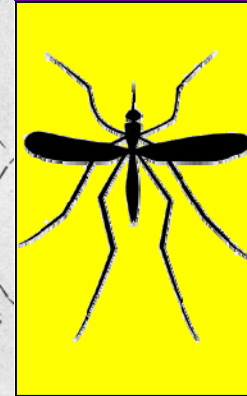
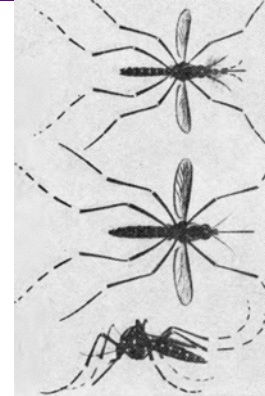


the Aristides Agramonte Yellow Fever Collection



Dr. Aristides Agramonte

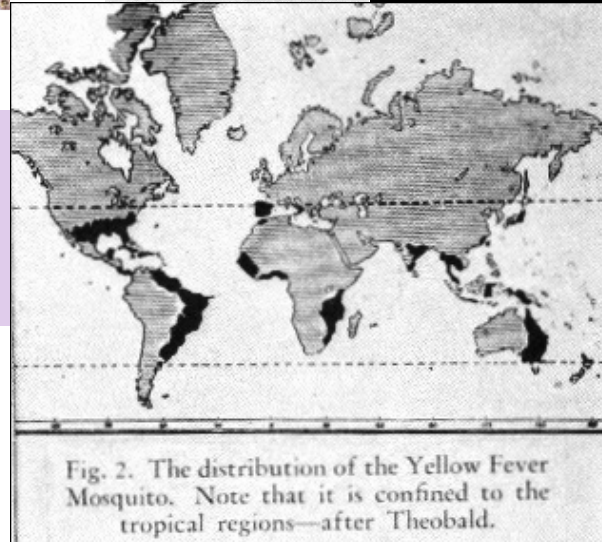


Fig. 2. The distribution of the Yellow Fever Mosquito. Note that it is confined to the tropical regions—after Theobald.

This project has been funded in whole or in part with Federal funds from the National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services, under Contract No. N01-LM-6-3505 with the Houston Academy of Medicine -Texas Medical Center Library.



Fig. 1. Trail of the Yellow Fever Mosquito

**LSU Health Sciences Center
John P. Isché Library**
433 Bolivar Street
Resource Center Building
New Orleans, Louisiana 70112

504.568.6100
digitalarchives@lsuhsc.edu

Historical Books and Articles on Yellow Fever

LSU Health Sciences Center Isché Library



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Agramonte, Lazear, and Carroll in Cuba

About the collection Aristides Agramonte, MD, was a physician and pathologist whose research on yellow fever earned him an appointment on the Walter Reed Yellow Fever Commission. His dedication to the study of infectious disease eventually brought him to New Orleans, Louisiana, to head the Tropical Medicine Department at the newly established Louisiana State University School of Medicine. Shortly after his move to New Orleans in 1931, Dr. Agramonte died suddenly at the age of sixty-three. His personal library became the first materials acquired by the LSU School of Medicine and the foundation of the school's first library. The collection included over 500 books, periodicals, and pamphlets including almost 150 items on yellow fever. The School of Medicine officially dedicated the Aristides Agramonte Memorial Medical Library on May 10, 1932.

The Yellow Fever Collection includes materials dating back to the 1790s, and are written in a variety of languages including English, Spanish, French, and German. Books authored by Agramonte himself are included, as well as other notable authors on the subject such as Carlos Finlay and Walter Reed. Many aspects of research are covered in the collection including history, epidemiology, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

¹Image courtesy of Historical Collections & Services, Claude Moore Health Sciences Library, University of Virginia (Phillip S. Hench Walter Reed Collection).



and the Louisiana Division of the Arts, Office of Cultural Development, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. In 2008, the frieze was hung on a specially prepared wall in the newly remodeled Library Commons, adjacent to the modern Library at 433 Bolivar Street.



About the artist Enrique Alferez was born in Mexico in 1901, and trained in the streamlined Bauhaus style at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1924. He began his career creating pieces for Chicago skyscrapers during the building boom of the early 20th century. Trying to work his way back to Mexico, he arrived in New Orleans in 1929, where he earned his first commission to build five figures for the Church of the Holy Name in Algiers, and he was hired to teach at the New Orleans Arts & Crafts School. He later served as director of the sculpture program of the New Orleans Works Progress Administration (WPA), during which he produced a large body of work for the city's public spaces. More than twenty of his works grace City Park, and a park street is named for him. In addition to "The Conquest of Yellow Fever," Alferez completed two reliefs for Charity Hospital, and carved a mahogany panel for the St. Bernard Parish Courthouse. Admiration for Alferez extended well beyond New Orleans. He had commissions across the United States, as well as in Canada, South America, Europe and Asia. But the greatest concentration of his work is in his adopted hometown. Alferez continued to work and live in New Orleans, with extended stays in Morelo, Mexico, until his death in 1999.

About the frieze "The Conquest of Yellow Fever" (1931) is an art deco plaster bas-relief sculpture that was originally housed in the LSU School of Medicine. It was commissioned from artist Enrique Alferez and is significant beyond its aesthetic appeal because of its connection to the city of New Orleans, to the history of medicine and to the LSU School of Medicine.



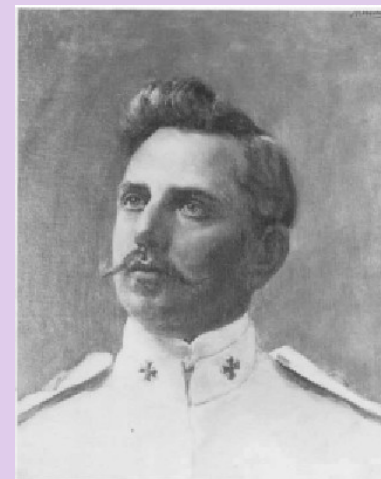
It depicts the U.S. Army Yellow Fever expedition to Cuba led by Dr. Walter Reed in 1899 and the ultimate conquering of Yellow Fever. The Reed team is illustrated in the sculpture, which important to the LSU School of Medicine because of Dr. Agramonte's affiliation with the school.

Dr. Agramonte is the central figure among the group of men illustrated in the sculpture, as he functioned as the pathologist for the expedition. Dr. Walter Reed, who led the expedition, is to Agramonte's right. Additionally, the family groupings toward either end of the sculpture represent agricultural / rural life, and on the right, industrial science. On a more "local" note, a Charity nurse posed for the central female figure.

The sculpture's original coating was of ground aluminum and banana oil. It is twelve feet in length, weighs 600 pounds, and was originally hung in the lobby of the 1542 Tulane Avenue building, the first location of the LSU School of Medicine. After many locations and many years, the frieze was sent to a conservator for restoration in 1999 thanks to a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Louisiana State Arts Council,

The physical collection is currently housed in the Old and Rare Book Room of the Library, now known as the John P. Isché Library, at the LSU Health Sciences Center in New Orleans. In 2010, the Library applied for and was awarded the Historical Preservation and Digitization Award to digitize this historical collection. In Spring 2011, the Aristides Agramonte Yellow Fever Collection was launched and made freely available online to the general public via the LOUISiana Digital Library - <http://www.louisianadigitallibrary.org>. The LOUISiana Digital Library is a state-wide digital library consortium that provides an online library of digitized materials documenting Louisiana's history and culture. Researchers who are interested in the history of medicine, yellow fever epidemics, tropical medicine and the development of the first scientific theory used to trace and find a cure for a communicable disease will find a special interest in this collection.

About Aristides Agramonte Dr. Aristides Agramonte was born in Cuba on June 3, 1868, "his father being one of those patriots who lost their lives in Cuba's attempt to gain independence."¹ At the age of 3 he moved to the United States. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree at New York University in 1886, and graduated in Medicine from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University in 1892.



Agramonte served as Sanitary Inspector and Assistant Bacteriologist to the New York City Department of Health, and as Acting Assistant Surgeon of the U.S. Army in 1898. Working with Dr. Walter Reed's U.S. Army Yellow Fever Expedition to Cuba beginning in 1899, Agramonte's participation helped give the final proofs of the relation of the mosquito to the transmission of yellow fever.

Agramonte was appointed Professor of Bacteriology and Experimental Pathology at the University of Havana in 1900, in addition to many other positions. In 1931 Agramonte was appointed the

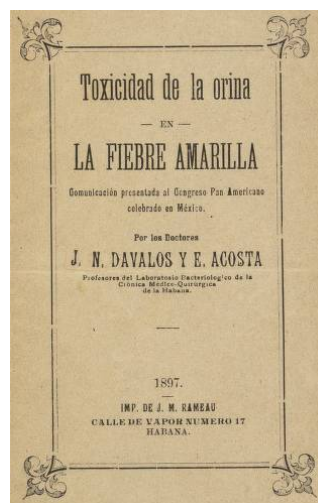
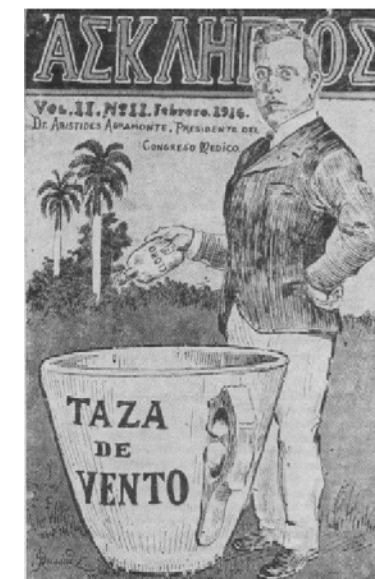
first department chair of the Tropical Medicine Department at the newly founded LSU School of Medicine in New Orleans. Sadly, he died shortly after arriving in New Orleans from heart disease.

The Yellow Fever Expedition to Cuba and the ultimate conquering of Yellow Fever marked a turning point in medicine. Throughout the previous centuries, New Orleans and other cities suffered from horrific epidemics of Yellow Fever. The germ theory of disease had not yet been fully developed and at the time, cannons often boomed through the night to ward off the disease. The Reed team put forth the first scientific theory regarding Yellow Fever (the source being discovered as the mosquito).



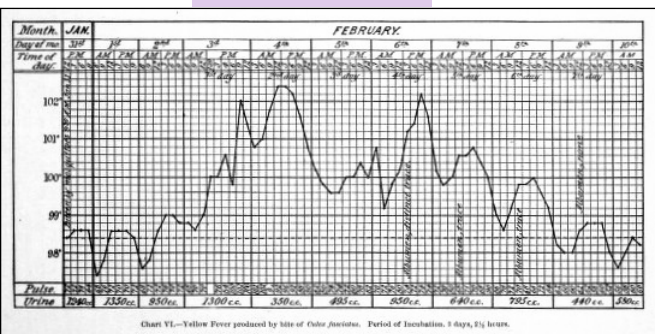
Upon Agramonte's death, the American Public Health Association noted that "science has lost a devoted servant. His knowledge of tropical diseases and his great experience in the practical handling of them made him peculiarly fitted for the professorship he had just accepted.

Our growing international relationships, coupled with the development of rapid transit by steamship and airplane, have brought us every year more and more into contact with the diseases of other countries, and especially those in close contact with us on the south. The importance of tropical medicine has grown step by step with these contacts." ²

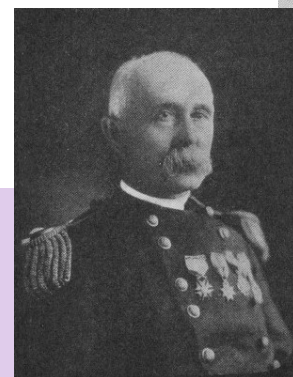


Titles in the Collection include:

1. *Report of the Committee of the Physico-Medical Society of New-Orleans, on the epidemic of 1820. Published by order of the Society.*
2. *Memoire sur l'epidemie de fièvre jaune qui a regne a la Nouvelle Orleans et dans les campagnes pendant l'annee 1867.*
3. *Yellow fever epidemic of 1878 in New Orleans.*



At left: one of many charts used to track cases of yellow fever.



Above: Surgeon General George M. Sternberg (U.S), Major Walter Reed (U.S), and Dr. Carlos J. Finlay (Cuba), physicians with whom Agramonte worked diligently to establish the cause and control of yellow fever.

1: "Association News" Am J Public Health Nations Health. 1930 December; 20 (12): 1333-1342. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1556161/>
 2: "ARISTIDES AGRAMONTE, M. D" Am J Public Health Nations Health. 1931 October; 21(10): 1136-1137.