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# Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation

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October 17, 2013

## History

### Farwell

In 1837 Eldridge Farwell came to the area and settled on land near the Niles families and started to operate a ferry in the location now known as Farwell's Bridge. Other Farwells were: Gustavus, Set, Isaac and their families and the sons and daughters of Gustavus. The Village of Farwell was started at this time. There were several other villages that were in competition with Freeport. Farwell's problem was in being two miles north of the main road, the Old State Road and the area was subject to flooding. By the time the Galena railroad went through, in 1853, the Village of Farwell was history. Just north of the Pecatonica River was Turner's mill, established by Thomas J. Turner. With the help of two young companions, Turner built a hut and sawmill at the end of Rock Run creek and started a contracting business. He began processing lumber immediately and did so until the trees on his claim ran out. One of his contracts was to build the first courthouse. He reached Freeport, in 1836. He was a justice of the peace in 1837 for the east side of the county and admitted to the bar in 1840. Turner was from Ohio via Galena. The iron bridge was constructed in 1881, replacing the wooden bridge that replaced Farwell's ferry. The road was moved and a modern bridge has since replaced the old iron bridge. The road north went past Irish Grove, Salisbury's mill, Davis Mill (formally Flower's mill), Epply's mill (later Epplyana), Blackmore's mill and on to Walnut Grove and Rock Grove. It should be noted that arriving settlers at times found no place to spend the night and this led to them stopping in areas where they found springs or streams and tree groves. This quarry southeast of Durand in Winnebago County exposes fossiliferous limestone that was deposited in a warm, shallow tropical sea approximately 450 million years ago. These rocks are a primary source of crushed rock for the stone industry in northern Illinois.

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