

## Retired Fulton Teacher Gives Program on Chief Blackhawk

On Thursday afternoon, July 8, 2010, Ronald H. Koehn will present a PowerPoint program entitled "Chief Black Hawk and His War" which will review the man and the war that bears his name and their legacy in American history. The program is scheduled for 5:30 PM at the Windmill Cultural Center located at the corner of 1st Street and 10th Avenue in Fulton. The public is invited to attend.

Just three years before John Baker founded Baker's Ferry, later renamed Fulton in honor of Robert Fulton of steamboat fame, a band of Sauk and Fox Indians under the leadership of Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kiakiak (or Black Sparrow Hawk) left imposed exile in the spring of 1832 in the Iowa Territory and returned to their homes across the Mississippi River in northwestern Illinois. These Native Americans had lost their tribal lands in Illinois in a disputed treaty negotiated by William Henry Harrison, a future president of the United States.

The return of these Native Americans to northwestern Illinois spread fear and panic among the white settlers of the region. Governor John Reynolds quickly called up the state militia, including Abraham Lincoln of New Salem who was elected a captain of volunteers, to oppose this "invasion" of Illinois. The resulting conflict was the Black Hawk War of 1832.

Lasting no more than five months at most and being comprised primarily of a series of chases and skirmishes, the Black Hawk War was not a war in the traditional sense of the word. It constituted a minor footnote in American history. And yet, its legacy was surprisingly significant in terms of white settlement in a portion of what had been the Old Northwest Territory, the fate of the Native Americans, and the political careers of some of its participants.

Ron Koehn earned his Bachelor of Science degree in history and political science and his Master of Science degree in history at Illinois State University (Normal). Now retired, he was employed as a social studies instructor at Fulton High School from 1974 to 2003, primarily teaching United States history, sociology, and American government.