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HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICINE

Civil Hospital of Zamora de Hidalgo

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Abstract

The city of Zamora de Hidalgo harbors one of the most important hospitals in the region, which was built in 1841 and named Civil Hospital of Zamora. Built to answer to municipal health needs and with the support of the town council of Zamora and private donations, it served as a shelter for sick and needy people and pilgrims. It was administered and maintained by neighbors, later by sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and, finally, by the federal government. Currently, it provides services to the Zamoran community neighbors and admits patients from other locations such as Jacona, Jiquilpan, Patamban, Ocumicho, Chavinda, Tangancícuaro, Chilchota and Tangamandapio. It was named civil hospital because the only functioning hospital in Zamora stopped being run by the ecclesial council and passed into the possession of the State. (Gac Med Mex. 2015;151:119-26)

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The first hospital was the Civil Hospital of Zamora, founded in 1841

The current city of Zamora, in the state of Michoacán, started being populated by Spaniards in 1574 in the Tziróndaro by command of the viceroy of the New Spain Martín Enríquez de Almanza. In words of historian Luis González y González, "the villeage of Zamora was planned much before. A report dated June 10, 1743 in Jacoma, states that Viceroy Mendoza, in order to fight the Chichimecas, ordered in 1541 the foundation of a village of Spaniards in the Tziróndaro valley, but his order was not obeyed due to the lack of settlers" 1. In view of this, the historian comments that Don Antonio de Mendoza had to build a fort with the few neighbors found in these towns. It was until January 18, 1574 when Viceroy de Almanza had the fortune of

being able to found Zamora with 36 Spanish neighbors whose names appear in the text "Zamora. Historic assay and document collection", by Zamoran chronicler Arturo Rodríguez Zetina.

After being settled by Spaniards, it stood out as an important agricultural and livestock center with significant commercial and social activity; it was a crossing point for travellers, traders, soldiers, civilians and clergy members. Public buildings, houses, churches and monasteries were erected, and there were also drugstores and hospitals. On August 1841, the Civil Hospital of Zamora was founded in the villeage of Zamora with 2 patients; its first director was medicine professor José María Cortés².

The origins of this hospital go back to August 21 1838, when Don Rafael Guzmán, son of Don Joaquín Guzmán and Doña María Cortés y Bernal, granted the power to Mister Buenaventura Méndez –owner of

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González y González L. Zamora. México: El Colegio de Michoacán, A.C.; 1994. p. 45.

Rodríguez Zetina A. Zamora: ensayo historico y repertorio documental. México: Jus; 1952. p. 590.

the del Espíritu Santo farm—, Mister Pantaleón Beracochea and Don José Miguel Bahamonde to execute his will. One of the instructions left by the deceased Don Rafael Guzmán was: "[that the] properties on his name are to be sold immediately and the product of the sale to be invested in the construction of the parish church, now cathedral"3.

In the year of 1840, a commission of 5 individuals, comprised by the priest Don José Miguel Bahamonde, Don José María Cortés, medicine professor Don Cirilo Murillo, Don José Secada and presbyterian Don Gabriel Silva Lejarazo, aided by the illustrious town council, which donated the magnificent ammount of 2,000 pesos, was able to acquire a house owned by the late Don Rafael Guzmán, where the hospital was installed. One year later, the hospital opened its doors operating only with 2 beds, which were occupied immediately. In 1842, the number of beds was increased to 5, and by 1850, the hospital was operating with 10. The expenses remained in charge of wealthy neighbors of the city, who commited themselves to contribute with everything necessary for the correct operation of the hospital. Researcher and specialist in the femenine and religious world of the New Spain Josefina Muriel points out: "Wealthy people are the ones who create foundations, provide hospitals with real estate for their subsistence, rebuild churches, enlarge buildings, donate certain number of beds, make hospitals their heirs in their wills (as it happened with the will of Don Rafael Guzmán), and others provide with periodical aid that allow for them to subsist when their own assets fall short"4. This first, small hospital was the work of traditional wealthy families settled in Zamora.

When the hospital started operating treated the most important health problems of the region, such as fevers, typhus, intestinal-origin fevers and skin conditions. The situation worsened when there were epidemics, as with the arrival of cholera *morbus* in 1850. This epidemic caused for hospital beds to be fully occupied. There were many deaths, and to prevent the spread of the disease, quarantines were resorted to. Vegetable, animal and mineral-origin healing measures, as well as prayer, failed to solve the problem. "Between March and July 1850, cholera *morbus* left a

lot of fatalities in its path through Zamora and its surroundings. A total of 1,108 deaths due to this disease were recorded"⁵. The hospital, as a social service institution, took the necessary measures to aid the patients by offering them food, shelter, rest and, of course, healing. The Civil Hospital of Zamora, as well as those in the national territory, had to develop an extraordinary capacity in order to satisfy the demand of care of the population.

When cholera morbus arrived to the villeage of Zamora on March 7th, 1859⁶, the Civil Hospital was located in what currently is the street of Aquiles Serdán South, number 256, downtown. Too central for a hospital, and an inppropriate location for the inhabitants of the city, who were forced to breath day and night an ait loades with the miasmas generated by the hospital. Therefore, it had to be moved to somewhere else. A place had to be found outside the city where predominant winds blew on its direction, from the town to that place, and not the opposite. The water drank by the city inhabitants might also be a vector for the miasmas originating in the hospital and hence, one of the requirements that had to be met by the place was being far from natural springs or open currents of the water people used for drinking and cooking. Thus, the idea of moving the hospital somewhere else began to be considered and a search was undertaken for the most appropriate place to move it.

Transfer next to La Purísima

Data provided by Dr. Nelly Sigaut indicate that "in the crossing of the Madero and Colón streets, place where the construction of the church devoted to the Immaculate Conception was decided to thank her miraculous intervention during the cholera *morbus* epidemic in 1850, there were some constructions, such as a house inhabited by pious women where a small chappel consagrated to the Virgin of Guadalupe and the Civil Hospital used to operate⁷". The hospital had been moved to the 5th street of the Hospital between the 6th of Madrigal and the 6th of el Puente in 1850. The construction of the La Concepción temple started on March 8, 1851⁸.

^{3.} Ibídem, p. 589.

^{4.} Muriel J. Hospitales de la Nueva España. Tomo II: Fundaciones de los siglos XVII y XVIII. México: UNAM/Cruz Roja Mexicana; 1991. p. 311.

^{5.} Tapia Santamaría J. Identidad social y religión en el Bajío Zamorano, 1850-1900. El culto a la Purísima, un mito de fundación. Relaciones. 1986; 27(VII): 43.

^{6.} Ibídem.

^{7.} Ibídem, p. 147.

^{8.} Sigaut N. Catálogo del patrimonio arquitectónico del bajío zamorano. México: El Colegio de Michoacán; 1991. p. 92.

The architecture of the hospital did not suffer great modifications, but hygiene and patient isolation conditions did. Its capacity increased to more than 30 patients, although only the expenses of 20 were covered by public funds. The most common diseases among the population were: syphilis, dysentery, acute enteritis and skin pustular conditions. When someone presented with an injury, the healing procedure employed by the hospital physician involved pulling out any foreign objects from the wound, such as hair, dirt or blood lumps, inspect the wound and rinse it with warm water or wine9. The wound was closed and cleansed as long as necessary with arnica until it was healed. According to Dr. Nelly, "of 302 patients seen in 1875, only 19 died, and out of 447 seen in 1876, 28 died"10. By the middle and the end of the 19th century, medical care practiced in this hospital was improved, and a larger number of men and women resorted to the hospital looking for its services.

Due to the population increase, the number of beds had to be extended, trained medical personnel had to be hired and surgical material had to be acquired. On January 6 1903, the director of the hospital, Heraclio Macías, asked the governor of the state of Michoacan, Aristeo Mercado, to purchase the following items: "80 bed sheets, 60 pillowcases, 24 matress covers, 50 kg of stuffing, 18 night tables, 2 towels, 1 washbasin, 1 pitcher and 30 spittoons" 11. A few days later, Aristeo Mercado authorized the purchase and asked the Hospital director to pick up the items on January 14 at National Railways of Mexico to bring them to be used at the hospital.

On March 16 1903, the director of the hospital made again a request to acquire surgical instruments essential to the services of the hospital. The director, Heraclio Macías, listed the following requested instruments: "a syringe for hypodermic injections, 2 fountain syringes, 1 Cooper needle, one dozen of pliers, one dozen assorted suture needles, a Smarck band, a grooved probe and a probe for stomach pumping" 12. The governor authorized the purchase of the material and the instruments were received on April 21.

As part of the program to improve the hospital, a wall that was threatening to collapse was urgently repaired.

Additionally, two large wards, one ward for wounded patients, one for patients with contagious infectious diseases and other used to store implements at the service of the establishment were painted. On March 11, 1903, the director, Heraclio Macías, required from the governor of Michoacán, Aristeo Mercado, the following: "please have the roofs of the hospital be examined. Due to the rainfall, they have leaked into most rooms of this hospital and in excess in the dinning room, which is adjacent to the temple and it is flooded. I kindly ask you to take the actions you deem appropriate"13. The governor had the roofs examined and the convenient budget required for the repairs to be assigned. For this repair, 2,000 tiles, 42 murillos and 11 rafters were purchased. With the acquisition of these materials, the roof was repaired.

Part of this plan to reform the hospital was driven by the scientific revolution that took place in Europe in the 19th Century, which contributed to both medicine and architecture theories to be renewed, which corroborated the adherence to modernity promoted by Porfirio Díaz. The new notion of health that arrived from Europe and was established in Mexico as part of the modernizing project imposed by Porfirio Díaz "came to consider space as an element that not only contributed to prevent diseases, but also to cure them, thus making restructuration of places where medicine was practiced unavoidable"14. The Civil Hospital of Zamora was one of the institutions that benefited from this renovation plan when it started its transformation according to guidelines imposed for the modernization of buildings with the central theme of hygiene. This was clearly evidenced by the prefect of the district of Zamora. Jesús M. Prado, when he stated: "in view of the process of progress and peace the country is experiencing, the government is asked to take care of civil hospitals, since due to the increase of the population, help is asked and, therefore, 6 important points to Public Welfare are exposed:

"First-. There is a Civil Hospital supported by the government of the state. Three thousand four hundred twenty pesos and fifty six cents are spent yearly from public funds to take care of 20 men and 10 women,

^{9.} Fernández del Castillo F. La cirugía mexicana en los siglos XVI y XVII. México: E.R. Squibb & Sons; 1936. p. 30.

^{10.} Sigaut N. Op. cit., p. 149.

Archivo Municipal de Zamora. Fondo: Prefectura. Sección: Gobernación. Caja: 48. Expediente 32. Fojas: 42, Año 1903. Relativo al mueble del Hospital.

^{12.} Ibídem.

^{13.} Archivo Municipal de Zamora. Fondo: Prefectura. Sección: Gobernación. Caja: 50. Expediente 74. Fojas: 3. Ano 1903. Relativo a mejoras en el Hospital Civil.

^{14.} González Servín ML. Los hospitales del porfiriato. Bitácora Arquitectura. 2011:64.

which is the number of patients they are able to receive.

"Second-. By virtue of the increase of the poulation, the demand for aid is larger everyday and the use of these services it is not possible because it would require for the sanatorium premises to be enlarged, which the perimeter of the current building renders impossible and circumstances suggest that the hospital should be moved as soon as possible to an adequate place and in appropriate conditions to its purpose and current times.

"Third-. The hospital is owned by the government; the person in charge of the executive power would allow for the property to be sold in order to acquire other in a better place, where the required reforms could be made according to modern rules of public hygiene and with other conditions of convenience and good distribution.

"Fourth-. Social collaboration is essential. If after the purchase of the estate there is money left, let it be used to feed the patients.

"Fifth-. To ask for valuable help for the development of the presented general project, a subscription is to be opened for neighbors who can afford to contribute with donations.

"Sixth-. The provided benefit is and must be general and intended to move this project's aspirations. Therefore, foreign councils and inhabitants under their jurisdictions, by contributing to the referred work, would have the right for poor patients of the municipality and crime-related injury victims to be admitted as soon as they could be transferred to the hospital, which, for this purpose, would bear the appropriate name of "Hospital of the District of Zamora" The prefect of Zamora expects for these points to be studied and to have a resolution soon, "since the fulfillment of these would improve the reputation of the district".

The changes that can be appreciated in these six points were not only focused on the Civil Hospital, but the prefect also requests two improvements of public nature that have to be addressed: the introduction of drinking water originating in Jacona watersprings and the construction of a new market acording to regulations of the sanitary code, without forgetting the third point, relocation of the Civil Hospital.

The insistence on relocating the hospital in a place outside the city with more capacity to take care of a population that in the past few years had increased from 12,271 inhabitants in 1900 to 15,116 in 1904 is to be highlighted; 2,845 inhabitants had emerged in only 4 years. The supply of beds, implements and clothing to take care of this new population was very poor, and "the biggest fear was the location of the building. In case of an epidemic or any other motive, public hygiene will suffer considerabily due to the inappropriate location of hospitals" ¹⁶. For this reason, the Zamora city council started analyzing the situation and tried to solve the problem of the economic resources that would be required for the construction of the new hospital.

The promise of a new hospital

The first action by the council was to announce that the space occupated by the old hospital was going to be sold in order to acquire, with the product of this sale, a larger property and build a new hospital that met the requirements demanded by the population. The Zamora neighboring municipalities, as the news was known, responded to the council's call by donating money for the construction of the hospital. For example, neighbors from Tangamandapio voluntarily contributed with donations to aid in the reconstruction of the Civil Hospital of Zamora: "Eudano González, Ignacio Ochoa, Sabas García, Venancio Arroyo and Silverio González donated 5 pesos each, whereas Julio Olivares and David Ochoa donated 3 pesos. José Trinidad Cuevas donated 2 pesos and Prisciliano Romero, Juan N. Valdés, Rafael Gonzales, Antonio Ochoa Hernández and Josefa García donated one peso. Bernabé Navarro donated 50 cents. Manuel González, Fernando Ramos, Juan Villanueva and Higinio Cortés donated 25 cents each" 17. In total, the amount of 39 pesos and 50 cents was collected, which would be grouped with the donations accumulated from other municipalities.

The highest authority (Jefe de Tenencia) of the community of Tarecuato informed the prefect of the Zamora municipality that calling "a meeting of the principal neighbors of this locality in order to collect money for

^{15.} Archivo Municipal de Zamora. Fondo: Prefectura. Sección: Gobernación. Caja: 55. Expediente 55. Fojas: 26. Año 1904. Relativo al Hospital Civil de Zamora.

^{16.} Sigaut N. Op. Cit., p. 149.

^{17.} Archivo Municipal de Zamora. Fondo: Prefectura. Sección: Gobernación. Caja: 55. Expediente 55. Fojas: 26. Año 1904. Relativo al Hospital Civil de Zamora.

the referred construction, this community will contribute with 100 pesos, which will be handed over in four parts" 18.

Once the amount of 139 pesos and 50 cents was collected, plus the cooperation of the other municipalities, the project of the new hospital was already a fact.

With the sufficient amount of money collected for its construction, a small piece of land near by the municipal cementery was assigned; the reasons for its selection were the following: "1) Due to the topographical location of the city. This place is located towards the nort-eastern wind with respect to the city and within its perimeter. 2) Because being the neighborhood of the cementery or the neighborhood of Madrigal, as commonly known, an isolated area, perhaps because the neighbors are very noisy, the area will unquestionably improve with an establishment of the projected nature, since the security guards constantly present in the hospital should inspire some respect. 3) Because staying in the projected piece of land, it will be very easy to move the corpses to the cementery, which is at a distance of 100 meters or less. 4) The garden that now is projected to be built in the small square of the cementery, will be located in front of the building and, thus, will receive special care to be used as a rest area and therefore improve the hygiene of this area and because, as mentioned in the second clause, public moral will be very improved in that area" 19. The place was decided, the only thing left was to formalize the purchase.

The arrangements for the purchase were handled by Doña María Ávila Easpinosa, widow of Pedro Espinosa (when he passed away, the matter was passed on to his wife). By means of a commission in charge of the purchase of the property, the sum of 2,412 pesos and 30 cents was agreed, according to the general arrangement of the agreement, at 85 cents per square meter of land. The Espinosa widow was handed personally the agreed amount and, before the notary of this municipality, Citizen Diego Méndez, the respective deed was granted. The land acquired for the construction of

the hospital was, as judged by the prefecture, the indicated, but with the increase in hospital services due to the population increase, it became indispensable "to buy two more pieces of land located south of the city, which belonged to Mister Primitivo Valdez and Mister Ignacio Quiroz, in order to enlarge the establishment"²⁰. Total cost for all three pieces of land was 70,000 pesos (Appendix 1).

The new hospital would integrate all indications of medical and construction science, allowing for the physical structure to be equated with the new healing techniques. For example, electrical networks substituting the old oil lamps were to be introduced. Current water and drainage were going to be installed²¹, as well as openings in the outer walls in order to renew the air and allow for illumination. "The façades were covered with a lime coating in order to prevent for bedbugs, lice and arachnids and other disease-transmitting vermins to nest, which, of course would improve urban appearance. The roofs would no longer be made out of tiles, but rather of grooved galvanized sheet supported by wooden poles and strips. The rafters would be made out of steel rather than wood, set into the load bearing walls and, below them, a false ceiling made out of plank would be mounted, which would allow for a comfortable micro-climate to be maintained in addition to creating an esthetical interior space"22. In order to avoid overcrowding and possible contagions, the hospital was going to be divided into 30-patient sections, integrating what was known as ward system. For the sake of functionality, the attempt was made to locate the hospital close to any source of water, since large quantities of water were required to ensure hygiene. Everything was ready for the laying of the first stone in the piece of land located in the corner formed by the Juarez square and the Dr. Verduzco street north of the city, property already acquired by the government²³. Considering that the celebrations of the Independence centenary were very close, the prefecture of Zamora asked the governor of Michoacán for permission to lay the first stone during the

^{18.} Ibídem.

^{19.} Archivo Municipal de Zamora. Fondo: Prefectura. Sección: Gobernación. Caja: 62. Expediente 181. Fojas: 10. Año 1905. Relativo al proyecto de traslación del Hospital Civil y construcción de un edificio que reúna las condiciones necesarias para destinarse exclusivamente a aquel objeto.

^{20.} Ibídem.

^{21.} Archivo Municipal de Zamora. Fondo: Prefectura. Sección: Fomento. Caja: 35. Expediente 14. Fojas: 2. Año 1912. Solicitud para gasto de la introducción de agua potable en el Hospital Civil.

^{22.} González Servin ML. Op. cit., p. 65.

^{23.} Archivo Municipal de Zamora. Fondo: Prefectura. Sección: Gobernación. Caja: 88. Expediente 154. Año 1910. Colocación de la primera piedra para el nuevo hospital.

celebrations of the centenary, in order to lend solemnity to the act; however, this could not be arranged.

Up to this moment I don't have information to confirm if the hospital was transferred to its new location. I cannot assure if this occurred because I don't have historical data that allow for me to confirm this. Dr. David Guzmán, specialist on the subject and director for 28 years of the current Civil Hospital "José María Silva" told me in an interview²⁴ that the Civil Hospital of Zamora was never moved to its new location; the lack of resources was the main reason that prevented the construction of the hospital because surely it turned out to be more expensive than the originally planned amount. The hospital tended to dissapear to turn into the offices of the La Purísima temple. The property where the new hospital was planned to be built was left compltely abandoned. A city neighbor asked the town council to rent the property where the new Civil Hospital was supposed to have been constructed. The council reviewed the request and it was accepted. The piece of land was rented to Mr. Rafael Garibay, stipulating an amount of 72 pesos to be paid monthly over a period of three years²⁵. Thus ended the dream of building a new hospital.

In view of the medical needs of the region, the city council decided to adapt a poorly tasted, defectively built ramshackle that previously served as a cloister for Nazarene nuns. The building was occupied by the government in 1875; first, it served as public offices, and after some time being vacant, the Civil Hospital was established there²⁶. Over time it was named Civil Hospital "José María Silva"²⁷ in memory of this distinguished doctor, deceased in 1952 in this city. In 1990, the name was changed into Municipal Hospital of Zamora "Juan Pablo II" in honor of this saint. With capacity for 72 patients, with 4 incubators, sufficient instruments to take care of surgical emergency needs

of the local community, an X-ray unit (the first equipment was provided in 1943) and more than 50 physicians residing there at the service of the population, the Civil Hospital has since then offered quick, timely and quality service, as is to be expected in a good hospital; 173 years of service endorse it.

Conclusions

In view of the above, we can appreciate that, since it started operating, the Civil Hospital has taken care of all kinds of sick and helpless people that, looking for cure and comfort occupied its beds. According to the Regulation for civil hospitals from Zamora, Uruapan, La Piedad, Tacámbaro and Pátzcuaro, every sick person asking for emergency medical care was received and, once admitted, they had to observe the curative plan imposed by the doctor²⁸. The patient was discharged when the director of the establishment decided.

During the periods of war (North American invasion [1846-1847] and French invasion [1867]), the hospital had trouble to obtain resources and provide services, but, owing to communitary aid in collaboration with the Zamoran city council, it managed to keep on going. During the stage of the scientific revolution that took place in Europe, whose contributions to medical sciences revolutionized curative techniques and the use of space²⁹, the hospital was favored by these contributions. The Zamoran city council, aware of these advances, and with the project for the new Civil Hospital on the verge, sent a group of Zamoran physicians to the city of Morelia to visit the recently opened General Hospital of Michoacán (1901), in order for them to examine the elements available for the study of medical sciences and patient cure and bring this knowledge in order to apply it in the new hospital³⁰.

^{24.} Interview of Dr. David Guzmán by José Luis Gómez in January 27 2013. In this interview, Dr. Guzmán commented that he arrived to Zamora in 1957 through Dr. Alfonso Iñiguez, director of the Civil Hospital. Before dying of liver cancer he appointed Dr. Guzmán as his succesor. Initially, Dr. Guzmán refused the charge until the director of the Health Center together with the secretary of the Union of Healthcare convinced him. In 1962, he took possesion of the charge and, 28 years later, in 1990, he left the post.

^{25.} Archivo Municipal de Zamora. Fondo: Prefectura. Sección: Fomento. Caja: 39. Expediente 51. Año 1918. Solicitud de Rafael Garibay pidiendo en arrendamiento el predio donde se proyectó fincar el Hospital Civil.

^{26.} Sánchez Díaz G, coord. Pueblos, villas y ciudades de Michoacán en el porfiriato. México: Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo/Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas; 1991. p. 201.

^{27.} José María Silva studied in Guadalajara. A physician in 1893, he practiced in Zamora. He was councilor of Zamora (1904-1910), vicepresident of the Zamoran electoral club (1909), federal substitute deputy (1910-1912) and member of the Independent Electoral Party (1921). He ran the hospital from 1906 to 1923. In: Ochoa Serrano A, Sánchez Rodríguez M. Repertorio michoacano (1889-1926). 2a ed. Mexico: El Colegio de Michoacán/Universidad Pedagógica Nacional/Morevallado editores/Casa de la Cultura del Valle de Zamora; 2004. p. 372.

^{28.} Coromina A. Recopilación de leyes, decretos, reglamentos y circulares que se han expedido en el Estado de Michoacán. Morelia: Imprenta de la Escuela I.M. Porfirio Díaz. Tomo XXXII. 1899. p. 329.

^{29.} González Servín ML. Op. cit., p. 64.

As previously mentioned, the project to construct a new Civil Hospital was failed. The city council, as well as the illustrious members of landowner and businessmen families gave priority to other novelties, such as the Zamora-Jacona trolley (1879), the telegraph (1884), the movie theater (1895), electric light (1897), the introduction of drinking water in the city (1898), the railway (1899), the first automobile (1904), urban telephone service (1907) and the construction of a municipal market (1910)³¹. Instead, an abandoned house was adapted and the Civil Hospital was established there, where it fulfills it functions to this very day (Appendices 2 and 3).

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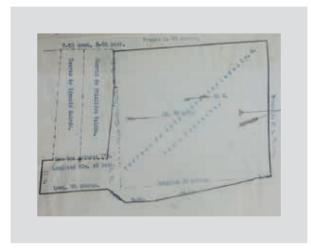
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Appendix 1. Diagram of Pedro Espinosa's property.



Appendix 2. Map of Zamora, 1910. Map of Zamora in 1910 divided into 4 quarters. As it can be appreciated in the map, the Civil Hospital is located in the third quarter (III), represented by the letter d next to a black cross symbolizing the La Purísima parish. The location streets in the map are Colón avenue almost at the intersection with Francisco I. Madero.



Appendix 3. A: Former location of the Civil Hospital. B: Parish offices. C: Purísima Concepción temple.