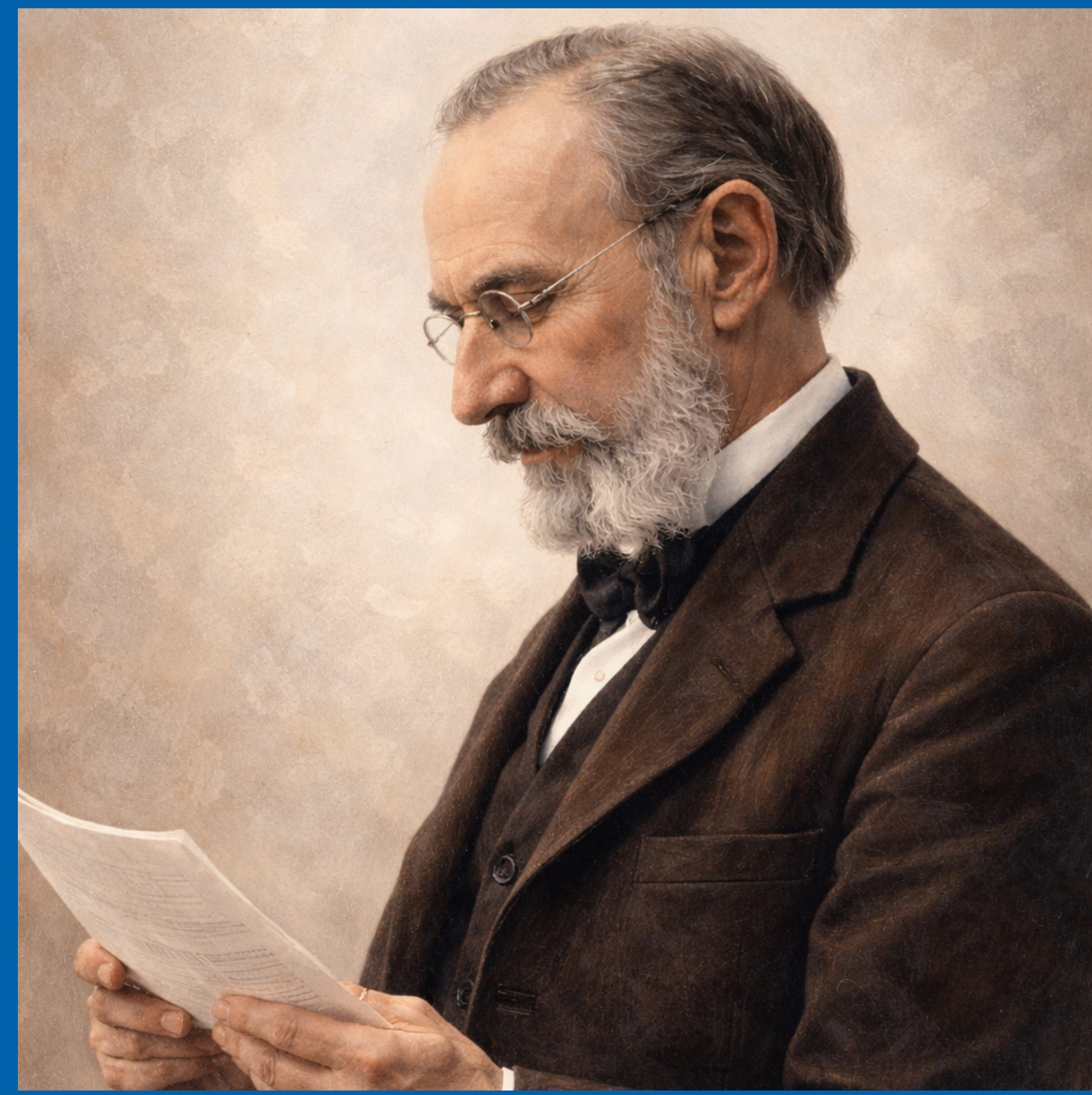


# Carlos Finlay

CUBAN PHYSICIAN AND PIONEER OF YELLOW FEVER RESEARCH



## BACKGROUND

Born on December 3, 1833, in Cuba, Carlos Finlay was the son of a Scottish-born physician and a French mother. He received much of his early education in Europe before earning his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia in 1855. Despite opportunities to remain in the United States, Finlay returned to Cuba, where he established his medical practice and became deeply interested in studying infectious diseases that affected his homeland, particularly yellow fever.

## CAREER

Finlay built a career as a practicing physician and a scientific investigator in Havana, dedicating much of his work to understanding yellow fever. In 1881, he proposed a groundbreaking theory that mosquitoes transmitted the disease, a concept that challenged prevailing medical beliefs and was widely dismissed at the time. For nearly two decades, he conducted experiments to prove his hypothesis, often facing skepticism and ridicule. His work was validated in 1900 when researchers, including Walter Reed, confirmed his findings.

## IMPACT

Finlay's discovery that mosquitoes transmit yellow fever transformed modern medicine and public health. His work led to effective disease control measures that significantly reduced the spread of yellow fever, saving countless lives in the Americas. These advances also made projects like the Panama Canal possible by limiting outbreaks among workers. Finlay is now recognized as a pioneer whose ideas reshaped the understanding of infectious disease and laid the foundation for modern epidemiology.

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