

# Roelof Voorhees of New Brunswick

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IN SEARCHING for the parentage of my ancestress, Mary Van Voorhees (wife of Peter Van Pelt of Franklin and Bridgewater townships, Somerset Co., N.J.), I have discovered that she was undoubtedly the daughter of Roelof Voorhees of New Brunswick and that the material in print on this Roelof Voorhees is not entirely accurate. The *Genealogy of the Van Voorhees Family in America* (1888), by Elias W. Van Voorhis, states (p. 421) that Roelof Lucasse Van Voorhees married (1) 26 April 1714, Helena Stoothoff and (2), subsequent to 1726, Margareta Cortelyou; and that his children were Luke, Garret, Roelof, Johannis, Johanna, Jannetje, Helena, Maria, and Catlyna. It further states that Maria was baptized 23 Oct. 1737, on Staten Island. This last statement puzzled me, for why should this one child be baptized away from New Brunswick? The abstract of the will of Roelof Voorhees of New Brunswick as given in *New Jersey Archives*, v. 32, pp. 342-43, lists these children and mentions "money received on behalf of children's grandfather, Gerrit Stoothoff." This would seem to indicate that all the children were grandchildren of Gerrit Stoothoff, yet the *Genealogy* states that Mary or Maria was daughter of Margareta Cortelyou. Consequently, I got a copy of the original will of Roelof, found his children's baptisms in the records of the New Brunswick First Reformed Church, and also found his third marriage was to Margareta Cornell. These records helped to clear up the puzzle and are as follows:

The will of Roelof Voorhees, dated 16 Aug. 1750 and proved 25 April 1751, is as follows (abstract of the original will on file in Trenton):

I Roeloff voorhees In ye Corperation of New Brunswick and In the County of middlesex In New Jearsy Yeoman . . .

I Give unto maregrita my Beloved wife all the household Goods which She Brought to me wen I was first marred with her . . . that my beloved wife and Children shall live and be on my Estate or plantation well [*sic*] the Iungest Child be at Lawfull age . . .

Item it is my will that my Son Johanis Shall have all the Care and mennegment . . . my Said son Johanis shall Give to my Daughters helena and and [*sic*] marya and Catlyna wen they happen to marrey a Deseant out Set out of the Intiresse or Issue of this my Estate . . .

Item it is my will after my Daughter Catlyna Is Cum to be of lawfull age that then all my Real and personel Estate In the Corperation County and province afore or Eleswhere that I now possess shall be sold . . .

. . . unto my Son luke my Grate Duch bibel and the sum of twenty five pounds for his firs Berth Right . . .

. . . unto my Sons Gerrit and Roeloff and Johanis all . . . of my Boats . . .

. . . unto my Sons luke and Gerrit and Roeloff and Johanis the Sum of two hundred pounds . . . there father Received In there behalf of there Grand father Gerrit Stoothoff Deceased.

. . . Rest of my Estate shall be Deveided amongst my beloved Children Namely luke Gerret and Roeloff and Johanis and Johana and Janitie and helena and marya and Catlyna . . .

[Signed] Roelof voorhees

The witnesses were: Gerrit Voorhees; Johs Martinus Van Harlingen, Jr.; and Arnoldus Van Harlingen.

From this we learn that in 1750 Roelof had a wife Margareta; that Luke was his eldest son; that Gerrit Stoothoff is mentioned as grandfather of the sons, Luke, Gerret, Roelof, and Johannis; that Catlyna was the youngest; and that his children were Luke, Gerret, Roelof, Johannis, Johanna, Jannetje, Helena, Marya, and Catlyna.

The records of the New Brunswick First Reformed Church have been published in the *Proceedings* of the New Jersey Historical Society, New Series, v. 11 (1926), and show the following baptisms on pp. 208, 209, 210, 401, 403:

Gerrit, son of Roleph and Lena Van Voorhees, bp. 1 Apr. 1722  
Roeleph, son of Roelph and Helena Van Voorhees, bp. 8 Mar.  
1724

Johannes, son of Roeleff and Lena Van Voorhees, bp. 4 Dec. 1726  
Helena, dau. of Roelof and Neeltie Van Voorhees, bp. 4 Apr.  
1731

Maria, dau. of Roelof and Neeltie Voorhees, bp. 12 Aug. 1732  
Cattlina, dau. of Roleph and Neiltje Van Voorhuise, bp. 30  
Nov. 1735. Witnesses: Abraham and Catrinna V. Voorhuise

The New Jersey marriage bonds on file in the Secretary of State's office in Trenton (abstracted in *New Jersey Archives*, 1st series, v. 22) include one dated 5 Dec. 1745, for Roleph (Van) Vorhuise of Middlesex County and Margareta Cornel of Somerset Co., the bondsmen being Luke and Gerret Voorhees; and a bond dated 20 Apr. 1751, for Peter Van Pelt of Somerset County and Mary Van Voorhees of Middlesex County, the bondsmen being Gerret Voorhees. Mr. Donald A. Sinclair, curator of special collections, Rutgers University and editor of this magazine, informs me that the signature of the Gerret Voorhees who signed the 1751 marriage bond corresponds to that of the Gerret who signed the 1745 marriage bond and to that of the Gerret who married Johanna Van Harlingen in 1747 and who was the son of Roelof and his first wife Helena (Stoothoff) Voorhees.

The Van Pelt Bible (published in Holland in 1744) states that "Mary Voorhis" was born 2 Aug. 1733, disagreeing with the baptismal date of Mary, daughter of Roelof and Nellie Voorhees, by one year. However, this Van Pelt family record is apparently a copy which might account for the error. Although old and written in the Bible, it was recorded by Peter Van Pelt, for it is written in the first person, but there are entries dating after the death of Peter. Perhaps the original was written in Dutch and later someone rewrote the record in English. The penmanship is unusually fine. Be that as it may, there can be little doubt but that Mary Voorhees who married Peter Van Pelt was the Mary, daughter of Roelof Voorhees of New Brunswick. The day of birth (Aug. 2) and the day of baptism (Aug. 12) are harmonious. The bondsman for Peter Van Pelt and Mary Voorhees was Gerret Voorhees, son of Roelof and thus brother to Mary. Mary (Voorhees) Van Pelt named her second son Roelof which is in accord with the Dutch custom of naming the second son after the maternal grandfather, and she named her second daughter Nellie, undoubtedly for her mother.

Thus, the record of the family of Roelof Voorhees is as follows:

ROELOF LUCASSE VAN VOORHEES (later Roelof Voorhees), son of Lucas Stevense Van Voorhees and Jannetje Minnes Johannes, married (1) 26 Apr. 1714, Helena Stoothoff, who died prior to 1729 (T. G. Bergen, *The Bergen Family*, p. 250), daughter of Gerret Elbertse Stoothoff and Johanna Nevius; (2) about 1730, Nellie —; (3) 1745 marriage bond of Dec. 5, Margareta Cornell, who survived him. Roelof Voorhees died at New Brunswick, N.J., between 16 Aug. 1750, the date of his will, and 25 Apr. 1751, the date it was proved.

Children (the first six by first marriage, remainder by the second):

1. Luke
2. Johanna
3. Jannetje
4. Gerret, bp. 1 Apr. 1722
5. Roelof, bp. 8 Mar. 1724
6. Johannes, bp. 4 Dec. 1726
7. Helena, bp. 4 Apr. 1731
8. Mary, b. 2 Aug. 1732; bp. 12 Aug. 1732; m. 26 Apr. 1751, Peter Van Pelt, who was b. 28 Feb. 1725; d. Dec. 1776, Bridgewater (now Branchburg) Township, Somerset Co., N.J. Lived near Six-Mile-Run, Franklin Twp., Somerset Co., most of his life. CHILDREN (baptized Six-Mile-Run Dutch Reformed Church; see *Somerset County Historical Quarterly*, 8:127, 128, 130, 212, 215, 217, 221):
  - Tunis, b. 11 May 1752; bp. 14 June 1752; d.y.
  - Jane, b. 13 Apr. 1754; bp. 12 May 1754; m. John Vander Veer
  - Nellie, b. 1 Aug. 1756; bp. 15 Aug. 1756; m. Jonathan Dunn
  - Roelof (Rulif), b. 8 Oct. 1758; bp. 29 Oct. 1758; d. 2 June 1854, North Branch, Bridgewater Twp.; m. (bond 11 Jan. 1782) Catharine Ten Eyck
  - Abraham, b. 17 July 1761; bp. 2 Aug. 1761; d. 25 July 1848; m. Ellen Williams
  - Lena, b. 16 Oct. 1763; bp. 6 Nov. 1763
  - Mary, b. 29 Jan. 1767; bp. 12 Mar. 1769
9. Catlyna, bp. 30 Nov. 1735