

Claudio Dumas y Franco

Cuban Educator, Mathematician, and U.S. Census Bureau Supervisor

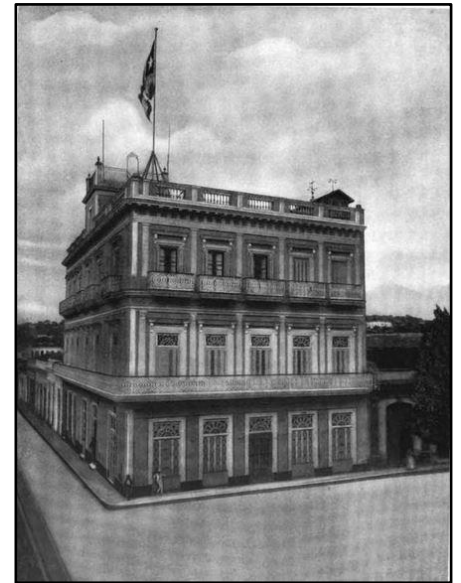


Claudio's 1899 Census portrait.

The U.S. Census Bureau continually strives to ensure an accurate count of the people of the United States. For this reason, it has always embraced the hiring of a diverse workforce representative of the local communities. In the middle of the 19th century, the United States expanded west into areas formerly governed by Spain and Mexico. Since many of the citizens and local officials only spoke Spanish, the Census Office quickly realized that it needed to employ workers fluent in the language. The establishment of a permanent Census Bureau in 1903 and increased immigration from the Caribbean, Central and South America expanded the need for Spanish-speaking employees both in the field and at headquarters.

Claudio Dumas y Franco was born in Cuba in 1849. His father, Mariano

Dumas Chancel, had earlier emigrated from Spain. In 1840, Mariano began working as a teacher and rose to school principal in 1862. In 1867, Claudio began teaching as well. In 1872, he became the principal of the Matanzas superior school, the Cuban equivalent to high school, while his father also received a promotion to Inspector Provincial de Instrucción Pública (Provincial Inspector of Public Instruction). By 1883, Claudio was teaching at the Instituto de Matanzas, the main college in Matanzas, where he specialized in mathematics. Like his father, Claudio published several books on mathematics and education, such as the 1886 mathematics textbook, *Programa de Aritmética y Algebra*.



The Instituto de Matanzas, where Claudio taught. This photograph appeared in the 1907 Census report.

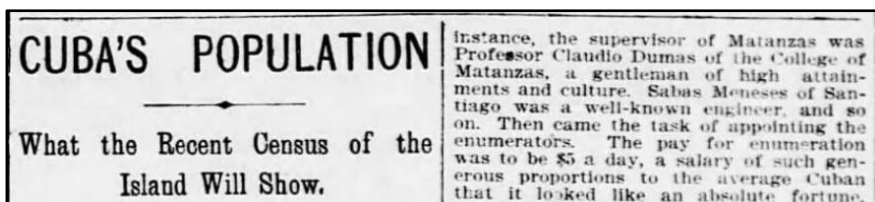
Claudio traveled extensively in Europe and the United States to expand his knowledge of



Claudio, front and center, with several enumerators in Matanzas, 1907.

mathematics and education, including a trip from Havana to New York in 1895. Following the conclusion of the Spanish American War in 1898, and the transfer of Cuba from Spain to the United States, the temporary U.S. military government recognized they needed accurate statistics for effective government and authorized a census of Cuba in July of 1899. Claudio, an educated and respected member of the community with previous experience conducting school censuses, represented the ideal candidate for census supervisor.

In a proclamation on August 17, 1899, President William McKinley declared that one of the goals of the census was to prepare Cuba for self-governance. The military governor appointed a supervisor for each province and selected Claudio to supervise the enumeration of Matanzas. Along with his fellow supervisors, Claudio traveled to the Census Bureau headquarters, arriving in Tampa, FL, on August 7, and in Washington, DC, on August 17. In Washington, supervisors received their schedules, instructions, and training. Claudio's background in education helped him with one of the supervisor's main duties of training enumerators. On August 23, the Cuban supervisors returned to Cuba, and the assistant director of the census and a core group of headquarters clerks soon followed.



Evening Star (Washington, DC), July 23, 1899.

In order to save time and money, the 1899 Census of Cuba did not include many elements of the U.S. decennial census, and only focused on population, education, and agriculture. Work began as soon as Claudio returned to Cuba as he divided Matanzas into districts and blocks, hired local supervisors and enumerators, and checked the quality of surveys as they returned to headquarters.

The census also presented an opportunity for the women of Cuba, whom the Spanish government had excluded from civil service positions. Claudio supported the work of his female employees and appointed women to supervisory positions. Work officially came to a close on December 31, 1899.

In 1902, with the ratification of the new Cuban constitution, American troops departed. However, as the new Cuban government faltered in 1906, American troops returned that fall to restore order to the island. Once again, the U.S. military government authorized a

census, which took place in 1907, and once again, Claudio received an appointment to supervise the enumeration of Matanzas.

The 1907 Census proceeded almost exactly as the previous 1899 Census, although the supervisors did not travel to Washington, DC—as the majority, including Claudio, had worked on the previous census. The census started September 30 and ended November 14. The Census Bureau headquarters provided tabulation support. Claudio counted 239,812 residents—an increase from his 1899 count of 202,444.

Claudio's contributions to Cuba earned him the respect and admiration of his fellow citizens. A boy's school in Marianao bore his name until the 1959 revolution. Claudio passed away in 1908, after a lifetime of service to his community. In 1910, students and faculty placed a monument to Claudio in the garden of the Instituto de Segunda Ensenanza de Matanzas. The Census Bureau is thankful for Claudio's contributions, and of the contributions of all the members of our diverse workforce throughout the years.



Claudio's 1907 Census portrait.



Monument to Claudio in the garden of the Instituto de Segunda Ensenanza de Matanzas.

Orozco, Leonel Perez and Luis R. González Arestuche, Johanset Orihuela León, Ricardo Viera Muñoz, *Matanzas: en el Visordel Tiempo, Tomo 1*, Editorial Félix Varela (2015).