



Newsletter

of

The Van Voorhees Association

ORGANIZED 1932

Volume 9, Number 2

JUNE 1991

59th ANNUAL MEETING

Planning for this year's Annual Meeting to be held on Saturday, October 12, 1991, is rapidly being completed. As previously announced, our guest speaker will be Dr. Charles Gehring, translator of the Nieuw Netherlands papers, and the recently rediscovered VanVoorhees letters. Dr. Gehring's topic will be "New Light from Old Paper - the translation of the Nieuw Netherland and VanVoorhees Archives". This promises to be another interesting program, and everyone should plan to attend.

The meeting will be held at the Reformed Church of Highland Park, NJ, just across the Raritan River from New Brunswick. Luncheon will be provided by the Ladies Guild of the Church. Although the menu has not yet been finalized, we can assure you from past experience at Executive Committee Spring meetings that it will be excellent.

Final information and reservation form will be in the next Newsletter.

BOOK REVIEW

ed. note: The following was sent by Association "first lady" Lois Vorhis, in expectation of the Van Voorhees tour of the Netherlands planned for this fall (see elsewhere in this Newsletter):

As a way of preparing for the trip, I have been reading the new edition of Roaming 'Round Holland by Patricia Erickson and Sheila Gazaleh-Weevers. The two authors have lived in Holland and are quite knowledgeable and helpful in their descriptions, advice and suggestions of sights to see. They make a point of including interesting things for families to see and do. There is also a chapter listing holidays, celebrations and special events that would be helpful to visitors. A chapter on Drenthe is included, too.

You can order a copy of this book from the authors, if you can't find it in your bookstore. {Patricia G. Erickson, 3319 Dent Pl. NW, Washington, DC 20007 Phone: (202) 965-3352 Cost: \$15.95 plus postage} It's not too soon to start reading up before the tour.

1991 DUES

1991 Association dues were due and payable on January 1, 1991. If you have not paid your dues, please send a check, made out to "The Van Voorhees Association" to the Treasurer, Mr. G. Harold Buttler, 72 Upland Ave., Metuchen, NJ 08840. 1991 dues are as follows:

Regular	\$5.00
Junior	\$2.00
Sustaining	\$10.00
Contributing	\$25.00
Life	\$150.00

INCREASED DUES FOR 1992

As with everything else these days, the Association's operating costs have continued to increase, with a substantial portion of these costs going to the printing and mailing of the Newsletter. Based on letters we receive, we know that the membership wants these to continue. As a result, at its recent meeting, the Executive Committee reluctantly agreed to an increase for the Association's dues structure for the 1992 and subsequent years, as follows:

Regular, sustaining and contributing members increase \$2.00 to \$7.00, \$12.00 and \$27.00, respectively. These

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEWOMAN EMERITUS

At the recent Executive Committee meeting, on the motion of Frank J. Van Voorhees, former Lucas Line Representative Elizabeth V. Edgar was made an Executive Committee Member Emeritus, in recognition of Elizabeth's many years of service to the Association. The motion was passed unanimously without any need for discussion by the Committee.

rates will apply for 1992 memberships, regardless of when dues are paid.

Life membership increase to \$200.00, effective with life membership applications received by the Membership Committee Chairman starting January 1, 1992. Applications received by December 31, 1991 will be accepted at the current rate of \$150.00, which makes Life membership now a better deal than ever!

Junior members no change (remains at \$2.00).

Also, members whose dues are in arrears for the previous year will be dropped from the mailing list unless both the previous and current years' dues are paid. This does not apply to those members who, due to limited income cannot pay dues, and who have so advised the Treasurer.

LUCAS LINE REPRESENTATIVE

Judith Voorhees, who took over responsibility for sales of Van Voorhees Association items last fall, as noted in the February Newsletter, has been selected to fill the Lucas Line Representative position on the Executive Committee, formerly held by Elizabeth V. Edgar.

MILESTONES

ed. note: This is your column. Please send us notices of your achievements and happy occasions in your life, and those of your family members.

Executive Committee Member Elisabeth V. Ripton (AB Biology, Brown University, 1926) will be attending her sixty-fifth class reunion this Memorial Day weekend. This will be en route to her summer home at Brier Island, Nova Scotia, where she has spent the last 20+ summers. The island, which has only 370 inhabitants, lies in the Bay of Fundy, and can be reached only by taking two different ferry boats. The island is perhaps best known as the home of Joshua Slocum, whose "Sailing Alone Around the World" recounted his 1897-1900 solo sloop voyage.

George VanVoorhees was honored in 1989 for his 1457 volunteer hours of service since 1984 as a Master Gardener in the program run by the Indian River County office IFAS / University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service. This was the highest total for any of the 26 members of the group, which provides assistance to residents in selection, planting and maintenance of lawn, landscape and garden plants. Emphasis is placed on ecologically sound and conservation oriented plantings. George has since been elected President of the Master Gardeners group. He is the uncle of Lucas Line Representative Judith Voorhees.

William Penn Daniel was born

July 17, 1989. His parents are Peter V. and Sara (Penn) Daniel of Atlanta, GA, whose older son Peter McLane Daniel was born April 26, 1986. William is the grandson of William and Doretta Smith Penn of Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

For their 1990 corporate Christmas card, The Hartford insurance company and affiliates used "December Moonrise" ca. 1908 (oil on canvas, 28" x 29"), by Clark Greenwood Voorhees (1871-1933). The original is in the fine arts collection of The Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Co.

The Bois des Chenes Inn at Lafayette, LA, operated by Coerte and Marjorie Voorhies received a very favorable rating in 'The New York Times' of Jan. 27, 1991. The Inn is in the restored 1820 plantation home of Charles Mouton, one of Coerte's ancestors. Mr. Voorhies is an expert on local history, and was one of the founders of nearby Vermilionville, a Cajun and Creole village done in the style of Colonial Williamsburg, opened in 1990. Lafayette is in the heart of the Cajun Country, home of many of the descendants of the French Catholics who, in 1755, refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Protestant King of England and were exiled from Acadia (now Nova Scotia), and settled in what is now Louisiana.

John Sinclair, a senior at Cook College of Rutgers University, has been awarded one of two 1991 William E. Snyder

Scholarship awards by the NJ Flower and Garden Show. The annual awards recognize outstanding NJ students in a major relating to plant science or ornamental horticulture. John is the son of Don and Kathryn Sinclair.

David W. Voorhees was recently named the new editor of 'De Halve Maen', the journal of the Holland Society of New York. While working as the reference history editor for Charles Scribner's Sons, he served as managing editor of the 'Dictionary of American Biography' and the 'Concise Dictionary of American History', among other works. David's doctoral dissertation "In Behalf of the true Protestant Religion: the Glorious Revolution in New York" has won the 1988 Bayard Still Award, 1990 New York State Historical Manuscripts Award and 1990 Hendricks Manuscript Award. He is currently editor of the Papers of Jacob Leisler, a project of the National Publications and Records Commission, and was one

of the speakers at the recent conference on "The New York of Jacob Leisler".

Lt. John Voorhees is serving with the 503 Military Police Company in Frankfort, Ger. He is a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy, West Point, class of 1989. John is the son of Gary and Judy Voorhees of Middlesex, NJ.

Margaret Ramsey of Highland Park, NJ is the new editor of the Ackerman Newsletter, issued by the David Ackerman Descendants 1662. She is a member of both the Ackermans and our Association. Knowing what is involved in doing a family Newsletter, we wish her best luck and the enjoyment we get from hearing from widely scattered cousins! Margaret's first cousin, Steve Shyers, IV does the keeping of the mailing lists for both organizations, as well as our computerized genealogical files, and he has recently completed the word processing for the forthcoming research volume.

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, October 12, 1991

Reformed Church, Highland Park, NJ

Speaker: Dr. Charles Gehring

"New Light from old paper - the translation of the Nieuw Netherland and VanVoorhees Archives"

ed. note: The following article is the second of two parts, excerpted from the text of a talk given by Association Historian, Manning W. Voorhees, to the Old Bergen Branch of the Holland Society of New York on October 17, 1990. The first part appeared in the February 1991 Newsletter, very limited quantities of which are available from the editors (send 52 cents US postage with your full address).

SEARCHING FOR OUR DUTCH PERSONALTY

We had several objectives for our research project:-

First -- to learn as much as possible about Steven Coerts and his family, both ancestral to him and those contemporary with him. We achieved success far beyond our expectations. Steven's contemporary family of parents, uncles, aunts, brothers, wives and children is identified in detail: names, many dates of birth and death, and marriages together with a few stories about some of the people that are in the ancient legal records. The ancestral trees are carried back for a few generations. As a result of our extended inquiry, the trees are also carried forward for several generations.

We now know without doubt that our family progenitor was a tenant farmer, or crofter, who did not inhabit the farm at Voorhees notwithstanding the "Van Voorhees" that he appended to his name. Steven's older brother, Albert, succeeded to the tenancy of Voorhees in 1614. After several decades, Voorhees passed to Albert's son, Coert. Steven's second older brother, Jan, became the tenant of Middlehees from 1600 to 1638 when he died. Middlehees then passed to two of Jan's sons. Achterhees was rented by a branch of the Coerts family. Accordingly, there was Grandpa with no land to farm -- so he went out into the "cruel world". He never had a turn at the family farms.

There is an indication that Steven was a tax collector in 1625 through 1627 -- he was 25 to 27 years old then -- in the parish of Hasselt in Overijssel. He collected the wadegeld, or a tax for the repair of dikes in Hasselt and Overijssel. Tax collectors were essentially commission merchants in that time, so I guess that he had a business deal. Steven then returned to Drenthe and leased a very small farm from Dikninge in 1633 or sometime before that in the region of Meppel. It must have been a jolt to start out on his own small farm when his brothers "had it made" with the two large farms at Hees.

Steven then moved to the Oosterbuur near Meppel at least by 1640 when Wessell was born -- or, perhaps that was the farm that he leased in 1633 -- thence to a location near Ruinen in 1642 after being named as a tax dodger in the prior year, and then to Pols Erve around 1658. However, he may have rented another farm from Dikninge near Ruinen before going to Pols Erve, but if so we do not

know exactly where or when. Further, he probably was a sub-tenant at Pols Erve before the 1658 lease that I saw at the Assen archives during our 1984 trip.

We also discovered the identity of Steven's first wife and mother of his first four children as well as the birth of a son that was unknown to us. Grandpa was rather prolific: he had six children with his second wife after he reached 50 -- think about that for a moment (!) -- for a total of ten children.

Secondly, we wanted to learn as much as possible about Steven Coerts' economic situation. That proved to be more difficult to accomplish. After a period of relative prosperity from 1625 to 1650, the Drenthe economy declined:-- costs of production were up and prices of farm products were down. Taxes rose sharply with the new land tax in 1643. Dikninge changed its system of rents in 1614 from the "third sheave", or one-third of whatever was grown, to a fixed rent which was harsher because the landlord did not receive a lesser rent in the poor years. In 1626, Dikninge changed again to rents based on a bidding arrangement in which amounts paid were raised. As a broader background, Drenthe never really recovered from the ravaging wars of 1580 to 1630. In 1659 -- the year before Steven sailed -- brother Albert at Voorhees complained to Dikninge that he had to have some rent relief because his "house, barn and sheepfold need urgent repairs, before it will be totally fallen into decay". In other words, the place seemed about to collapse. Times were tough!

In spite of the economic difficulties, Steven apparently was successful because the farms that he leased increased in size over time until he had the sole tenancy of Pols Erve. This farm had two structures, 26 acres and four horses -- a "full farm". Steven probably privately owned five acres of the total 26. While Pols Erve was smaller than Voorhees, Grandpa "had arrived" -- at the age of 58.

Nonetheless, his life had developed over several moves. He certainly did not stay in one place, and that must have marked his character and thinking process. Grandpa's wealth, if one wants to call his success "wealth", was obviously relative to the poor economic situation in Drenthe. He merely had more than many others at the age of 60 when he sailed for the New World.

Our third objective was to ascertain why this man of 60 would leave his life-long surroundings and go to a wild part of the world to start over. This is similar, I suppose, to us packing up and moving to a totally undeveloped third world country. I am 61 -- no thank you! Was Grandpa totally irrational, were there sound reasons for this dramatic move, or was he simply crazy?

Crazy, he wasn't. Perhaps some critics would say that Steven Coerts was irrational to leave his well known, comfortable environment --

but, there were some reasons, or so we can presume. No one really knows why he left for New Netherland, but we can put together a plausible picture.

To begin with, his two older brothers inherited the tenancies of Voorhees and Middlehees, leaving Steven landless and he had to start from zero. Or -- to put it another way -- he did not have an established and sizeable farm that he could call his own as the unchallenged lessee. Further, and as a result of his landless situation, Steven moved several times. While his farms successively increased in importance, the continual moving to achieve something that his brothers were given when they commenced their economic life must have impacted him. Suddenly, there was an opportunity to own -- not lease -- a large farm in a part of the world that was described in glowing terms as a natural wonderland. For instance, Adriaen van der Donck's

A Description of the New Netherlands¹, published in 1655 -- five years before Steven set sail -- is the sort of radiant portrait that was not easy to ignore. While Grandpa probably never read that little book -- if he could read at all -- word certainly spread. After about forty years of trying to catch up, the attraction of New Netherland must have been very strong.

Another motivation in this regard could have been to provide for Steven's children. They also would not inherit any landed position and available arable land in Drenthe was scarce or non-existent. This was clearly not the situation in New Netherland.

Further, there were the economic problems of recessionary Drenthe. Why should Grandpa continue to battle the poor economy, stiff rent and high taxes when this would not be necessary in the new world, or so he was probably led to believe by success stories of earlier emigrants. Steven was not alone in leaving Drenthe. The provincial population was in a declining trend, particularly in the southwestern part where Pols Erve and Hees are located. Others also sought better locations. The nephew living on Brickers Island in Amsterdam harbor might have told Grandpa about the many ships that were sailing for the New World.

But then, would the Coerts' know anyone in New Netherland? The family's acclimation to the strange surroundings of the Dutch colony would be tougher to accomplish if they had no friends and acquaintances. However, this was probably an easy hurdle because there was a significant emigration from Drenthe to New Netherland before 1660 and a larger group from Drenthe sailed with the Coerts family on April 15, 1660. Interestingly, another large group from Drenthe sailed two years later, in 1662. Most of these people came from the broad region surrounding Ruinen, as did the Coerts'. The family undoubtedly had many friends in New Netherland and the particular Drenthe accent could be readily heard.

¹ Edited by Thomas F. O'Donnell, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, New York, 1968, Library of Congress 68-29420.

While living in the Meppel area, Steven may very well have listened to Dominie Johannes Theodorus Polhemius and his Sunday sermons. The Dominie left Meppel in 1634 for the Dutch colony in Brazil and subsequently arrived in New Netherland in 1654. Now --there was the former pastor serving, of all places, Midwout (Flatbush), Nieuw Amersfoort (Flatlands) and Breuckelen (Brooklyn)². Steven bought his farm in Nieuw Amersfoort.

There were also relatives who settled in New Netherland before the Coerts family set sail. Jan Strijcker arrived around 1652 and founded Midwout. Strijcker's wife, Lammertje Seuberingh was the sister of Steven's wife³. And so -- that was the very early connection among the Stryker, Sebring and Voorhees families. But, the family ties in the New World may not have stopped here. There is the possibility that Jan Roelofs Seuberingh, the husband of Dominie Polhemius' daughter, Ariaentje, was also a brother-in-law of Steven as well as the brother of Jan Strijcker's wife. Thus, there might have been a direct connection between the Coerts and Polhemius families -- further research could establish this connection.

Finally, there were many similarities between the Midwout-Nieuw Amersfoort-western Long Island region of the seventeenth century and Drenthe: flat terrain, low population density and reasonable closeness to central markets, New Amsterdam and Ruinen. Steven probably liquidated assets to finance part his farm in Nieuw Amersfoort. Remember, he owned five acres at his last rented farm, Pols Erve, and several head of cattle and horses. Also, the Dutch West India Company may have helped him financially.

² Dominie Polhemius ceased serving the congregation in Breuckelen in September of 1660 for a period of roughly four years. The congregation complained that the Dominie gave them only a fifteen minute prayer on alternate Sundays and not a sermon. Polhemius was replaced by Dominie Henricus Selijns. Polhemius also visited Nieuw Amersfoort on alternate Sundays. His church was located in Midwout. See the Introduction by the Rev. Dr. Howard Hageman to Old First Dutch Reformed Church of Brooklyn, New York, First Book of Records, 1660-1752, translated and edited by A.P.G. Jos van der Linde, Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Maryland, 1983, Library of Congress 73-14890.

³ As a total speculation, Steven's wife, Willemtje, might have initiated the move to New Netherland notwithstanding the male domination of seventeenth century Dutch society, so that she could rejoin her sister, Lammertje. I am told that recent research into the Irish migration of the nineteenth century suggests that it was the wife who often initiated the move to America, not the husband in that male oriented society, so she could rejoin her family who had emigrated earlier. This is an intriguing idea that obviously shifts the focus of my comments.

Thus, we have been able to achieve our third objective for the research project: attempt an explanation of why Steven Coerts came to the New World, thereby launching the Voorhees family in America.

The Van Voorhees Association is very pleased with the highly professional work of Jan Folkerts and his associate, Dick Wijmer. The results of their research are far beyond anything that we thought to be possible. While some additional tid-bits of information may still be hiding in those ancient documents that I gazed upon in Assen, and possibly in Steenwijk, we do not believe that they can be significant. As Jan stated in his de Halve Maen⁴ article, "These results are more than we possibly could have expected, especially taking into account the very fragmentary and scattered historical sources that were available."

Our book is not merely a genealogy. It is also an important historical contribution to an understanding of the people of New Netherland and their culture. We hope that scholars will weave our study into a better comprehension of the Dutch world in America. Oliver Rink, at the Rensselaerswijck seminar this past September, said that the development of the New Netherland frontier was influenced in part by the particular ethnic area from which the settlers came. Drenthe was one of these ethnic areas.⁵ Further research of other New Netherland families in the old records "back home" will deepen the understanding that we hope has only commenced. The challenge is yours.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

At the recent Executive Committee meeting, Publications Committee Chairman Bob Voris announced that the final editing of the research volume manuscript has been completed, and would be delivered to the publisher probably during the first week of May, with completion of printing and delivery of books hopefully in time for the Annual Meeting in October. We expect to have final publication and ordering information in the next Newsletter.

⁴ See footnote number three, in part 1 of this Article (Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 11).

⁵ Settlers in New Netherland came from other provinces of the old country in larger numbers.

VOORHEES COLLEGE

Subsequent to Voorhees College President Leonard Dawson's presentation to the Association's Annual Meeting in 1987, the Executive Committee in 1989 voted to establish, on a trial basis, to be reviewed annually, a scholarship at the College. The scholarship is awarded to needy students best emulating the character and commitment of the founder of Voorhees College, Elizabeth Evelyn Wright. The recipients sharing the first year scholarship were:

Michelle Gladney - A rising Junior from a family of four, she is a Computer Science major with a GPA of 3.29. She is a member of several organizations on campus and in her home community.

Carolyn Brock - A graduating Senior from a family of three, she is a Sociology major with a 3.57 GPA, and has maintained a 3.00 GPA or better every semester.

Both recipients are members of the Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society. We wish them continued success in their studies and chosen careers.

TELEPHONE CHANGE

Due to increased demand for new telephone numbers in New Jersey, the NJ Telephone Company has split the existing 201 area code. The northerly portion of the old 201 area will keep its code, while the southerly portion has been redesignated as area code 908. Southern New Jersey numbers will remain 609. Several of the members of the Executive Committee are affected by this change, they are:

Treasurer G. Harold Buttler:	(908) 548-8869
Donald A. Sinclair:	(908) 545-0568
Manning W. Voorhees:	(908) 842-0086
VVA Sales, Judith Voorhees:	(908) 449-4902
Genealogist Albert Stokes:	(908) 297-2438

These changes have also been noted in the Executive Committee listing on the back page of the Newsletter. The new area codes can be used immediately and will be mandatory beginning on June 1, 1991.

NETHERLANDS TRIP

The number of people who have signed up to go on the previously announced trip to Holland following the Annual Meeting in October is still a few short of the number required to proceed. We know there are many members who expressed a clear interest in going on the trip, but have not, as yet, signed up. We have been advised that the closing date to sign up has been extended, but it is essential that if you are interested in participating, you immediately contact Meg Butler at Empire Travel (908) 741-8050. The closing date cannot be postponed indefinitely. For those keeping an eye on the cost of the trip, the recent favorable change in the exchange rate with the guilder should result in a lower cost for the land portion of the trip than previously anticipated.

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. H. Dusinberre Smith (nee Dorothy Van Voorhis) died March 21, 1991. She had celebrated her 100th birthday on February 3, 1991. She was a graduate of Miss Roate's Training School in Ellenville, NY, and had been a first grade teacher. She resided most of her life in Fishkill, NY until moving to Florida in 1966. She was the daughter of Samuel Laurence and Mary Frances (Van Sternburgh) Van Voorhis. Mrs. Smith is survived by her daughter, Doretta Smith Penn.

Edward Voorhees, died at his residence in Texas City, TX, March 20, 1991, age 83. He was born Oct. 24, 1907 at Galveston, TX, the son of Willis Drummond Voorhees (b. Brunswick, MO), and grandson of Civil War veteran Abraham R. Voorhees (b. Canandaigua or Rushville NY). Edward was retired from Amoco Oil, where he had been employed for 40 years. He was the last male to have the Voorhees name in this line of the family. Mr. Vorhees is survived by his wife, Martha Nell Voorhees, daughters Betty Dunn, Alice Yanasak and Diane White, sister Rosalie Stigletts, seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Ruth Segoine McCabe, 76, died Feb. 7, 1991 at Monroe, NJ. Although not a member of the family, Mrs. McCabe for many years painted the VanVoorhees coat-of-arms for the Association, as had her mother, Mrs. Richard Segoine, before her.

Paul George Norris, husband of Ruth Hegeman Norris, died March 18, 1991 at Myrtle Beach, SC.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1991

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6/91

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