

THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF  
THE DISTINGUISHED  
SURNAME  
DAVALOS

The colourful traditions of Spain have over the centuries yielded many distinguished surnames. These proud cultural traditions have been carried from the Old World to the New, and to almost every corner of the globe. The name Davalos has been traced to its source in Castile, in north central Spain.

Spanish surnames often conserve the oldest spellings with few changes, which distinguishes them from names originating in England, France and Germany. The variations Davalos, Davallos, Devallos, Devallos and Davilado, however, share the same origin.

The first group known to have populated what are today Spain and Portugal were the Iberians, who traveled north from Africa around 3000 B.C., following the rivers inland. Celtic tribes from northern Europe began to establish settlements in the peninsula during the 14th century B.C., mostly in the northern and western regions, which today are home to Galicia and Portugal. About 200 years later, the Phoenicians made contact with these peoples and established small coastal trading centres. The Phoenicians built lighthouses and founded cities that still exist today. The other major Mediterranean power to establish a presence in Spain was the Greeks, who arrived around 630 B.C. and founded several cities for trading purposes.

Over the next two centuries the Greeks were displaced by the Carthaginians, who wished to expand their Mediterranean empire into Iberia. This expansion, however, brought Carthage into conflict with Rome, and led ultimately to war. The 2nd Punic War, 219-201 B.C., determined that Spain would be controlled by Rome. The Romans first subdued the peoples of the coast, who had had more contact with other cultures. It would take many more years for Rome to control completely the north and west of the peninsula.

Some of the original Celts and Iberians had, meanwhile, formed a new mixed culture in the central peninsula, known as Celtiberians. Each of the peoples of the peninsula had unique customs and folkways. Each had a different language and religion. Roman language and customs were, thus, imposed on a multicultural land. Each culture interacted with the Romans differently, as they adapted to a new language, religion and administration.

The Romans were the first civilization to alter the people's way of life over the entire peninsula. They brought a completely new way of life, with their accomplishments in law, agriculture, architecture, engineering and the sciences. Rome pensioned many soldiers in Spain, or Hispania as it was called, founding for

them cities that still stand today, such as Zaragoza and Mérida. These former soldiers married local women, which would gradually give rise to a blended Hispano-Roman culture. The emperors Hadrian, Trajan and Marcus Aurelius were Spanish by birth, as were many great Latin writers, including Seneca the Elder and Seneca the Younger, Lucan, Martial, Quintilian, Columella and Prudentius.

Early in the 5th century the Visigoths conquered Hispania. The Visigoths, however, lived apart from the people and never had the same influence that Rome had exerted. The best-known Spaniard of this time was St. Isidore, a writer who became Bishop of Seville. In 711 Spain was invaded by Muslims from Africa, who soon conquered the entire peninsula except for Asturias, in the north. Traces of their presence remain today in the cities of the south, such as Granada and Cordoba, witnesses to the important cultural contributions of the Muslims. The Christians of the north, however, began a concerted resistance that would ultimately regain for them the entire peninsula, although the struggle would last for almost eight centuries. During the tenth century Castile became an independent region and began a series of alliances and battles that would push the frontier far to the south. Castile's first king, Ferdinand, united his kingdom with Leon, and he controlled Galicia as well. By the end of the 11th century the Christian re-conquest had reached Toledo and Valencia, and it would continue until 1492, when Ferdinand and Isabella would retake Granada.

The Davalos family originated in Castile, leader of the Christian Reconquest of Spain from the Muslims. One of the earliest records of the name dates from the eleventh century. This distinguished family played an important role in the ancient history of the province. Whether the head of the family emerged as the Marquis de Davila of the Government of Spain is not clear. From Castile the family branched to other regions of the north, including Leon, Galicia, Navarre and Aragon. As the armies of the Reconquest progressed southwards, led by Castile, families from the north followed after them and settled in the newly recaptured lands. Thus the family branched to southern Spain, becoming established in Seville and Cordoba among other centers, and eventually Granada.

Prominent among members of the family the Davalos family of Castile.

The fall of Granada on 2 January 1492 meant that the Spanish Crown could turn its attention to empire-building. Ferdinand and Isabella supported Christopher Columbus' voyages to the west, which began an era of exploration and conquest that would take Spaniards and their language and culture literally around the world.

The first exploratory voyages were soon followed by those of the conquistadors, and Spanish settlements were founded throughout the Caribbean, Central and South America. Among the greatest of the conquistadors were Cortés, Pizarro, Valdivia and Balboa, who led many others in search of wealth and adventure. The settlers who built upon these foundations of the Spanish Empire included: These included Hernando Davalos who immigrated to Chile in 1565; Melchor Davalos who came to New Spain in 1578 and Beatriz Davila who settled in Peru in 1582; Rodrigo Davalos, who arrived in Peru in 1834; Juan Davalos, who landed in Peru in 1834; Marciana Davalos, aged 11, who settled in America from Havana, in 1906; Balhem Davalos, aged 42, who emigrated to the United States from London, England, in 1908; Armando Davalos, aged 19, who settled in America from Havana, Cuba, in 1909; Joseph John Davalos, aged 17, who emigrated to the United States from Bueno Aires, Argentina, in 1912; Rafael Davalos, aged 24, who landed in America from Burgos, Spain, in 1912; and Guilermo Davalos, aged 17, who emigrated to America from Rio Bamba, Ecuador, in 1920.

More recent migrations have occurred in which many Latin American families have moved to the United States and Canada.

Contemporary notables of the surname Davalos include Richard "Dick" Davalos (b.1930) American actor from New York City, New York; Alexa Davalos (b.1982) American actress, best known for her roles in Clash of the Titans (2010) and The Chronicles of Riddick (2004); Elyssa Davalos (b.1959) former American television and movie actress; David Davalos (b.1965) American playwright; and Douglas Wayne "Doug" Davalos (b.1970) American head men's basketball coach at Texas State University.

One of the earliest coats of arms granted to this family was:

A blue shield with a gold castle, with a red border and silver checkered border.