



Father Benito Viñes: The 19th-Century Life and Contributions of a Cuban Hurricane Observer and Scientist

Luis E. Ramos Guadalupe

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Before Doppler radar and broadcast weather reports, Spanish-born Benito Viñes (1837–1893) spent decades observing the skies at Belen Observatory in colonial Cuba, routinely issuing weather reports and forecasts to local newspapers. And before storm trackers and emergency alerts, Viñes made it his mission to teach the public what he was learning about the weather. He developed the first network of weather observation stations in the Caribbean, and his research laid the groundwork for the hurricane warning systems we use today. His sometimes eerily accurate hurricane forecasts helped save many lives—earning him the nickname “the Hurricane Priest.”

Father Benito Viñes is a fascinating look at the life of a man who worked on the cutting edge of weather science while still remaining devoted to his religious life. It explores Viñes as both pioneer in the study of tropical meteorology and a colonial Jesuit priest. With notes that put his life into modern context, this book puts a much deserved spotlight on a figure who played a crucial role in making our lives safer.

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