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Who Were the Parents of Elizabeth (Terhune) Earle of Bergen County, New Jersey?

Joseph W. Dooley*

Elizabeth Terhune (1756–1847) was married to the American Revolutionary War soldier, Morris Earle (1757–1833).^[1] Since at least 1924 there has been some question about the identity of her parents, and multiple candidates have been put forward. This article will show that the parents of Elizabeth Terhune were Albert Terhune and Jannetje Vanderhoof.

In *History and Genealogy of the Earles of Secaucus*, Rev. Isaac Newton Earle states that Elizabeth's parents were Albert Terhune and Betsy Van der Linde.^[2] In *Descendants of Albert Albertse Terhune of 1654*, Herbert S. Ackerman shows Elizabeth (Terhune) Earle twice. She is designated as Descendant No. 5-80, and she is listed again as Descendant No. 6-261.^[3] Ackerman asserts that Elizabeth (5-80) was the daughter of Stephen Terhune and his second wife Maria Bogart. This Elizabeth, according to Ackerman, was married to Marten Erle. Ackerman asserts that Elizabeth (6-261) was the daughter of Steven

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¹ Family tradition holds that Elizabeth Terhune and Morris Earle eloped and were married in New York City (Rev. Isaac Newton Earle, *History and Genealogy of the Earles of Secaucus* [Marquette, Mich.: the author, 1924], 355). In her declaration dated 29 September 1837, filed with her application for a pension as the widow of a Revolutionary War veteran, Elizabeth stated that she and Morris were married by Rev. William Jackson on 2 February 1777 in Bergen County, New Jersey. But no church or civil record has been found to confirm this date of marriage (Revolutionary War Pension File, W849, Morris Earle). The only contemporary record found pertaining to their marriage is a New York marriage license dated 10 March 1778 (*Names of Persons for Whom Marriage Licenses Were Issued by the Secretary of the Province of New York, Previous to 1784* [Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1968], 124).

² Earle, *Earles of Secaucus* [note 1], 355, 604.

³ Herbert S. Ackerman, *Descendants of Albert Albertse Terhune of 1654* (Ridgewood, N.J.: the author, 1946), 16, 32, 60. For the early generations of the Terhune family, see Harry Macy, Jr., and Renee L. Dauven, "Origin of the Amerman and Terhune Families, and Their Founding Mother Geertje Dircks," *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 148 (2017):84–110 et seq. As will be shown below, Elizabeth (Terhune) Earle was the granddaughter of Johannes Terhune who married Geesje Westervelt. This Johannes is shown to be Johannes³ (*Albert*²⁻¹) in the Macy and Dauven article at 148:294–302.

Terhune and Sautie Alys. This Elizabeth, according to Ackerman, was married to Morris Earle.^[4]

A few online sources state that Elizabeth's parents were Albert Terhune and Jannetje Vanderhoof,^[5] but none offers proof or cites primary sources to establish this parent-child relationship.

Albert Terhune of New Barbadoes Township in Bergen County, New Jersey,^[6] left a will dated 20 January 1807, proved 28 January 1808.^[7] In his will Albert named sons Cornelius, John, and Peter, and daughters "Gusye,"^[8] wife of Solomon Van der Beek, and Elizabeth, wife of Morris Earle. This will eliminates the possibility that Elizabeth Terhune's father was Stephen or Steven as proposed by Ackerman, and makes clear that her father was named Albert. But who was Elizabeth Terhune's mother: Betsy Van der Linde or Jannetje Vanderhoof?

Regularly throughout *The Earles of Secaucus*, Rev. Earle cites primary sources and recounts correspondence he has had with Earle family members and other researchers to support his history of the Earle family. But he cites no source for his statement that Elizabeth Terhune's mother was Betsy Van der Linde. What makes this a little more frustrating is that in "The Van der Lindes in Colonial America,"^[9] the authors, George E. McCracken and George O. Zabriskie, do not report the birth of *any* woman named Betsy or Elizabeth Van der Linde in the early-to-middle eighteenth century in New Jersey.

⁴ Ackerman, *Descendants of Albert Albertse Terhune* [note 3], 16, 32. Ackerman cites some primary sources, but none that connect Elizabeth to either Stephen or Steven. He cites the will of "Stephanus" Terhune, alleged father of Elizabeth (5-80), but as cited, the will lists no daughter Elizabeth. For Steven Terhune, alleged father of Elizabeth (6-261), Ackerman cites the will of Steven's father Albert, which mentions a grandson Hendrick, but not a granddaughter Elizabeth. In the published records of the Dutch Reformed Church in Hackensack, New Jersey, Morris Earle's given name has been transcribed as "Marus" or "Marten." One may readily understand how "Morris" may be written as the similarly-sounding "Marus," but to understand how "Morris" was transcribed as "Marten" requires a bit more analysis. In the handwritten register, the first leg of the lower case "u" appears taller than the second leg, allowing the first leg of the "u" to be mistaken for a "t," and the second leg for an "e" or an "i." So, "u" is transcribed as "te" or "ti." Hence, what was written as "Marus" has been mistranscribed as "Marten." But Ackerman appears not to have realized these variations referred to the same man. His references to two Elizabeth Terhunes marrying "Marten Erle" and "Morris Earle" are actually references to the same marriage. Morris Earle's father, also named Morris Earle, was the son of Enoch and Anna (Morris) Earle (Earle, *Earles of Secaucus* [note 1], 354-355, 604).

⁵ For example, <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/pedigree/landscape/LQ5D-2NB>, and Edmund West, comp., *Family Data Collection-Births*, https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=5769&h=4444584&tid=&pid=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=78h-567293&_phstart=successSource.

⁶ New Barbadoes Township eventually became the City of Hackensack in 1921. For the complex history of these two jurisdictions, see John E. Snyder, *The Story of New Jersey's Civil Boundaries, 1606-1968* (Trenton, N.J.: Bureau of Geology and Topography, 1969), 78-79, 82.

⁷ Secretary of State's Wills, File 3438B (Bergen Co.), New Jersey State Archives, abstracted in Elmer T. Hutchinson, ed., *Calendar of New Jersey Wills, Administrations, Etc., Vol. XI, 1806-1809* (Trenton, N.J.: MacCrellish & Quigley Co., 1947), 330-331.

⁸ "Gusje" was a variant spelling of Geesje, a female Dutch first name.

⁹ George E. McCracken and George O. Zabriskie, "The Van der Lindes in Colonial America," *The Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey* 29 (1956):1-12, reprinted in *Genealogies of New Jersey Families from the Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey*, selected and introduced by Joseph R. Klett, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1996), 1:940-951.

However, McCracken and Zabriskie offer a possible explanation for Rev. Earle's unsupported statement about Elizabeth Terhune's mother. They note that Geesje Westervelt was married first to Peter Van der Linde,^[10] and second to Johannes Terhune.^[11] A son named Albert was born to this second marriage on 7 November 1729.^[12] As will be seen, this was the same Albert Terhune who would marry Jannetje Vanderhoof on 17 May 1752.^[13] Assuming these are Elizabeth Terhune's parents, then her *grandmother* was born Geesje Westervelt, and when she married Elizabeth's grandfather, she was the widow Geesje Van der Linde. This may explain how Rev. Earle came to state that Betsy Van der Linde was the mother of Elizabeth Terhune: he (or his unnamed source) confused the grandmother for the mother, and he confused her given name *Geesje* for *Betsy*. Rev. Earle's focus was the Earle family, not the Terhunes, so he was more concerned about the marriage of Morris Earle to Elizabeth Terhune than about the identity of Elizabeth's parents.

Establishing Elizabeth's Parents and Grandparents

Cornelius, John, and Elizabeth Terhune are all named in their father Albert's 1807 will, and all three also appear in Revolutionary War pension files. Cornelius Terhune was awarded a pension,^[14] John Terhune and his widow Sarah were also awarded a pension for John's service in the Revolution,^[15] and the widowed Elizabeth Terhune was awarded a pension for the service of her husband Morris Earle.^[16]

In his application for a pension, Cornelius states that, in addition to his later service, he served in 1776 as a substitute for his brother John. In John's application, he refers to his father Albert. Included in the application file for Elizabeth (Terhune) Earle is an affidavit from her brother Cornelius.

No record of the baptisms of either Elizabeth or Cornelius Terhune has been found. But there is a record of John Terhune's baptism at the First Dutch Reformed Church in Hackensack, and that record states that his parents were "Albert Ter Huyn" and "Gennitje Van der Hoef."^[17] Therefore, we may conclude that if John and Cornelius were brothers (as Cornelius states in his pension file), and if Cornelius was the brother of Elizabeth (as he states in Morris Earle's pension file), and if John was the son of Albert Terhune and Jannetje Vanderhoof (as indicated by John's baptismal record), then John, Cornelius, and Elizabeth were siblings, and their parents were Albert Terhune and Jannetje Vanderhoof.

¹⁰ Geesje Westervelt married Peter Van der Linde in Hackensack, banns dated 21 October 1710 (*Records of the Reformed Dutch Churches of Hackensack and Schraalenburgh, New Jersey*, Collections of The Holland Society of New York, Vol. 1 (New York City, 1891), Part 1, p. 34).

¹¹ Geesje Westervelt married Johannes Terhune in Hackensack, banns dated 10 April 1725 (*ibid.*, Part 1, p. 45).

¹² Arthur C. M. Kelly, ed., *Vital Records of the Protestant Dutch Reformed Church at Acquackanonk (Passaic), New Jersey, 1727-1816 . . .* (Rhinebeck, N.Y.: Kinship, 1977), 13.

¹³ *Reformed Dutch Church of Hackensack* [note 10], Part 1, p. 69.

¹⁴ Revolutionary War Pension File, S1121, Cornelius Terhune.

¹⁵ Revolutionary War Pension File, W9849, John Terhune.

¹⁶ Revolutionary War Pension File, W849, Morris Earle.

¹⁷ *Reformed Dutch Church of Hackensack* [note 10], Part 1, p. 218.

While we have no record of Elizabeth Terhune's baptism, there is evidence from which we may calculate her approximate date of birth. Elizabeth died 4 March 1847. A compilation of gravestone transcription and cemetery records of the New York Cemetery^[18] states that Elizabeth's age at death was 90 years, 5 months, and 21 days.^[19] From this we can calculate that Elizabeth was born on or about 13 September 1756.

The final piece of evidence to show that Elizabeth's parents were Albert Terhune and Jannetje Vanderhoof is the Dutch pattern in family naming: the first two children of each sex were usually named for the four grandparents.^[20] Albert Terhune was the son of Johannes Terhune and Geesje Westervelt. Jannetje Vanderhoof was the daughter of Cornelius Vanderhoof and Elizabeth Ackerman.^[21] Elizabeth Terhune's name and birth date fit nicely in the sequence of children born to Albert Terhune and Jannetje Vanderhoof, whose first four children were:

1. *Geesje Terhune*, baptized 25 March 1753.^[22] Named after her paternal grandmother.
2. *Elizabeth Terhune*, born on or about 13 September 1756. Named after her maternal grandmother.
3. *John Terhune*, baptized as Johannis 22 April 1759.^[23] Named after his paternal grandfather.
4. *Cornelius Terhune*, born 15 July 1761. Named after his maternal grandfather. While no record of his baptism has been found, Cornelius's date of birth may be determined from other sourc-

¹⁸ Herbert S. Ackerman and Arthur J. Goff, comps., *New York Cemetery, Hackensack, N.J.* (Ridgewood, N.J.; the compilers, 1945; repr. as *New York/Maple Grove Cemetery*, Hackensack, N.J.: Bergen Historic Books, 2001), p. 65. New York Cemetery is actually in Hackensack, and is now Maple Grove Cemetery, also known as Maple Grove Park. It was established by the Dutch Reformed Churches of New York City, which is why it was originally called New York Cemetery. New York/Maple Grove Cemetery is about a mile and a half from the First Dutch Reformed Church of Hackensack. In their compilation of interments in New York/Maple Grove Cemetery, Ackerman and Goff include Elizabeth Terhune and Morris Earle. This is probably correct, but it is possible that Morris was originally buried in the Churchyard of the First Dutch Reformed Church of Hackensack, also known as the Church on the Green. In the collection of the Bergen County Historical Society is a file of index cards for "Revolutionary Soldiers' Graves." The card for Morris Earle says he was buried "On [the] Green." But no record has been found to show his remains were moved to New York/Maple Grove Cemetery, even though he and his wife Elizabeth are listed in the Ackerman and Goff compilation. That compilation gives a date of birth of 22 March 1757 for Morris Earle. Morris was baptized at the First Dutch Reformed Church of Hackensack on 10 April 1757, but his baptismal record does not give his date of birth (*Reformed Dutch Church of Hackensack* [note 10], Part 1, p. 216).

¹⁹ Ackerman and Goff, *New York/Maple Grove Cemetery* [note 18], p. 65.

²⁰ Rosalie Fellows Bailey, *Dutch Systems in Family Naming: New York – New Jersey*, Genealogical Publications of the National Genealogical Society, No. 12 (Washington, D.C., 1954). "Children were almost invariably named for relatives, and it was customary to name the eldest two boys and the eldest two girls after their four grandparents."

²¹ *Reformed Dutch Church of Hackensack* [note 10], Part 1, p. 168 (Jannetje's baptism); Wilson V. Ledley, *New Netherland Families: Vanderhoef Family: The First Five Generations* (New York: the author, 1959), 6–7.

²² *Reformed Dutch Church of Hackensack* [note 10], Part 1, p. 210. Geesje's parents are listed as "Albert Ter Heun" and "Jannetje Van der Hoef."

²³ *Ibid.*, Part 1, p. 218. John's parents are listed as "Albert Ter Huyn" and "Gennitje Van der Hoef."

es.^[24] This date of birth is consistent with Cornelius's age in the affidavit he submitted in support of the pension application for his sister Elizabeth.^[25]

The names of the children of Elizabeth Terhune and Morris Earle are also consistent with Dutch tradition. The names of Morris's parents were Morris Earle and Metje Bosch (*Metje* or *Mettie* is Dutch for *Martha*). Elizabeth and Morris's children were:

1. *Albert Earle*, born 23 November 1778.^[26] Named after his maternal grandfather.
2. *Mettie Earle*, born 14 July 1781.^[27] Named after her paternal grandmother.
3. *Jannitie Earle*, born 7 March 1784.^[28] Named after her maternal grandmother.
4. *Marus/Morris Earle* (twin), born 21 March 1788.^[29] Named after his paternal grandfather.
5. *John Earle* (twin), born 21 March 1788.

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²⁴ In the genealogical files of the Sons of the American Revolution in Louisville, Kentucky, is a transcription of the family Bible of Cornelius Terhune's son Jacob, which includes Cornelius's dates of birth and death. This Bible was formerly owned by J. Christie Terhune of Hackensack, New Jersey. Note also Ackerman and Goff, *New York/Maple Grove Cemetery* [note 18], p. 36, for Cornelius Terhune.

²⁵ Revolutionary War Pension File, W849, Morris Earle. In his affidavit dated 2 May 1842, Cornelius Terhune claimed to be 80 years old.

²⁶ *Reformed Dutch Church of Hackensack* [note 10], Part 1, p. 277. "Albert Terhune" and "Jannetje Van Hoef," were witnesses at the baptism of Albert Earle. They were Albert Earle's maternal grandparents.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Part 1, p. 280. Although the church records give Martha's date of birth as 14 July 1781, she herself represented her date of birth as 1 August 1781. When her mother Elizabeth (Terhune) Earle filed for a pension as the widow of a Revolutionary War veteran (see note 1), Martha submitted a needlepoint sampler that she had created as a little girl as evidence that her parents were married, and that her mother was, therefore, entitled to a pension as Morris Earle's widow. On this needlepoint sampler, Martha stitched that she was born "Augus[t] 1 A D 1781." See Jennifer Davis Heaps, "Remember Me: Six Samplers in the National Archives," *Prologue, The Quarterly Magazine of the National Archives and Records Administration*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Fall 2002), 184–195.

²⁸ *Reformed Dutch Church of Hackensack* [note 10], Part 1, p. 286.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Part 1, p. 254.