

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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Kendall Historical Marker Honors Cleng Peerson

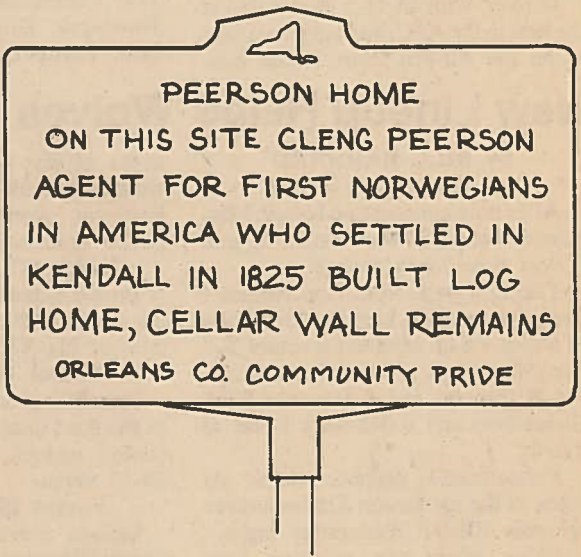
By Frank Clow
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An historical marker recognizing the home site of Cleng Peerson was dedicated in a brief ceremony on Saturday, October 7 in Kendall. Cleng Peerson was the agent for the first settlers of Norwegian descent to locate in America in modern times. The marker had been placed on the property of Vernon and Dorothy Root at 1013 Kendall Road just north of the Lake Ontario State Parkway.

On October 9, 1825, the sloop "Restoration" of 3½ tons burden put into New York harbor with 53 Norwegians aboard after a voyage of 98 days on the Atlantic. They were Quakers who had found it difficult to live in Lutheran Norway.

They were met by Cleng Peerson who had preceded them and had purchased land from Joseph Ellows, agent for the Pulteney Estate with offices in Geneva. The immigrants were in difficulty with the law immediately. The ship was impounded under an 1819 law which required ships to be of 5 tons burden for every two passengers. The "Restoration" was obviously overloaded and the owners were subject to a fine of \$3,150 and the latter was appealed to President John Quincy Adams who took a personal interest in their plight and issued a pardon. The sloop "Restoration" which cost \$1,800 for the immigrants was sold for 400. The 53 Norwegian immigrants came to Albany via the Hudson River and then by the newly opened Erie Canal which at that time was open only as far as Lockport. The dedication of the canal was scheduled for October 26 and the immigrants left Albany on October 21st and undoubtedly encountered the official Erie Canal dedication party making its way east to marry the waters of the Erie and the Atlantic.

The Norwegian immigrants debarked at Holley



and walked to the Kendall area where they cleared land and built small log cabins where 24 people crowded into one small log home that first winter. This early settlement was on what is now known as the Norway Road in the Town of Kendall. Cleng Peerson erected a log house just west of the Norway Road on land dedicated as the Cleng Peerson home site. A portion of the cellar wall remains in the home now occupied by the Roots. It is interesting to note that Dorothy Root is a descendent of one of the early Norwegian settlers in Kendall.

Cleng Peerson went west in 1833 to find more suitable land and helped establish a Norwegian colony in LaSalle City on the Fox River in Wisconsin. This site is felt by some to have been the first Norwegian settlement in America but the settlement in Kendall actually came first in 1825.