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## Town’s History Reviewed At Rotors Over Mentone Event

Jackie Gorski, Staff Writer

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A helicopter from Cleveland Helicopters lands at the Lawrence D. Bell Aircraft Museum while giving rides during Mentone's 11th Rotors Over Mentone Saturday. Photo by Jackie Gorski, Times-Union

MENTONE – Mentone’s history was the focus of Rotors Over Mentone Saturday.

The theme of the 11th Rotors Over Mentone, held at the Lawrence D. Bell Aircraft Museum, was “Celebrating the Rich History of Mentone.”

Featured speaker was museum board member Linda Cochran. Museum board president Tim Croy said the museum originally was advertising R.J. Hill to be the speaker, but “he wasn’t feeling real well.” Instead, Cochran spoke, who the board felt was Mentone’s historian.

Cochran started off her speech talking about what the museum was doing with the cement block portion of the museum, commonly known as the Mentone Room and was renamed to the Mentone Historical Museum last year. Cochran said the Bell collection used to be in that part of the museum.

The Bell collection has since moved into the larger room of the museum and the concrete portion of the museum is used for items relating strictly to Mentone’s history.

Croy said the museum staff is looking for anything related to Mentone’s history. It could be anything

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“as simple as an obituary because we are also doing genealogy.”

“In the very beginning when the committee was formed, they wanted to do something with Mentone, with the Mentone history,” she said.

She then went into Mentone’s history.

When Americans were moving west, several Native American groups, including the Miami and Potawatomi, lived in the area.

In about 1870, about 80 acres of land were purchased by William Blue. That land was sold to Albert Tucker, Cochran said. There are several of Tucker’s descendants in the area. Tucker and James Blue and others owned the land now known as Mentone and they coded the town. They purchased more land and the plot for the town was started.

Cochran also talked about the Nickle Plate railroad that passed through the area in about 1882. The first plan was to have to the railroad pass through a village southwest of Mentone, which was growing.

Tucker then divided Mentone into plots and the plan for the railroad shifted into the town’s area. It went from Morgan Street to Etna Street. In the summer 1882, it was “considered one of the construction feats of the day.”

The first house was built in September 1882, she said. “The hotel soon followed.”

The school house was on the corner of Ind. 19 and Ind. 25. The town was incorporated in 1886.

Community leaders thought about naming the town Tucker or Tucktown, but there was a town in Indiana with a similar name, “so they chose Mentone, after a town in France,” Cochran said.

In three years the town grew from eight to more than 700 people. Travel was by horse, buggy or wagon. The streets were dirt and cattle drives took place regularly to the loading dock, where they would be shipped out.

Cochran said the first car in Mentone was owned by Calin Myers.

“It was a one-cylinder, four-passenger Cadillac,” she said. “It had no top, no windshield or rear entrance to the rear seats.”

She said it would go 15 miles per hour “down hill. Seven to 8 miles per hour on the level.” Several people gathered at Myers’ home to see the “demon” vehicle. One girl was so frightened, she fainted. The horses tried to climb the telephone poles. Cochran said the story told to her great-grandfather was Myers would drive around town and when asked why he did that, Myers’ reply was the person who sold him the car told Myers how to start the car, but forgot to tell him how to stop, so he had to drive until he ran out of gas.

When electricity was established in Mentone, Cochran said it was turned on at dusk and “turned off again at 10 or 11 p.m.. At one time, there were lights that ran across the town’s main street that formed an arch, and there were three of them,” Cochran said.

During Rotors Over Mentone, Warsaw American Legion Post #49 Color Guard did the Placing of the Colors, the Rev. Jeff Herron of Mentone United Methodist Church did the invocation and band members of Tippecanoe Valley High School played the national anthem. Cleveland Helicopter also gave rides throughout the event and American Huey 369, Peru, gave membership rides.

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A helicopter from Cleveland Helicopters lands at the Lawrence D. Bell Aircraft Museum while giving rides during Mentone's 11th Rotors Over Mentone Saturday, above. Museum board member Linda Cochran, at left, spoke during the event. Warsaw American Legion Post #49 Color Guard, right, place the colors to start the program.

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Sep 13, 2020 [Dan Spalding](#) Updated: Sep 13, 2020 @ 12:52 PM

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Jaiden, 3, peers out the window of a Robinson R44 helicopter as his mother, Soundria Grizzle, sits in the front seat with pilot Matt Goodrich Saturday, Sept. 12, in Mentone. The rides were part of Rotors Over Mentone. InkFreeNews photo by Dan Spalding.



Soundria Grizzle awaits liftoff with Matt Goodrich, the pilot. Grizzle's husband and son were in the backseat. InkFreeNews photo by Dan Spalding.



Jason and Soundria Grizzle, of Akron, hold hands with son, Jaiden, after his first helicopter ride. InkFreeNews photo by Dan Spalding.

By Dan Spalding  
InkFreeNews

MENTONE – Gray skies and cool temps could not damper the thrill of a helicopter ride Saturday.

Jaiden and Wesley were among the passengers who took part in the day-long rides at Rotors Over Mentone Saturday, Sept. 12 outside of the Bell Aircraft Museum.

Jason and Soundria Grizzle, of Akron, wanted to give Jaiden, 3, his first ride in a helicopter and got the chance after recently learning about the festival.

Rides were offered by Cleveland Helicopter Services. Single seats were \$40, but three could ride for \$100.

“It was great. We did it for him, he loved it,” Jason said.

He added, “We didn’t even know this was here until we saw it advertised.”

“It’s pretty neat – didn’t know something like this was so close to home.”

Wesley, a 54-year-old client of Cardinal Services, returned this year for what has become an annual event, according to Craig Tolley who accompanied him on the ride.

Wesley was carefully loaded into the front seat and given a headset for communications.

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“Wesley had a good time,” Tolley said.

Aside from helicopter rides, the festival also had other aircraft on display. The main speaker had to cancel, but visitors heard a recap of the town’s history by Linda Cochran.

The biggest attraction this year was a Huey UH1H constructed in 1970. The helicopter is operated by [United Huey 369](#), a group that educates and commemorates the past helicopters used in wars.

The group is headquartered at Grissom Air Field near Kokomo and is in the process of establishing a new museum with construction next summer.

Many of the members are military veterans.

“The Huey has been around for many years and has served a lot of purposes through the different wars. Just to be able to fly in with something with this much history behind it ... you don’t see them too much anymore,” said Rick Marroni, crew chief on the flights.



*Wesley, 54, prepares for takeoff while pilot Matt Goodrich talks to passengers Saturday. Cleveland Helicopter Services offered rides for sale during the Rotors Over Mentone, a one-day festival in Mentone. InkFreeNews photo by Dan Spalding.*

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*Welsley, in the front seat, reacts as the helicopter lifts off the ground. InkFreeNews photo by Dan Spalding.*



*Members of American Huey 369, a group based at Grissom Air Field, commiserate while standing next to a 369. InkFreeNews photo by Dan Spalding.*



*The Honor Guard with the American Legion in Warsaw participated in the festival Saturday. InkFreeNews photo by Dan Spalding.*



*Band Director Janelle Riner leads members of the Tippecanoe Valley High School band, including trombonist John Moore.*





*A helicopter with Cleveland Helicopter Services takes off on another ride in Mentone Saturday. InkFreeNews photo by Dan Spalding.*