhies was an ardent democrat, though he did not take an exceedingly prominent part in local affairs. He served as District Judge of St. Martin and Iberia Parishes for eight years, and devoted

much of his leisure time to literature, and was a writer of recognized merit. He wrote a number of comedies in French, some of which have received high commendation. His "Blanche Duvart," or "A Louisiana Romance," was reprinted in both Canada and France. Colonel Voorhies was for many years a regular contributor to the leading French papers in the United States, and his "Louisiana Sketches" in the *New York Independent* have been widely read and admired. His "Acadian Reminiscences" is his only book in English. Colonel Voorhies contributed many articles to local papers, and was for four years editor of *The Observer* at St. Martinville.

He was married in October 1859 to Miss Modeste Potier, daughter of Charles Potier and Marcelite Broussard, and out of the union of that marriage were born Edward G. Voorhies, now deceased, a prominent attorney of Lafayette, Louisiana, who served as Clerk of Court of that parish for sixteen years, and who married Alice Mouton; Felix E. Voorhies of Dallas, Texas, an engineer and mechanic; Dan W. Voorhies, a prominent attorney of St. Martinville; Charles L. Voorhies, an engineer and mechanic of New Orleans; Robert D. Voorhies, a physician of high repute, who has been practicing his profession in the city of Lafayette, Louisiana, for thirty years; Albert P. Voorhies, a dentist, now deceased; Cecile Voorhies, who married L. F. Babin, a resident of the Parish of Lafayette, Louisiana; Paul E. Voorhies, a resident of New Iberia, who owns a large foundry; Walter Voorhies, a resident of Port au Prince, Haiti, and a vice-president of the City National Bank of New York; Lucy Voorhies, who married August Gassie, a resident of the Parish of Lafayette; Joseph S. Voorhies, a bond broker of New Orleans; and Maude Voorhies, who married Frank Dauterive of New Iberia, Louisiana.

The other son of Cornelius Voorhies Jr., who gained wide prominence, was Albert Voorhies. He was educated at St. Charles College, Grand Coteau, Louisiana. Subsequently he went to Lexington, Kentucky, to study law, and returned at the age of nineteen to practice in his native state. At that time his father was serving on the Supreme Court bench, and on his father's death in 1859 he succeeded him in office when only thirty, the youngest Judge ever to sit on that tribunal. During the Civil War, he was Judge Advocate General of the Trans-Mississippi Department of the Confederate Army, was made prisoner, and later exchanged for one general and

sixty-five privates. Immediately after the war, he was elected Lieutenant-Governor of the State. He was a member of the Legislature, Chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee, District Attorney, and District Judge. In the midst of his laborious duties he found time to prepare a revision of the Civil Code of Louisiana,



JUDGE ALBERT VOORHIES

and an excellent work on the Criminal Jurisprudence of that State. He died on January 20, 1913, at the advanced age of eighty-four. After his death, when his portrait in oil was presented to the Supreme Court, Chief Justice Monroe in an extended address said:

"By the time I was admitted to the bar I had become quite familiar with the name of Voorhies. I had, as a part of my studies, familiarized myself to some extent with the jurisprudence of the State; and, in

reading over the decisions of the Supreme Court of the State, as published in our annual volumes, the name of Voorhies very frequently appeared as Judge of the District Court, and subsequently, from the 14th to the 16th Annuals inclusive, as a member of this Court, succeeding, by election, his father, who was Associate Justice Cornelius Voorhies. There seemed to me at that time a great gulf between what was then the present and past. Between those periods there intervened the chasm of war, and these gentlemen, particularly Judge Campbell, Judge Merrick, and Judge Voorhies, impressed me as being men who had been taken from a former generation, as men who belonged to some previous era. I do not know why they particularly impressed me in that way, because other men, equally as old, and living in Louisiana just as long, did not so impress me. It is perhaps because they retained their habits. They wore the same kind of clothing; they wore silk hats and black frock coats, and fashion never changed for them so far as my memory serves me.

"Speaking in reference to another aspect or phase of his character that impressed me always was the buoyancy, I might say resiliency, and the elasticity of his character. Whatever may have been his sorrows, his troubles, they were not apparent to his acquaintances and friends whom he met in the course of everyday life. He seemed always the same, and his unvarying courtesy marked him, in my mind, as a man who was by instinct, as well as by birth, and education, a gentleman. It seemed impossible to conceive the idea that Judge Voorhies would intentionally do a wrong or wound the feelings of any one on earth. I have heard him many times in the trial of cases in which he participated as a member of the bar, and I have yet to recall a single instance in which any one had occasion or could have occasion to find fault with his demeanor, either towards the Court or to his fellow members at the bar.

"I know of no finer encomium that can be bestowed upon any man than to say of him that he was a thorough gentleman, because I think that that includes everything that can be said in praise of any human being on earth."

Albert Voorhies was married to Leontine Durand, daughter of Charles Durand and Amelie LeBlanc. Of their eight children, Arthur Voorhies, their oldest son, is still living at the advanced age of eighty-seven, in the city of New Orleans.

Of the other children of Cornelius Voorhies Jr., Edgar Voorhies 1827-1861, married Euzeide Martin, and was a prominent lawyer. They had six children, three sons and three daughters. Another son, Alfred Voorhies, married Euphrosine Marie Olivier, and they had twelve children. The father was a member of the House of Representatives of Louisiana from 1879 to 1884.

Another son, Martin Voorhies, married Alice Leroy. He was a prominent lawyer of New Orleans, and a member of the House of Representatives from 1859 to 1860. Of their thirteen children all but two grew to maturity. Amelie Voorhies, a daughter, married



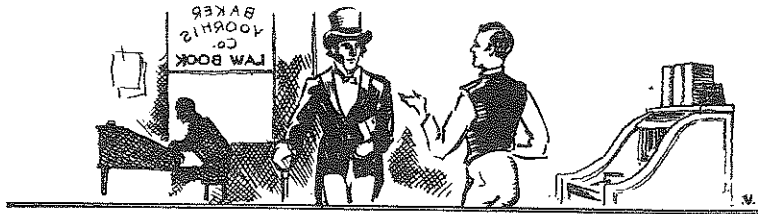
JUDGE FELIX VOORHIES

Louis Bienvenu. Their were eight children of this marriage. Three other children of Cornelius Voorhies Jr. died in their early youth.

To mention the direct descendants of the children and grandchildren of Cornelius Voorhies would be an unsurmountable task. There are hundreds and hundreds who bear the Voorhies name in Louisiana, and thousands of collateral relatives who trace their ancestral lines to that sturdy Dutch family of Van Voorhees.

Mr. Bennett Voorhies has presented a copy of the book written by his grandfather, Hon. Felix Voorhies entitled "Acadian Reminiscences," and another by a neighbor, "The True Story of the Acadians," by Dudley J. LeBlanc. The first is the story of Evangeline as told by the author's grandmother, who had adopted Evangeline, and brought her to Louisiana. Their party was taken by the British to Maryland. They later went overland to Tennessee, and then on a raft down the Tennessee River to the Mississippi, until they reached New Orleans, where they joined Acadian friends who had arrived earlier by other routes. The story, though full of sadness, is beautifully told, and is highly commended.

In 1932 Bennett J. Voorhies when only thirty-one years of age, was a candidate for United States Congress in the Third Louisiana District in the primaries on September 13, 1932, but failed of nomination by 680 votes. He is reminded that Senator Daniel W. Voorhees failed the first time he was a candidate but was not discouraged.



XIX

THE FOUNDERS OF A CENTURY-OLD FIRM

IN the special edition of the *New York Sun* published in 1933, in celebration of the one hundredth year of its publication, among the firms over a century old that were invited to advertise therein was Baker, Voorhis & Company, law book publishers, located at 45 and 47 John Street.

Inquiry revealed that the law book store established at the corner of Wall and Broad Streets by Oliver Halstead had been in continuous existence since 1820, and that John Stevens Voorhies was early associated in the business; after 1830, as a partner. The imprint of Halstead and Voorhies appears on a number of law books published over one hundred years ago. An important work on Chancery Practice in three volumes by Murray Hoffman was the most outstanding publication of the firm in 1834.

On the death of Mr. Halstead in 1842, Mr. Voorhies continued the business for nearly twenty-five years on his own account. He soon accepted as an assistant William W. L. Voorhis, a distant cousin, who began to learn the book trade in 1840 with Carvill & Company, but joined the Voorhies business when that firm retired in 1843. They continued together until the death of the senior Voorhies on November 9, 1866. Then William W. L. Voorhis joined with Messrs. Baker and Goodwin, law book printers, forming the firm of Baker, Voorhis & Company, which has continued the business under this name until the present day. Mr. Voorhis retired in 1886, after an active participation in it for more than forty years.

The two men who built up and maintained this business so successfully were both natives of New Jersey. John S. Voorhies was a great-great-great grandson of Coert Van Voorhees, the names in his line being Albert, Zaccheus who moved to Somerset County, Coert, and Zaccheus who married Eliza Stevens and removed from Millstone to New York. John Stevens Voorhies was therefore in the seventh generation from our common ancestor.

William W. L. Voorhies was a great-great grandson of Jan Van Voorhees, the names in his line being Jan J. who moved to Monmouth County, Hendrick, and Thomas Letson who married Mary E. Griffin. Their son, William W. Letson Voorhies went to New York in his boyhood, where he was highly regarded by his business associates.

The John S. Voorhies firm enjoyed great popularity with the legal profession, and Mr. Voorhies enjoyed the patronage and confidence of the leading lawyers of his native city during his entire life. His store, at No. 20 Nassau Street, was a favorite resort of such men as Chancellor James Kent, George Wood, Hugh Maxwell, Edward Sanford, Daniel Lord, J. Prescott Hall, William Curtis Noyes, John Duer, James W. Gerard, Theodore Sedgwick, Joseph P. Bradley, Charles O'Connor, David Dudley Field, William M. Evarts, Charles P. Daly, and many others who had attained eminence or were rising members of the bar.

Mr. Voorhies had a thorough familiarity with law publications. His knowledge of their needs was of great service to his patrons, who relied upon him in the selection of law libraries, and always found his judgment sound. Early in life he began the publication of law books, and gave to the profession many standard works on law and jurisprudence.

Among the publications of his firm were Theodore Sedgwick's able treatises on "The Measure of Damages"; "The Construction of Statutory and Constitutional Law"; Alexander M. Burrill's works, comprising a "Law Dictionary and Glossary" in two volumes; a work on "Practice" in three volumes; a work on "Assignments"; Bradford's "Surrogate's Reports," and Blatchford's "United States Circuit Court Reports." He also printed, with American annotations, a number of standard English law books, one of which, "Mitford's Chancery Pleadings," ran into five or six editions.

When a new code of civil procedure was adopted by the State of New York in 1848, the Voorhies firm was the first to publish an annotated edition citing decisions of the courts applying to its various sections. Later, with the assistance of Mr. John Townshend, then a rising young lawyer, the firm prepared and issued an edition of the work familiarly known as "The Voorhies Code," which, owing to the special skill and legal acumen of Mr. Townshend, the editor and annotator, was the most valuable legal work of its kind published. Edition followed edition every few years.

He was always a careful, conservative publisher, shrinking from large ventures, preferring the slower and more certain returns of a steady, safe business. But he had the sagacity to know when a really good work was offered. And so when the Abbott brothers in 1859, then rising young lawyers, proposed a "Digest of the New York Reports and Statutes," in five or six volumes, upon a far better plan than had before been devised, Mr. Voorhies, not without many misgivings, however, decided to undertake the publication of this the most important and extensive work of his life. The Digest was nearly three years going through the press. It required a very large outlay of money, but such were the accuracy and superiority of the work that its success soon became assured, and it proved to be one of the most profitable of Mr. Voorhies' ventures. He also began a series of "Practice Reports" prepared by the Abbott brothers, and published their "Forms of Practice and Pleading," the "Clerks & Conveyancers' Assistant," and many other law books.

Mr. Voorhies married in 1840 Maria M. Davis. Their three sons died in infancy; two daughters grew to womanhood. Anna M. married David Gildersleeve and Ellen F. married Robert Proddow.

William W. L. Voorhis married Julia R. Jarvis, but there were no children; hence none of the name to carry on the business. But others have maintained it, and the Baker, Voorhis & Company store on John Street is to this day widely known.

These facts respecting the business are culled from a pamphlet entitled "100 Years in Business," published by Baker, Voorhis & Company in 1920.

XX

DANIEL VAN VOORHIS, SILVERSMITH

EARLY New York city directories disclose the fact that before the end of the eighteenth century several persons bearing the Van Voorhees name had become prominently identified with the business life of the community. One, Daniel Van Voorhis, attained prominence as a gold- and silversmith. He learned his trade in Philadelphia where he set up in business before 1782. An advertisement in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of May 6th of that year reads:

"Daniel Van Voorhis, goldsmith, informs the public that he has removed from his late dwelling house in Market Street, to the west side of Front Street six doors below the Coffee House, where he continues to carry on his business in all branches. He flatters himself, from his close attention, to give general satisfaction to all who may favor him with their custom."

Less than a year later he removed to Princeton, N. J., where, according to an advertisement in the *New Jersey Gazette* of February 4, 1783, he was located "a small distance eastward of the College." He soon moved to New York City where in 1785 he formed a partnership with one William Cooley, which, however, continued less than a year. In 1787 he had a shop at 72 Hanover Square, and in 1789 at 7 Queen Street. In 1796 another brief partnership was formed under the name Van Voorhis and Schenck. In 1797 his store was at 141 Broadway. A year later he took his eldest son, John Richards, into partnership, and thereafter advertised for sale an extensive line of wares, thus enumerated:

"Urns, Coffee Pots, Sugar Dishes, Tankards, Slop Bowls, Candlesticks, Sauce Boats, Tea Pots, Pint and Half Pint Cans, Milk Pots, Water Pots, Soup Ladles, Casters and Stands, Spoons, Buckels, Scissors, Chains, Sleeve Buttons, Gold and Silver Brooches, Gold Beads."

This would indicate an extensive and prosperous business. Many articles bore the firm's Hall Marks, of which two are noted: one the initials D. V. V. within a rectangle—the other an Eagle within a diamond shaped lozenge.

The Van Voorhis firm produced silverware in artistic and popular designs of which many specimens are extant. A Coffee Pot and Spoons are exhibited in the American Wing of the Metropolitan

Museum of Art on Fifth Avenue, New York, and several pieces of Church Silver are listed in a recent Loan Exhibit there, including an Alms Basin belonging to the "Episcopal Church of the Town of Yonkers." There is also a fine display in the Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Avenue and 104th Street.

The above information is derived largely from a volume privately printed in New York in 1927 by Stephen G. Susko, entitled "American Silversmiths and their Marks."

Daniel Van Voorhis the silversmith was a descendant in the fourth generation of Coert Stevensen, through his son Cornelius, and his grandson Daniel, who had removed to Oyster Bay, Long Island. He was a nephew of Captain Daniel Van Voorhis (whose activities are recited in another chapter), the oldest son of Captain Daniel's older brother Cornelius who had married Neeltje Hoagland of Oyster Bay, and who adopted the name Van Voorhis.

Daniel Van Voorhis, born August 30, 1751, was thirty-four years of age when he removed his business to New York. In February, 1775, just before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, he had married Catherine Richards, by whom he had three children then living—John Richards, born in 1776; Susanna, in 1780, and Daniel Cornelius, in 1782. Five other children were later born to them in New York, only two of whom, a son Richards and a daughter Elizabeth, later married and left descendants.

Daniel's oldest son, John Richards, had just become of age when taken into partnership by his father. He died eight years later, in 1805. His death was a severe blow to the father who shortly thereafter liquidated the business, and accepted a position as weigher in the United States Custom House at New York.

Daniel Van Voorhis died at his home, 36 Sands Street, Brooklyn, June 10, 1824, at the age of seventy-three. His second son, Daniel, had died in 1818; another son, Richards, lived to be ninety-six years of age; he died April 12, 1881.

Although Elias W. Van Voorhis gives accurate genealogical data respecting the family of his distant relative, Daniel Van Voorhis—who was a third cousin of his grandfather, he made no mention of the business in which he had been engaged, and but for a chance view of a coffee pot bearing his Hall Mark in possession of a distant relative in Ohio, the facts respecting the silversmith might not have come to light.



XXI

A STORY FROM MEXICO

IN THE turn of events the unusual often happens. Among the casual acquaintances of the writer was Job W. Angus, Esq., who had been for many years a close friend and office assistant of his cousin, Foster M. Voorhees of Elizabeth, New Jersey, for a term of three years governor of the state. This friendship continued until the latter's death in 1927.

In January 1933, Mr. Angus found among the effects of his father, a packet of papers that had remained unexamined for many years. He therefore forwarded them with a note explaining that they related to a "Mr. Voorhees who died in Mexico in 1844, and my father had something to do with the settlement of his estate. I did not know that the Voorhees and Angus families were ever together until Foster and I joined forces."

The estate was that of Marcus Tully Voorhees who, born in Amsterdam, New York, May 19, 1812, had gone when a young man to New Orleans and established himself in business. When the War with Mexico was brewing he went to Puebla, Mexico, on a business trip, and after a brief illness, died of cholera on December 13, 1844, when only thirty-two years of age. James W. Angus from New Jersey, then in Puebla, was with him during his illness, and accepted from him a large sum of money, some keepsakes, including a fine gold watch, giving assurance that his dying wishes would receive his fullest attention. The papers are complete evidence of the fidelity of Mr. Angus to that solemn promise.

Mr. Voorhees was buried at the cathedral at Puebla. Messages were sent to his father, Samuel Voorhees, M.D., in Amsterdam, New York, and to the American Consul, John Black, whose good offices were needed under the circumstances.

Mr. Angus on January 28, 1845, reported to the Consul that he had received in cash \$1050.44, and had paid funeral expenses totaling

\$210.31 $\frac{1}{2}$, for which an itemized statement was inclosed. He forwarded an inventory of personal effects, with a statement that they had brought \$127.56 at public sale, as copies of the inventory and a sale sheet duly attested. He then had \$840.00 in his possession.

In April after the death of his son, Dr. Samuel Voorhees went to New Orleans to look after his business affairs, and met by appointment a young man who had been with him during his sickness and at his death. Thus the father learned that no medical or friendly service had been omitted, since the son died among friends. The father in a letter from which these facts are taken states that he was assured that Marcus was held in high esteem in New Orleans by his business and other associates.

To make final settlement a lawyer, Luis S. Hargous of Vera Cruz, was given a power of attorney by the father, and when other collections had been made and reported, the Consul wrote Mr. Angus directing him to turn over to the attorney, the gold watch, valued at \$140, and the amount then in hand—\$1017.31—that these might be forwarded to New York by the "Ann Louisa," a vessel that was to sail on December 1, 1845.

The papers and letters in the case were on thin but very good paper. Several of them are copies in Mr. Angus' handwriting. The two letters from the attorney were well written in good English, evidently by an American copyist. One of them was directed to "Sor D. Diego W. Angus"—Diego being the Spanish for James. The postmarks are within rectangular lines thus:

OCTOBER 13
VERA CRUZ

Two of the documents are of particular interest. The first a letter from the attorney to Mr. Angus; and the other, the latter's itemized statement of the sickness and funeral expenses he had paid. It was dated at Vera Cruz 19 July, 1845, and reads:

SIR: Having received a power of attorney from the father and lawful heir of the late M. T. Voorhees who died in your city last December and knowing that before his death he confided to you the state of his affairs, you would much oblige me by making me acquainted with the particulars thereof and putting me in possession of such information as may enable me to make a quick settlement of his estate.

The father of the late M. T. Voorhees writes me that his son died in your house and requests me to procure his trunk and what clothing

he had with him together with a gold watch and pencil case, breast pin, sleeve buttons, money and papers which he believes to be in your possession.

In short being aware of the respectability of your standing in the City of Puebla, I look to you for the fulfillment of Mr. Voorhees' father's wishes and have no doubt of your cooperation.

If it be necessary to send a copy duly legalized of the power of attorney I hold from Mr. Samuel Voorhees or substitute any one in Puebla to act in my name I can do so, but if you say that it is not absolutely necessary it would be useless to go to that expense.

Your answer by return of mail would much oblige

Sir respectfully

Your obedt Servant

L. S. Hargous

Per John Young

The itemized statement follows:

Freight of trunks paid	\$60 0
Professional services of Doct. Dujah	12 0
Professional services of Doct. W. H. Shepherd	50 0
Coffin	3 0
Cathedral duties	22 4
Church ditto	8 0
One mattress & 2 sheets	16 0
Board as per bill	5 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
S. D. Matthys bill, services as clerk	10
Postage paid on letters	2 1
	201 3 $\frac{1}{2}$

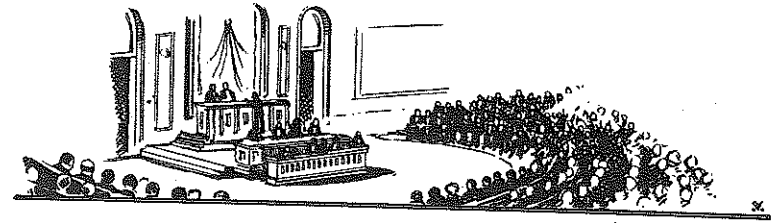
Reference to the Genealogy of the Van Voorhees Family, page 135, makes clear the ancestry of Dr. Samuel Voorhees of Amsterdam, New York. He was in the sixth generation, his great grandfather, Garret Coerten Van Voorhees, having been the third son of Coert Stevensen and Marretje Couwenhoven. Garret's son, Henry, had moved from Flatlands to Monmouth county, near Freehold, N. J. His youngest son Henry—son of his second wife, Sarah Schenck, who at the time of their marriage was the widow of Johannes Voorhees of New Brunswick, his second cousin—married Jane Lesley and moved to Montgomery county, New York, and their oldest son, Peter, was the father of Samuel Voorhees (1787-1870) of Amsterdam. He married Betsy Reynolds, a woman of energy and force of character. Marcus Tully Voorhees was their oldest son. Three other sons were born to them, James Leslie, Stephen Reynolds, and George Max-

well. A daughter of the latter, Mrs. Josephine Voorhees Wilder, is the only surviving member of the family.

The Voorhees homestead, 17 West Main Street, Amsterdam, came to be highly regarded by the people of the city because of its age, it having been for many years the stopping place of the stages that passed through the Mohawk Valley; later it was the home and office of Samuel Voorhees, M.D., long a widely known and honored physician, and later still the home of his son, Captain George Maxwell Voorhees, who won his rank in the Civil War, and during succeeding years dispensed a liberal hospitality, and was highly regarded by the entire community.

In the course of years interesting and valuable furniture and keepsakes had accumulated in the house—most of them secured by Mrs. Betsy Reynolds Voorhees—which many desired to see. On February 22 to 25, 1904, under the auspices of the D. A. R., an historical exhibit was displayed in the house, that attracted wide attention and elicited high praise for the family's generosity.

Thirteen years later, after her father's death, Mrs. Wilder offered all these cherished relics, records and heirlooms to the Montgomery County Historical Society. She presented the collection in person on Wednesday, June 20, 1917, and they have since been on exhibition in the home of the Society in Old Fort Johnson village.



XXII

MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY IN POLITICAL LIFE

IF IN this chapter an effort were made to be inclusive, we would need to begin with Coert Stevensen, the oldest son of Steven Coerten, who early in his career in the colony to which he had come as an immigrant in 1660, became a member of the Assembly of New Amsterdam in 1664, as one of two representatives of Flatlands. He was later a delegate to the convention held March 26, 1674, at New Orange—Albany—called to confer with governor Colve.

Following this initial experience in political life, there was a period during which comparatively few members of Dutch-speaking families attained political prominence. The members of the Van Voorhees family were too busy establishing themselves in their new homes to give much attention to public affairs.

That many of them served in the continental army or in the militia of their respective states is made clear in another chapter. Not however until the beginning of the 19th century, do we find men of the name reaching important legislative or administrative stations. Not a few of these entered political life in states in the Middle West.

In one family a father and two sons attained some prominence. Abraham Van Voorhis, a descendant in the fifth generation through Jan, the third son of our immigrant ancestor, removed from Flatlands to Western Pennsylvania, settling in Washington county, which borders on northwestern Virginia, now West Virginia. One of his sons, Abraham, removed in 1831 to Athens, in Athens county, Ohio, the seat of Ohio University, and there for a time published *The Western Spectator*. For a term he was a member of the Ohio Legislature, was later appointed a Register of the United States Land Office and moved to Stillwater, Minnesota, and served for a year in the legislature of that state.

NELSON HOLMES VAN VOORHIS

Two sons of Abraham Van Voorhis became well known in the political world. The first, Nelson Holmes Van Voorhis, was born in Western Pennsylvania but removed with his parents to Athens, Ohio. There he worked for six years in his father's printing establishment, and later succeeded him as editor and proprietor of *The Western Spectator*.

Readers of "Grandmother Brown's Hundred Years," will recall that her sister, Elizabeth Foster, married Nelson H. Van Voorhis. He in 1850 became a member of the Ohio House of Representatives and continued in service until 1872, on four different occasions being elected to the speakership. In 1861, he joined the Union army as a private and was promoted to the rank of colonel. In 1874, he was elected a member of the House of Representatives of the United States, and served two terms. His death occurred December 4, 1882.

A brother of Nelson Holmes, Andrew Jackson Van Voorhis, removed with his father Abraham to Stillwater, Minnesota, where he attained distinction, being also for a term a member of the legislature of that State. He published for some years *The Stillwater Messenger*, served a term in the legislature, and was Clerk of the Supreme Court at the outbreak of the Civil War. He was captain and quartermaster in the army during the closing years of that conflict.

NATHANIEL WHITAKER VOORHEES

When in 1860, Nelson H. Van Voorhis was a delegate to the Republican National Convention in Chicago that nominated Abraham Lincoln for the presidency he may have met a distant relative from New Jersey who was also a delegate, and secretary of the state's delegation—Nathaniel Whitaker Voorhees. At that time these two men could not have known their degree of relationship, but it can now be stated. Nelson Holmes was in the sixth generation from Jan, while Nathaniel Whitaker was in the seventh generation from Jan's older brother, Lucas, through Minne, Garret, Garret, and Garret, all of whom had lived in New Jersey.

Nathaniel Whitaker Voorhees was born in Somerset County, June 29, 1829. He graduated from Rutgers in 1847, studied law in Princeton, but for the greater part of his active life was cashier of the First National Bank in Clinton, New Jersey. He was also a delegate to the Republican convention in Cleveland in 1880, that nominated James A. Garfield for the presidency.

FOSTER M. VOORHEES

The oldest son of Nathaniel Whitaker Voorhees and Naomi Leigh, his wife, was Foster M. Voorhees, who was born in Clinton, New Jersey, on November 5, 1856. He graduated from Rutgers with high honors in 1876, studied law and practiced in Elizabeth, New Jersey. There he attained some prominence and entered into the political life of the state, first as a member of the General Assembly, then as Senator, and later as Governor of the state, being elected in December, 1898, on the same day that Theodore Roosevelt was elected Governor of New York. He received the degree of LL.D. from Princeton University, and was a trustee of Rutgers for twenty-five years—until his death in 1927.

HENRY CLAY VAN VOORHIS

Another member of the family from Ohio who became a member of the United States Congress was Henry Clay Van Voorhis of Zanesville. He was a descendant of Captain Daniel Van Voorhis of whose life both in the East and the Middle West, something is told in another chapter.

Henry Clay was born in Nashport, Muskingum County, on March 1, 1852, attended Denison University at Granville for a time, then studied law at the Cincinnati Law School, and thereafter made his home at Zanesville. He was a delegate to the Republican National Conventions of 1884 and 1910. He became president of the Citizen's National Bank, and served in the United States House of Representatives six terms—from 1893 to 1905. On his retirement he resumed the presidency of the bank. He was at the time of his death—December 12, 1927—a trustee of Marietta College.

A CONGRESSMAN FROM THE EAST

John Van Voorhis was born in Decatur, Otsego County, New York, October 22, 1826. He studied law, was admitted to the bar in 1851 and began practice at Elmira. He was made a member of the Board of Education in 1857, City Attorney in 1859, and was Collector of Internal Revenue for the 28th New York District in 1862 and 1863. In 1864, he was a delegate to the Republican National Convention at Baltimore, and was a member of the fifty-third Congress, 1893-1895, but failed of reelection. He then removed to Rochester, N. Y., where he continued to practice law until his death,

October 20, 1905. The law firm he there established is still maintained by his sons and grandsons.

Mr. Van Voorhis was in the eighth generation, a descendant of Coert Stevensen, through Johannes, Coert, Johannes, Coert, and John.

SENATOR DANIEL W. VOORHEES

The most prominent member of the Van Voorhees family during the last half of the nineteenth century was Daniel Wolsey Voorhees of Indiana, for he served his State in a large way, representing it in the Congress, both in the House for nine years and in the Senate for twenty years. Because of these distinguished public services, and being a man of large and commanding presence, he came to be known as "The Tall Sycamore of the Wabash."

Daniel W. Voorhees was a descendant of Lucas Stevensen, through his second son, Jan or John, whose home was near New Brunswick, N. J. He had nine sons, all but Johannes the oldest being children of his second wife, Mayke R. Schenck. Following Johannes, these sons were Lucas, Roelof, Stephen, Petrus, Martin, Isaac, Garret and Abraham, the latter being an ancestor of the Treasurer of the Van Voorhees Association, Wheeler N. Voorhees of Brooklyn.

John's fifth son Peter, and Mary his wife, had three sons, Johannes, Stephen, and Peter, all of whom lived in or near New Brunswick. Stephen, Petrus's second son, married Margaret Van Dyke, and their son Peter, in the sixth generation, became the grandfather of Senator Daniel W. Voorhees.

In a spirit of adventure, Peter Voorhees started west, and about 1790, when twenty-three, settled near Harrodsburg, Kentucky. There he knew many of the difficulties of pioneer life, but endured them with true Dutch hardihood. When twenty-nine he married Miss Lemma Van Arsdale, whose father had fought against the Indians in the battle of Blue Lick under Daniel Boone.

In 1805 they removed to Bethany near Hamilton in Butler County, Ohio, taking with them two children, Stephen and Jane. A second son, John, was born there in 1809.

Stephen Voorhees in 1822 married Rachel Elliott, of Irish extraction, a native of Maryland, and a woman of fine endowments and great strength of character. Of their four children, two sons and two daughters, Daniel Wolsey was the youngest, born September 26, 1827, and while an infant was taken to Fountain County in

western Indiana, where his father had purchased a farm about ten miles from Covington, the county seat. Here he participated in all the work of the farm until past eighteen, when he went to Indiana Asbury University, now DePauw, at Greencastle, about forty miles from his home, pursued a full course and graduated in 1849. He then studied law in Crawfordsville, the seat of Wabash College, and was admitted to the bar in 1851. He settled first in Covington, and later removed to Terre Haute on the Wabash, about forty miles to the south and near to the Illinois border.

It is said that on hearing the youthful lawyer deliver a Fourth of July address, former Senator Edward A. Hannegan invited him to become a member of his law firm. After the removal to Terre Haute in 1857, his rise to prominence was rapid. Before he was thirty he was a candidate for Congress, and failed of election by less than 250 votes. In 1858, he was appointed by president Buchanan, United States District Attorney for Indiana, and served until the beginning of his Congressional career in 1861.

While in this office he was invited by Ashbel P. Willard, Governor of Indiana, to defend his brother-in-law, John E. Cook, who, having joined John Brown's band, participated in the raid at Harper's Ferry on October 16, 1859. Brown, and the other conspirators who were not killed in the raid, were arrested, taken to Charlestown, Virginia, indicted and later tried. Brown's trial came first and he was convicted on October 31 and executed a month later—on December 2.

After Brown's conviction, the other participants in the raid, including John E. Cook, were tried. He admitted that he had obeyed orders from Brown, who styled himself commander-in-chief of the expedition. He affirmed that he had no evil intent, and did not understand the full implication of his acts, and therefore sued for mercy at the hands of judge and jury.

Daniel Voorhees's argument, heard on November 8, 1859, was a powerful appeal for mercy, and the forgiveness due the penitent. The blame was placed upon Brown, the masterful leader, and on those who had incited and abetted him because of their intense antagonism to slavery as unworthy of a free country.

Though unsuccessful the argument in Cook's behalf was so highly regarded that it was soon thereafter printed and widely circulated, and was translated into several foreign languages. In 1861 it was reprinted at Richmond, together with an oration delivered by Mr.

Voorhees before the literary societies of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville on July 4, 1860—a production of wide learning and unusual force and eloquence. These publications revealed the author as a gifted and polished orator from whom much was to be expected.

Daniel W. Voorhees was made a candidate for Congress on the democratic ticket, was elected in the fall of 1860, when Abraham Lincoln was chosen president, and took his seat in the House of Representatives on inauguration day, March 4, 1861. Here he served until 1873, with the exception of three years, as his election in 1865 was successfully contested before the House. On November 12, 1877, he entered the United States Senate, being appointed to fill out the term of Hon. Oliver P. Morton deceased, and continued a senator by successive reelections until 1897. Here he had many occasions to display his ability as an orator and statesman. He was, in fact, among the recognized leaders of his party for thirty-five years.

In 1896, he failed of reelection to the Senate being defeated by Charles W. Fairbanks, later vice-president of the United States. He lived but a few months after his defeat. His death occurred in Washington on April 9, 1897. He was buried in Highland Lawn Cemetery, Terre Haute.

The year following his death a work he had completed was published in two volumes, entitled, "Forty Years of Oratory."

In July 1850, when in his twenty-third year, Daniel W. Voorhees had married Anna Hardesty, then but eighteen years of age. Three sons were born to them. The oldest, Charles Stewart Voorhees, studied at Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana, and graduated in 1873 at Georgetown College, Washington, D.C. Two years later he moved to Colfax, in the territory of Washington, and later to Spokane. Here he became prosecuting attorney of Whitman County, and in 1884 was elected delegate from the Territory to the Congress of the United States, and was reelected in 1886. He resided in Spokane until his death December 26, 1909.

A VETERAN CENTENARIAN

In all the political history of the United States there is only one man who was in active service in an important office when he passed his one hundred and second birthday and was then retired on full pay under a special act of the State Legislature, on the recommendation of the Governor of the State, Franklin D. Roosevelt. That man

was John R. Voorhis, who died in New York City, February 5, 1932, in a home he had built for himself seventy years earlier. This unique career deserves mention in these pages.

John R. Voorhis was a descendant in the seventh generation from Albert Stevensen, who made his home near Hackensack, New Jersey. His fourth son, Petrus Voorhees, married Geesjean Romeyn. Their second son, Albert P., married Mary Doremus, and their oldest son, Peter A., married Gitty or Gertrude Berdan, and continued to live near the homestead in Bergen County. Of their seven sons the third, Richard Voorhis, married Maria Van Saun, and they were the parents of John R. Voorhis, who was born on a farm near Pompton Plains, New Jersey, July 27, 1829.

When the lad was but two years old his parents removed to New York City. After brief educational experience in private schools, John Voorhis learned the stair builder's trade, and became a partner with his uncle, John R. Van Saun, when only twenty-one years of age. This business he later continued for many years with marked success.

Early in life, becoming interested in politics, he attained the leadership of his district, and held his position so firmly that the "Voorhis Democracy" became known as in active opposition to the Tweed ring of the early eighteen-seventies. Mr. Voorhis, then forty years of age, canvassed his district against Tweed, and continued the opposition until his downfall, and the reorganization of the Tammany Society. He then, against the advice of his mother, accepted the office of Excise Commissioner, thus beginning a career in the city's service that continued, with slight intervals, for a period of nearly sixty years, until his death in 1932. He was at one time offered the office of sheriff, that was then worth \$100,000 in fees, but this he declined, as he would not allow any one to say that he had let money influence him.

He continued as excise commissioner until 1874, was then commissioner of police for two years, and after an intermission of three years, again from 1879 to 1880; and after being dock commissioner from 1881 to 1885, he returned to the police commissionership from 1885 to 1892, and was then police justice until 1895. From 1901 to 1907 he was commissioner of elections; from 1911 to 1915, superintendent of public buildings; in 1918, at the age of eighty-six, he was made president of the board of elections and continued in the

active discharge of its duties for thirteen years, until he was retired on September 30, 1931, when he had passed his one hundred second birthday.

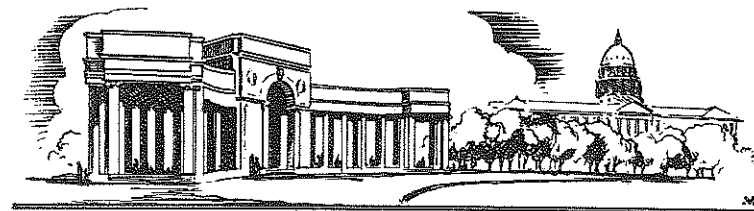
In the Tammany Society he was raised to the highest office shortly before his death, for he was sincerely respected even by those who could not understand his brand of sterling integrity.

On June 15, 1931, he marched at the head of the Flag Day parade of the Sons of the Revolution to City Hall, and two months later he, amid applause, offered a formal resolution at a meeting of the New York County Democratic Committee.

His was a remarkable case of prolonged vitality. It is said that he shaved himself until he was past one hundred, and that he had his hair cut by one barber—August Pinkbank—for more than fifty years at his shop on Bleeker Street. He took but one vacation trip, going then to California.

In 1840, when but twenty-one years of age, he married Lucinda Lefferts and they lived together in one house on the corner of Bethune and Greenwich streets until her death in 1907—after they had passed their sixty-seventh wedding anniversary. Thereafter two daughters looked after the home.

Mr. Voorhis was a gentleman of the old school. He was courtesy personified. His office manners were courtly. He would rise and see his visitors to the door. Until his birthday mail grew in the last years to royal proportions, he answered all these letters in his own hand.



XXIII

THE VOORHIES COLONNADE IN DENVER

IN RECENT years the City of Denver, Colorado, has developed a Civic Center that gives dignity and beauty to the Capital of the Centennial State. The center of interest is the Capitol itself. As one stands upon the steps near the marker placed just one mile above sea level and looks westward across a beautiful park toward the State Museum, the Library, and the new \$5,000,000 City and County building, two structures are seen midway to the right and left at the edges of the park that add greatly to its beauty.

The building to the left is a Greek Theater. That to the right, of consistent architecture, is a Colonnade in half elliptical shape, partly encompassing a small pool embowered in shrubbery. Its stately columns and arches form an appropriate and attractive gateway to a Civic Center in which the city and county of Denver take just pride.

This beautiful structure is deemed of such significance that for several years the Union Pacific Railroad printed an illustration of it in its time tables, designating it THE VOORHIES COLONNADE. It is appropriate, therefore, that a brief account of the donor should be included in these pages.

John H. P. Voorhies was a native of Lexington, Kentucky, to which state his grandfather, Peter Gordon Voorhies, had removed from near Princeton, New Jersey, shortly after the War for American Independence. He was a descendant in the seventh generation from Steven Coerten, through his oldest son, Coert Steven- sen and Marretje Couwenhoven his wife, and was an older half brother of Cornelius Voorhies, the progenitor of the Louisiana family, whose story is given in an earlier chapter. Their grandfather, who removed from Long Island to the vicinity of Princeton, had continued to spell his name Voorhies, as he did in his will, though his brother Koert retained the earlier form, Voorhees.

Peter Gordon Voorhies married Mary, a daughter of General Bennet Pemberton of Kentucky, and their son William, who was a lawyer in Lexington, married Mary H. Hart. Of their five children, John H. P., the youngest, was born September 21, 1851. His father died when he was but five years of age. As he grew to manhood he studied engineering and went west, first to Chicago, and later to Colorado, where he made his home in Silverton. There and at Telluride he was successful in mining ventures in connection with John A. Porter and J. H. E. Waters. He was in 1877 chosen to represent the Silverton District in the second Legislature of the Centennial State. In 1885, he was appointed Collector of the Port by President Grover Cleveland, and thereafter made his home in Denver, where he became interested in some real estate activities, and served for a time as director of the International Trust Company. He lived much of the time in the Denver Club. Of a genial and friendly disposition he enjoyed a wide acquaintance, but never again sought political office.

In 1896, when about forty years of age, John H. P. Voorhies married Mrs. Georgia Hammond Sweeney, widow of Anthony Sweeney, whose early home had been in Indianapolis, Indiana. During the years of their married life a Civic Center for Denver was under discussion, and they determined to give the project financial support. This they could well do, as they had no children or other dependents.

After Mrs. Voorhies's death in 1903, in accordance with her wish, Mr. Voorhies provided by his will that the largest portion of their joint estate should go to the City of Denver for the erection of "A Gateway or Archway," in connection with the Civic Center. This was ultimately carried out under the direction of Mr. Walter C. Mead, a close friend of Mr. Voorhies, at the request of the International Trust Co. of Denver, executor of the estate.

Mr. Voorhies's death occurred on November 11, 1913, in his sixty-second year. The beautiful Colonnade is evidence of Mr. Mead's faithfulness to his commission.

Because of a law suit, settlement of the estate was delayed for several years, during which time its value materially increased, to over one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. A much finer structure was thus made possible.

Plans were drawn by Fisher and Fisher, architects, and received the approval of Tracy and Swartout of New York City. The central arch, in beautiful proportions, is flanked on either side by curved colonnades supported by forty fluted Ionic columns, and cost about one hundred and fifteen thousand dollars. The pool and surrounding landscape cost nearly twenty-five thousand dollars additional. When completed in 1920, the Gateway with flanking colonnades was accepted as a remarkably beautiful and fitting memorial.

The facts respecting the structure are set forth on a tablet which is thus inscribed:

THE ERECTION OF THIS GATEWAY BY THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER IN THE YEAR 1920 WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY A TESTAMENTARY GIFT FROM JOHN H. P. VOORHIES AND IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF HIS PUBLIC-SPIRITED BEQUEST TO THE MUNICIPALITY IN WHICH HE HAD LONG RESIDED + THIS TABLET IS INSCRIBED AS A MEMORIAL

TO

JOHN H. P. VOORHIES

AND

GEORGIA H. VOORHIES

HIS WIFE



CENTRAL GROUP AT THE VOORHIS SCHOOL

XXIV

A UNIQUE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

THE VOORHIS SCHOOL FOR HOMELESS BOYS AT
SAN DIMAS, CALIFORNIA

THE Christian ideal, that those who are able should seek out ways of helping those who are in need, has inspired many experiments for the education of under-privileged children. Methods have varied, from the orphan asylum of earlier years, to schools for higher learning where boys and girls, by working part of the time, if sufficiently persevering may gain a college degree. The success of any project of this sort depends upon the ideals it adopts and the methods it uses to attain them. Many endeavors have failed because ideals were not sufficiently human, or because of failure to understand child psychology, and to provide such surroundings and companionship as meet the real needs of growing children and youth during the successive stages of their development.

Our country is awaking to the fact that neglect to inculcate effectively Christian ideals during adolescence has proved costly indeed, for those who start on criminal careers, armed with scientific knowledge and unrestrained by moral ideals, have robbed, and kidnapped, and murdered to an extent that is appalling. A campaign of ruthless search for criminals, and of severe punishment for those who are captured, may be necessary, and has strong support. More attention, however, should be given to the children whose environment is not helpful, that they may be effectively taught the ways of right living, and be so strengthened in character as to overcome temptations to criminal deeds, and to choose instead the Christian way of living.

The Voorhis School at San Dimas in southern California was established in 1928 to care for boys who were deprived of the care, affec-

tion, and intelligent guidance of one or both parents. This is at times caused by death, by selfishness, by poverty, or by divorce, as a result of which the child is denied his birthright—a happy home.

One essential purpose guided the founders of the school—to create for homeless boys of good parentage a home life so fine and Christian in all its aspects that they would grow normally in knowledge and in ways of service, and to encourage development in home and social relationships that will lead to high character and the free choice of ethical purposes for life. Work, play, and study in proper proportions under happy home surroundings should lead normally to the development of Christian character, and the ways of Christian living.

The founders of the School are Mr. and Mrs. Charles Brown Voorhis, natives of Kansas. The former, after a successful business career in his home state and later in Wisconsin, removed to Pasadena, California, and there sought opportunity of making an investment that would prove of permanent value to society in ways that he and Mrs. Voorhis deemed best suited to the end in view.

They therefore contributed 150 acres of land for a school, and an endowment approximately sufficient to support sixty boys—this in honor of their parents, Aurelius L. Voorhis and Louisa Brown Voorhis, and Horace J. Smith and Mary Ward Smith.

Six homes were erected, accommodating twelve boys each; also a Chapel, a Library, a Junior High School, Dining Rooms and Kitchen, Offices and a Print Shop, Manual Training Shop, an Infirmary, and Masters' Cottages. The School was opened in 1928, with Mr. H. J. Voorhis, a son of the founder, as Head Master.

The plan of the School is unusual in that the younger boys, to the seventh grade, attend the public school in San Dimas. The Junior High School cares for the seventh, eighth and ninth grades. Older boys attend the San Dimas High School, where they may enjoy broader contacts, and in a coeducational environment make a normal transition to the wider life that awaits them.

Attention to farm life, the care of poultry, farm animals and implements, and the use of tools in construction and for various trades, give opportunity to aid in support of the school community, and to understand the ways of industry. These, with supervised sports and regular school training, help to an acceptance of the broad principles that underlie human life and human relationships.

The heart of the School is its religious basis, and the encouragement that is given during the years of adolescence to growth into a well-rounded understanding of fundamental human relationships. To this end the best available teachers are sought, and all appropriate organizations are conducted. A high degree of success at this point is deemed essential to the progress of the entire enterprise.

Though some of the initial plans were deemed experimental, their effectiveness has been revealed. With such modifications as experience has suggested they now control the work of the school.

The religious life of the school is central. To discover the Christian solution of all problems is its aim, not through a dogmatic approach, but through the mode of living which Jesus practiced and taught. All, students and teachers alike, are learners in the school of the Master. The place of formal worship is appropriately named the "Chapel of the Beloved Disciple." As all are disciples of one Lord, the spirit of companionship predominates. A Council of five boys chosen by the group, seeks, not by authority but by persuasion, to improve and enrich the community life.

Though the school is still young, its experience is helpful and reassuring. The founder and his fellow trustees feel confident that this good work well begun will increase in usefulness as its years of service are multiplied.

Charles Brown Voorhis, the founder of the San Dimas School, is in the tenth generation from Steven Corten Van Voorhees, being a descendant of his fourth son, Albert Stevensen Van Voorhees of Hackensack, New Jersey, the names in his line being Petrus, Daniel, Cornelius, Jacob (who began spelling the name Voorhis), Henry M. and Aurelius L. His great-great grandfather, Daniel Van Voorhees, was born in northern New Jersey in 1737. He married Maria Tallman, and during the Revolutionary War was proprietor of a hotel at Hackensack, where he on several occasions entertained General Washington. When past middle life he went west, and finally settled near Lebanon, Warren county, Ohio. One of his great grandsons, Aurelius Lyman Voorhis, removed to Kansas, was a lawyer at Olathe, and later in Kansas City, Missouri. Henry Brown Voorhis was born in 1870 at Olathe. He studied at Kansas State University, but was compelled to leave in his junior year. Through the distribution of farm machinery he became interested in the Kingman Plow Company at Oklahoma City, and in 1909 removed to Kansas City,

Missouri. In 1913 he went to Pontiac, Michigan, to become vice-president of the Oakland Motors Company, and from 1916 to 1923 he held a like position in the Nash Motors Company of Kenosha, Wisconsin. Becoming interested in oil development in Southern California, he then removed to Pasadena, where he has since made his home. In recent years he has gradually withdrawn from active participation in business affairs, and with Mrs. Voorhis and their son, H. J. Voorhis, finds much satisfaction in promoting the School for Homeless Boys, which they founded at San Dimas.

XXV

TWO MEN OF SPIRITUAL VISION

TWO MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY WHO BECAME BLIND

THE loss of sight is an affliction from which all pray to be spared, yet many who thus suffer find compensation, and live happy and useful lives. Two such require mention. They were near contemporaries, for though one was born twenty years before the other, their deaths occurred less than a year apart.

SAMUEL R. VOORHEES

Samuel R. Voorhees of Amsterdam, N. Y., was a descendant in the seventh generation, of Coert Stevensen, through his son Garret, his grandfather having removed from Monmouth county, N. J., to Montgomery county, N. Y., before 1800, and settled in Minnaville, where Samuel was born July 13, 1818. His parents, Samuel Voorhees, M.D., and his wife, Betsy Reynolds, removed to Amsterdam while he was a child. There he grew to manhood, and entered the drug business. When twenty-four years of age, on a trip to New York by boat, he contracted a cold. Inflammation set in and destroyed his eyesight, and for sixty-four years he lived in darkness. But he learned to be cheerful in the midst of his afflictions, and soon became able to get about the city with the assistance of his cane. He was a familiar figure to the citizens who respected him highly. He was a devout member of St. Ann's Protestant Episcopal Church, and highly regarded for his consistent and upright life. He died in 1906, when in his eighty-eighth year. A story respecting his older brother, Marcus Tully Voorhees, is told in another chapter.

RALPH VOORHEES

The other member of the family who became blind was Ralph Voorhees, who was born in Bernards township, Somerset county, New Jersey, in 1838, and became blind before he was thirty years of age. He had lost the sight of one eye several years earlier, and the sight of the other gradually faded out until in the spring of 1867 he was totally blind.

During about twenty years, he lived with an older brother, Samuel S. Voorhees, on the homestead in the Mine Brook Valley on land that had been purchased in 1752 of Thomas and Richard Penn, sons of William Penn, one of the twenty-four proprietors of East New Jersey, by Jonathan Whitaker, their mother's great grandfather. Then when nearly fifty years of age Ralph Voorhees married Elizabeth Nevius Rodman, and they made their home in Clinton, New Jersey, where he lived until his death in 1907, in his sixty-ninth year. Mrs. Voorhees survived him for sixteen years, living quietly and unostentatiously in the Clinton home.

Shortly after their marriage in 1887, Mrs. Voorhees inherited an ample fortune from her uncle, Robert W. Rodman of New York City. This they regarded as a sacred trust to be used for social, educational, and religious upbuilding. The initial gift of \$60,000 for a library at Rutgers College has been mentioned. It was erected in 1903, and was enlarged in 1926 by funds contributed by Mrs. Voorhees before her death, and is known as the Ralph Voorhees Library. A beautiful Chapel erected on the campus of the New Jersey College for Women, known as the "Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees Memorial," was completed in 1926, by funds bequeathed by Mrs. Voorhees to the trustees of Rutgers College.

From additional funds left to the same trustees, ten prize scholarships of \$175 each are awarded annually to freshmen entering the College for Women, and also three graduate fellowships of \$1500 are awarded to seniors of exceptional promise, to make possible a year's study abroad, or at any college of high standing in the United States, other than New Jersey College. In addition a substantial sum was set aside as a student aid fund, to be loaned to worthy students at the college. These provisions for loans, scholarships and fellowships, are named in honor of Mrs. Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees, and are of great value to the educational life of the college.

During their lifetime Mr. and Mrs. Voorhees gave large gifts to important societies, including the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society, the Presbyterian and Reformed Church Mission boards.

They also provided for the erection of buildings in several colleges as follows:

Carroll College, Waukesha, Wisconsin, four buildings, including the Elizabeth Voorhees Dormitory.

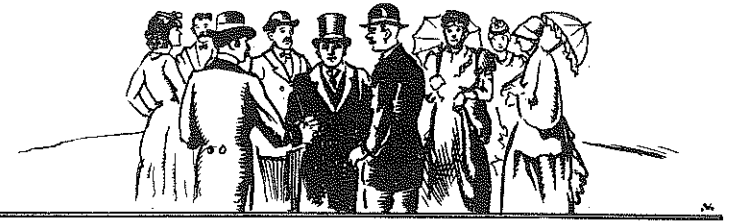
Huron College, Huron, South Dakota, Main Hall and Dormitory.
Maryville College, Maryville, Tennessee, the Voorhees Chapel.
Jamestown College, Jamestown, North Dakota, Chapel and Music Hall.

Hope College, Holland, Michigan, The Voorhees Dormitory.
Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, The Voorhees Quadrangle.
American Indian Institute, Wichita, Kansas, The Voorhees Hall.

In addition two institutions bear their names—The Elizabeth Voorhees College, Vellore, India, and the Voorhees Normal and Industrial Institute for Colored People, Denmark, South Carolina. These were among their largest benefactions. The total amount of their gifts has never been closely estimated.

Mrs. Voorhees' name, Elizabeth Nevius, indicates a Dutch origin. Investigation shows that she was also a descendant of Steven Coerten, in the eighth generation. Her maternal great grandfather, John Nevius, was a great grandson of Lucas Van Voorhees, through his mother, Susan M. Schenck, and his grandmother, Jannetje Van Voorhees, a daughter of Lucas. Ralph Voorhees was a fourth cousin of Mrs. Voorhees' mother, Elizabeth Nevius.

Shortly after Mrs. Voorhees's death in 1923, the president of the Van Voorhees Association prepared a book which bears the title, "Ralph and Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees, a Tribute." It was published in the fall of 1927, just forty years after their marriage, and contains something of their ancestral lines, of the section of New Jersey where they made their home, and of the institutions that were enriched by their liberality. It is profusely illustrated and has received high commendation for its portrayal of life in New Jersey through several generations.



XXVI

TWO VOORHEES FAMILY REUNIONS

IN THE course of the generations many reunions have been held, some continuing through a series of years. Of two held in New Jersey accounts are here given.

A FAMILY REUNION IN 1878

BY REV. J. SPENCER VOORHEES

On Friday, August 23, 1878, the descendants of Stephen Voorhees held a reunion at Bedensville, Somerset county, N. J., about half way between Harlingen and Rocky Hill. The spacious grounds had been furnished with tables and a platform for the speakers, with plenty of flowers, ferns, and flags for decorations. A large banner bore the inscription:

VOORHEES 1771-1878

It was in 1771 that Stephen Voorhees was born. He used to tell of seeing the Red Coats passing his father's house after the Battle of Princeton. In 1795 he had married Sarah Hegeman, and the following year he bought this estate of 1324 acres. Here their children were born. They were: Ann, Ellen, John H., Garret S., Joseph Hegeman, and Stephen. He died in 1851 aged eighty. His wife died in 1857 aged eighty-one. He was the son of Garret Voorhees of Neshanic, who was the son of Koert Voorhees of Gravesend, L. I., who was the son of Garret Stevensen of Flatlands, the son of Coert Stevensen, the son of Steven Coerten, born at Hees in the province of Drente, Netherlands. When the writer visited Hees in 1908 it consisted of five old stone cottages with thatched roofs, and he took a picture of each so as to be sure of the one from which our immigrant ancestor came, if perchance the older houses then remained.

Ann, the first child, born to Stephen and Sarah in 1797, married John Van Zandt of Blawenburgh. After six years of married life

they were able to be present at the reunion, with children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to the number of forty-one.

The second daughter, Ellen, married Peter A. Stryker, John, the first son, married Catherine Veghte, Garret married Adeline Veghte, Joseph married Sarah C. Westbrook of New York, Stephen married Caroline Williamson, and afterward lived at Rocky Hill.

Joseph was a public spirited citizen, holding almost every office within the gift of his fellow men. He served three terms in the New Jersey Legislature, was a speaker on the temperance platform, was a Sunday School superintendent for forty-two years, was one of the founders of the Reformed Church of Rocky Hill in 1857, and was an Elder therein until his death.

The four sons present at this reunion and their descendants, numbered sixty-five, making the total attendance one hundred and six.

At the dinner, Stephen Voorhees, the youngest son and owner of the farm, welcomed all to the reunion, and the blessing of God was asked by the Rev. Louis B. Voorhees, the oldest son of Joseph.

An hour after the super-abundant out-of-door banquet had been enjoyed, all gathered around the speaker's platform. Several old hymns were sung to the accompaniment of a reed organ and a cornet. Joseph Hegeman Voorhees then read a most interesting historical statement of the family since leaving Holland. Additional facts were given by James L. Griggs, a lawyer, and great grandson of Stephen Voorhees Sr. Then followed an address by Rev. Louis B. Voorhees, who had recently become minister of the Congregational church of Worcester, Mass. Among other things he said that, while no member of the Voorhees family had reached great fame, none had died in disgrace; while few had been in Congress, none had been in jail; while none had amassed great wealth, none had died in the poor house. They had been quite uniformly industrious and prosperous, and especially active in the Christian Church. He closed by saying, "The only true greatness is goodness."

Then Rev. John Gardner, minister of the Reformed Church at Harlingen, spoke of Stephen Voorhees and his wife, Sarah Hegeman, from an intimate acquaintance with them as their minister. He said that Stephen was the first signer of the call extended to him to become pastor at Harlingen. As a ruling Elder he had helped greatly by his good judgment and counsel. His wife was full of good

works, of pleasing humor, and of an earnest and sympathetic Christian character.

Mr. Lloyd Vanderveer of Philadelphia, then gave some interesting reminiscences of the family. After the speaking was over the large company remained until dark, visiting together and enjoying the good fellowship of the occasion.

Many other reunions have been held in various parts of the country. The story of one other, held at High Bridge, New Jersey, July 11, 1905, should prove of interest. Nearly all who were present of the Voorhees name were descendants of Lucas, the second son of our common ancestor.

A VOORHEES REUNION IN 1905

This reunion was arranged by Rev. and Mrs. Oscar M. Voorhees, and was held at their home, the parsonage of the Reformed Church of which Mr. Voorhees was then pastor. An immediate reason was to honor a cousin from Illinois, Dr. David Felmley, then President of the State Normal University at Normal near Bloomington, as he and Mrs. Felmley were in the East for a brief visit. The weather was propitious and the occasion proved most delightful.

During the hour devoted to reminiscences many interesting statements were made respecting conditions of earlier decades. As an historical background the host read some verses in which were depicted a few outstanding facts respecting the earlier generations. This was so well received that, with "The Story of the Day," as printed in the local weekly, it was reprinted in an illustrated booklet of twelve pages. Extracts from this story have appeared in folders of the Van Voorhees Association, the first issued in July, 1932, and the other in November, 1933.

The members of the community were deeply interested in view of the character and the positions held by those in attendance. Mrs. Viola M. Grammer, a teacher in the public school, prepared a paper on the reunion, written in playful mood, and read it before a local Literary and Social Society. This is deemed of such interest that it is here reprinted. Readers far removed from the section where Dutch influences continue may need to be told that "Domine" is the familiar term used to designate Christian ministers. It has often been confused with *Domine*, a Scottish term for schoolmaster.

THE TRUE RECORD OF THE VOORHEES FAMILY REUNION

BY MRS. VIOLA M. GRAMMER

Now it came to pass upon the seventh month of the one thousand nine hundred and fifth year that the Domine and his family reasoned together, saying: "Behold our house is great and valorous. Let us, therefore, call together from the east and from the west and from all the parts of the earth the tribes and clans of the House of Voorhees," and it was so. And they sent out messengers to all the kinsmen of all the tribes of that house.

And behold there came upon the eleventh day of the seventh month of that year unto the city of High Bridge in the land of Jersey the kinsmen and brethren of Oscar the Domine—they and their wives, their sons and their sons' wives, and the children thereof. And when they had entered into the city they were led through the streets thereof to the home of the Domine, which is the parsonage, and there they tarried that day unto the going down of the sun.

Now there were gathered together that day men of great honor and renown. There came Ralph the philanthropist, who journeyed from the city of Clinton. There came likewise from the city of the Virgin Queen, Foster, who had been the chief ruler of the land which is called Jersey, and his brother also, Nathaniel, the physician; and from the city on the banks of the Raritan came Edward the pedagogue, who is also a mixer of chemicals and vile concoctions. And from the chief city of the realm came Matthew, also a physician, of the house of Beattie, who became joined to the family through Sarah, his wife. And from the far west came David of the line of Felmley. These and many others came that day, and in all there was assembled forty and three men and their wives and their little ones.

And behold there was feasting and much rejoicing and the exchange of kindly greetings. And when the repast was at an end the Domine read unto the assembled multitude from a scroll bearing record of the generations of the House of Voorhees, and the company hearkened unto the record with much interest.

There came also to the parsonage that day Elias, whose surname is Terraberry. And he did stand the company in rows, one row above the other stood he them. And before them placed he a contrivance which is called a camera, by the aid of which and his art he made a picture of the assembled multitude. And behold when Elias showed unto them his handiwork they said that it was good.

And when the day was far spent even to the going down of the sun the kinsmen and their families began to depart, going to their homes in the east and in the west, and in all parts of the earth wherein they dwelt. And to this day there dwelleth in the hearts of the Domine and his family loving remembrances of that day.