



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ACERVO DA CASA DE OSWALDO CRUZ/FIOCRUZ

The sanitarian at the Pasteur Institute, Paris, in 1897: the first Brazilian to study at the institution

## A promising start

At the age of early 20, Oswaldo Cruz published his first work

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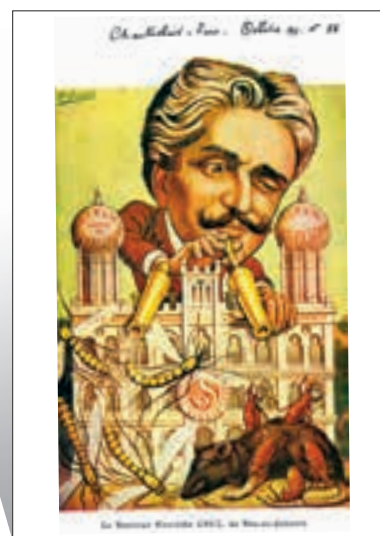
Cruz with other researchers in Manguinhos, Rio de Janeiro. In the background, the Serotherapy Institute



Sanitarian Oswaldo Cruz lived only 44 years, but he used every moment for learning and taking an active part in the life of the country. To start with, the thesis which earned him a doctorate, at the age of 20. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the candidates to become physicians would be enrolled in the rare courses available, and had to prepare, write and defend a thesis to be approved at the end of six years. A native of São Luís do Paraitinga, in São Paulo, but brought up in Rio de Janeiro, Cruz decided on medicine at the age of 14. He graduated at 20, knowing exactly what he wanted to do in life. “Since the first day that is given us to admire the enchanting panorama that is described when one puts the eyes to the eyepiece of a microscope (...) the idea took root in our spirit that our intellectual efforts from now onwards would converge for us to acquire learning and become specialized in a science that supports itself on microscopy”, says Oswaldo Cruz, in the first paragraph of his thesis *Microbial Transmission through Water*, defended on November 8, 1892, at the School of Medicine in Rio and published 110 years ago. In the same work, the patron of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation and of Brazilian sanitarism presented an apparatus invented by him, for collecting ground water with as little contamination as possible, as an alternative to foreign machines that he regarded as no good. This was just the beginning of a brilliant



Cruz (in the middle, seated), with scientists at the Manguinhos Teahouse. Also seated, Carlos Chagas (2<sup>nd</sup>, from left to right) and Adolpho Lutz (the 5<sup>th</sup>)



Cover of the thesis (left) and the caricature of the French magazine *Chanteclair*, of 1911 (above): international recognition

career that enjoyed the collaboration of a new generation of scientists, such as Carlos Chagas, Adolpho Lutz, Vital Brazil and Henrique da Rocha Lima, amongst others. Cruz studied at the Pasteur Institute (from 1896 to 1899), founded the Serotherapy Institute (1900), the future Oswaldo Cruz Institute, and became director-general of Public Health (1903), at the age of

30. His work was fundamental in campaigns to combat the epidemics of those times. This year, there will be the possibility of getting to know more about this scientist. The Bank of Brazil Foundation, Odebrecht and the House of Oswaldo Cruz have created an exhibition that will visit municipalities all over Brazil. For further information, write for [cidadania-e@fbb.org.br](mailto:cidadania-e@fbb.org.br).