

Mentone

Bell

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Town Founded In 1882

Mentone reflects its 83 year past in the mirror of time with scrutinizing eyes. The lines of age in the old buildings coupled with growth in its business adds up to a view of the old and a hope for the new.

A small village, Yellow Creek, Ind., uprooted itself in 1882 and moved about one mile east to the present location of Mentone in order to be near the New York Central Railroad.

The inhabitants of Yellow Creek, more commonly known as "Little Chicago," carted entire buildings, including the Drygoods Store, which now houses a coin laundry.

They were welcomed by Albert Tucker, who owned the land and had surveyed the plot in May, 1882. The area, occupying parts of Franklin and Harrison townships, was considered good farm land because the rolling terrain was crossed by Yellow Creek near the southeast boundary, providing excellent drainage.

Tucker, who later operated a grain elevator in Mentone, was the founder of the village and deeded one-third interest to both George W. Myers and William E. Hackedorn, both of Ohio. It was Myers who suggested that the community be named after Mentone, France.

In a four-year period, 1882-1886, Mentone grew from a population of four to a booming 700. Farmers attracted to the Mentone region were not disappointed. More stock of all kinds has been shipped from the Mentone railroad station than any other station in Kosciusko County.

In the autumn of 1882, William Kintzel became the first pioneer to erect a house on the

new town plot. His home, which was finished Nov. 5, 1882, housed his family: Mary E. Kintzel, her daughter, Clara, and her grandson, Willie B. Shaffer.

Two days later the Artemus Manwaring family moved in with the Kintzel family until their business house was completed. This two-story building was stocked by Manwaring with a large assortment of general merchandise.

BUSINESS SPREADS

On Christmas Day, 1882, C. E. Doane and L. S. Clayton opened Mentone's second business building, a hardware store.

Other businessmen began trade in Mentone. Henry Damanu opened a meat market Jan. 1, 1883. Samuel Garrison began selling his exclusive stock of boots and shoes in the spring of 1883. At the same time, Hayden Roe opened a harness shop.

A fine flouring mill erected in 1884 by Manwaring and Samuel C. Mentzer was the first one in northern Indiana. It often operated 24 hours a day in order to produce 100 barrels.

The first sawmill, erected by John Cox, was destroyed by fire in 1883, but was soon rebuilt. A machine shop and planing mill was owned by Foulks and Jefferies.

FIRST POSTMASTER

Esquire Johnstone acted as the first postmaster. The post office was moved from the Abe Whetstone home in 1883. He

was succeeded by Manwaring, Doane, and Clayton. Clayton also served as the first American Express Agent.

Mentone's first physician, Dr. Joseph A. Chandler, also carried a stock of drugs for ailing customers. When he left Mentone in 1886, Dr. John Heffley, physician and surgeon, filled his position.

In addition to fathering seven sons whose families became well-known county residents, William (Billy) Mollenhour erected an opera house in 1885. It seated 500 of the town's 700 inhabitants. The handsome brick house erected by Doane in 1886 became the pride of the village, also.

NEW GENERATION

On Sept. 1, 1884, David and Sarah E. (Kintzel) Dillingham became the parents of the first child born in Mentone. Charley, as he was named, and other Mentone children could attend the village's schoolhouse, erected in 1883, where Frank Crutcher taught.

Mentone's early citizens could worship at any of the three churches in the village: the Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1880; the Protestant Methodist Church, erected in 1886; and the Baptist Church, completed in 1887.

The Sevastopol Lodge Number 403, a secret society organized on July 5, 1872, was moved from Sevastopol to Mentone in 1885. Abraham Whitenberger, John Cox, Harvey Riner, David Neff, Henry Riner, and Charles H. Ketchum were the presiding officers.

February, 1886, was the big month for the incorporation of Mentone as a village. Richard C. Railsback, Sol Arnsberger, and John Yantis were elected members of the village board. Stephen Boggess became clerk-treasurer, and S. S. Zent was named marshal.