

Eduardo AGRAMONTE Piña, MD

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The Man:

Don José María Agramonte Agüero and his wife, María de la Concepción de Piña y Porro, happy parents of the hero, baptized their newborn Eduardo Calixto de Jesús, in the Parrish *La Soledad*, Puerto Príncipe (later renamed Camagüey), Cuba. He was born on October 14, 1841.

While still a child, Eduardo Agramonte was sent to Barcelona, Spain, where he studied a Baccalaureate in Arts and Science. He continued his studies, completing the Baccalaureate in Medicine in 1858. He successfully earned the degree of Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery, at the university of Barcelona, on October 13, 1864. A few days later, on October 24, Eduardo Agramonte graduated with outstanding marks.

Upon his return to Cuba, Dr. Agramonte lived temporarily in Cienfuegos and in Sagua la Grande. He then returned to his native Puerto Príncipe, a city of 62,527 inhabitants at the time. Besides the practice of his profession, he applied for, and was awarded a position as professor of Rhetoric and Poetics, Spanish Grammar, and French Language, at the recently created Institute of Secondary studies in Puerto Príncipe.

Eduardo Agramonte married Matilde, the young daughter of the physician José Ramón Simoni, on April 29, 1867.

Dr. Agramonte was one of the founders of *El Popular*, a local weekly publication that began circulation in May 1868. He titled his first article *Anatomy as a Science – Preliminaries*. He published, in total, eight papers on the subject of medicine. The last paper was *The vertebral column*.



The Patriot:

Cubans had been conspiring passionately for their freedom from Spain for many years. Puerto Príncipe was one of the most active centers of that conspiracy. Eduardo Agramonte formed part of the Revolutionary Junta of Camagüey. In order to facilitate their activities the patriots founded the *Tínima Lodge No. 6* (Logia Tínima No. 16), which was affiliated with the *Gran Oriente Cubano*.

On February 26, 1869, Eduardo Agramonte was one of the signatories of the act granting freedom to slaves and abolishing slavery in Cuba.

At the Guáimaro Assembly, on April 14, 1869, he was appointed Secretary of Interior of the Cuban Government in Arms. In this capacity, together with Vicente Mora y de la Pera and Francisco Arredondo Miranda, he organized the Cuban postal service of the insurgents, which operated effectively. The service included the issue of postage stamps. Manuel de Quesada, delegate to the *Junta Central Republicana de Cuba and Puerto Rico*, informed in New York, in 1870, that the service consisted of the following staff:

General Manager	1
Post Inspectors	3
(One each for the provinces of Oriente, Camagüey and Las Villas)	
Post Master	135

Postillons (from 12 to 15 years of age)	540
Post Houses	135

In January 1870 Eduardo Agramonte resigned his position as Secretary of Interior due to discrepancies with the President, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes. He was immediately appointed Deputy to the House of Representatives, on January 14, 1870.

The Soldier:

The *Ten Years' War* (the first of three wars fought by Cubans seeking independence from Spain) started in Yara, province of Oriente, on October 10, 1868.

Eduardo Agramonte Piña, with 76 other *Camagüeyanos*, met in Las Clavellinas on November 4, 1868 in order to support the uprising. He was appointed Chieftain of the fourth of seven groups into which the Cuban army was integrated.

During the night of November 27 and the morning of November 28, the Cuban forces of which E. Agramonte was a part, attacked a special Spanish military railroad convoy on route from Nuevitás to Puerto Príncipe. The cargo consisted of an important reinforcement of 1500 rifles for the Spanish troops quartered in the capital of the province. In the attack, the casualties suffered by the Cubans consisted of two wounded: Eduardo Agramonte was one of them. The explosion of a grenade injured his thigh.

On May 26, 1870 his wife, Matilde, his two sons, his parents-in-law, Amalia –his sister-in-law and wife of this cousin, Major General Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz and his nephew-, were taken prisoners by the Spanish troops in the farm where they were hiding. First they were taken to Puerto Príncipe and later on they were deported to the United States. The imprisonment of his relatives brought great suffering to Dr. Agramonte.

On August 24, 1871 the then Lieutenant Colonel E. Agramonte Piña was appointed Colonel-in-Commission, Chief of the South Brigade.

Another aspect of his life, little known to many, is that he had an extraordinary musical ability. He composed the *Mambí Reveilles*, which were officially used by the Cuban Liberator Army.

On March 8, 1872, while marching together with the Commander-in-Chief of the army of the Camagüey region, Major General Ignacio Agramonte, they battled the Spanish Army, at San José del Chorrillo.

After several clashes, and upon the arrival of the Spanish Infantry, he commanded an orderly retreat. A commander of the Cuban riflemen wanted to fire his last cartridge. While firing his weapon, he was mortally wounded. Eduardo Agramonte returned to the battlefield to assist the wounded. Dr. Agramonte's own assistant was also wounded. Surrounded by the Spaniards and the bodies of the two wounded Cubans, he faced the enemy. He received a bullet wound in the middle of his chest that ended his life, a life that had been completely devoted to the Cuban insurrection.

The Physician:

After graduating in Spain, and while living in Sagua la Grande, Cuba, he received the official license to practise medicine. He returned to Puerto Príncipe, where he continued practicing his profession.

Since the very beginning of the war, he considered his “professional services essential to all, the very lives of many, perhaps dependant on them.” He, therefore, contributed his knowledge as a physician to the service of his comrades in arms.

In the combat of Arenillas he amputated, without any surgical instruments or anesthesia, the arm of the chief of the Cuban troops.

His professional dedication compelled him to return to the battlefield where one of his soldiers lay wounded. He sacrificed his own life in the line of duty.

Philatelic Information:

Dr. Eduardo Agramonte Piña is shown in two Cuban stamps:

- (1) Commemorative stamp, 3 c, yellow brown, issued on April 10, 1969. The stamp commemorates the centenary of the Guáimaro Assembly (1869-1969). Dr. Eduardo Agramonte is the person standing by the window.
- (2) Commemorative stamp, 3c, multicolor and gold. Issued on March 8, 1972. The stamp was issued to commemorate the centenary of his death (1872-1972). It shows an oil painting by Federico Martínez.

Bibliography:

Eduardo Agramonte. By Emilio Godínez Sosa. Editorial Arte y Literatura. Instituto Cubano del Libro, La Habana, 1973.