

S U M M A R Y

DOCTOR FRANCISCO DOMÍNGUEZ ROLDÁN 1864-1942

Doctor Francisco Domínguez Roldán was born in Havana on February 15th, 1864. Having obtained his Bachelor's degree at thirteen, that of licenciado in Medicine at nineteen and his Doctorate in Medicine at the Madrid School of Medicine in 1885, he studied the career all over in Paris, France, where he graduated as an M. D. in 1891.

Back in Cuba, he won the chair of Topographic Anatomy and Operations at the University of Havana and was appointed surgeon at the Mercedes Hospital, where he introduced asepsis and antisepsis. At the same time he acquired a well-deserved reputation in Cuba and abroad for his precise diagnoses.

In February of 1896, he left behind his prosperous career to fight in the Cuban War of Independence, joining General Lacret, later General Pedro Betancourt in the Matanzas Province, where the fighting was most dangerous.

Medical Head of the Fifth Army Corps, Civil Governor of Western Cuba and Colonel of the Liberation Army, he performed brilliant operations in the brush, mostly in difficult circumstances, with few instruments and often without anesthetics. In spite of several wounds and paludism, his courage and his will never failed him.

Cuba having become independent, he resumed his university teaching and scientific activities. He then organized the School for Surgeons, a course for surgery of accidents> introduced dissection, the use of gloves for operations, a French method for keeping corpses indefinitely and various original surgical methods.

Among his other innovations are: a moving platform to keep corpses in large deposits; his "costotomolegra"; a special cast for broken shoulders; his personal technique to demonstrate the disarticulation of the knee and to remove the appendix in record time; the craniometric card (metallic); the post-operative sheet; and removable threads for the operation of the inguinal hernia.

With other professionals, he organized the banquet of December 22nd, 1900, in honor of Dr. Carlos J. Finlay, during which the American

governor, general Leonard Wood, publicly acknowledged that the Cuban scientist had discovered the means of transmission of yellow fever by the mosquito. Wood's words remained deeply engraved in his mind, specially when in further years the Americans would try to demonstrate that the discovery had not been made by Finlay, but by Dr. Walter Reed.

With self-made instruments, he studied the recently discovered X rays, of which he had read a few days before leaving for the War of Independence. In 1906, after a trip to France, during which he carefully visited all installations possible, he published an excellent report, "Finsen Rays, Roentgen Rays, Radium". As a consequence, the Cuban Government and the University of Havana commissioned him officially to purchase the necessary equipment in Europe.

On May 1st, 1907, was inaugurated in Havana the X-ray Department of the Mercedes Hospital, considered at that time the best in the world, and of which doctor Domínguez Roldán was appointed director. Later on, he also organized the radiological departments of the Calixto García Hospital, the Centro Gallego and the Quinta Covadonga, heading the latter until 1920.

He then dedicated great part of his time in preparing the first Cuban radiologists, while also teaching everything relative to X-rays to the electricians and nurses. That is why he was considered "the father and master of radiotherapy and physiotherapy in Cuba". He also introduced phototherapy at the Mercedes Hospital, studied radium, later high-frequency currents and experimented ceaselessly any new possibilities in the radiotherapy of cancer, field in which he obtained several cures.

After representing Cuba at the Fifth International Congress of Radiology in Barcelona in 1910, he wrote a memorable report, "Radium, Medical Radiology and Electrology", which is an extraordinary résumé of the condition of X-rays at that time.

From his marriage in 1911 with Paris-born Técla Bofill y Perry, two children were born, Francisco-José and María Luisa.

Having reached the summit of his professional career, he nevertheless accepted the appointment of Secretary of Public Education and Fine Arts in 1917, conscious of how much he could do in that field.

During his two years in office, he reorganized totally the Cuban education and among other things, created the School of Domestic Arts.

Due to clashes of opinions and a crisis amidst the university professors, the resigned from the ministry, his chair and his career, exiling himself voluntarily in Paris for seventeen years.

Elected Corresponding Member (1929), later Associate Member (1934) of the Paris Academy of Medicine, doctor Domínguez Roldán undertook the rehabilitation of Dr. Carlos J. Finlay's discovery.

His book, "Carlos J. Finlay — Son Centenaire (1933) — Sa Découverte (1881)", granted the Vernois Prize 1937 by the Academy, had such a world-wide impact that all the countries — except the United

States— acknowledged Finlay as the only discoverer of the means of transmission of yellow fever by the mosquito.

Forsseeing the Second World War and desirous to set foot on his native land before dying, he returned to Cuba, where in spite of his years and declining health, he pursued incessantly his work on behalf of Finlay, through articles, conferences and speeches. Death caught up with him on April 25th, 1942, a few days before being published the long-awaited Spanish translation of his book on Finlay.

Author of some sixty-four articles and eighteen books, all of them original and of great educational value, member of numerous scientific societies and recipient of various national and foreign decorations, doctor Domínguez Roldán, who fought all his life for Cuba, Cuban medicine and his fellow countrymen, well deserves the homage of this country.

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R É S U M É

LE DOCTEUR FRANCISCO DOMÍNGUEZ ROLDAN 1864-1942

Le docteur Francisco Domínguez Roldán naît à La Havane le 15 Février 1864. Bachelier à treize ans, Licencié en Médecine de l'Université de La Havane à dix-neuf ans et Docteur en Médecine de la Faculté de Madrid deux ans plus tard, il recommence toutes ses études médicales à la Faculté de Médecine de Paris, où il obtient le Doctorat en 1891.

De retour à la Havane, il est chargé de la Chaire d'Anatomie Topographique et Opérations à l'Université de la Havane, où il prépare de nouvelles générations de médecins cubains; nommé chirurgien de l'Hôpital Mercedes, il parvient à y introduire l'asepsie et l'antisepsie; en outre, ses diagnostics exacts lui acquièrent une grande réputation de clinicien tant à Cuba comme à l'étranger.

En Février de 1896, il laisse une carrière pleine de promesses pour participer activement à la guerre d'indépendance de Cuba, décidant de s'unir aux forces du Général Lacret, puis du Général Pedro Betancourt dans la Province de Matanzas, où la guerre est plus acharnée.

Médecin-Chef du Cinquième Corps, Gouverneur Civil de la Moitié occidentale de l'île et Colonel de l'Armée de Libération, pendant trois ans il fait de brillantes opérations chirurgicales dans la brousse, dans des conditions pénibles, avec peu d'instruments et parfois sans anesthésique. Malgré les blessures reçues et souffrant du paludisme, son courage et sa volonté ne faiblissent jamais.