

13 October 1993

Dear Waldensian Cousin:

The purpose of this letter is to bring you up to date on Waldensian research in the State Archives at Torino, in notarial records pre-dating the "Piedmont Project" family group records in the LDS Family History Library's Main Archive collection, and which corrects misinformation provided by a prior researcher.

Brief History: In 1978, at the urging of Hugh T. Law (the Genealogical Department's European specialist), an organization of Waldensian families was created. The first project was to extract genealogical information from Mentoulles, missed in the Piedmont Project because those parish registers were no longer among the Waldensian records.

In 1980, under the direction of Marriner Cardon, a lawyer of Waldensian descent, the PFO registered with the IRS as an official, tax-exempt organization [under Section 501(c)(3)].

It was suggested that if the new Piedmont Families Organization could raise the money to rebind the 600 or so volumes of notarial records, the Genealogical Department could arrange to have those records microfilmed.

The intent was then to extract genealogical information about *all* families in those records, so that this information would be available to all. The Organization raised more than \$6000, but the microfilming was delayed.

Finally, in 1990 the Genealogical (now the Family History) Department recognized that it had received so many permissions to microfilm vital records (their highest priority) that they would never get to the Waldensian notarial records, and so informed us.

A search has since taken place to identify a trustworthy, qualified, on-site researcher. The purpose of this letter is to announce the successful conclusion of that search.

With the assistance of Dr. Adriano Comollo, a native of the Torino area but now a faculty member at BYU, contact was made with Giovanni Cena in Torino. Giovanni Cena is completing work on his doctoral program (a much longer project there than in the U.S.) and is an LDS bishop.

Present Status: The officers of the PFO have used 1993 as a "test run" with this researcher. A survey of the State Archives in Torino revealed that, indeed, there are some 216 volumes of notarial records concerning Waldensian communities predating the surviving parish registers (pre-1710).

The village of Rora (Rorata at that time) was selected as a control. Only two volumes of notarial records survive, and a number of families during the parish-register period are found on Piedmont Project family group records, thus providing a limited trial and some controls, at least on the families extending from the notarial period into the parish registers.

The results are impressive. Giovanni Cena has now extracted all Rorata notarial records.

Experiments have shown that with the type of data involved, it is much faster and more accurate to record details on family group records before entering the results into the computer. Over 100 family group records have been created to date, with about half of the extracted material analyzed so far.

Three families each from five Rora surnames were selected for checking with the Piedmont Project family group records. In each case, it has been possible to tie later notarial generations to the Piedmont Project families and--again, in each case--to extend the pedigree of each family several generations.

Because some of these records invoke previous agreements, many of the Waldensian families can be traced to the early 1500s.

An especially gratifying result is the ability to identify maiden names of so many of the wives in the early Piedmont Project records for whom this information was lacking.

Quality Controls: In addition to checking notarial information against the Piedmont Project, Dr. Comollo (at BYU) has been paid to translate sample documents to be used as models, as well as to translate difficult or obscure documents as they are found. Further, Waldensian historians carefully researched the Swiss records of Waldensian exiles (1686-1690), and this information also provides excellent check points.

What You Can Do: We **need** your help in one major area--money.

This is the current situation:

1. Now that our procedures are established, Giovanni Cena can complete a report every 2-3 months. He invests 90-100 hours for each report, which at \$20 (comparable to top-notch U.S. researchers) costs us \$1800-2000.

His next report will use up the remaining PFO money. **We need to raise \$2000 by the end of November 1993** to permit him to continue his research.

We obviously need to raise at least \$8000 per year to keep him researching. With some 216 volumes, we **need** to keep him busy on our research.

2. Giovanni Cena is eligible for a retirement pension in about 3 years, and would be interested in pursuing that option IF we can keep him moderately busy doing research. This possibility is important to us, given the large number of records to extract. With increasing terrorism there is no guarantee that these records will still exist over the decades it would take at our present pace.

PLEASE NOTE: **ALL** donations are **fully** tax-deductible. For security, all PFO disbursements are made by check only and require two signatures. All funds are used only for research-related activity (research, translation, occasional large mailings). Officers are not paid, and their usual out-of-pocket expenses not reimbursed.

If you have interest, you might also assist in one or more of these ways:

3. If you wish personally to complete LDS temple ordinances for some of these people, please send the following information to **me**: (a) which temple, (b) how many names you can complete in about a 60-day period, (c) surnames preferred, if any (I'll **try** but cannot promise that exact surnames will be available at any given time; please restrict requests to not more than 2-3 surnames at a time), and (d) the person's name under which the family file will be listed at the temple. Names provided will be ready for you to take/send to your temple, on diskette, using TempleReady. Please therefore include \$1.50 with each request to cover the cost of the diskette and postage.
4. If you have a little background in French or Italian (or even Spanish) and wish to help transfer information from the reports onto family group records, let me know.
5. If you have access to a computer and PAF (Personal Ancestral File) and wish to help input information from the working copies of family group records, please let me know.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Much more could be said. This is, indeed, a massive project--but our ancestors are **worth** it. They lived magnificently in their own time, under conditions that challenged their will and their moral commitments. Our challenges are different, yet we too can live magnificently--for them, and for those who follow us.

SEND FINANCIAL DONATIONS:

John L. Chatelain
PFO Treasurer
1870 W. 600 North
Salt Lake City UT 84116

SEND OTHER ITEMS TO:

Ronald F. Malan
Trustee, PFO
99 South Sage Drive
Orem UT 84058

We hope that senior members of Waldensian families will include PFO in their wills.

We appreciate your support. Please share this information with your Waldensian relatives.

Ronald F. Malan
For PFO Board of Trustees