

ECHOES OF CEDARVILLE NOVEMBER 2017

Cedarville Area Historical Society



Society Releases Annual Report

The Cedarville Area Historical Society board of directors has mailed copies of its 2017 annual report to the organization's 260 members represented by 150 memberships. Half of the members are in the Stephenson County area; the other half are in 23 states other than Illinois. One member is in Versailles, France.

The CAHS program year runs from January through December, but for report purposes it is November through October.

Some highlights of the report include:

* *The society operated within its \$12,000*

budget, the same as last year.

* *Two improvements were made to the second floor south room: storm windows were installed and a mini-kitchen was completed through volunteer labor and contributions.*

* *The society and Highland Community College partnered in four history classes.*

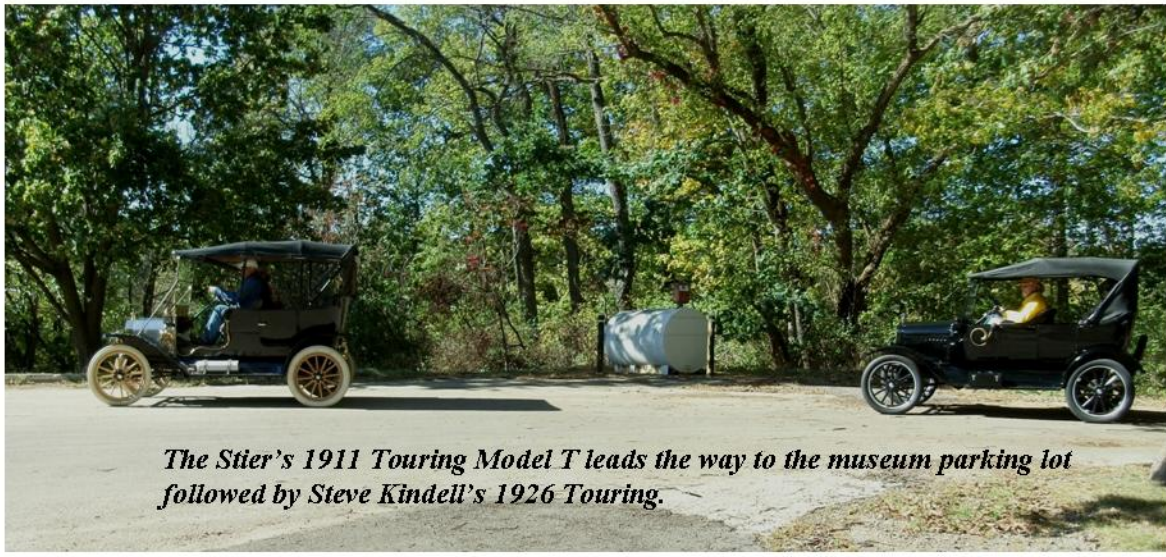
* *The society presented three live music programs.*

* *The society sponsored the Memorial Day parade and free Friday night movies.*

For a free copy of the four page report call Jim Bade, 815-563-4485 or e-mail bonniebade@comcast.net

*Rockford Model T Enthusiasts Tour
Cedarville Museum Pages 2, 3*

*1928 Puerto Rico Killer Hurricane
And Link to Cedarville Pages 4—7*



The Stier's 1911 Touring Model T leads the way to the museum parking lot followed by Steve Kindell's 1926 Touring.



This 1926 "Tudor" Sedan Model T to the left is owned by Dave and Deena Lantz,

*All photos by
Lisa Goodwin*



The complexity and beauty of a Model T wheel.

This 1911 Touring Model T beauty is the pride of Scott and Sheryl Stier



It's a 1914 Touring for Joe and Bean Maurer



Betty Clifton and her 1926 Coupe Model T

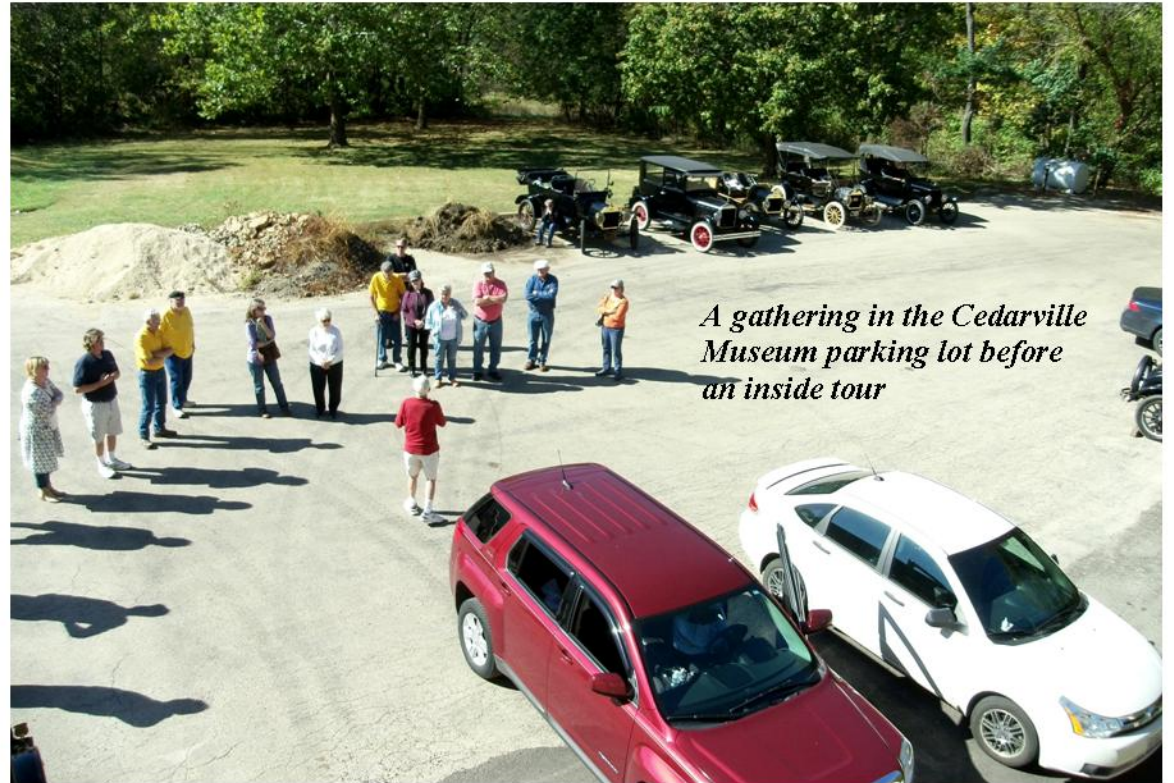


Bean was able to round up her husband, Joe, for a joint photo in their 1914 Touring Model T.



Group learns about Jane Adams from CAHS President Jim Bade

Rockford Chapter of Model T Enthusiasts Motor to Cedarville for Tour of Museum



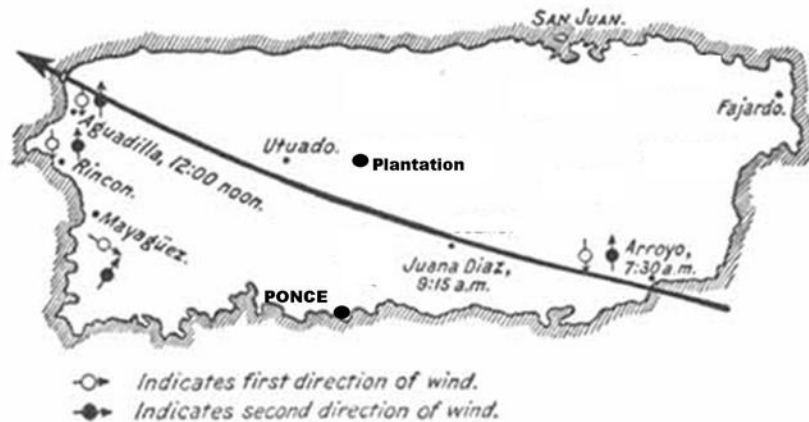
A gathering in the Cedarville Museum parking lot before an inside tour

Cedarville and History Revisited: The 1928 Puerto Rico Hurricane

In October of 1927, Miss Mary Dickson, great grand daughter of Josiah Clingiman, one of the founders of Cedarville, and daughter of Rev. John Dickson, Methodist minister in the village in 1920, disembarked from a ship in the harbor of San Juan, Puerto Rico. The 32-year-old woman with two college degrees had a contract to teach English to the primarily Spanish speaking students in Ponce, the island's second largest city. Her only schoolroom experience was one year as an 18-year-old in 1918 in Bellview School northwest of Cedarville. It is believed she got her Puerto Rican position through her Cedarville cousin Rollo Lutts, a Spanish-American War veteran who became involved in English education on the island after the United States acquired it from Spain in 1898..

Shortly after starting her job, she met and later married Victor Auffant, 40, a civil engineer in Ponce and owner of a coffee plantation in the island's central mountains. Of French background he was fluent in French, German, Spanish and English, educated at New York City University and was a U.S. army officer in World War I. The couple had two daughters, one being Yvonne (Bonnie) Auffant Bade, now living in Cedarville.

Hurricane Maria in September 2017 devastated Puerto Rico. In September of 1928, eleven months after Mary Dickson reached the island, Category 5 Hurricane San Felipe with winds of 160 miles an hour did the same. On the following pages is Victor Auffant's personal account in his letter to Mary of his experiences during the event.



Dearest Mary

Alive and kicking would properly express my present state compared to what it could have been.

The much feared cyclone finally did visit us. Of its gruesome work, I can tell you but little. Five days have gone by and it is only today that news from the interior of the island is slowly filtering into Ponce. All means of communication between towns have disappeared. Telegraph and telephone lines have been destroyed; roads and railroads have been so badly damaged that transportation is at standstill. Up to now, the only means to reach San Juan from Ponce is by sea. Relatively nothing or almost nothing is known of the towns of the interior. How much the island had suffered in loss of life and damage to property is a matter of speculation. Weeks will go by before enough information will be obtained to enable us to grasp the magnitude of the disaster.

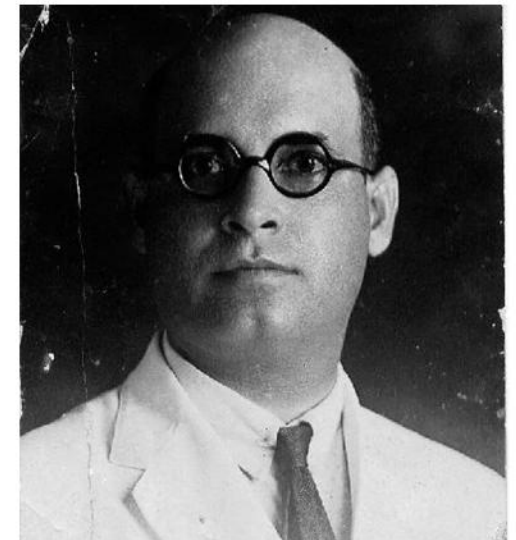
This can I say of what I have seen: That on the wake of the unwelcome visitor, only ruin and desolation were left.

On Sept. 12th, being Wednesday, I went to the plantation. (*mountain top coffee plantation owned by writer*) I nosed around all day riding Pisaflores (*name of small horse bred for mountains*) over the lonely trails. I was alone, the superintendent being absent in Ponce. I went back to the house about 6 p.m. and while talking to the painter, who was giving the new house the last finishing touches, the Spaniard got back from Ponce and brought an errand from mother to the effect that I should return to town at once because the weather man was announcing the visit of a cyclone. (*Auffant family's home was in Ponce on south coast of island.*) We had been announced such a visit quite a few times, so I was inclined to believe it of no importance. However, I decided to stay overnight, past experience having taught me this was the wise thing to do. I was, therefore, my aunt's guest that evening.

About nine of the same evening a gentle breeze began to blow, and this, in a short while, changed to intermittent rushes followed by deadly calms and accompanied by rain. These grew in intensity until 7 a.m. of the morning of Sept. 13th. About 10 a.m., while it seemed that everything would quiet down, I rode over to my plantation, having decided that it would be wise to take my car up to the gate, so in case it continued raining, I would not be hemmed in by the slides in the plantation road. I was to come back, have lunch with the folks (*close relatives*) and then go back to Ponce, expecting that by this time there would not be any possibility of danger.



Mary Dickson at age of 18 when she was teaching at Bellview School in Stephenson County.



Victor Auffant in a photograph believed to have been taken in 1935.,

When I got to the gate, everything looked so promising I decided to go right on to Ponce, and so I did. A short while after, I began to question my judgment. The wind began to howl through the trees and the fact that I was up for a fight with the elements was emphatically brought home when a tree crashed on the road just behind me. From then on until I got to Ponce, two hours after, every tree and every telegraph pole was a subject of deep interest to me. Every turn in the road held forth interesting possibilities. And around me the furies were indulging in a grand melee.

I got to Ponce at noon, but not until having to chop down trees that lay across the road, and cut with pliers telephone and telegraph wires. I thought I had seen my show because almost absolute calm reigned in Ponce, although everywhere a feverish activity was shown in securing doors, windows and some such things that might work loose. We had lunch almost peacefully, but around 1:30 p.m. an ominous breeze from the north began to blow increasing in intensity until at about 3 p.m. pandemonium was let loose. The wind howled, wailed and hissed. The trees began their fight, but to no avail. They were stripped of their branches and plucked from their very roots until nothing seemed to be able to stand the fury of nature. A big tree from the park across from our house was uprooted and thrown against the stairway and the roofing of houses were tossed in the air like straws. At this hour, according to official reports, the wind was blowing at 160 miles an hour.

Varying in intensity, this activity kept up until 4 a.m. of next day, Sept. 14th, meanwhile the town being absolutely dark.

At eight in the morning I got out of the house and started on a trip of inspection. To me it seemed a strange city. No tree had been spared. The parks and private gardens seemed destitute and sad. The general appearance of the town was that of a ransacked city. I inspected my jobs and the damage done did not seem great. *(As an architect, he had projects underway in Ponce.)* Immediately I thought of the folks in the hills and I decided to go back at once.

Besides the anxiety to know how my folks had fared, I felt the urge of adventure so I took my car and rode out. After covering four miles I had to stop. I then left my car, my bag and even my coat behind and set out on foot on what to all appearance seemed a sad and strange country. Gone were the familiar flamboyants, the guavas and the mocas; gone was the emerald green of the coffee bush; gone was the murmur of brooks and streams. It was a country of deep gashes, dead trees and roaring torrents; it was a country of ruin and desolation; it was a country peopled by silent beings in whose faces nothing but deep sorrow showed. Out of ten houses, nine had been blown to pieces. The road was obstructed by fallen trees, great slides and washouts. I plodded along making detours and going over slides until I arrived at kilometer 16. Meanwhile, a steady shower was falling and the wind blew steadily although its speed had greatly abated. Two girls were standing by the roadside. They looked at me as at some strange being from the antipodes. I inquired about a planter friend and as to the possibility of obtaining the service of a guide and a horse. They did not seem to react to my question. Finally, looking up the road, they said "No horse," and then pointed to a house in ruins. I walked to the house which had been a two story affair of which the second story had been blown off by the wind. It seemed to be deserted. I pushed the door and stepped in a dark room apparently meant for a storehouse. As my eyes adjusted themselves to the darkness, I saw about twenty persons, motionless and quiet, looking for all the world like automatons. My voice sounded hollow as I put the old familiar question, "Que pasa?" My planter friend looked at me and replied: "Nothing. Nothing can happen now. Nothing could happen where there is ruin and desolation."

I did not reply. I merely nodded. After a short silence, I stated my case: My folks were farther up and I needed a horse and a guide. He called one of the men and after wishing me good luck, I found myself again trying to make headway over the scarred country.

The horse was no avail. I had to return it and along with it went the guide.

After two hours more of the heart breaking plodding, I arrived at the crossroad of Jayuya and Adjuntas. It was getting dark. A stiff shower was falling and the fog was so thick that I could hardly see two yards away from me. I was on the same section of road we traveled over that foggy night. *(Reference to earlier trip with Mary Dickson)* It was my idea to travel two miles more and to get some lanterns from friends so I could

keep on going to the plantation. A mountaineer was coming down the road and on inquiry about the condition of the road ahead I was informed that slides and washouts made it impossible to travel at night. But worst of all, I heard that the houses which were my objective had collapsed so that no lanterns were to be had. I then decided to get under cover for the night. Luckily, I had a friend not very far on the road to Adjuntas. His house was unroofed, but outside of the discomfort of being wet all night, we spent a quiet evening. There, in the gloomy parlor, a huge calendar was reminding me it was my birthday.

Early next morning I resumed my journey. I left the road and cut across the mountains. The terrain was known to me and two hours after I was at my plantation.

The whole thing is a total ruin. The big house collapsed. The others did not fare much better. Only the new little house was intact and it was there my folks had found lodging. Their house was half blown away and for seventeen hours they had stayed under what was left until the storm blew over.

I tried to make light of everything and they were good enough sports to try to show good cheer.

Having no dry clothes, I changed into a bath robe and began to swap stories. I could not leave the house the rest of the day and early we went to bed.

At twelve o'clock that night we were awakened by loud knocking at the door. It was my secretary, a cousin of mine and a friend. They had achieved what to me seemed impossible. They had some from Ponce in six hours. Of course, work had begun on clearing the roads. Nevertheless, it was quite a feat.

My secretary called me aside and asked if I knew anything of my father who was up at his place. I answered in the negative. Then he told me we must break through because he had been injured according to reports received in Ponce that afternoon. I knew what that meant and then he plainly told me that the report was that he had been killed by a flying piece of roofing although such news had not been confirmed.

I didn't know what to do. My shoes had been completely torn during my hike up. My feet were sore and bleeding. The shoes had shed the heels and the nails had driven into the flesh. However, my cousin Pete was there. I organized a rescue party of ten mountaineers who, led by Pete, were to break through the mountains to father's place. He was to bring him back and then to Ponce, if possible. I knew that only by the merest lucky chance could they achieve this, but I also knew that if it could be done, Pete would do it. They left at 1 a.m. and we sat up all night waiting patiently for what we expected to be a funeral procession. At 9 a.m. a messenger arrived and handed me a note from Pete. He informed that the report was untrue but that father was sick and he was taking him in a hammock to Utuado for medical assistance. He got back at 4 p.m. and further informed there was no danger and with a high fever went to sleep for almost twenty hours. To give you an idea of what those men had done, I must tell you that as soon as I had news that father was safe, I sent the foreman of the plantation to take charge of his *(father's)* place, and after seven hours he returned stating it was impossible to get through. He was unable to do by daylight what the rescue party had done the night before.

I rested for one day more and then I traveled back to town on horseback followed by a pack mule until I reached my waiting automobile. Even now I read in the papers all about father's death. I have quite a job making my friends believe that it was a false report. You see, father is still in Utuado and cannot be taken home until the roads are cleared.

On getting back home, I found your birthday present. *(An album of classical music recordings)* My first impulse was to play the "Meditation". It was the only music I could have enjoyed. And it was like a pleasant sedative to my shattered nerves.

I thank you

Post Script: Victor Auffant died in 1936 at the age of 49. Mary Dickson Auffant four years later married Jose Piza, a native of Majorca, a small island off the east coast of Spain. He died in his 80s in 1982 in Majorca. The plantation eventually recovered from the hurricane and Mary lived there after her first husband's death but she spent weekdays as a professor of English literature at the University of Puerto Rico in San Juan. In 1943 she became the first woman to earn a PhD in English Literature at the University of Pennsylvania. She died in 1970 at the age of 70 while working at her desk in San Juan.

An Overlooked Gem in the Museum

The Cedarville Museum is recognized for its exhibits, its music programs, its history classes and its local art gallery, but for some reason its excellent local history research library is overlooked when the praise is passed out. Why?

Perhaps it's because libraries are often considered "deadly" or "not exciting." The truth is that libraries can be very exciting if you know how to use them.

The historical society actually has three libraries available for research on Cedarville area subjects.

The collection of books you see when you reach the top of the stairs at the museum second floor is filled with general information on the area, detailed information on Jane Addams, Civil War diaries, Illinois history and local church and school history. Anyone can make use of the material in this area, but, of course, the books can not be taken from the building.

The second museum library is actually in the air because it's on a computer. The memory of this computer contains thousands of bits of information on the history of the village. Especially valuable are the photos and the text related to local individuals of the past. If you are interested in a person or an event in Cedarville's history, contact the society and a staff member will see what's available.

Finally, there is the third library. That's located in the museum "annex" which is the former village hall and jail on Cherry Street. One-of-a-kind books and government records are located there, including minutes of some village board meetings. The material in this building is for use by persons involved in research that requires access to primary sources.

If you are in doubt about which of the libraries will best serve you, call Jim Bade at 815-563-4485 or send an e-mail to bonniebade@comcast.net.

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