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New Groningen

The village of New Groningen, which prospered in this area from 1855 to 1865, was the second colony established by a group of Dutch immigrants led by Jan Rabbers. The first settlement, Groningen, was located about one mile southwest of here until 1856 when the road between Holland and Zeeland (present-day Paw Paw Drive) bypassed the community. Unlike the Dutch farming communities of Graafschap, Drenthe, and Overisel, founded in 1847 and 1848, Groningen developed as an industrial town. Around 1847 Jan Rabbers built a log house and a store on land now occupied by the New Groningen Cemetery. He erected a sawmill nearby. Other ventures followed. The Veneklasen brickyard, opened in 1851, is the most enduring industry. Many Veneklasen brick buildings stand today.

Significant Date:

Statehood Era (1815-1860)

Registry Year: 2001 **Erected Date:** 2001

Marker Location

Address: 10542 Chicago Dr.

City: Zeeland

State: MI **ZipCode:**

County: Ottawa

Township: Zeeland

Lat: 42.80814100 / **Long:** -85.99759600

Web URL:

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Jan Rabbers

Jan Rabbers, the leader of a colony at Groningen and New Groningen, left Drenthe, the Netherlands, in 1846 with immigrants from Utrecht, Friesland, and Overijssel. They planned to join Albertus Van Raalte in Holland, Michigan. After arriving in New York aboard the Isabella Bath, the group went to Albany to await instructions from Van Raalte. According to tradition, in 1847 Rabbers and fourteen others walked from Buffalo to Detroit. Believing the Black River to be a likely trade route, Rabbers established Groningen about one mile southwest of here where the river appeared to be navigable. When the bridge washed out in 1856, the settlers relocated here where they had better access to the new road between Holland and Zeeland. They called the settlement New Groningen.