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12-1-2002

Obituary: Jacob Brodzinsky (January 17, 1918 - February 25, 2003)

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Obituary

Jacob Brodzinsky (January 17, 1918 – February 25, 2003)

Robert E. Woodruff

Florida State Collection of Arthropods,
P.O. Box 147100, Gainesville FL 32614-7100

Earlier this year, at the age of 85, Major Jacob Brodzinsky passed away at his home in Santo Domingo. It is with great sadness that I write this obituary, because "Jake" was a great personal friend and professional colleague for over 30 years. He leaves a wife, Marianela (Mañeña) Lopez-Penha, whom he married on April 26, 1964, and two lovely daughters, Sibylla and Raquel.

Jake was an exceptional man. He studied forestry management at the Environmental Science and Forestry School at Syracuse, New York. He served in the U.S. military in World War II, in Belgium, northern France, Korea, and Vietnam. He started in the Army Corps of Engineers, but later was in Military Intelligence. He retired in 1967 with the rank of Major, and entered civil service (also in intelligence). He spoke seven languages, and was always my source for the etymology of words in Spanish.

After retiring from the military, Jake was looking for something to occupy his curious mind. Because his wife was Dominicana, it was a direct connection to the amber there. They formed a company, "Amberica", which became the source for much of the important insect fossils discovered in the DR. They were living in Charlottesville, Virginia at that time, but I first met Jake at a gem and jewelry show in Tampa, Florida. We immediately became friends, and I assisted him in identifying fossils. In 1980, Jake retired from civil service, and the family moved to Santo Domingo, where the amber business was booming.

However, he really wanted to be able to make such identifications, at least to the Family level. Although with little background and an ancient microscope, he proceeded to delve deeply into entomology. Eventually he asked if I would provide training at my institution (the Florida State Collection of Arthropods, Gainesville, Florida), and I was happy to do so. We spent two weeks in a "crash" course, using many fossils that he brought with him. Over the years he became extremely proficient in identifying most fossils he encountered, a feat that would stymie most Ph.D. entomologists. We were both proud that we shared the only 2 horseflies (Tabanidae) known from Dominican am-

ber, which were named *Stenotabanus brodzinskyi* and *S. woodruffi*.

His main goal (one we also shared) was to provide these fossils to specialists who could formally name and publish on their significance. He was quite successful, and the many patronyms of *brodzinskyi* testify to this fact (see below). His name will permanently be recognized for this service. His goal was not to publish, although he did write some general papers (see below). He delighted in finding something new and significant for other scientists.

In addition to assisting scientists with study material, he and Mañeña opened their house to dozens of visiting scientists from throughout the world. Their hospitality even extended to filthy, dirty, field entomologists (including myself), who often had quantities of specimens (alive & dead) and other equipment (which they generously agreed to store for future trips). It became my home in Santo Domingo! Even after one visitor dried his undergarments on the chandelier, he was still tolerated.

Jake and I took several trips together to visit amber mines and to collect insects. One memorable trip was with "Porcina" during the African swine fever scare. We were waiting at a restaurant in Monte Cristi, when someone ordered "Medio Pollo" after dinner. After a considerable delay, the waiter finally brought a half chicken. Our driver accused the waiter of being Haitian, for not knowing that he ordered coffee. We all laughed heartily, and Jake often recalled that incident fondly.

On another trip we were searching for ticks (garapatas) in the nests of rodents, iguanas, and birds. Having driven to Pedernales to spend the night (in a room with 5 guys in hammocks), but were to go by boat across Lago Oviedo early the next day. The "2 peso hotel" had no coffee, so we delayed until Oviedo, when all were hungry. A roadside stand was cooking, so we stopped. Jake only ate eggs once a week & this was his egg day, so he asked if they had scrambled eggs. Si, was the answer, so he ordered them. The only cooking pot was the same oil in which "chicharrones" were prepared. When he got them, they had been

dropped in hot grease, which still poured over them. Although disappointed, he exclaimed that they were "Chicharrones de Huevos", and we laughed about this many times later.

Jake was proud of his Jewish heritage, and he often requested matzo balls and kosher sausages when I visited. His favorite restaurant food was Chinese roast duck. Jokingly he said he was the most famous Jew in Santo Domingo, when "Jacobo" ran for president, and his name was prominently displayed throughout the country. Jake will be remembered as a great friend, a dedicated scientist, a loving husband and father, as well as for his service to the important study of Dominican amber fossils.

Citations of Scientific Papers

for which Jake wrote or contributed:

- Poinar, G.O., Jr., K. Warheit, and J. Brodzinsky.** 1985. A fossil feather in Dominican amber. (International Research Communications Systems) *Medical Sciences* 13:927.
- Poinar, G.O., Jr., and J. Brodzinsky.** 1986. Fossil evidence of nematode (Tylenchida) parasitism in Staphylinidae (Coleoptera). *Nematologica* 32:353-355.
- Brodzinsky, J.** 1985. Fossils in Dominican amber. *Fossils Quarterly* 3:29-40.
- Brodzinsky, J.** 1997. Un vistazo general. *Ambar* 1(1):10-11.

Patronyms for Jake Brodzinsky

There are perhaps others that were not discovered during a literature search. [This search was greatly aided by the careful work done by Daniel E. Perez-Gelabert in his *Catálogo Sistemático y Bibliographia de la Biota Fósil en Ambar de la República Dominicana*. Published in *Hispaniola* [publicación científica ocasional] (Nueva Serie) 1 (1999):1-65]

- Diplopoda: Pyrgodesmidae: *Docodesmus brodzinskyi* Shear, 1981.
- Diptera: Ceratopogonidae: *Culicoides (Oecata) brodzinskyi* Szadziwski and Grogan, 1998.
- Diptera: Perisclididae: *Perisclis (Myodris) brodzinskyi* Grimaldi and Mathis, 1993.
- Diptera: Tabanidae: *Stenotabanus brodzinskyi* Lane, Fairchild, and Poinar, 1988.
- Diptera: Tipulidae: *Brachypremna brodzinskii* Krzeminski, 1996.
- Hemiptera: Aradidae: *Calisiopsis brodzinskyorum* Froeschner, 1992.
- Hemiptera: Enicocephalidae: *Alienates brodzinskyi* Grimaldi, Michalski, and Schmidt, 1993.
- Trichoptera: Hydroptilidae: *Ochrotrichia brodzinskyi* Wells and Wichard, 1989.
- Coleoptera: Erotylidae: *Dacne brodzinskyi* Skelley, 1997.