

From family research to academic work

When the Family D Study Center was opened in the 70's, its goal was to identify and gather information regarding the Duailibi (and its 12 other spellings) family in Brazil. However, in the 80's and 90's this mission took on a new and broader perspective.

Our initial work, comprising research and questionnaires, enabled us to identify around 800 D's in Brazil. Naturally, organizing and cataloging this data came next on our "to do" list. Historian Clarice Rangel was hired for that purpose. With broad experience in oral history, Clarice organized the center's files, classified families by region of residence and cataloged all interviews, both oral and written.

In trips throughout Brazil and overseas, Clarice collected documents, interviewed families and strengthened family ties nationwide. Important research dates from this period, including studies on the possible origins and meanings of our common surname (www.familyd.net/_centro_de_estudos/pesquisa.asp).

Another initial research objective was the publication of a book containing the complete D Family tree and a study on the Lebanese immigration to Brazil. As we advanced in our work, we realized such

a book would demand countless new editions, given its content is renewed on a daily basis. Around this time – the late 90's – the internet was launched in Brazil and we had the idea of building a site for our family instead. The challenge was met with the creation of familyd.net, a site devoted to the history and genealogy of our family, with interactive tools for relatives to connect and contribute. Another milestone in the Center's history was achieved by librarian Maria Célia Tonon, who indexed our library, which had grown significantly over the last 20 years, thereby facilitating access to an extensive gathering of publications.

Orkut, Google's internet social network service, has also become a virtual meeting point for the youngest of our family. On page sabinamourafamilyd, more than 220 names can be found (until June 2006). The Study Center's work has gained world recognition. We are often visited by Lebanese and Brazilian diplomats and journalists. "The Center has become a reference point and a cultural legacy and I'm proud of its accomplishments. We're fulfilling the mission of ensuring that the future generations do not lose the family's memory and that people who bear this name know its origin and a little more about history", says Roberto Duailibi, the project's originator.



The Duailibis in Campo Grande, 1925. From left to right: Elias, Nagib, Faride, Felipe with his son Eduardo, Jorge and João.

A name behind many stories

One of our biggest family questions is regarding the origin of our name. Because of that, back in the 90's the Family D Study Center asked Lebanese historian Colette Moubarak to discover the origins of the D surname in Lebanon.

According to one story, the family originated in the Bekaa Valley, in Lebanon, as descendants of the Sayeg family, renowned for their jewelry craftsmanship. By another account, the surname is of Arabic origin and stems from the word doulab, or "wheel" in Arabic. According to this story, the first D's were blacksmiths. However, their jeweler descendents were the ones to achieve notoriety.

Nevertheless, in their Dicionário das Famílias Brasileiras ("Brazilian Families Dictionary"), Antônio Henrique da Cunha Bueno and Carlos Eduardo de Almeida Bavala, claim the surname comes from the descendents of a family of blacksmiths (Haddad, in Arabic). A legend tells of seven brothers who were forced to flee after attacking a Turkish military outpost. After they fled, each brother adopted a different surname: Dawalibi, Khouri, Sayeg, Nour, Maluli, Jereissati and Haddad. According to the dictionary, the brother who adopted the Dawalibi surname was Rizkallah Dawalibi, supposedly one of the founders of the city of Zahle, sometime before 1700.



The Duailibi's home in Zahle, Lebanon.

D family members tell different versions for the origin of their name. According to Teóphilo Duailibi, in a 1978 testimonial at the Family D Study Center, there is no relationship between the name and the Haddads. By his account, (based on stories he heard from Wadih Duailibi), the Duailibis have been manufacturing wheels since the very beginning.

Nadra Dawalibi tells a story quite similar to the tale of the seven brothers. She claims three Haddad brothers fled to Lebanon. One of them began to work with wheels and looms and thus acquired the nickname Dawalibi. When his son was born, he allegedly included the nickname into the boy's official name.

Just like in any story, you can't be absolutely sure about anything. But for those who would like to know a little more about the subject, log on to the family site and hear or read the testimonials.

Those who know a different version of our story, please share it with us. It's for the good of our family.

Eduardo Duailibi contributes with Family D pictures and stories

During a visit to the Family D Study Center on April 12, Eduardo Duailibi offered a rich contribution to our legacy: a precious collection of photographs, which have already been posted on our site, and some of his childhood memories and a few family particularities.

A son of Lebanese immigrants, Eduardo, who brought along his son Silvio, told us the story of his daring mother who in her youth took part in political activities in Lebanon and because of that had to flee to Brazil following a violent brawl over her grandfather, Salomão, described as one of the first inhabitants of the city of Campo Grande in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul.

His testimonial is woven with memories of a quiet town, teeming with Lebanese who had come to Brazil to escape from the hardships of their native land. He also shares a few details of his family life, like the dresses made by Cecília Duailibi for Silvio's mother, Faride.

The stories he tells us include moving to Araraquara and then later on to São Paulo, graduation at the Liceu and his wedding (the 60th anniversary of which is to be commemorated this year). Additionally, Eduardo comments on his feeling toward his Lebanese identity: "We're very proud to be Lebanese descendents. Especially in our family, which is very big and full of prominent members. We feel proud to see those people who struggled hard to raise the family name", he says.

His testimonial is both touching and fun. For sure a great story, now available on our site. Enjoy!

Bimonthly publication issued by the **Family D Study Center**.

Historical Research: Sabrina Moura de Araújo

Journalist: Denise Crispim de Souza

Site: Ana Paula Feliciano

Librarian: Maria Célia Tonon

Research Assistant: Eduardo Costa