



MIGRATION DEFORESTATION AND HEALTH IN GOIÁS: THE MEDICAL PRACTICE IN THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURE COLONY OF GOIÁS (1941-1959)

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Abstract

At the end of the 1930s in Brazil, the federal government established a colonization policy of the hinterlands in the country, this movement was known as the “March to the West” (Marcha para o Oeste). This policy sought, within a set of means, to favor internal migration and the occupation of territory of areas with low population density in Brazil. Thus the government created the National Agriculture Colonies (Colônias Agrícolas Nacionais), by means of donating rural pieces of land and offering a basic infrastructure for the settlement of families. Of these structures the most noticeable ones are the medical assistance policies. It is in this context that this paper positions itself, with the objective of investigating medical policies in the National Agriculture Colony of Goiás, through medical practices that combat tropical diseases in the region, normally known as malaria. The focus will be on the biographic record of the practices done by the medical pioneers’, Dr. Jair Dinoah de Araújo, Dr. Domingos Mendes da Silva and Dr. Álvaro de Melo. The pieces of land destined for the Colony, are currently the municipalities of Ceres, Nova Glória and Ipiranga, which was once a region of a dense seasonal tropical forest (Matas de São Patrício) that was deforested to open the new agricultural settlements. Besides the agricultural expansions and the effects of the landscape’s devastation, this occupation caused a serious effect to the health of the peasant settlers. The evidence base will privilege the reports, records, diaries, interviews and other written document records that permit the identification of the forms of combating tropical diseases of the rural people of Goiás in the first half of the 20th century. The intention of this study is to present a relation between migration, deforestation and the medical practices in the colonization of the west of Brazil, having as an articulated element the history of health and tropical medicine.