

# Physical Anthropological Research on Indian Remnants in Eastern Cuba

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There is very little in the physical anthropological literature on the Indian groups of Cuba, and most physical anthropologists are convinced that Indians disappeared from Cuba long ago. (Ethnologists have, however, reported on these groups—see the *Handbook of South American Indians* [Steward 1949], vol. 4 and *Narody mira* [Tolstov 1959], vol. 2.) One of the few mentions of the Cuban Indians is in the paper of Culin (1902), who besides reporting his own observations stated that in 1875 Dr. Bastian from Berlin had measured some Indians from the vicinity of Santiago de Cuba. Harrington (1921) reported having met some Indians during his excavations on Cabo Maisí. The only paper published by a physical anthropologist is that of Gates (1954), who reported on some Indian families living near Guantánamo and Caridad de los Indios.

An expedition to the central part of Oriente province was undertaken in 1964 under the sponsorship of the Academy of

Sciences of Cuba and the University of Havana. The participants were M. Rivero de la Calle (University of Havana), R. Payarés (Academy of Sciences of Cuba), the late V. V. Ginzburg (Leningrad), and myself. M. Stingl (Prague) joined the expedition as ethnologist. In the locality chosen for study—Felicidad de Yateras and Caridad de los Indios—we found a group that differs strikingly from the surrounding population. The people are conscious of their Indian origin, although they speak Spanish and share much of their way of life with the rest of the population of the area.

A total of 203 individuals were examined. After the elimination of individuals younger than 18 years and individuals with non-Indian ancestors, the sample was reduced to 41 adult men and 54 adult women. Their most striking feature was their short stature—mentioned also by Gates. Men ranged in height from 141.2 to 159.8 cm., with a mean of 149.93 cm. Women ranged from 127.0 to 156.6 cm., with a mean of 140.51 cm.

The group can be characterized as mesocephalic, mesoprosopic, mesoleptorrhinic, mesopsid, and macroskel (in terms of Giuffrida Ruggeri's [1910] scheme). Skin colour is in most cases light-brown; eyes and hair are of the darkest shades. The hair is straight and fine; eyes are oblique, and the Mongolian eye fold is very frequent. Dermatoglyphics are characterized by a high frequency of whorls on the fingers and of patterns in the thenar and first interdigital areas.

We conclude that this group can be considered as Indian, presumably with slight admixture of other racial components.

## References Cited

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