

History of Druze in the United States from 1908 to 1970

By Julie Makarem

Druze Emigration and its Aftermath

The true name of the Druzes is 'al-Muwahhidun' which means those who believe in the Unity of God. Although this does not apparently distinguish Druzism from other faiths, it has a deeper meaning which does, indeed, make it unique. Druzism united in the first time in the history of philosophy between matter and form, or in other words, between the First Cause and the Final Cause.

In ethics, the Druzes class truthfulness and veracity to be their final moral code. In Jurisprudence, they were the first to give equal rights to women. Moreover, they declared slavery illegal, abolished social discrimination, and preached fraternity and equality one thousand years ago when such noble ideas were not considered in the world to be even worthy of being discussed. For this reason, we must be proud of being Druzes, the followers of such a progressive religion, the motto of which is "Reason Is Above All."

Druze emigration to North America began in the nineteenth century. The Druzes were settled in the areas of southern Syria, Lebanon, and Galilee. These people have preserved their identity wherever they have resided, and they have remained a closely integrated society. They have always defended and preserved their independence, and they have upheld their virtue.

Since a Druze considers his body a mere robe for the soul, he does not fear death for it is only a tearing of his robe. In Epistle 35 of the Druze Scriptures, Hamza ibn 'Ali says, "Whoever fears a human being like himself falls under his sway; the Unitarian is valiant by virtue of his faith." Belief that the number of days of one's life is fixed, not to be exceeded or diminished by a single day, and that the soul after leaving one body is immediately reborn in another, enhances courage and dispels fear of death. Thus, when the Druzes began to emigrate, they were not running away from the changes and the upheavals that were constantly surrounding them in their father-land; on the contrary, they merely intended to have a short absence from their countries to be able to better provide for their families and do away with poverty for their families.

Thus, the early Druze emigrants had no intent of a long absence from their homelands, nor did they envisage a permanent stay in the country to which they had immigrated. The married men had left their wives behind, and those who were single returned to their homeland for a bride when they decided to marry. Few brought their wives to live with them in the West until well after the turn of the century.

The Druzes now live in Latin America, especially in Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico, with smaller communities in Chile and Colombia. There are also some Druzes in the West Indies and the Philippines. Several thousand reside in the United States of America and in Canada."

In the United States, the Druze have established 'El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat,' the 'American Druze Society,' the 'American Druze Foundation,' and the 'Druze Council of North America'.

The Druzes in Canada have formed the 'Druze Association of Toronto,' the 'Druze association of Edmonton,' and the 'Druze Association of Montreal.'

Those in Brazil have founded the 'Lar Druzo Brasileiro' or the Druze Center in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

In Mexico, there is 'La Lega Drusa' or the 'Mexican Druze Committee.'

A Druze Association has also been established in Buenos Aires, Argentina, under the name of 'Association de Beneficencia Drusa' or the 'Druze Bacora of Argentina.'

In Venezuela the Druze have formed the 'Venezuelan Cultural Druze Society.'

In Adelaide, South, Australia, 'The Lebanese Druze Community Incorporated' has founded 'The Druze Hall,' where the Druze community meets on occasion. In Melbourne, the Druzes have established 'The Australian Druze Association of Victoria,' and in Sydney, they have established 'The Australian Druze Association of New South Wales.'

The Druzes in Europe have formed the 'British Druze Society', and the French Druze Association'.

In Africa, the Druzes have established the 'Nigerian Druze Committee.'

When the Druzes began to emigrate, they were not running away from the changes and the upheavals that were constantly surrounding them in their father-land; on the contrary, they merely intended to have a short absence from their countries to be able to better provide for their families and do away with poverty for their families.

The first Druze immigrants landed on the shores of the North American Continent in the late 19th century, and as the numbers of these immigrants rose, there was a strong desire and need for brotherhood, fellowship, kinship, and camaraderie among them. In 1907, a group of those immigrant Druzes who had settled in and near Seattle, Washington, and who were known for their sincerity and enlightenment, organized the first fraternal organization which they called "El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat." (El-Bakaurat) is an Arabic word and means the first fruit. It was properly used to indicate the first fraternal-Druze society in the United States. There is on record that Mr. Assaad Cramery from Ain Zahalta, Lebanon, along with Dr. Nasseem Saleem from Jubieh, Lebanon were the original founders of the "El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat." Mr. Henry Flehan, ADS historian, has on record an emblem of the Seattle organization dated February 8, 1908. Mr. Abbass Dakdouk from Cleveland, Ohio gave Mr. Flehan the emblem in trust.

(El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat will be used throughout this work for the spelling of the Society regardless of the manner in which it was written in any of the accounts researched to produce this work. This spelling was taken from the badge of Branch #2 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Detroit, Michigan).

Therefore, a fraternal organization in Seattle, Washington under the name of El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat was fully and legally registered under the laws of that State. On Sunday, February 1, 1908 and in the city of Seattle, Washington, the first meeting of The Duruz Society was held. Its aim was to promote unity and brotherhood among all its members. A set of Bylaws was written and all members present ate salt from a bowl symbolizing unity, harmony, and oneness. Each member took an oath saying, "I affix my name and join this organization, agreeing and accepting all its rules. I swear by the Creator of all beings, and by the Druze honor to help and uphold all of its laws." Everyone then signed his name in his own handwriting. The following is a list of the signee's:

Kassem Saad El Deen Shaar, Ali Kassem Jaber, Sleiman Hassan Harb, Khalil Hussein Wahbeh, Mahmoud Ali Abou Ali, Ousman Ibrahim Al Gharib, Nassib Milhem Bshir, Nayef Mahmoud Al Hameedy, Salim Najm Jaber, Kassem Rasheed Melhem Al Shaar, Hussein Kassem Yahaia, Troudy Mohamed El-Jowhary, Rasheed Melhem Jaber, Kassem Hassan Zayour, Abdallah Youssef Najm, Mahmoud Salman Najm Raydan, Hassen Farris Rizk Karamah, Daoud Hassan Harb, Hussein Mahmoud Abou Saady Slim, Shaheen Mohamed Attaya, Mahmoud Abdallah Ahmed, Kassem Hassan Zayour, Saeid Abdallah Ahmed, Youssef Salman Al Ghazel, Ameen Hamdan El-Jowhary, Saleem Salman Faraj, Shaheen Ali Abou Ali, Najeeb Moustafa Jamal, Kassem Mahamed Yahia, Morshid Salman Najm, Hussein Hamad Shaheen Al Mishhim, Rasheed Slim Yousef Hamad Salman, Ibrahim Mahmoud Najm, Najm Kassem Jaber, Mohamed Fahd Hassen, Mohamed Hussein Hamadeh, Shahram Rada Hassen, Yousef Zain ElDeen Wahbeh, Ameen Hassen Hussein Hamadeh, Ali Ahmed Shamseldeen, Mohamed Mahmoud Nasr, Ameen Hussein Ali Karamah, Saeid Kassem Mohamed Assaf, Mohamed Kassem Nasr, Daoud Ismail Kassem Hammed, Moustafa Ameen Al Gharib, Salman Youssef Al Mishhim, Youssef Hussein Youssef, Hussein Mahmoud Karamah, Farris Melhem Hassen, Ibraheem Assad Nasr, Saleem Mahmoud Abou Ali, Majeed Saad Al

Deen Al Shaar, Melhem Ibrahim Salah, Fayez Keywan, Shaheen Mohamed Wahbe, Rasheed Youssef Yahia, Ismael Hamad Abou Ltife, Kassem Ahmad Hamed, Fandi Kassem Mohammed, Mohammed Salman Nasr, Melhem Mohammed Abdel Salam, Saeid Hussein Alwan, Nassif Mahmoud Abou Ali, Salman Jammoul Al Hassanieh, Aref Amin Al Gharib, Ali Al Abine, Daoud Melhem Jaber, Mohammed Abbass Yahia, Najeeb Ahmad Naked, Saleem Wahbah, Majeed Farris Jaber.

During the early years, the organization provided financial and civil assistance, as well as moral support to all its members. On July 25, 1911, an Agreement to Incorporate was drawn up, and on the 3rd day of August, 1911, The Duruz Society was incorporated as AL BAKOURAT ALDERZIET in Seattle, Washington. The document of the *ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF AL BAKOURAT ALDERZIET* is in the National Office of the American Druze Society archives. It reads as follows:

AGREEMENT TO INCORPORATE

THIS AGREEMENT *made this the 25th day of July, A.D. 1911.*

WITNESSETH:

FIRST: That we, the undersigned, S.A. Cramery, C. Albert, Thomas Jaber, Salamon Hamad, and D. M. Jaber, subscribers hereto, have associated and do hereby associate ourselves for the purpose and with the intention of forming a corporation.

SECOND: That the name of the said corporation shall be **AL BAKOURAT ALDERZIET**.

THIRD. That the objects for which said corporation is formed are and shall be: To render fraternal aid and assistance to any members of said association who might become sick, to pay the sick benefits and fraternal expenses of any of its members; to acquire, furnish and maintain a place or places for reading rooms, libraries and social meetings for the members of this association, and in all lawful ways to acquire, hold or dispose of any and all real and personal property necessary or convenient to carry on the uses and purposes now or hereafter made the objects of this association; and finally to cultivate acquaintances and good fellowship, and form a more perfect union among its members; and do all the things deemed best to further the objects and interests of this association.

FOURTH: The said corporation shall be located in the City of Seattle, King County, State of Washington.

WITNESS our hands the date herein first above written (signed by each of them) that the following notice to-wit:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Notice is hereby given that on the 3rd day of August, A.D., 1911, at the hour of 4:00 p.m., on said day in the New York Block, situated in the City of Seattle, County of King, State of Washington, there will be held a meeting of the subscribers to an agreement to incorporate the Al Bakourat Al Derziyet, for the purpose of effecting an organization of said corporation and adoption of the By-Laws and the election of officers. The following officers were elected:, to wit:

S.A. Cramery, President

Thomas Jaber, Vice President

Salamon Hamad, Secretary

D.M. Jaber, Assistant Secretary

C. Albert, Treasurer

Attest: (Their signatures and that of the notary.)

(Mr. S.A. (Assad) Cramery was obviously the person among the group who could read and write English since he could sign his name on the document. The signatures of the other officers were in such a way which was apparent they could not read nor write English. There is no record of the true names of the officers since they were not recorded in Arabic. My sleuthing leads me to believe *Najm Kassem Jaber* could have been changed to the westernized *Thomas Jaber*, and *D.M. Jaber* changed from *Daoud Melhem Jaber*. These names on the list of the original members. As for *C. Albert* and *Salaman Hamad*, I would venture at the name, *Saeid Abdallah Ahmed*, on the list of members to be *C. Albert*. My only clue for this guess is that there was a *Saeid Abdallah Kabbul* from Ain Zahalta in Detroit, Michigan who went by the westernized name of *Sam Albert*).

The 'El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat' meetings were held once a month, and the members met on the first Sunday of every month. Organized meetings were conducted, and impeccable records were kept. Dues of .50 cents per member were collected monthly, and absent members without a valid reason for the absence were fined 25 cents. A 25 cent fine was also levied on a member for tardiness, as well as for talking out of turn. If a member talked badly of another member in public, and if a member's conduct was not conducive to the Druze Social Values, the member was suspended from the meetings for a definite period of time.

The goal of the Society was brotherhood, and it carried out this goal in every sense of the word. The 'El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat' paid doctor bills and hospital bills for any member who needed the help. Invariably, these members were able to pay the money back to the Society when they had recuperated. The Duruz Society also paid the cost of funerals for those whose families who required the assistance. Loans were made to members threatened with bankruptcy, as well as to those who needed help in starting a small business. As the organization grew, it thrived from its good deeds and the perception of brotherhood among the Druze community. The 'El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat' was as it should be! Unity, harmony, and oneness among all the members. The Society flourished and continued to be very effective and active. It contributed to the cultural, educational, and modernizational projects undertaken by the Druze in Lebanon and in Syria. In the name of patriotism and Druzism, the Seattle 'El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat' showed a great sense of responsibility and commitment here at home in the United States and abroad in Lebanon and in Syria.

Seattle's Mother Branch' continued to be very effective and active, and 'S.M. James recalls, 'In July of 1914, the Druze held their first convention in the Middle West. At times during the convention, there were 500 or 600 people. Visitors came from Canada, Mexico, and Central America. The executive committee of the convention rented a big building. They put in a kitchen to serve Syrian food everyday. The city invited the city officials of St. Joe. After dinner, the mayor

and the Chief of Police thanked the committee and admitted that they had never tasted such good food as they had that night. The convention lasted almost ten days. There was my Mujwizw, Dapke, Ghanna, and lots of fun day and night."

As the early immigrants settled in the United States, they inquired into the possibility of beginning branches in their cities with the Seattle branch as the 'Mother Branch' because the need for brotherhood among the Druze immigrants grew very strong. The candle had been lit, and Druze esprit de corps had begun, there in Seattle, Washington. One of the Seattle settlers, Mr. Assaad Cramey, moved from Seattle, Washington to Cleveland, Ohio and settled among the large Druze community there. He was instrumental in having organized the first branch of The Druze Society in 1916 in Cleveland, Ohio. It was called Branch #1 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat.

The organization continued to grow, and as the founding members had done, the new members shared in eating the salt that marked unity, harmony, and oneness among all the members. For the newcomers, the

eating of the salt signified his initial pledge to the group; for the old members, it was a renewal of their commitment . There were ten branches throughout the United States by the year 1946.

BRANCH #1

Branch #1 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Cleveland was the promising child of an urgent need of a cohesive group of an ethnic community scattered over a large territory in a foreign land. It fulfilled that need bravely and creditably and without regret nor tarnish. It lacked a recognized National Authority, but though local and narrow in its organization, it kept a lively exchange of dialogue, correspondence, and visitation among its several branches.

Branch #1 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat started in Cleveland, Ohio when Mr. Assaad Cramey, moved to Cleveland from Seattle, Washington. He came from the village of Ains Zahalta in the Chouf Mountains of Lebanon on April 16 in the year 1916 and first settled in Seattle, Washington. The Cleveland Branch was founded by mostly members of the Seattle El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat who had moved to Cleveland, Ohio. They wanted to continue the work that they had begun in Seattle. Most of these people were from Aramoon, Lebanon in the Gharb district. The majority were from the Yahya family.

Mr. Said Kabalan, says that his father came to the United States in 1913 and became a member of Branch #1 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Cleveland, Ohio. His father was not among the founders; however, he played a large role in the Cleveland Branch and was instrumental in incorporating the Branch as a non-profit, cultural, social, and welfare corporation. This was done in 1926. Mr. Said Kabalan says that the original charter has been placed in the archives of the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, Ohio for safekeeping and preservation for use by researchers of the history of Cleveland.

Mr. Said Kabalan says that an influential person from Cleveland, Ohio who was instrumental in promoting and organizing eight branches of El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat was Dr. Mohammed Yahya. Dr. Yahya worked diligently in promoting the unity of the Druze in the United States. He was the first Druze to obtain a medical degree in the United States. He received his Pre-medical degree from the University of Washington, and his Medical Degree from Rush Medical College of the University of Illinois.

The address of the Branch #1 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Cleveland was P.O. Box 373, Cleveland, Ohio. The local officers were: Mohamed Fahd Hassen, Milhem Ali Zayour, Nayef Assaf Slim, Saeid Abdallah, Youssef Mohamed Fahd, Saied Assaf, Ali Abou Jaoudeh, Daoud Hassen, Mahmoud Al Mishhim, Farris Hassen Abou Ghader, and Sleiman Ali Zayour.

Mr. Abbass Dakdouk from Cleveland, Ohio was a charter member. He was 16 years old when he emigrated to this country from Aramoon, Lebanon in 1913. He recalls: "I arrived in the United States, and the brotherhood I found among my fellow Druzes through the Branch #1 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat sustained me. We shared the joys and sorrows of each other, and we traveled long distances to attend weddings and funerals." He was the president of Branch #1 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Cleveland for 12 years, and he was able to list the members and their village of origin. They are as follows:

Nasseem Saleem (Jubaa), Hussein Helal (Karnayel), Youssef Fahed, Saleem Wahbe El-Buinnieh, Alie Ahmed El-Buinnie, Rasheed Ahmed El-Buinnieh, Sulieman Zayour, Milhem Zayour, Mohammed Fahed, David Harb, Assaad Cramey (Ain-Zahalta), Hassan El-Sayegh (Chouroon), Moustafa Ghareeb (Fafer Matta), Saied Nasser(Bshatfeen), Mohammed Alem El-Deen, Mahmoud El-Mushham(Aghmeed), Hussein Yahyee, Milhem Ebraheem Yahyee, Said Yahyee, Rashid Saleem Yahyee, Kassem Mohammed Yahyee, Abbass Dakdouk, Saleem Mohammed Dakdouk, Hani El-Moghtar, Kabalan Dow Bshatfeen, Toufeek Alie El-Moghtar, Najeeb El-Moghtar, Youssef El-Moghtar, Mohammed Ahmed El-Jowhary, Hassan Alie El-Jowhary, Ajaj El-Jowhary, Anees Milhem El-Jowhary, Mohammad Abbas Abo-Fokher, Milhem Najeeb, Hussein Kabalan, Saleem Kabalan, Saied Hamdan, Fandy El-Jowhary, Troudy El-Jowhary, Alie Nassar El-Jowhary, Mohammed Saied El-Jowhary, Mohammed Saleem El-Jowhary, Assad Ahmad El-Jowhary (Aramoon), Abdallah Sandeed, Abdallah Sandeed (Alley), Alie Hamzey (Obiediat), Kassem Atalla,

Milhem Atalla (Aindara), Saleem Syfe (Neigha), Mahmoud K. Ganem (El-Warhaniet), Rasheed El-Shaar, Hussein El-Shaar, Majeed Shaar (Ainab), Khattar Shukier (Arssun), Farhan Saab , Kamal Saab, Ajaj Saab (Chouifat), Fayez Mackarem, Mohammad El-Halaby, Anees Mackarem (Rass El-Maten), Hamad Nasser (Araman, Jabel El-Druze, Syria), Hussein El-Jowhary (El-Kafar, Jabel El-Druze, Syria).

Newcomers to Branch #1 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Cleveland after 1930: Fawzy Baddour (Rashiya), Rafeek Alamy, Sulieman Mohammed Alamy, Farris Alamy (Aghmeed), Shafeek Dakdouk, Saied Kabalan, Saleem Afeef, Anees Dakdouk, Hikmat Dakdouk, Kameel Dakdouk, Jamal Dakdouk, Fareed El-Jowhary, Nabeel El-Jowhary, Fahed El-Jowhary, Adel El-Jowhary, Ghazi El-Jowhary, Youssef El-Moghtar, Hameed El-Moghtar, Youssef El-Halaby.

EL-BAKAURAT ED- DIRZIYAT BRANCH #1 in Cleveland, Ohio carries an advertisement in the Booklet of the Sixth Annual Convention of the ADS at the Hotel Carter in Cleveland, Ohio. The year was 1952.

BRANCH #2

Branch #2 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Detroit, Michigan was founded May 27, 1917. The branch started through the efforts of Farris Hassen Abou Ghader from Cleveland, Ohio. The address of Branch #2 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Detroit, Michigan was 1337 East Palmer Street. The first officers of Branch #2 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Detroit were: Abbas Salman Abou Ghanem, Ali Salman Abou Ghanem, Khattar Moustafa Abou Shakra, Mahmoud Ali Dargham, Ibrahim Ali Dargham.

It included members living in the surrounding areas of Flint and Saginaw. It has always been the cornerstone of many Druze achievements in the West, and particularly the American Druze Society. It remained a very strong branch of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat until the years 1973-74 when it joined the ADS as Chapter #1."

Mr. Nafe Katter from Saginaw, Michigan became a member after he emigrated to this country from Bethloun, Lebanon in 1920. He joined the Branch #2 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Detroit, Michigan in 1920 soon after his arrival. Mr. katter (Uncle Nafe) was able to list the early members. They are as follows:

Fred Massey, (Aynab), Farris Mullin Abu Ghanem (Bmhrine), Abbass Amin Abu Ghanem, Olie Amin Abu Ghanem, Hussein Mullin Abu Ghanem (Rhamliyyi).

A badge with a ribbon was worn by the members of the EL-BAKAURAT ED-DIRZIYAT. Written on the ribbon is EL-BAKAURAT ED-DIRZIYAT BRANCH 2 Detroit, Mich, the name of the Druze Society. Above this writing on the ribbon is a badge which is another insignia with a logo composed of a five pointed star encircled by a crescent, and above the crescent is a sword. Around the logo, the name of the Druze Society, EL-BAKAURAT ED- DIRZIYAT BRANCH 2 Instituted May 27, 1917, is written. This is encased in the round gold badge. Above the badge are two American flags crossing each other, and above the flags is another badge, oval in shape, with two hands grasping each other in a handshake. This badge is also encased in gold. Thus the esprit de corps among the American Druze immigrants began over ninety year ago.

EL-BAKAURAT ED- DIRZIYAT BRANCH 2 in Detroit, Michigan carries an advertisement in the Booklet of the Sixth Annual Convention of the ADS at the Hotel Carter in Cleveland, Ohio (1952), the Tenth Annual Convention of the ADS at the Fort Shelby Hotel in Detroit, Michigan (1956), the Eighteenth Annual Convention of the ADS at the Daniel Boone Hotel in Charleston, West Virginia (1964), the nineteenth Annual Convention of the ADS at the Sheraton Park Hotel in Washington, D.C. (1965), the twentieth Annual Convention of the ADS at the Statler Hilton Hotel in Detroit, Michigan(1966).

BRANCH #3

There is no information on record concerning Branch #3 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat. However, in the files of Sami and Afaf Aboul Hosn, there is recorded a third branch that was started in Butte, Montana. The name of Abbas Al Sakaan was recorded in relation to Branch #3 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Butte, Montana. In another article in "Our Heritage", by ADS historian, Mr. Henry Flehan " El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat - The Mother Organization" has published a picture of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat Branch No. 3 banner with the Words El-Bakaurat El-Dirziyat Branch No. 3 Instituted, 1918, Butte, Montana.

However, in the Convention booklet "The First Mihrajan of AL-BAYAN", there appeared an advertisement of the Branch No. Three in Danbury, Connecticut which confirms the branch was still active in 1947. The Arabic sentence under the advertisement translates to: "Branch #3 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in the State of Connecticut and surrounding areas salutes your accomplishments and loyalty." There are no further records.

BRANCH #4

Branch #4, El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat was established in 1924 in Princeton, West Virginia. It was very prosperous during that era. Many immigrant Druze chose to settle there. They settled mostly around the mining fields such as Princeton, Bluefield, Matoka, and Kimbell, Mullins, Norfolk, Welch, War, and Bradshaw. All of the original immigrants started in the business of back peddling until later years when they began to learn the basic common words of 'give and take' in English. Learning the English language branches to a less back breaking means to make a living. The businesses these first immigrants opened were then called 'Dry Goods Stores.' They also opened shops that sold the American basic foods, the hamburgers and the hot dogs. Mr. Harry Hamdan Aboulhosn was the only living member of the original Druze settlers in West Virginia when the research on the Branch #4, El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Princeton, West Virginia was made. Mr. Hamdan emigrated to the United States from Bteghnay, Lebanon June 23, 1921. He settled in Kimbel, West Virginia; then, he later moved to Princeton, West Virginia. He and his wife, Najla Bahmed Aboul-Hosn and their four children, Joe, Raymond, Nabeel, and Norman were active in the ADS since its inception. The names of the early members of Branch #4, El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Princeton, West Virginia are as follows:

Mr. Harry Hamden Aboul Hosn, Jimmie Mosrie, Richard Mosrie, Said Mosrie, Abdallah Mosrie, Farris Mosrie, Sulieman Hassen Mosrie, Towfic Zieneldeem, Najib Hamad Mosrie, Najim Hyden Mosrie, Kassem Flehan, Najeen Mahmoud Aboul-Hosn, Kassem Abed El-Khalek, Kassem Mosrie, Jameel Sangid Aboul-Hosn, Jaber Shukier, Majeed Milhem, Assaad Ali El-Awar, Hamad Mosrie, Ameen Roydon, Sulieman Akel, Mohammad Hussien Aboul-Hosn, Richard Hamdan Aboul-Hosn, Ahmad El-Zoaar, Milhem Atalla, Mirshed Kassem Aboul-Hosn, Slieman Moothad (Modad), Hussein Helal (He moved to Princeton, West Virginia from Cleveland, Ohio), Olie El-Olie Aboul-Hosn, Olie Sangid, Rasheed Sangid, Youssef Hamad Aboul-Hosn, Mohammad Zaher Eldeen (Henry Flehan who is the ADS Historian), Wadeh Sangid Aboul Hosn, Joseph Hamdan Aboul-Hosn, Shaheen Mosrie, Sami Hamad Mosrie, Farris Shaheen, Fowad Mosrie, Shakeeb Hamden Yawl Hosn, Baheej Aboul Hosn.

An application for incorporation was made on February 20, 1940. On record is a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation, State of West Virginia. Article I states that the name of the corporation shall be Branch #4, El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat.

Article II states that the location where all business shall be conducted shall be in Princeton, Mercer County, West Virginia.

Article III states that the objectives of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Princeton, West Virginia are to aid, foster, develop and assist in preserving the American type family life; to give individual service to families in restoring them to independence and the normal way of life; to aid in betterment of factors relating to home, family, and domestic relations; to do charitable and civic acts; to furnish cooperation and leadership with other agencies in programs for social betterment; to make By-Laws, rules and regulations for the government of its members and contributors; to aid and protect its members and to do all things necessary

and incident thereto in carrying out the principles and objects of this organization. Not to be conducted for profit and without shares of stock - simply to promote the moral, social and educational welfare of its members.

Article IV states that this corporation is not to be operated for profit and will not issue capital stock. It shall be a charitable and fraternal association made up of members of the Ed-Dirziyat in the United States. The By-Laws will provide fee for entrance and a monthly contribution paid into the corporation in the form of dues.

Article V states the names and the post office box of the incorporators as:

Albert Ameen (Welch, West Virginia), Albert Mosrie (Princeton, West Virginia), Joseph Najjar (Princeton, West Virginia), Jimmie Mosrie (Princeton, West Virginia) Joe Jaber (Matoka, West Virginia). These people were also the signees on the papers of incorporation dated September 20, 1940.

EL-BAKAURAT ED- DIRZIYAT BRANCH 4 in Princeton, West Virginia carries an advertisement in the Booklet of the Tenth Annual Convention of the ADS at the Fort-Shelby Hotel in Detroit, Michigan (1956)

BRANCH #5

Branch #5 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat was established in the year 1935 in Kingsport, in the eastern part of Tennessee which included Bristol, Virginia and Tennessee, and Johnson City. This branch was like all the others, strong and supportive of all Druze affairs, and it maintained complete cohesion with all the Bakaurat el-Dirziyat branches, especially in Princeton, and Charleston, West Virginia. They were, in their rights, successful business men in all their endeavors and well respected in their communities.

Mr. Faheem Mohammed Mire Aboul-Aboul Hosn from Kingsport, Tennessee joined Branch #5 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in later years as a young man. Mr. Yawl-Aboul Hosn, despite his young age, is the only living member in that area of Tennessee when he related the account of the history of that branch. The names of the first members who started Branch #5 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat are not on record. The names of some of the original members of Branch #5 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat follow:

Mohammad Hani Kontar, Saleem Shukie, Olie Shukier, Hussien Yawl-Aboul Hosn, Kassem Sangid Yawl-Aboul Hosn, Saied Hyder, Hassen Rafeea Yawl-Aboul Hosn, Alie Rasheed Yawl-Aboul Hosn, Najib Shaheen Mosrie (He later moved to Princeton, West Virginia), Saied Najjar, Mohammad Makarem, Saleem Makarem, Abed Elhameed Fathayel, Saleem Massaoud, Assaad Milhem Mughrabi, Mustafa Saied, Najib Abi Ezeldeen, Alie Sulieman Jaber, Ared Zieneldean, Sulieman Alam-Eldean, Rasheed Sulieman Yawl Aboul Hosn, Hussien Milhem Yawl-Aboul Hosn, Mohammad Mire Yawl Aboul Hosn, Youssef Kabboul, Alie Jaber Yawl Aboul Hosn, Toufeek Hussein Aboul Hosn, Shaheen Akley Aboul Hosn, Youssef Kassem Aboul Hosn, Slieman Saied Areeth, Rasheed Kassem Aboul Hosn.

New Members After 1946 were: Mickey Sangid Aboul Husn, Sami Akley Aboul Husn, Farris Shaheen Aboul Husn, Wajeeh Sangid Aboul Husn, Mansour Mosrie, Rasheed Shakier, Najeeb Hamad Aboul Husn, Dawwod Slieman Aboul Husn, Hussien Assad Aboul Husn, Faheem Mohammad Mire Aboul Husn, Fouzy Mohammad Mire Aboul Husn, Ramez Kassem Aboul Husn, Jameel Shaban, Kameel Hyder, Ezzat Dakour Aboul Husn, Jameel Barakat Sangid Aboul Husn, Mahmoud Shehabeldean Aboul Husn,

EL-BAKAURAT ED- DIRZIYAT BRANCH 5 in Kingsport, Tennessee carries an advertisement in the Booklet of the Tenth Annual Convention of the ADS at the Fort-Shelby Hotel in Detroit, Michigan (1956).

BRANCH #6

Branch #6 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat was established in 1937 in Charleston, West Virginia. It too, was very active in the surrounding areas of West Virginia and Tennessee.

Details of Branch #6 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat were given to Mr. Henry Flehan by Mr. Aref Kassem Mire from Charleston, West Virginia. In 1921, Mr. Mire came to the United States with plans to settle. He was just seventeen years old. However, when he reached Ellis Island, he was turned away for health reasons, and he returned to his home in Lebanon. In 1934, Mr. Mire again set sail for the United States, and this time he was admitted. He made his home in Charleston, West Virginia where he became a member of Branch #6 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Charleston, West Virginia.

The original members of Branch #6 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat are:

Ameen Yousef Mire, Sulieman Yousef Mire, Khaleel Shibley Mire, Assad Shibley Mire, Dawood (David) Denaan Mire, Toufeek Said Mire, Aref Kassem Mire, Fakher El-Deen Assrawy, Naseef Assrawy, Najeeb Ajaab, Hassan Ajaab, Mickey Sangid Yawl-Husn (He moved to Charleston, West Virginia from Kingsport, Tennessee, Rasheed Shaar, Saleem Shaar, Hussien Yahyee, Said Yahyee, Rasheed Yahyee, Hassan El-Sayegh, Hassan El-Jowhary, Sulieman Saleem, Ameen Abo-Saeid, Mahmoud Barakat.

In the Convention booklet "The First Mihrajan of AL-BAYAN," there appeared an advertisement of the Branch No. Six in Charleston, West Virginia which confirms the branch was still active in 1947.

EL-BAKAURAT ED- DIRZIYAT BRANCH #6 in Charleston, West Virginia carries an advertisement in the Booklet of the Tenth Annual Convention of the ADS at the Fort Shelby Hotel in Detroit, Michigan(1956).

Branch #7

Branch #7 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat was in Richmond, Virginia.

EL-BAKAURAT ED- DIRZIYAT BRANCH # 7 in Virginia carries an advertisement in the Booklet of the Tenth Annual Convention of the ADS at the Fort-Shelby Hotel in Detroit, Michigan. The year was 1956. There are no further records.

BRANCH #8

Branch #8 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat was in Hopewell, Virginia, and it was established in 1936. There are no further records.

BRANCH #9

Branch #9 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat was later established in Seminole, Oklahoma.

In the convention booklet, the names of the committee members of the "First Mihrajan of AL-BAYAN," appear in a list and "Branch #9 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat, Seminole, Oklahoma" appeared in that list. There are no further records.

BRANCH #10

Branch #10 was in Texas.

EL-BAKAURAT ED- DIRZIYAT BRANCH #10 in Texas carries an advertisement in the Booklet of the Tenth Annual Convention of the ADS at the Hotel Fort Shelby in Detroit, Michigan. The year was 1956. There are no further records.

SUMMARY

The ten branches of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat flourished up to and throughout the 1940's. The members of all the branches of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat were good and uprights, ethical, and honest citizens of their adopted country, the United States of America; yet, they preserved the traditions and the culture of the Druze Faith, all the while, striving to maintain and reserve the Druze Social Values in which they were raised. They imparted the Druze Social Values to their children, however, the time and pace of the world was rapidly changing, and there were other interests for those first generation Americans. The branches of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat began to become inactive; one after the other.

In 1969, The mother branch, El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Seattle, Washington became inactive. Money left in its account was sent to the Druze Orphanage, Dar el-Yateem, in Abey, Lebanon. Since its inception, the Seattle branch had supported this worthwhile cause, the Dar el-Yateem in Abey, and they had also contributed to the Institution for the Elderly and Disabled Druze in Lebanon, 'Maawa Al Oujaz.' These early immigrants had been pioneers of Druze culture in the United States, and they had served with honor through their beloved society, El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat.

In the Convention booklet "The First Mihrajan of AL-BAYAN," there appeared an advertisement of the Seattle Branch El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat which proves the branch was still active in 1947. It reads :"
Compliments of members of AL-BAKOURAT EL -DURZIYEH, Seattle, Washington. Hassen W. Sayegh, Sam Smeil, David Smeil, Sam Hassen, Fred Deen, Ali A. Shamseldin, Saeid Hassen, Kamel Hassen, Fred Hassen, Kelly Hassian Wahby, Joe Wahby, Mike Imen.

An appropriate epithet for the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat branches is what was said by Mr. Faheem Mohammed Mire Aboul-Husn from Kingsport, Tennessee when he finished relating the history of Branch #5 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Kingsport, Tennessee : "It is indeed sad, as in my case and others, to remember the golden years of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat branches wherever they were located. Particularly, when one visited these branches, it was as visiting your relatives in the homeland. It did not matter who you were, but only the fact that you were Druze. If we were to trace their habitat and business places of yesteryears, we could visualize and hear the echo of their presence. You miss seeing the neon signs of their identity, and their welcoming gesture when you appear. Yes, it is indeed sad when one looks to the past and remembers the old as I do today, when old acquaintances have passed away."

They are gone forever, but forgotten, not ever!

Branch #1 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Cleveland, Ohio

Branch #2 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Detroit, Michigan

Branch #3 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Danbury, Connecticut

Branch #4, El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Princeton, West Virginia

Branch #5 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Kingsport, Tennessee

Branch #6 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Charleston, West Virginia.

Branch #7 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Richmond, Virginia

Branch #8 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Hopewell, Virginia

Branch #9 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Seminole, Oklahoma

Branch # 10 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Texas.

The concerned members of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat throughout the ten branches in the United States became aware that this society would soon be dormant, if not extinct, in the years to come. This created a new trend of interest, which persisted for several years to follow. It was discussed at every opportune occasion.

At no time was there a large membership of young Druze in any of the ten branches of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat because the Bylaws of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat required that communications be in the Arabic language. Nafe Katter from Branch #2 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat called a General Meeting for all the members of that branch to vote on an amendment to the Bylaws changing the Arabic language to English. He had furnished the officers with a list of names of 45 young intelligent and eager American Druze boys and girls from the Michigan area who wanted to be together in a club. However, the resolution to change the Bylaws that Uncle Nafe had made was defeated.

But that did not deter the youth. Eddie Igram from Flint, Michigan chaired the first meeting of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat Youth Club which was held in the Durant Hotel in Flint. This was in 1943. The Michigan Youth Club drew up Bylaws and formed their own organization with English as the official language. However this was not the case throughout the rest of the country. The Druzes were greatly alarmed because there was no fellowship among the Druze youth, so they began to concern themselves with organizing a club for all the Druzes to become involved. This concern finally reached reality in the year 1946. The Druze then and before had not had an opportunity nor occasion to meet in large groups other than at weddings and funerals. The year 1946 gave them both.

In 1946, all Druze gatherings in Michigan discussed the necessity of forming a lasting organization that would unite the Druzes of the United States and bring them together once a year under one roof.

Also in 1946, a group of men, all members of a branch of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat, was instrumental in having a Convention in Charleston, West Virginia. "Al-Bayan" was one of the oldest Arabic newspapers in the United States, and it was in dire need of funds, as well as support from the members of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in order for it to sustain itself and continue its publications. Mr. Mahmoud Sadek from Washington, D.C., and a group of men who belonged to various branches of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat, began a tour of the United States wherever there was a concentration of Druzes.

The other men in this group were: Sam Rafey from Hopewell, Virginia (Salim Abou Rafeh); Fayz Rasheed from Richmond, Virginia; Brahim Shoukier from Munday, Texas, Saeid Waheed from Lubbock, Texas, and Jimmie Silman who had just moved to Saginaw, Michigan from Texas, Samia Shoucair Salam from Washington, D.C. and her two daughters, Nadeen and Alva Salem and Wadad Silman, the wife of Jimmie Silman, Sr., and their daughter, Polly (Pauline) Silman were also among the group. As well as gain support for the Arabic newspaper, Al-Bayan, this group wanted to have a Convention that would bring all the Druzes in the United States under one roof.

On June 23, 1946 the Druze attended the Historic Meeting at the home of Mahmoud (George) Sadak for promoting "*Al Bayan*," the Arabic newspaper owned by Ameen David Fayad. Present were Uncle Nafe Katter, Ameen David, Aref Al Awar, Rashid Hassen Rashid, Sam Rafey, Najm Basheer, Slyman Sadak, (Mahmoud's brother), Said Kabalan, Salim Showker, Khatter Rashid, Mansour Showker, Said Rashid, Salim Massoud Abdul Khalek, Ferris Sadak (Mahmoud's son), Fayez Rashid (seated), Jamil Sayegh, Abbass Nasrallah, Yusuf Aboul Hosn, and Ali Sleiman Jaber.

The First Convention was planned with the purpose of rallying the American born Druzes to become acquainted with each other, as well. As the group toured the United States to demonstrate support for the Al-Bayan, they proposed that each member of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat take his wife and children to the First Mihrajan of the Al-Bayan. Thereafter, on October 15, 1946 at the house of Zakia and Sylamn Joseph of Charleston, West Virginia, the decision for holding yearly conventions found universal support among the community members. This would be done in the name of the "Al-Bayan", its stockholders, subscribers, supporters, and friends.

"Al-Bayan" is an Arabic newspaper published in Washington, D.C. At that time, there was a strong movement to support the continuing publishing of the Al-Bayan as it was the only source of communication among all the Druze community. It was working then, as it always had been, in accordance with its constitution: to strengthen and promote better relationships between our country of adoption and that of our origin. The Druze community was determined to find support to continue publishing the Al-Bayan. This group of supporters decided there should be a gathering of all the Druzes in the United States for this cause, as well as for brotherhood among the community."

To the best of our knowledge, the following people were present at the home of Zakia and Slyman Joseph: Nafe Katter, Saeid Fayyad (brother of Ameen David Fayyad), Yusef Bomorra, Farris Milhem Abu Ghanem (Mullin), from Michigan. Melhim Yahya, Fayz Makarem, from Ohio. Rashid Al Shaar, Melhem Atallah, Najib Mosrie, Sami Mosrie, Farris Mosrie, Aref Kassem, Henrey Flehan, Harry Hamdan, Hussein Helal, Mahmoud Jaber, Rashid Mosrie, Slyman Joseph, Ameen Joseph, from West Virginia Ameen Fayyad David from Washington, D.C. Fayez Rasheed, Mahmoud Shaban, Kassem Shaban, Nejm Basheer, and Salim Abou Rafey from Virginia. George Salem, Wadia Dakkour, Shakeeb Dakkour, Shakeeb Ameen. Anis Silman Ameen, Azzat Dakkour from Texas.

A group of men decided they would go to many states as heralds and invite the Druzes in those states to Charleston, West Virginia where this first great event would take place. Among those ambassadors were James Silman, Sr. from Saginaw, Michigan, Faze Basheer from Richmond, Virginia, Brahim Shoukier from Lubbock, Texas, Sam Rafey from Hopewell, Virginia, and Mahmoud Sadek from Washington, D. C. They went to many homes in each state, and they invited the Druze community to come together in Charleston the following year to attend the Druze Convention. In the interim, the Al-Bayan carried the message of the forthcoming convention to the Druzes in all the United States.

The immigrant members of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat realized that they had to establish a means to create interest toward more fellowship among all the Druze in the U.S.A. - to acquaint the younger generation with one another and bring together a large number of Druze once a year at different locations in this country.

Thus, the need for brotherhood has been fulfilled, and the American Druze Society celebrated its 50th Anniversary Convention in 1996. The strong bond among the Druzes and dedication to brotherhood has prevailed abroad in North America as it has at home.

1947. Charleston, West Virginia

The year 1947 and Charleston, West Virginia are the date and the place of the FOUNDATION OF The American Druze Society. In 1947, the **AL BAYAN Corporation** held The First Mihrajan of the Al-Bayan July 21, 22, 23 1947, Kanawha Forest, Charleston, West Virginia.

It is recorded in the first souvenir issue: "It is with great pleasure that we take this opportunity to extend to you individually and collectively our heartiest welcome to this first Mihrajan of Al-Bayan. It is, indeed, a historic occasion that which brings together for the first time the family of Al-Bayan ...".

"Al-Bayan, as you all know, is one of the oldest newspapers in the United States. It was founded by the late Sheikh Sulayman Baddour in 1910. It has rendered through these years invaluable services to the cultural,

educational, social, and public welfare of our Arab speaking Americans. It has always been in the forefront in supporting every movement that was in the interests of our beloved land of adoption, the United States of America ...". The first convention program appears was as follows:

Monday, July 21: Arabic concert from 12 noon to 7:00 P.M. at the Boat Club. Karawan Al-Wadi and his orchestra will entertain the public.

Tuesday, July 22: Arabic dance (Dabki) and various kinds of social and musical activities from 12 noon to 7:00 P.M. at the Boat Club.

Wednesday, July 23: Meetings in the afternoon in the Boat Club, Banquet at 8:00 P.M. in the Daniel Boone Hotel, All details of social and musical activities will be announced daily.

Julie Mullin Makarem remembers that on Tuesday evening, after the Arabic band had left the Boat Club, all the adults went to the homes of some of the locals to spend the rest of the evening. The younger Druzes, all gathered in the cars of the local West Virginians: Norman Shaar, Rufus Canon, Romes Joseph (Mire), and there were others. The locals stopped at a place that had water melons for sale. Each car was loaded in the trunk with the watermelons. Then, the group set out to a park for the remainder of the night. There was no time for sleep at this first convention. When the Druze Convention ended, all that had attended vowed to keep in touch with each other, and of course, to attend the second convention which would be in Washington, D.C. Thus, the American Druze Society.

The convention booklet throughout contains advertisement. On other pages, there are lists of names for other purposes. One such page contains: The First Mihrajan Committee Members. These names are in Arabic, and the English translation has been provided.

Daoud Abi Al- Mona, Aref Kasem Merhi, Raji Daher, Abbass Dakdduk (Branch #1), Rasheed Hassen Rasheed, Abdel Hamid Fadayil, Rashid Yahya, Abdel Hamid Yusuf, Rafic El Rasamny, Abdel Rahman Abdallah, Saied Baz Radwan, Ali Ameen Abu Ghanam, Saied Daoud Zahareldeen, Ali Hamzi, Saied Rasheed, Ali Slyman Jaber Abi Elhasen, Saied Salman Abdel Khalik, Ali Mahmoud Shadid Abu Hassen, Saied Ali Ghannam, Omar Hleik, Saied Kabalan, Farris Ali Kabitah, Saied Mohammed Halloway, Fays Rasheed, Saleem Abu Rafeh, Saleem Ameen Abu Hassen, Saleem Shoukier, Saleem Ali Seif, Salman Assad Ameen, Salman Al Aridi, Salman Fayad, Slyman Salman Abu Izzidine, Slyman Saleem Ali, Slyman Makarem, Slyman Yusuf Merhi, Shibley Tajeldeen, Shukri El-Khouri, Fareed Abu Muslih(Branch #2), Mahmoud Ghanem, Fareed Rasheed, Mahmoud Fayad, Kasem Shoukier, Mustafa Saied Abu Fakhridinne, Kamel Abu Hatoum Hamady, Mansour Shoukier, Kamel Ghanem, Nafe Katter (Branch #2), Kamal Yakhtan Rasheed, Najm Rasheed (Branch #7), Majid Sharafeldinne Abi Elhasen, Najib Shaheen Elmosrie, Majid El Shaar, Najib Mahmoud Ali Elmosrie, Majeed Farag, Nassib Ali Slyman Rasheed, Mohammed Zeineldeen Makarem, Nassib Nakid (Branch #2), Mohammed Said Massoud, Wadih Eldakour, Mohammad Kantor, Whey Chatter (Branch #2), Mohammed Merhi, Yassine Mashal, Farris Milium Abu Ghanem (Branch #2), Amine Shuman, Mohammad Saied Abi Elmona, Yusuf Habhab, Mustafa Saied Abi Elmona, Yusuf Chatter Elmahithawi, Mohammed Ali Abi Elmona, Yusuf Rasheed, Mohammed Hani El Kantar, Yusuf Rayyes, Mahmoud Shaaban, Yusuf Saleh, Mahmoud Sadaka, Youssef Kasem Abi Elhasen, Fays Mohammed Merhi, Yusuf Mahmoud Najjar.

The above information was taken from 'The First Mihrajan of the Al-Bayan Year Book.'

Nafe Katter, recalls: "In 1947, the Al-Bayan Corporation held their first convention at Charleston, West Virginia. Mr. George (Mahmoud) Sadek was the President, Mr. Nafe Katter, Sr. was the Vice President, Mr. Richard Rashid was the Secretary, and Mr. Haney Abou Mislal (Massey) was the Orator. Mickey Sanjid was the Chairperson. We all agreed to have a 'General Meeting' because there were members present representing several different states (This apparently was the result of those present having attended the Convention, and the 'General Meeting' was held after that Convention - The First Mihrajan of the Al-Bayan. That first meeting was held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Selmor Morhey. It was very constructive,

and it approved the adoption of our name 'The American Druze Society'. There was an encouraging number in attendance with everyone showing much interest for its continuing the following year. In fact, they agreed on several locations where several future conventions would be held. It has become the cornerstone of the American Druze Society."

The First Mihrajan of the Al-Bayan convention provided joy, happiness, and the feeling of family togetherness. The younger generation enjoyed the continuous entertainment of dancing, singing, picnics, and sport competitions, while the old folks reminisced about old times, exchanged news, and conducted the unfinished business of El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat. The business of the Al-Bayan newspaper was discussed, and when the Convention ended, brotherhood and fellowship was inherent among all who had attended. All of the young people at that convention were first generation Americans, and they were overjoyed with meeting each other.

They each found that the struggles a first generation American Druze has with other American teen-agers is insignificant. Each teenager vowed to attend the next convention in Washington, D.C., and from that point on, lasting relationships were made. The Al-Bayan newspaper wrote extensively of the success of the first convention, and this made people in the Druze community even more determined to attend the following convention.

The role of the annual American Druze Society Conventions was known by one and all - bringing together the younger members of our people so that they become better acquainted and join forces in working towards becoming better citizens of our great United States. This role has never been questioned! And, fifty years later, two people who had become acquainted with each other at the third convention in Detroit, Michigan, Romana Williams from Kingsport, Tennessee met Ali Alley from Berwick, Pennsylvania, met and they married, and today, Helen Romana Williams (Aboul Hosn) Alley (Kansao). Her son, Andrew Ali, met Neda El Awar from Detroit, Michigan at the 45th convention, and they married in 1995. The forces started by the Founding Fathers are still at work!

1948. Washington, D.C.

After that convention, The First Mihrajan of the Al-Bayan, the organization took on the name of The Annual Convention of the American Druze Society. The Second Convention of the American Druze Society the following year, 1948, was held in Washington, D.C. under the leadership President Mahmoud Sadak and Vice-President Dallal David from Washington, D.C., and Polly Silman from Saginaw, Michigan was the chairperson . (The above information is from the Memoirs of Nafe Katter, Sr.)

1949. Detroit, MI

Detroit, Michigan was the site for the Third Convention of the American Druze Society on August 8, 9, and 10th in 1949. The conventions began as just three day conventions. The Third Convention of the American Druze Society in Detroit, Michigan was sponsored by Branch #2 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat. The President of the American Druze Society was Edward Igram from Flint, Michigan, and the officers were , Maxine Dahook from Saginaw, Jimmy Sams from Bay City, Kenneth Katter from Saginaw, Eddie Igram from Flint, Marian Rogers from Saginaw, Eleanor Katter Hamady from Saginaw - then Flint, Hamad Bomorro from Flint, Sidney Modad from Detroit, and Mabel Mullin from Detroit. The Honor Chairman was Michael Hamady from Flint.

1950. Richmond, Virginia

The President of the American Druze Society and Chairperson was George Rafey from Hopewell, Virginia. There is no other records.

1951. Cedar Rapids, Ohio

The President of the American Druze Society and Chairperson was Dr. Eddie Richards. There is no other records.

1952. Cleveland, Ohio

Cleveland, Ohio was the site for the Sixth Annual Convention of the American Druze Society on June 30th, July 1st and 2nd, 1952 at Hotel Carter, Prospect Avenue at East 9th Street. The President of the American Druze Society and Chairperson of the Convention was Fred Mullen, and Norman Shaar the Vice President. The officers were: Mae Richards, Secretary and Treasurer Mabel Mullin, Corresponding Secretary, Eddie Richards, Sergeant at Arms, Floyd Saley, Art Editor Fred Mullen in his welcome message said: " We, the convention committee of 1952, extend to you our heartiest welcome to the City of Cleveland. It's convention time in Cleveland, Ohio. To each we give a key to the City of cities. We want you to use it through these coming hours of many enjoyment that are offered. Unless we help to bring joy and laughter into the lives of others, we are entitled to very little fun ourselves. Our hats are off to you and the door shall always remain open - for you, one and all, to join in making this biggest convention ever.

The program was full of joy and happiness. It included Luncheon, Picnic at Rocky River Reservation, Berea, Ohio, Sightseeing tour of Cleveland, Square Dance, Syrian Entertainment, Semi-formal Dance and the Annual Banquet.

1953. Dallas, TX

The President of the Society was Mr. Azzet Joseph and the Convention Chairperson was Mr. Polly Silman. There is no other records.

1954. Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C., was the site of the eighth Annual Convention of the American Druze Society on June 28th, June 29th and June 30 at the Sheraton Park Hotel. The President of the Society was Jim Silman Jr. and the convention Chairperson was Polly Silman. Officers: Mona Alley, Delal David, Nadine Silman, Norman Akel. Committee members: Selma Sadak, Jimmy Silman, Bashir Aridi, Mrs. George Slaem, Braheem Choukier. Guest speaker: Dr. Farid Zeineddine, Syrian Ambassador.

1955. Charleston, West Virginia

The President of the American Druze Society was Mickey Sanjid and the convention Chairperson was Bill Hamady. There is no other records.

1956. Detroit, Michigan

Detroit, Michigan was the site of the Tenth Annual Convention of the American Druze Society on June 25th, June 26th and June 27, 1956 at the at Hotel Fort Shelby on West Lafayette at First Street. The President of the Society was Roger Mullin and Vice President was Grant Hamady. The officers were: Julie Mullen, Secretary-Treasurer, Fadwa Shibley, Corresponding Secretary, Nafe Bomorro, and Kamel Kasem was Master of Ceremonies. Other Committee members were: Sidney Modad, Sam Albert, Helen Dow, Helen Igram, Jemila Salamy, Mouner Kasem, Fred Gazaley Malakie Fayad, Fred Mullen, Advisors: Jack Hamady, Sam Amin.

The Detroit Convention Committee, dedicated the 1956 program book in the memory of William Igram who chaired the 1949 Convention. Monday, June 25th, the conventioneer gathered for a luncheon. The program included a tour of the Ford Motor Company, Picnic at Belle Island, Moonlight Cruise on Lake St. Claire, Business meeting, Square Dance, Arabic Entertainment.

Michael Hamady from Flint, Michigan wrote in the program booklet of the Tenth Annual Convention in 1956, " I regret very much that because of ill health, I am unable to attend your convention, but I assure you that I am with you in spirit. This convention has the most commendable purpose of bringing together the younger members of our people so that they become better acquainted and join forces in working towards becoming better citizens of our great United States. I am heartily in accord with the purpose and work and wish you the best of success in all your activities. My best wishes to you one and all." The Convention Booklet dedication was to the late Mr. William Igram of Detroit, Michigan.

1957. Atlantic City, New Jersey

The President of the Society was Jim Silman Jr. and the convention was chaired by Delal David. The only information found concerning that convention was from Mr. Silman. He mentioned that all had lots of fun, but unfortunately low attendance.

1958. Richmond, Virginia.

Richmond, Virginia was the site of the twelfth Annual Convention of the American Druze Society on June 22nd, June 23rd and 25th at Hotel Jefferson. The president of the Society and the convention chairperson was George Rafey. Officers were: Eddie Richards, Jameel Ameen, Edna Joseph, Joe Nappa. It was supported by many branches of the Bakourats.

1959. Washington, D.C.

The convention was held at Woodner Hotel. The President of the Society was Jim Silman, Jr. and was Chaired by Edwards Richards. Again the comments of the Jim Silman, Jr.: "It was a huge success with a huge turnout." There is no other record.

1960. Charleston, West Virginia

The Fourteenth Annual Convention of the American Druze Society was held from June 19 through June 21, 1960 at Richmond, VA. The President of the Society and the Convention Chairperson was George Rafey. There is no other records.

The successful conventions became more and more popular each year, and Druzes throughout the United States, as well as in other countries began to know of its existence and even attend the conventions. The convention was hailed by those great Druze leaders who had so diligently worked toward the success of its continuity

1961. Flint, Michigan

The fifteenth Annual Convention of the American DRuze Society was held at the Duran Hotel from June 19 through June 21, 1961. The President of the Society and convention chairperson was Roy. R. Hamady and J. Raymond Najar was the Vice-President. The Convention was chaired by Officers were: Nadia Abraham, Secretary - Treasurer, Madeline Hamady, Corresponding Secretary, Hamad Bomorro , Sergeant at Arms. Advisors: Robert M. Hamady, Jack A. Hamady, Nafe Katter, Ernie Mullen, Fred Sefa, Jim Silman, Khalil Wahbey. Committee Chairmen: Nafe Bomorro, Joan Sefa, Roger Albee, Jim Silman, Sr.,

Lilian Sefa, Helen Dow, Fred Sefa, Hamad Bomorro, Nafe Bomorro, Nora Wahbey, Malakie Fayad, Joe Nappa, Jack Hamady, Joe Sefa. The program included an Early Birds Party, Welcoming Luncheon, Picnic at the Flushing Park, Flushing, Michigan, Brunch and Business Meeting and Annual Banquet.

1962. Chicago, Illinois

The Sixteenth American Druze Society Convention was held in Chicago, Illinois at the Hotel Sherman. The dates were June 24, 25, 26, 27, 1962. The President was Julie Mullin Makarem. She and her husband, Dr. Sami Makarem, were still on their honeymoon while she presided as President at the Convention. Sami referred to himself as 'Prince Phillip.' They had met each other at the 1961 Convention in Flint, Michigan and gotten married just two weeks before the Chicago Convention on June 9, 1962 in Detroit, Michigan. They lived in Ann Arbor, Michigan for one year, and Sami and Julie moved to Lebanon with their two-month old daughter, Sahar, on July 9, 1963.

Mack Joseph Azzam, the Convention General Chairman, and his wife, Salimi, were the only Druze residents of Chicago, Illinois. Single handedly, they sustained the American Druze Society by sponsoring the Convention in Chicago. The officers were:

Vice president, Salimi Joseph Azzam, Secretary-Treasurer, Nadia Abraham, Corresponding Secretary, Joan Sefa, Sergeant-At-Arms, Amin Ally, Executive Secretary, Joe H. Nappa, Advisors: Robert M. Hamady Flint, Jack A. Hamady, Roy R. Hamady, Nafe Katter, Sr. Saginaw, Charles Dahook, Ernie Mullen, Fred Sefa, Jim Silman, Sr., Khalil Wahbey. Convention Committee: Roy R. Hamady, James Albee, Selma Joe Bomorro, Ajaj Andary, Selma Dahook, Emma Saley, Salimi Azzam, Joan Sefa, Nafe Bomorro, Alexander J. Sim, Lily Hamady, Floyd Saley, Sami Nassib Makarem, Ralph Modad, Slyman Kysia.

Julie Mullin was elected the National President in 1961, and with her team of officers, she carried the Society through another tumultuous year. She was the first woman awarded Life Membership for her devotion and dedication to her beloved American Druze Society. Julie met the criteria for the 'Life Member' and under the recommendation of Robert Hamady from Flint, Michigan, and seconded by Uncles Nafe Katter from Saginaw, Michigan, and Jack Hamady from Flint, Michigan, and Rafic Rasamny from New York, Julie was awarded Life Member status during the Banquet. In her "A Message from the President" she writes in the Convention Booklet: "It is with pleasure that I write this annual Presidential message. This year marks the Sixteenth Anniversary of the American Druze Society. Since its inception in 1947, this Society has done the best it could in order to fulfill its manifold task. Every year, it becomes more and more aware of the increasing responsibilities it has to face. These responsibilities make us firmly believe in the indispensability of our American Druze Society for they can only be achieved by sincere cooperation through such a society. . . . It is the message of the American Druze youth who are proud of being Americans, as well as being Druzes. It is, therefore, a message of the youth, a firm will, and a continuous progress from the good to the better."

The program included Early Bird Party, Luncheon and Welcome by President Julie Mullin Makarem, a Chicago Shoreline Cruise, Picnic at the Clayton F. Smith Forest Preserve, Continental Breakfast, Arabic Movies ('A New Day in the Middle East' & 'Baalbec Festival'), Annual Banquet and American and Arabic Music.

It is important to mention, with respect to this history, that the precious year of 1961 gave this society the legal name of ADS by its first Constitution and Bylaws.

1963. Richmond, Virginia

The President of the Society and Chairman of the Convention was George Rafey, and Jameel Ameen was the Vice-President. Officers were: David Ameen, Edna Joseph and Haney Fayed. There is no other records.

1964. Charleston, West Virginia

The Eighteenth Annual Convention of the American Druze Society was held at Daniel Boone hotel from June 25 through June 27, 1994. The President of the Society and the Convention Chairperson was Fred H. Joseph and Vice President was Norman Shaar. Officers were: Ameen Joseph, Jr., Secretary - Treasurer, Rose Marie Joseph, Corresponding Secretary, and Kamal Shaar, Sergeant-at-arms. The committee Chairmen were Faye Basheer, Olga Joseph, Fred Yaha, Eddie Najar, Jimmy Najar, and Mickey Sanjid.

The program included an Early Bird Reception, Luncheon, Business Meetings, Picnic at the Holiday Park, Annual Banquet and Arabic and American Music Entertainment.

1965. Washington, D.C.

The 19th Annual Convention of the American Druze Society was held in Washington, D.C. on June 28, 29, and 30, 1965. The place was the Sheraton Park Hotel. The President of the Society and the Convention Chairperson was Randy Shaban and Farris Sadak as Vice President. Officers were: Dr. Ernest Rafey, Secretary-Treasurer, Gamille Sadak, Corresponding Secretary, and Nabeel David, Sergeant-at the Arms. Convention committee members were: Samia Salem, Samia Fayyad, Mansour Showkier, Nada Hassen, Camilla Ameen, Zee Sadak, Larry Rafey, Alva Salem, Mohammed Fayyad, Chafic Abou-Hosn, Mahmoud Sadak, Jimmie Silman, III and Dallal David.

In his "Welcome to Washington' Message from the President" Randy Shaban writes in the Convention Booklet: " ... After traveling throughout the country visiting with many members of our society, I find that the convention means a lot more to our people than I had ever imagined. We should all share the responsibility of participating and encouraging other Druze to participate in the spirit of the American Druze Society."

The program included welcoming coffee, Picnic at the Rock Creek Park, Private tour of the White House, Business Breakfast, Movies of Lebanon and Baalbek, a Visit to the Lebanese Embassy, Annual Banquet, and Arabic and American Entertainment. On the first day of the convention, Mr. & Mrs. Ameen David invited all the conventioners to be their guest at a cocktail, Buffet Supper and Discotheque party in the Champagne Room in Washington.

1966. Detroit, Michigan

The 20th Annual Convention of the American Druze Society was held in Detroit, Michigan on July 7, 8, and 9, 1966. The place was the Statler Hilton Hotel which was located in downtown Detroit. The Convention was sponsored by Branch #2 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Detroit, Michigan. The President of the Society and the Convention Chairperson was Nafe J. Bomorro and the Vice-President was Ajaj Andary. The Officers were: Jihad Alkateeb, Secretary-Treasurer, Selma Jo Bomorro, Corresponding Secretary, Frank Hamady, Sergeant-at Arms. Advisors were Jim Silman, Ernie Mullen and Floyd Saley. Convention Committee members: Lily Sob, Fred Mullen, Enda Corte, Hamad J. Bomorro, Laura Mullen, Virginia Mullen, Nora Wahbey, Helen Dow, Kalil Wahbey, Essam Naim

In the Dedication of the Convention booklet, Fred Massey wrote, "Branch #2 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Detroit, Michigan hails the 1966 Annual Convention of the American Druze Society and bespeaks full enjoyment for all participants and meaningful achievements for its worthy aims. Branch #2 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat in Detroit, Michigan further, cordially greets all sister locals of this fraternal organization and trusts they are all animated by ardent interest in its life and sustained determination for its growth. Let us rally around the banner of our Fathers raised fifty years ago. Let us pledge out united fidelity to the Druze unity they envisioned and consecrated. Let us give continuing evidence to their gospel of high purpose, vigorous dialogue, and true friendship and understanding in our ranks.

The program included Early Bird Party, Luncheon and Fashion Show, Panel Discussion, Question and Answer Period (Mr. Fred Massey, Speaker), Dancing - Arabic and American, All day Picnic at Edward Hines Park, Surprise Party, Breakfast and Business Meeting , and the Annual Banquet

1967. Daytona Beach, Florida

The 21st Annual Convention of the American Druze Society was held at Daytona Plaza Hotel, Florida from June 26 through June 28th, 1967. The booklet of the convention was dedicate to late Robert Hamady. The President of the Society and its Convention Chairman was Farris Shaheen and Fred Deen was the Vice President. Officers were Delores Deen, Secretary-Treasurer, David Mosrie, Sergeant-at-Arms and Baheej Abulhosn General Chairman. Advisors were: Arif Hatoum, Mack Hamed, and Sam Ackley. Convention Committee members were Helen Alley, Elia Peres, Julia Alden, and Atef Hatoum.

This convention was for the first time in Florida and had neither a large Druze community there nor a branch for the Bakourat. It was a huge success. The program included Early Bird Party, Luncheon, Picnic at the Tomoka Park, Breakfast and Business meeting, Annual Banquet and American and Arabic music.

1968. Charleston, West Virginia

The 22nd Annual American Druze Convention was held at the Daniel Boone Hotel from June 24th through June 26th, 1969. The President of the Society and Convention Chairman was Adil H. Najar and William Hamady was the Vice President. Officers were: Secretary-Treasurer, Norman Shaar, Corresponding Secretary, Linda Nameen, Sergeant-at-Arms, Ernie Joseph. Advisors: Harry Hamdan, Mickey Sangid, Freddie H. Joseph, Randy Shaban and Nora Webby. Convention Committee members: Emily Joseph, Joe Joseph, Fouad Ynava, Nahia Joseph, Lila Kannon and Jamal Richards. Speaker: Dr. Abdallah Najjar, Chief International Affairs Office, National Communicable Disease Center, United States Public Health Service. The program included Early Bird Party, Picnic, Breakfast and Business meeting, Annual Banquet and American and Arabic Music.

1969. Richmond, Virginia

The 23rd Annual Convention of the American Druze Society was held at the Holiday Inn West from June 15th through June 18th, 1969. The President of the Society and the Convention Chairperson was George A. Rafey and Jameel Ameen was the Vice President. Officers were: Secretary-Treasurer, David Ameen, Corresponding Secretary, Enda Joseph, Sergeant-at Arms, Haney Fayed. Advisors: Sam Rafey, Najim Basheer, and Ameen David. Convention Committee: Nadia Rafey, Idell Ameen, Evelyn billy, Julia Ameen, Virginia Fayed, Ralph Shibley, Michael Billy, Said Ameen, Roma Ameen, Clara Ameen and James Sams. The program included President's Reception, Orientation Meeting, trip to Williamsburg, Arabic Buffet, Crowning of "Miss Druze" 1969, Picnic at St. Anthony's Recreation Area, Breakfast and Business Meeting, Druze Panel Discussion, Banquet and Arabic and American music.

1970. Detroit, Michigan

Detroit, Michigan was the site of the 24th Annual Convention of the American Druze Society on July 6, 7, 8, and 9, 1970 at the Detroit Hilton Hotel. The President of the Society and the Convention Chairperson was Nafe J. Bomorra and Ernie Mullen as Vice President. Officers were: Secretary-Treasurer, Dan Sefa, Corresponding Secretary, Selma Jo Bomorra, Sergeant-at Arms, Riad Ellassal. Advisors: Jihad Alkateeb, Jack Hamady, Nafe Katter, Mike and Zabad Saleem, Kalil and Nora Wahbey. Convention Committee members: Laura Mullen, Fred Mullen, Nadia Alkateeb, Ajaj Andary and Hamad J. Bomorra. The program included Sip and Chat Party, Luncheon, Druze Panel Discussion, Picnic at Belle Isle Park, Breakfast and Business Meeting, Arabic and American music and continental

Summary

The first seed sown in 1908 in Seattle, Washington, El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat, has brought forth the American Druze Society (ADS). The goals of the ADS complement the goals of the Branches of the El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat. The initial goal of those first Druze immigrants, the pioneers, has been fulfilled and is alive in the American Druze Society as it was in the Branch #1 El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat, as well as all the other nine branches. Their aim was to keep Druzism alive in the Western Hemisphere, as well as to keep all the American Druze, from generation to generation, proud of their heritage. They had a dream that the name of Druzism must live on anywhere its descendants might locate during the first period of immigration and thereafter. The dream materialized into ten El-Bakaurat Ed-Dirziyat branches. They shared the joys and sorrows of each other, and traveled long distances to attend conventions.

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