

Celebrate Fulton: 1835-2010, 175 Years

Fulton celebrates its 175th birthday in 2010 and the Fulton Chamber of Commerce and the City of Fulton are planning special events for the year. In 1835, John Baker journeyed north from New Orleans and settled at the narrows of the Mississippi establishing Fulton. By 1836, Baker had constructed a log cabin with 3 tiny rooms, the only stop along the river between Albany and Savanna.

Here visitors found a good supper, night's lodging, and breakfast. Late fall, a frozen Mississippi steamboat forced 20 people to walk to John's cabin in Fulton. He served them a "supper of beef, potatoes and coffee, using tin cups for the latter." Since there were more people than cups, the cups were shared. Soon 20 more people arrived, so these guests, too, ate, drank, and shared the few tin cups. John and the first 20 snuggled inside while a large bonfire warmed the last 20 as they slept in the snow. (Bent, 1877).

A history of hospitality begun by the Bakers will be the focus of Fulton's events in 2010. Metal tin cups designed and produced by J.T. Cullen Company will be individually decorated. In late May or early June, the unveiling of the public art will be at Harbor Crest Home, the site of John Baker's cabin. Harbor Crest will serve coffee and vintage cake to those admiring the artistic tin cups. The public art then will be placed on Main Street and in other parts of town. On July 8, Ron Koehn, local historian, will use Chief Black Hawk's autobiography to tell about the life of this Native American leader. During the July summer night's festival, children will make birthday cards for Fulton and a cake decorator will demonstrate. Other events in the planning stages are presenters from the Illinois Humanities Road Scholar program, a fall bonfire at the Cattail site, and on election day in November, a DVD on the life of Andrew Jackson, U.S. President when Fulton was founded.