

PFO Report

The *PIEDMONT FAMILIES ORGANIZATION*

■ *Number 26*

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Financial Report

Since our last issue, we have paid our researcher \$4,000 and now owe him \$3,000.

We owe Giovanni Cena \$3,000. We need YOUR tax-deductible donation soon. Thanks for your continued support.

Please make checks payable to **PFO**, and send to:

PFO, 388 S 460 East, American Fork UT 84003

For a receipt, please send a self-addressed envelope.

More at PFO Web Site

Our PFO web site has had nearly 1300 "hits" (visitors) since it opened on August 8. We have also received many email inquiries from people with Waldensian ancestry, from the US and Canada.

We will soon begin posting to the PFO web site the text of the notarial records that have been extracted so far. It will be a while before we include there all the volumes that have been extracted so far. But the result will permit people to search their own lines.

And, of course, we invite them all to donate to the research fund so the extraction can continue.

If you haven't looked at it yet, check it out at:

<http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~waldense/>

If you have suggestions as you visit the site, Gerhard Ruf is the Webmaster. You can email him at: gruf@xmission.com or directly from the PFO site.

An Experience—and a Proposal

Several weeks ago, I received an excited email from our researcher. His daughter Marieli had received her mission call to Temple Square, and he wanted to know what that entailed, what she'd need, what they should do. I assured him that her mission president would soon send them details.

They currently also have a son serving a mission in London. But England is closer to home; serving a mission in the U.S. is much different to those folks.

Prompted to do so, I also asked who would meet her, how she'd get to the MTC, where she'd stay beforehand if needed. I suggested that Donna and I would be happy to meet her, take care of her, and get her to the MTC if they would like.

They eagerly accepted that offer and were much relieved. Last week, we met her at the Salt Lake airport, her flight arriving late in the evening.

The next morning, we took her to a session at the Mount Timpanogos Temple. She'd been to the Swiss Temple, of course, but like most members in Europe, that means spending several days at the temple and then not getting back before her mission.

It was an interesting experience. Marieli declined earphones for Italian, listening instead in English. We gave her the name of one of the women her father's research had helped us identify.

Afterwards, as we ate lunch in the cafeteria, I asked if she had been aware of the angels who had been with her in the session. She had not, but beamed at the realization that this had been the case.

That gave rise to an idea: It would be a marvelous experience for her parents to be able to come over when she finishes her mission. That should be just before April Conference, 2002. Brother Cena is the branch president, and Conference, Temple Square, the Choir, and other similar experiences would help him magnify his service to the Church at home.

It would also permit us to organize a meeting at which he could describe for us the records, his research procedures, and so on, and permit us to ask questions. You would have the opportunity to meet this devoted, effective researcher.

I am **NOT** proposing that we raise extra money to bring him and his wife over. Rather, if we were more prompt in paying him so he could afford to work faster on the records, he should be able to save enough on his own for them to come.

My proposal, then, is this: that we each dedicate ourselves to sacrificing a little more and donating more, more frequently, to the research effort. The Lord will bless us (and the Cenas) if we do.

One more factor affects this proposal. I have told BYU that I plan to retire in a year. A year after that, Donna and I plan to serve a mission (or more).

This means that if we haven't finished extracting the notarial records, someone else will need to take over the primary role: communicating with Brother Cena, getting the extraction files to the family researchers here, answering questions, writing and mailing this newsletter, etc. (Any volunteers??)

It likely will be easier to lengthen our stride now, hasten our work, increase our donations, and try to finish the project within the two years.

My Visit to the Valleys for the International Reunion

by **Susan Kersey**

Ever since I first became interested in family history, about twenty-five years ago, I had yearned to visit the mountains of northern Italy. I wanted to see Angrogna, Torino, Italy, the place where John Daniel Malan, and his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather before him had lived. But as much as I wanted to see Angrogna, its small-ness and remoteness put me off. I was afraid no one would speak English and I couldn't speak Italian. Intrepid world traveller I'm not, so year after year came and went without a trip to Italy. When an International Malan Reunion was announced, to be held June 22-25 in Torre Pellice, I knew the time had finally come to go.

We arrived in Torre Pellice on a beautiful, sunny day. It is a small town, surprisingly urban and incredibly similar to my own birthplace, Ogden, Utah. It lies in the centre of the Pellice Valley, which is the widest and greenest in the Turin area. In the summer months the surrounding mountains are cloaked with chestnuts, ash trees, beeches and firs, and the meadows are filled with daisies, gentians, primroses, lilies of the valley and, higher up, edelweiss. A magnificent river, wide, fast, and white-ice clear, runs through the town. Torre Pellice is considered the center of the Waldensians and has long had the responsibility and characteristics of a capital.

My mother, Barbara Malan, and my husband and I were the first Malans to check into the Gilly Hotel, which will be the headquarters of the reunion. It is modern and spacious, and managed by a distant cousin, Mario Malan, who organised the reunion along with Hercules Malan of South Africa. He told us that there are several Malans still living in the valley, and for the first time we learn that the name is locally pronounced 'Ma lawn'. This turned out to be a bit of a sticking point during the Reunion as the Europeans teasingly attempted to steer the Americans away from their pronunciation: 'May' lun.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article reflects feelings about the International Malan Reunion. It is included here because it also reflects feelings most of us have about the Waldensian Valleys, our marvelous ancestral homeland.

At breakfast on the 21st, we met the second group of Malans to arrive, two couples from Brazil. We were told by one of them, Alfredo Malan d'Angrogne, that his great grandfather, Pedro Malan, had gone to Brazil because "he had a restless nature." João's son, Alfredo, was a soldier who rose through the ranks to become Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Brazilian Army and, posthumously, Army General. Later that evening, we met Sergio Malan from the neighboring town of Pinerolo, Evienne, a lovely young woman from France, and a large group of Utah Malans. There were many exclamations of surprise, along with hugs, as they discovered that they knew my mother, and the reminiscences began. Registration also began, which would eventually record some 130 Malan family members from Australia, Brazil, England, France, Italy, The Netherlands, South Africa, Uruguay, and the USA.

The Reunion officially opened on June 22 with a hike over the Cottian Alps from La Monta in the Queyras Valley to Villanova in the Pellice Valley. Others toured sights in Turin. I wasn't in either group. I had waited long enough to see Angrogna, and I wanted to spend some time there on my own. The road from Torre Pellice was short but very steep, and in just a few minutes the hot, muggy air of the valley had changed to the sharp, pure air of the moun-tains. Angrogna was just the way I had imagined it, high, high up with far-flung houses perched like mountain goats on ever-steeper plots.

I parked about a mile above the village centre and walked down. Every one of my senses was alert. It struck me that here I was, at last, in Angrogna, Torino, Italy, walking on the same soil as my ancestors had walked. I stopped to watch a waterfall rushing to join the Angrogna River, and wondered if perhaps John Daniel's wife Pauline or his mother Catherine, or even further back, his grandmother Marie Marguerite, had walked along this same road, stopped to appreciate the same waterfall. What were they going through at the time, I wondered. Were they weighed down with care or had they felt to praise the glory of life?

All that day as I walked around Angrogna I felt the cloak of family history around my shoulders. With

each thing I saw and heard and smelled I wondered if other Malans had seen and heard and smelled something similar. This is where Bartholomew, and Madeleine, Daniel and countless Johns grew up. This is where they fell in love, had their babies, fought their battles, heard the birds sing, felt the sun shine on their backs. My flesh and blood for generation after generation. In this spot.

Today, the village center has an elementary school, a library, a small visitor's centre, a shop with rolls of oilcloth outside and necessities inside, a Waldensian Temple with a nearby cemetery. The inhabitants are a mixture of young and old, some having lived there for generations and others coming as holidaymakers from the nearby cities. One of the older residents, a Malan, still lives in the house built by John Daniel in 1841. For me, visiting this home was one of the highlights of the week.

A few days later I returned to Angrogna as part of a well-organized tour. On that day we learned that it had been the last refuge and resistance center of the Waldenses in the tragic years of the religious wars. We visited the Temple on the road to Serre, the oldest in the valleys, and the characteristic cave called the Ghieisa d'la Tana where tradition affirms that the Waldenses gathered during the persecutions to hold their worship service. In a field above Serre we saw the monument of Chanforan which was raised in remembrance of an assembly held in September 1532, during which the adherence of the Waldenses to the Protestant Reformation was decided.

The three days of the Reunion were a tapestry of connections between people, places and ideas. Names on pedigree charts came alive, papers about the Malans were presented in five languages, the history of the Waldenses took shape and form. The four- and five-course dinners were not only delicious -- the chef and his team received a well-deserved standing ovation the final night -- but gave us all a chance to meet and talk with cousins from around the world. Cousins I'd never met before told me anecdotes about my grandfather and great-grandfather. I just happened to have with me three sheets of family history needed by another cousin, unknown until the Reunion brought us

together.

On the final night, Mario Malan presented us all with a small, wooden plaque. "From the World to the Valley", it said, and along with the names of all the countries represented at the Reunion was a bundle of sticks tied together in the traditional way of the valleys. It was a symbol, he said, of the tie that bound us together as a family. There were no strangers there. It was an appropriate ending to an unforgettable event. I'll never think of family in quite the same way again.

Susan Mendelsohn Kersey
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Meeting Our Researcher

by Ron Malan

While the hikers trudged across the mountains—a much longer and more rigorous challenge than many had supposed—and Susan explored Angrogna (see preceding article), my wife Donna and I joined the group who went to Turin. But instead of touring with them, we had arranged for our researcher, Giovanni Cena, and his wife to meet us. They were most gracious hosts. The impressions of this couple that others of Waldensian descent have shared with us were completely confirmed.

We had an excellent visit, discussing our pedigree and the progress of our research. Then came one of the highlights of the whole trip. They escorted us to the State Archives in Turin, where the notarial records, and many other types of records, are stored in a climate-controlled environment.

The climate isn't the only thing controlled. Even the elevators work only by key. Each book to be used must be retrieved personally by a staff member.

For this reason, we were pleased to be permitted to be escorted into one of the restricted areas, where I was allowed to hold, inspect, and read in one of the volumes of notarial records. It covered the years 1615 and 1616 and contained records of some of our ancestors. To hold and read the original record written by a notary who had been in the presence of our ancestors was a powerful

experience.

The building, formerly a hospital, is nearly 200 years old, with thick stone walls. The architecture reflects the area, with pleasing lines of soaring arches. Yet, recently renovated, it features superb lighting and convenient outlets for computer use. It contains so many books that, if placed next to each other (as on a library shelf) they would cover 625 miles!

We left with a profound respect for our researcher. He is thorough, a hard worker, and has the respect of the head archivist herself.

Current Contributors

The following have contributed to our research fund since our July issue:

Stephanie Adolf	Fred Malan Family
Byron Alder	Trust
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Corey D Malan	Helen Woodland

We express deep gratitude to those who donate. We appreciate your sacrifice.

Donations, *tax-deductible*, are needed. Make checks payable to **PFO** and send to:

Ron Malan, PFO
388 South 460 East
American Fork UT 84003

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