

# Cleng Peerson



Cleng Peerson (17 May 1783 – 16 December 1865) was a Norwegian-American pioneer who led the first group of Norwegians to emigrate to the United States, traveling on the Norwegian sloop Restauration. Cleng Peerson was born Klein Pedersen near the community of Tysvær in the county of Rogaland, Norway. Cleng Peerson grew up on the farm Hesthammar in Tysvær, but was born on the farm Lervik in the same district. In 1821, he first traveled to the United States at the request of a religious community in Stavanger. In 1824, when Peerson came back to Norway, it was decided that a group should emigrate. Peerson returned to America to prepare for their arrival. Cleng Peerson met the immigrants when they landed in New York on October 9, 1825. They moved to northern New York, settling about 35 miles northwest of Rochester in the town of Kendall, near Lake Ontario, in Orleans County. The road that ran through this settlement is today known as Norway Road. In 1834, Cleng Peerson led a group of settlers to a little settlement on the Fox River, near Ottawa. The community of Norway in LaSalle County, Illinois is the site of the Norwegian Settlers Memorial which was dedicated in 1934. Starting in 1838, Peerson returned to Norway several times. By 1840, Peerson had settled in Sugar Creek in Montrose Township, Lee County in the southeastern part of Iowa. In 1847, he joined the Swedish immigrant society at Bishop Hill Colony in Henry County, Illinois, which had been founded by sect leader Erik Janson. During 1854, the Texas State Legislature granted Peerson 320 acres of land west of Clifton, in Bosque County, Texas. Peerson lived here until his death in 1865 and was buried in the cemetery by Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Cranfills Gap.