



# VAN VOORHEES NIEUWSBRIEF

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## THE VAN VOORHEES COAT OF ARMS STAINED GLASS

by

Albert Thomas Van Voorhies

In the 1980's, when I was working in Connecticut and living on Long Island, New York, I took up jogging on my lunch hour to ease the pressure of my job and the long commute to work. After my work-out I would visit the company's nurse to check on my blood pressure. One day she was talking to me about her part time job taking care of an elderly lady who was very rich and living all alone on a big estate. This lady had no children and had lost her husband several years ago. She employed about twelve part time nurses and had a private secretary to help her. Our company nurse took care of the lady at night and she confided in me that she did not know what to talk to her patient about.

I suggested that maybe the lady would just like to hear what the nurse's day was like, telling her about me and other people she took care of at The Singer Company where I worked. The next day the nurse told me she talked to the patient about me, mentioning my name, my running through the Stamford area, and my sense of humor, etc. The lady told the nurse she was related to the Van Voorhees Family and when she was feeling better, she would like to meet me and give me a copy of the Van Voorhees Coat of Arms.

*(Continued on page 3)*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 The Van Voorhees Coast of Arms Stained Glass, *(continued on page 3)*
- 2 Van Voorhees Who's Who
- 4 The New Natalie P. and Alan M. Voorhees Archaearium
- 7 Voorhees Settled in Old Flatlands, Noted Brooklyn Families
- 8 Virginia Voorhees Collins 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday
- 9 Tulips
- 10 Showing Off the Basin at 89, Coerte Vorhees Isn't Slowing Down
- 11 In Memoriam
- 12 "Historical Handbook of the Van Voorhees Family in the Netherlands and America" & Forward
- 13 I. The Family Genealogist and His Work
- 16 II. The Family Coat of Arms
- 18 III. Origin of the Van Voorhees Family
- 20 5 Ways to Tell If Your Genealogy Research Is Accurate
- 22 Van Voorhees Book Order Form
- 23 Van Voorhees Membership Form

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*(Continued from page 1)*

Unfortunately, the meeting never took place as she died a month later, but the nurse told me that there would be an estate sale and all the proceeds would go to the Stamford Hospital. My nurse took me up to the 16-acre estate in Darian, Connecticut, where I met the ladies' secretary a couple of days prior to the sale. The estate sale was advertised in the New York Times and it mentioned the sale included a stained-glass coat of arms! I therefore could not buy it outright but the secretary said she would take special care of it. The day of the estate sale I arrived in the driveway at 3:30 am. There was a red light installed on the main street many years ago so they never had to wait for oncoming traffic, (talk about power)! I was informed that six dealers had already arrived and were waiting on an adjoining side street. I was seventh of the first ten allowed into the estate. The secretary showed me the coat of arms, and it was beautiful! They estimated the value and I offered full price, so no one could outbid me. The secretary also found a leather cover book by Elias Van Voorhees, 1881, and several Van Voorhees family pictures and paintings, which she gave me. As far as I can determine, this lady was related to Emma Chesterman Van Voorhees Birdsall, a relative of Elisa W. Van Voorhis, and her mother had it hanging in the front window of the Brownstone house in New York City.

I now have it hanging proudly in my living room bay window.

*Editor's Note: Albert has served as Membership Chair for the VVA for many years. Please see VVA Who's Who.*



## THE NEW NATALIE P. AND ALAN M. VOORHEES ARCHAERIUM

Compiled by Marie Voorhees Avelsgaard

Sources: *Douglas W. Sanford and curated by Beverly A. Straube,*

*The Archaearium: Rediscovering Jamestown, 1607–1699*, by Beverly A. Straube. Pp. 95, 121 color figs., 2 maps. APVA Preservation Virginia, Richmond 2006. \$19.95. ISBN 0-917565-14-2 (paper).

Website: *'Jamestown Rediscovery, Historic Jamestowne*

<https://historicjamestowne.org/collections/exhibits/archaearium/>

The word “archaearium,” defined as “a place of beginnings,” symbolizes Jamestown’s role in the English settlement of North America. This review discusses the museum of that name (fig. 1), which opened in May 2006 and which features results from the ongoing Jamestown Rediscovery archaeological project, begun in 1994 by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA).



*Fig. 1. Exterior view of the Natalie P. and Alan M. Voorhees Archaearium, Jamestown, Virginia (courtesy APVA Preservation Virginia).*

The Alan M. and Natalie P. Voorhees Archaearium is named after a couple who made a significant donation to the museum’s establishment. Alan Voorhees (1922–2005) was a transportation engineer and urban planner who played a major role in establishing the American interstate highway system. Historic maps from his personal collection were donated to the Library of Congress, the Library of Virginia, and the Virginia Historical Society. Together, the Voorhees also funded lecture series and research centers at various universities and a nature preserve near their home in Virginia.

More than 4,000 artifacts are on vivid display at the Nathalie P. & Alan M. Voorhees Archaearium, the award-winning archaeology museum at Historic Jamestown. See a slate covered with words and pictures from 400 years ago, learn from the largest collection of Colonial period American Indian artifacts in Virginia, and find the tiny toys that children played with.

Surrounded by the historic landscape of the first permanent English settlement in North America, the Archaearium (pronounced “Ark-ee-air-ee-um”) pairs the spectacular finds of the *Jamestown Rediscovery* project with oversized period paintings to weave a narrative about the first settlers and the struggles they endured. Seeing these objects within view of the sites where they were used creates an immediate and powerful connection with the past. The ongoing nature of the archaeological project ensures that new discoveries become integrated within the displays. (fig. 2)



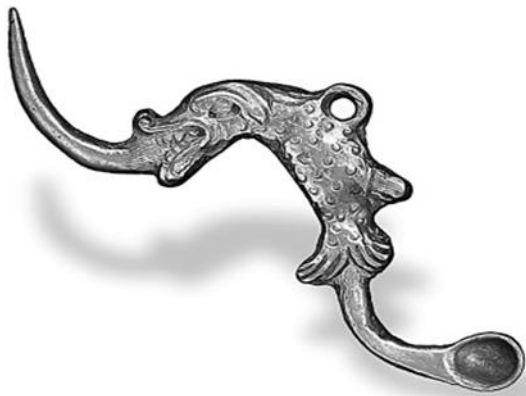
*Fig. 2. Artist's reconstruction of Fort James, ca. 1611, based on archaeological excavations and documentary history (lgth. of river side 128.016 m [140 yards]; lgth. of east side 91.44 m [100 yards]; lgth. of west side 91.44 m [100 yards]) (courtesy APVA Preservation Virginia).*

Exhibits focus on the 1607-1624 Virginia Company period at Jamestown. Twenty years of excavations have led to new understandings of the first English settlers, their relationships with the Virginia Indians, and how they shaped a new American society. The drama of the lives of settlers who were not documented in the historic record is told through their arms and armor, tools, coins, trade goods, personal items, religious objects, and food remains. Dead men's tales are also told. The results of forensic research on the skeletal remains of early settlers bring visitors face-to-face with facial reconstructions of some of the settlers themselves. (fig. 3)

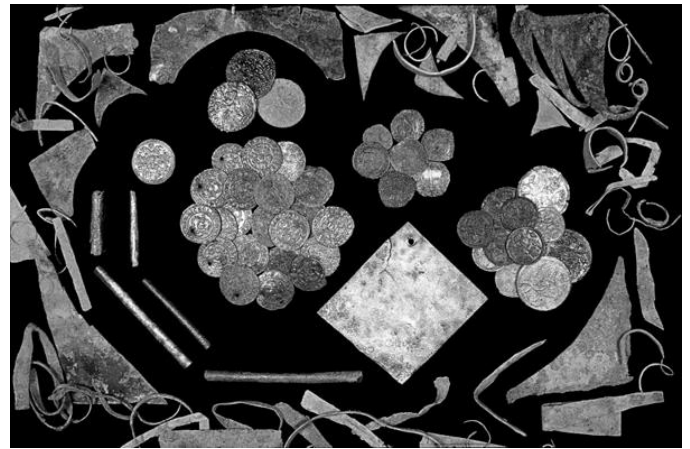
Visitors also learn about how these artifacts were found. A three-dimensional representation of a 1620s well shows armor and dozens of tools and household objects suspended within it the way they were archaeologically recovered from the brick-lined shaft. A partial reconstruction of a mud and stud building inside the museum echoes early Jamestown's architecture, while a cellar containing a glass wine bottle of Governor Francis Nicholson signals the “end of an era,” when the capital of Virginia moved from Jamestown to Williamsburg in 1699. (fig. 4)



*Fig. 3. Interior view of the galleries within the Archaearium (courtesy APVA Preservation Virginia).*



*Fig. 4. Ornate silver ear- and toothpick discovered within the extension of Fort James (lgh. 5 cm) (courtesy APVA Preservation Virginia).*

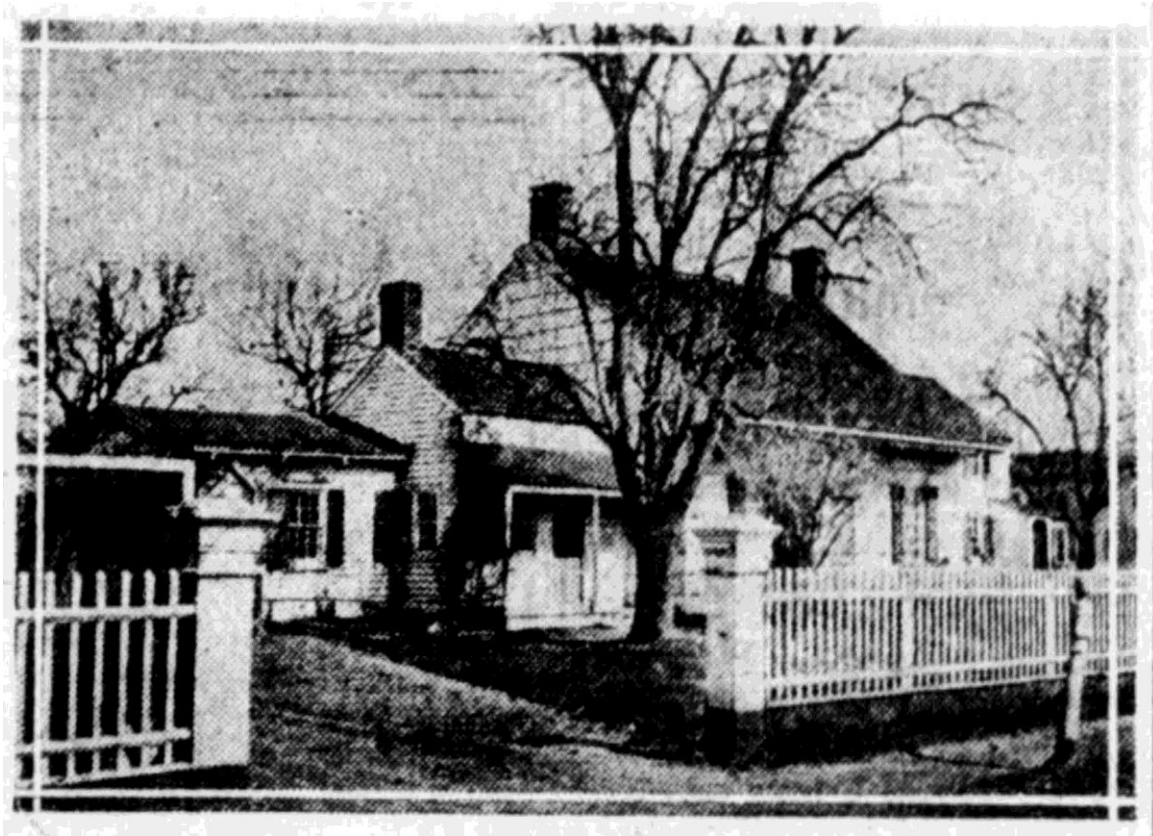


*Fig. 5. Copper scrap, coins, jettons, and tubular beads from Fort James (courtesy APVA Preservation Virginia).*

The 7,500-square-foot Archaearium opened in 2006. It is supported by piers strategically placed to preserve the 17th-century architectural features of Jamestown’s Statehouse, which are visible through glass portals below the museum. The exterior of the building is copper-clad in reference to that metal’s importance in the early trade between the Virginia Indians and settlers. Videos dramatize the meaning of some of the most important artifacts. And information is continually updated, such as the addition of “The World of Pocahontas” exhibit space in 2014 to highlight the interaction between the English and Powhatan Indians at James Fort.

## NOTED BROOKLYN FAMILIES VOORHEES SETTLED IN OLD FLATLANDS

*The Brooklyn Daily Eagle (Brooklyn, New York) – Monday, 28 April 1930*



The Old Voorhees mansion on Neck road, which was demolished two years ago.

### **ANCESTOR OF NOTED BROOKLYN FAMILY CAME FROM HOLLAND IN 1660 – ALL DESCENDANTS ATTAINED PROMINENCE IN COUNTY**

The Voorhees family has left a distinct impression on the old Gravesend and Sheepshead Bay sections. One of the leading avenues of the Bay carries the family name as a constant reminder for the present generation of the name and fame of those who paved the way for the subway commuters of 1930.

The common ancestor of the present family of Voorhees emigrated to America in 1660 with his wife and seven children. He was Stephen Coerte Voorhees, Voorhies, Voris or Van Vooghies – the name is variously spelled in the old records of Kings County. The name, according to Bergen's "Early Settlers of Kings County," comes from "in front of the hamlet of Hees," near Ruinen in Drenthe, a province in the Netherlands, whence the founder of the family came to seek his fortune in the New World. He was 60 years of age at the time of his arrival.

#### **Bought Brewery Property**

Settling in Flatlands, he bought property there, including a brewery with all the appurtenances, and soon after became a magistrate and man of much importance in his community.



All of his descendants have been prominent in that section of Kings County and have held positions of trust and responsibility.

One of these was John A. Voorhees, born 1798 in the old family homestead, where most of his long life was spent and where he prospered as a farmer. He held many local offices and about 1856, when Silas Wright was governor, he served two terms in the State Assembly. To reach Albany it was necessary for him to take the Sound boat to Bridgeport and thence over the Housatonic railroad to the capital.

There is a tradition, according to Charles A. Ditmas, by whose courtesy the above picture of the John S. Voorhees homestead is shown, that a Hessian soldier was buried under the back parlor of this house. The father of John S. Voorhees, Stephen J., fought in the Battle of Long Island and was noted for his bravery. When the soldiers whose duty it was to devastate the country reached the Voorhees house, they allowed Mrs. Voorhees to keep one cow on the condition that she hide it in a bedroom or the cellar because she had a young baby.

### **Many Noted Descendants**

Since the old days scores of men and women have added luster to the Voorhees name. In the Court of Special Sessions today sits Judge Albert Van Brunt Voorhees, who served the city for many years as a magistrate before taking his present position.

Dr. James Detmers Voorhees had a distinguished career in the medical profession in Brooklyn before his death last year in Santa Barbara, California.

## **VIRGINIA VOORHEES COLLINS**

Virginia Voorhees Collins celebrated her 100th birthday December 7, 2018.

She was born December 7, 1918, in Romeo, Michigan, at the Romeo Sanatorium. Her father, J. Martin Voorhees, M.D., D.O., and her mother, Jessie Burnie Smith Voorhees, R.N., owned and operated the Romeo Sanatorium which was the first Osteopathic Hospital in Michigan. They soon moved to Rochester, Michigan, where Dr. Voorhees established a private practice, as they did not wish to raise a child in a hospital.

Virginia is living in the independent section of a retirement community in Austin, Texas, near her son, John W. Collins, III. She is in excellent health and enjoys her family, remembering her stories, and continues her love of reading, mostly historical fiction. A surprise party was given on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Virginia's grandparents are, George Voorhees, born 1843, in New Hudson Oakland County, Michigan, and his

wife, Lydia Ann Gorham. Through Lydia Ann Gorham, we are traced back to the Mayflower.

Submitted by her daughter, Nancy Campbell Collins.





## TULIPS

Associated Press, Sunday, March 18, 2018, Lisse, Netherland

Nothing says springtime like the tulip season in the Netherlands. The vast Dutch sky hangs low against rectangles of color-majestic purples, regal reds, bright yellows, eye-popping whites.

Tulip fields dot the country side from Haarlem to The Hague. But the center piece of tulip-watching is Keukenhof park, located in Lisse, some 20 miles southeast of Amsterdam. Here, the tulip hunter is rewarded with artistic compositions of tulips with their seasonal brethren, hyacinths, daffodils, crocuses and other springtime varieties.

Gardeners begin planting the nearly 80 acres with over 7 million tulips, daffodils and hyacinths in mid-September to prepare for the eight-week spectacle that runs for a period from mid-March through mid-May. The hand-planting by 40 gardeners takes three months.

The color combinations are the envy of any fashion runway. Gardeners show off their fancy, placing a carpet of tiny blue Siberian squill against the ruffled blossoms of pinkish foxtrot tulip variety. Elsewhere, they contrast the deep hue of unopened red tulips against a backdrop of yellow daffodils. White daffodils pop against a bed of whiter hyacinths.

More than a million tourists visit the gardens each year, and compete for close-up shots of tulip gardens, no less frenetic than a red-carpet shoot.

The full grandeur of the bulb imported from Turkey in the 16<sup>th</sup> century becomes clear on close inspection. The exotic-looking crown imperial tulip resembles a pineapple with tufts of leaves above umber-colored flowers. That the tulip is a member of the lily family becomes abundantly clear when gazing upon the Madalyn, with its sharp-tipped petals.

Keukenhof can make for a full-day outing, offering flower shows, a walk up a typical windmill for a view of adjacent flower fields, a canal boat ride, children's playground,

restaurants and food trucks, which give the whole place a relaxed, festival atmosphere.

Exhibits offer information on topics like the Tulipmania bulb bubble of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when a single bulb could fetch as much as a canal-side house in Amsterdam. The



Tulips, Lisse, Netherlands

overblown tulip market is often cited as an example by economists of irrational investment mentality.

For the modern-day tulip hunter, nothing quite matches the sight of the colorful tulip fields coming into focus in the distance while traversing the Dutch countryside, either on bike or by car.

It is not uncommon to find cluster of amateur photographers at the edges of vast tulip fields trying to capture the intensity of the fiery red tulip, or the striations of contrasting hues – once the purview of some of Europe's most renowned painters.

Today, the tulip is a major part of the Dutch horticulture economy – while also being celebrated as part of the culture. Tulip season officially opens on Jan. 20, signaling the start of seasonal exports of cut tulips from the nation's vast network of greenhouses. To celebrate the

day, Dutch tulip growers bring over 200,000 tulips to Amsterdam's Dam Square, which can be picked for free.

The Netherlands is the largest tulip producer in the world, producer in the world, producing more than 2 billion tulip bulbs a year. According to Dutch trade figures, 77 percent of all flower bulbs traded worldwide come from the Netherlands, the majority of which are tulips.

The outdoor bloom begins closer to mid-March – and with it come more folksy tributes, with residents in small towns creating floral sculptures from tulips and hyacinths, showing them off along roadsides. Once a year, there is a 42-kilometer (26 mile) parade of tulip floats and decorated cars from Noordwijk to Haarlem.

The thrill of the tulip bloom has inspired one intrepid Dutch business man to plant fields abroad. Last spring, he drew thousands of tourists to a field of 250,000 tulips near Milan – exporting their fascination and making a business selling cut flowers.

But perhaps the reason so many people flock to see the Dutch tulip fields in the Netherlands isn't just a tribute to nature's pageantry, but the act that the easy-to-grow tulip bulb can be transported to any yard and garden, transforming them with a flash of springtime color.

When wandering Keukenhof, inspirations, abound, and there is the clear edict: Do try this at home.

## **SHOWING OFF THE BASIN AT 89, COERTE VORHEES ISN'T SLOWING DOWN.**

By KATC 3 (ABC) News, Around Acadiana, covering,  
Louisiana, news, St. Martin Parish  
Daniel Phillips, reporting, January 29, 2019

At 89-years-old, Coerte Vorhees has enough stories to fill a novel or a series of novels on everything from his time on the swamps to the people he's met along the way.

French generals pop up in his memories alongside Cajun doctors and celebrities, with the stories arriving at such a rate that at times, it can be hard to keep up. Over the last 30 years, Vorhees has taken these stories along with

guests out into the Atchafalaya Basin, pointing out any plants or wildlife that his boat comes across.

The way Coerte tells it, the seeds of his tours were planted by misinformation nearly 30 years ago.

While running a bed and breakfast, he would hear his guests talking about birds that, to him, didn't make sense. They'd joyfully recall seeing cranes in areas where cranes didn't live, and finally one day, he'd had enough. In a six-person boat, he offered his guests his own tour and set off one January morning in 1990 to try and do justice the place he'd grown up in.

That first trip was less than ideal.

A heavy fog rolled in while they were out, and visibility dropped—hardly ideal conditions for a group of people hoping to see the beauty of Louisiana for themselves. Foggy though, it was that would prove to be the first of countless tours Coerte would embark on, and a few years later, he was joined by his son Kim. The two of them continue to run tours out into the basin to this day, showing off everything that the swamp has to offer. It's hard not to fall for the basin while talking with them, pointing out every detail, and speaking longingly that people need to start taking better care of it.

Coerte, however, hasn't always been transfixed with the swamps. He admitted that as a kid, he preferred saltwater fish and would rather spend his time in the nearshore waters looking for redfish or trout. He was the product of a father who wanted him to be a doctor, but a stubborn streak sent him in a different direction. A quick stint as an Air Force pilot— they cut him when they found he hadn't graduated college— forced him back to school. There, he studied geology and would spend the majority of his career working as an oil geologist.

While he doesn't do much oil geology anymore, he's still out there, taking people out, even after a health scare a few years ago. One day while taking a group of French visitors out, he realized that he was starting to feel funny and managed to tell them to get his phone and call his son.

After that, he went into a full cardiac arrest and was eventually airlifted out and into the basin. It wasn't long before he was back out there; although, he no longer leads solo tours. According to him, he's going to keep taking people out there, refusing to give into complacency and refusing to slow down.

When asked about what he's most proud of, he quickly answered his family. He and his wife Margery are great-great-grandparents now, and the family is so big, he has to see them in shifts. Married for the last 68 years, he told me that he's so fortunate that he gets to go out to his favorite place with his best friend at home, waiting for him, and his second-best friend driving the boat.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Donna C. Vorhies

**Donna C. Vorhies**, 80, of Carrollton, Illinois, passed away Monday, May 7, 2018 at St. John's Hospital in Springfield. Donna was born January 15, 1938 in the White Hall Hospital to Carl B. and Ruby (Earley) Vorhies of Carrollton.

She was a life-long resident of Carrollton, where she was a member for many years of the First Baptist Church. She sang in the choir and played handbells. She graduated from Carrollton High School in 1956 and was employed at Boyd Memorial Hospital for 18 years, radio station WJBM in Jerseyville, IL, for 4 years and retired in 2005 from the Greene County (IL) Health Department after 25 years of employment.

She was preceded in death by her parents, a sister and brother-in-law: Maxine and George (John) Grizzle.

Surviving are a niece Marsha (Paul) Batscha of Springfield, a nephew Darrin (Kathy) Grizzle of Carrollton, one step-great nephew: Eric (Amanda) Weber, two step-great-great-nephews: Adam Wayne Weber and Joseph Weber and many cousins. She was a devoted sister, aunt and friend.

Visitation was on Monday, May 14, at the Airsman-Hires Funeral Home of Carrollton. Following visitation, graveside rites were held at the Carrollton City Cemetery.

Memorials were made to Carrollton First Baptist Church or a charity of one's choice. Condolences were left online at: [www.airsman-hires.com](http://www.airsman-hires.com)

## IN MEMORIAM

### George Irvin King

Tarboro, NC ---It is with great sadness that the family of George I. King, announces his passing on Monday, July 9, 2018, at the age of 84, following a brief illness.

He leaves his wife of 64 years, Carrol Ann King (Roberts), his son, Richard King and his wife Pam King, his daughter, Debra Ann Pfeifer and husband Steven Pfeifer, seven grandchildren, fourteen great-grandchildren, one great-great grandson and many close friends.

Born and raised in Olympia, Washington, the son of a rancher, Willard Irvin King and Evelyn Mae King (Trowbridge). After graduating from Fir Tree High School in 1952, he went on to follow his passion of being in the outdoors starting his career of more than 50 years in construction as a land surveyor in the Northwest. He went on to work for two of the largest EPC firms in the world, Bechtel and Jacobs as a senior construction manager, building mega-products across the globe.

He met his wife, Carrol Roberts in August of 1953 and they were married in 1954 in Chehalis, Washington. He was an avid outdoorsman, hunting, fishing, boating, golfing and water skiing, but he loved even more spending time with his family. George was also a lifetime member of various community groups including the Eagles, Elks and Moose Lodge.

Carrol Ann is continuing the membership in the Van Voorhees Association.



*The Van Voorhees Association published a handbook in 1935 entitled, "Historical Handbook of the Van Voorhees Family in the Netherlands and America", With Illustrations by Stephen J. Voorhies. We hope you were lucky enough to have purchased one when it was still in print, as it has been out of print for quite some time. We'd like to extend a thank you to one of our longtime members, John Van Voorhis, for transcribing the book into Word format. We have decided to share this with our membership by publishing it in the next several issues of our newsletter. The contents page will not be included as the page numbers will be irrelevant, and it will begin with the forward. There are some interesting stories in this book and we are happy to share them. Keep watching for them in future issues of the "Van Voorhees Nieuwsbrief"!*

## **"Historical Handbook of the Van Voorhees Family in the Netherlands and America"**

### **FOREWORD**

The plan to form a Van Voorhees Association was approved at a meeting 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 Drenthe, 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 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, 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 exceptions, 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 achieve 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.

Oscar M. Voorhees, Compiler and Editor, New Brunswick, N. J., May 15, 1935

## I.

### THE FAMILY GENEALOGIST AND HIS WORK

It is fortunate that there is available so complete 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 businessman 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, N.J., 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 Drente (*Footnote: This province is spelled on the earlier map, Drentia; on the later, Drente. Other spellings are Drent and Drenthe, but the "h" is not pronounced.*), 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 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 pp. 138-49 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 genealogists 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 sometime 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 literary 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 to be 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 as 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 *Coerte Stevenson*. 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 name *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 Voorhis 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 their 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 are 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 research received the following description of the Van Voorhees arms with a herald’s certificate under the seal of the College.

#### VAN VOORHEES

Ec *aux 1. E 4. de gu, a la tour d’or ouv’ du champ.*  
*aux 2. E 3. d’argent a Farbre arr’ de sinople.*

The translation of this in English 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 in 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 that 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 regarding 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 Worshipfull Steven Coerten, 79 years old,” and the last, his son, “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 Seubering. 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 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." (Footnote: "From a letter written October 2d, 1934, by Hans Van De Waal, M.A., *Prentenkabinet der Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden*.").

#### 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 their 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 and county magistrates - to affix their wax seals 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 list of descendants.

### III

## ORIGIN OF THE VAN VOORHEES FAMILY

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 northwestward, with the result that Netherlands 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 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.

*Footnote 1. By 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 geology. 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.*

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 *Et Stoel* or Seat of Law. The minutes of this court are contained in the *Ordel Boeck* or ordeal book or book of sentences. Because Drenthe was sparsely populated, even the most trifling matters were considered 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 some 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 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 Germ *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 Harinxman *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 properties 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.

As early as 1542 we find the name of Coert *thoe* Hees in the *Ordel Boeck*, Vol. 11, 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 states in 1598 Coert's heirs apparently succeeded to the manor of Voorhees, for in 1614 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 Albsertse, 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 Drente, would disclose considerably more date 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.

***This takes us through page 15 of the original handbook, which contains 122 pages. We will continue to submit material over the next several editions.***

# 5 WAYS TO TELL IF YOUR GENEALOGY RESEARCH IS ACCURATE

Ancestral Findings Newsletter

There is a lot of guesswork and uncertainty in genealogy. People in the past may have put the wrong information on old records, either from genuinely not knowing, or from having something they wanted to hide. Mistakes can be made in transcriptions of documents from one location to another; even tombstones are known to sometimes have mistakes on them from the stone cutter. Census takers make mistakes in the spellings of names (and even dates and places of birth of the householders they enumerate). Those who published family genealogies back in the 19th century, when this was a popular thing to do, often relied on legend, gossip, and the erroneous family stories other people gave them.

There is a lot of room for human error in genealogy research, and you are undoubtedly going to come across it, either in the work of others, or through mistakes you make in your own work. Even the best genealogists will once in a while discover they got an entire line wrong based on one incorrect assumption, misinterpretation of a record, or by obtaining a faulty record. With so much room for making mistakes, how do you know you've gotten it right? How do you know if your genealogy research is successful?

The fact is, except for mother/child relationships (and even these might be non-biological without you knowing it, if there was a secret adoption), genealogy is never a 100 percent sure thing. Even the best, most carefully carried out research can still potentially be proven wrong by a future researcher who discovers a clue no one ever noticed or that has just come to light.

However, there are a few ways to be as sure as you can ever possibly be that your research reveals the correct family relationships and information. Here are five ways you can tell if your genealogy research is most likely correct.

## 1. You Have Found the Same Information in More Than One Set of Records

The more often a family relationship, name, birth or death date, marriage date, or other important piece of family information is repeated through various record sets, the more likely it is to be correct. This is especially true if the records are primary records (records generated at the time of the event they mention).

For example, if you find the same names of parents or birth date or any other type of information for an ancestor in:

- Birth and death certificates
- Old newspaper birth and death announcements or other articles
- Wills
- Military records

The more reason you have to trust that the information is correct. Unless you find something drastic later that makes you question this information, or that refutes it entirely, you can be reasonably sure your research into this person is successful.

## 2. Your Research Matches the Research of Other People

In the online age, you are bound to come across people who are distant cousins or relatives by marriage who are working on your line. They may have been working on it for a while, possibly just as long as you or longer. It is important to compare research with these people.

If you find that your research matches up, including the sources you both used to arrive at your conclusions, you can have a great deal of confidence that your research is correct. If there are discrepancies in your research, then one of you is wrong, and you both need to look at your work again.

If you can find other people who have worked on the same line, try matching up your research with theirs. In fact, the more people you find who have done the same research and whose research is identical to yours, the more sure you can be that your research is correct.

### **3. You Can Reverse Engineer Someone Else's Work**

Those big genealogy books of the 19th century, though notorious for containing mistakes, also contain many correct things. Most of them come with annotations in the form of footnotes and/or endnotes as to where the author got the information used to write the genealogy.

Use these sources and find them yourself. It is always good genealogical practice to look at the original record in any case. You may find information on it the original researcher missed. If you can go through all the sources the author used and still come to the same conclusions as him or her, then you can be as sure as you can be that your research is successful.

### **4. Look for Confirmation for Your Wild Assumptions**

Sometimes, in genealogy research, we have to take a leap of faith in our conclusions due to a lack of solid evidence. Even the well-respected genealogical journals often contain articles where the author made their conclusion based on an assumption. However, those assumptions are always backed up with ample amounts of secondary evidence (evidence where the record doesn't outright state a family relationship or date, but one can be inferred from the information that is there).

If you have made a large assumption in your research, look for secondary evidence to back it up. The more secondary evidence you can find, the better. Once you've accumulated enough of it, you are at a point of being as sure as you can be about the accuracy of this line. Of course, the best thing is if you one day discover a primary record that confirms all of this secondary evidence. Keep looking for a primary source, even if you have a lot of secondary evidence. Just because you haven't found one yet doesn't mean it doesn't exist. It may be out there waiting for you to find it.

### **5. Get DNA Evidence**

While still relatively new to the world of genealogy, DNA has a remarkable ability to prove and disprove family relationships that would once have been impossible to confirm. While DNA may not be able to tell you the exact names of your particular ancestors, it can definitely put you in a suspected ancestor's family (or take you out of it) without a doubt.

If you have a person in your family tree with whom you have a suspected but unconfirmed direct relationship, DNA can confirm or deny it for you. You just need to get at least one (but the more the better) modern descendant of that person to compare their DNA with yours. The various DNA testing companies online can then tell you if the two of you are genetically related within a certain number of generations.

The more people you can get to take the test, the more accurate your results will be, especially if one person doesn't match up with all of the rest of the people who tested into the family. DNA offers about the surest way to confirm the success of your genealogy research, as there is no room for human error in DNA results.

Genealogy is imprecise and uncertain by nature. There is always a chance a relationship or information about an ancestor's birth, death, marriage, or anything else is wrong. This is more true the farther back into the past you go. People weren't always as careful about accurate record keeping as they are now, and making up noble lines of descent to make a family seem more prestigious was common. While you can never get around these things entirely, you can make sure your genealogy research is as accurate and successful as it can be by using the five tips above. Being as sure as you can be is the same as declaring victory in genealogy.

## VAN VOORHEES BOOK ORDER FORM

Please use or copy this form, complete shipping information and enclose a **check** or **money order** payable to:  
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***Through a Dutch Door: 17<sup>th</sup> Century Origins of the Van Voorhees Family***, must be purchased from Heritage Books Inc.

The code name is **V3758** and the price is **\$22.00**. This publication can be order vis website: [www.heritagebooks.com](http://www.heritagebooks.com)

**Or by mail to this address: Heritage Books Inc.**

**65 East Main Street, Westminster, MD 21157-5026**

**Phone: 1-(800)876-6103 Fax: (410)871-2674**

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**9<sup>th</sup> Generation CD (including 9<sup>th</sup> generation children)**

**Not available in book form.**

**Members of the Van Voorhees Association: \$29.00 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling = \$32.00**

**Non-members: \$39.00 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling = \$42.00**

Non-members price includes a free one-year membership to the Van Voorhees Association (if desired).

Please include a membership form with your order. Please include your email address, if possible, and please address any questions to [rfvoorhees@gmail.com](mailto:rfvoorhees@gmail.com).

Check or money orders should be made payable to the: **Van Voorhees Association**

Please mail to: **Robert F. Voorhees,**



## VAN VOORHEES MEMBERSHIP FORM

The purpose of the Van Voorhees Association is to provide genealogical research for members of the association which is comprised of descendants of the Van Voorhees Family. Membership is open to any descendant of the Van Voorhees Family whose patriarch was Steven Coerte. The Van Voorhees Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to the genealogy of the Van Voorhees Family. The association retains a genealogist who continues to research the family history. The Van Voorhees Association also maintains a genealogical data base to aid members of the association in tracking their lineage. The Van Voorhees family is reported to be the largest Dutch family in America.

Members of the association receive a newsletter, *Van Voorhees Nieuwsbrief*, detailing reunions, historical information about the family, and the latest finds in genealogical research.

If you wish to join the Van Voorhees Association or renew your membership, please print the membership application form and send it, along with the appropriate amount in dues, **payable to the Van Voorhees Association to:**

### MEMBERSHIP DUES: *Please select one*

Regular  \$10.00/year      Junior  \$2.00/year      Sustaining  \$15.00/year

Contributing  \$30.00/year      Life  \$200.00 *One time payment*

TYPE: *Please select one*       New       Renewal for Year \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBER INFORMATION *Please print*

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Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ VVA # \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### VAN VOORHEES FAMILY TREE

Please use additional sheets as needed to complete your Van Voorhees lineage, as far as known. Please be sure to include the names of your children. Also, if possible, please include date of death and place of birth and death. Even if exact place of birth or death is unknown, we need to get some general idea where people lived.

PARENTS:	Father	Birthdate	Death	Mother	Birthdate	Death
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Grandfather				Grandmother		
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Great Grandfather				Great Grandmother		
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Other: \_\_\_\_\_



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