

## Appendix Five

### Visiting the Vaudois Valleys

From time to time various American descendants of Vaudois ancestors have had the opportunity of visiting the Vaudois Valleys. A number have requested information about how to get there and what to see when there. This appendix gives a brief overview of this information. It includes four pictures of the Borgata Cardon and the surrounding area, and a map showing how to get to the Borgata, as well as a smaller scale map of a larger portion of the Vaudois Valleys.

#### **Torino**

The capital city of the Piedmont area of Italy, and closest large city to the Vaudois Valleys, is Torino (Turin). It is the historical home of the Dukes of Savoy, who, for most of time period that this volume is concerned with, were the rulers of the area in which the Vaudois Valleys are located. The Dukes of Savoy became the Kings of Sardinia, and in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the royal family of united Italy. Torino is a city with lots of architectural charm, some wide tree-lined streets, and small Italian autos everywhere, in the streets and parked in every possible parking spot, often including the sidewalk. There are a number of historical building and plazas in Torino, although it is usually bypassed by tourists (as are the Vaudois Valleys). From Torino one can get to the Vaudois Valleys by train or by auto. Certainly, if your plans include a trip to the Borgata Cardon or many of the other places of interest, you will need an auto after you reach the Valleys.

The train goes to Torre Pellice, the largest town in the Vaudois Valleys, and runs two or three times a day, so you can go to Torre Pellice, walk around the town for a few hours, and return to Torino the same day.

To make the trip by auto, proceed southwest from Torino toward Stupinigi and Pinerolo. You may want to stop at Stupinigi, a hunting lodge of the Dukes of Savoy. It is a baroque/rococo era palace that is slowly being restored. The highway diverts around the palace and the extensive stables and grounds. It is not necessary to go into the city of Pinerolo. A mile or two outside of town there is a split in the road. Take the highway that goes to Val Luserna (Val Pellice) and Torre Pellice. As you drive along this highway, you will pass a small built up area called Airali. Not too far beyond Airali you will notice on the right a turn-off for San Secondo. This is the road you will take to the Borgata Cardon.

#### **Val Luserna and St. Jean**

If you continue on toward Torre Pellice, you will enter the Luserna (or Pellice) Valley. The first town you encounter is Luserna. Adjacent to Luserna to the north east is San Giovanni (St. Jean) where a number of our ancestral families lived. The old Vaudois temple of Ciabas is near (northwest of) San Giovanni, and is worth seeing. Its architectural style is typical of the early Vaudois churches. Ciabas is where Daniel Cardon was killed in the war of 1655. Ciabas marks the line in this location below which Vaudois were not allowed to live prior to 1848. The religious war of 1655 arose, in part, because the Vaudois had encroached over this line, and many of them had settled in St. Jean. These were directed to convert to Catholicism or remove to the higher locations, and their slowness in doing either was used as an excuse for the massacre which occurred at Easter-time in that year.

## **Angrogna**

Proceeding on a mile or two you will cross a bridge over the Torrente Angrogna. The road to Angrogna, and to the historic Vaudois stronghold Pra del Tor, runs northward along the side of this stream. If you would like to take a quick trip to Pra del Tor, take the lower road along the stream. A higher road up to the east is more interesting and historical. On the higher road, you can see the old Angrogna Vaudois temple where your ancestors worshipped. A word of explanation about area and place names: Angrogna is an area name, the name of a Vaudois parish area. There are numerous little villages scattered throughout the parish. In the 18th and 19th centuries the Catholic church tried to stimulate conversions among the Vaudois by building impressive Catholic parish churches just about everywhere a Vaudois temple was located. These Catholic parishes were given the names of saints, and since they were built in the more populated areas, the Catholic parish name often became the name by which the principal village was called. Thus, the upper road I mentioned passes through the town of Angrogna San Lorenzo, where you will see the yellow towerless Vaudois temple, and the grey towered Catholic parish of San Lorenzo. If you continue toward Pra del Tor on the upper road you may want to stop at two other historic sites that are marked by small directional signs. The first is Ghiesa d'la Tana, a grotto which the Vaudois used as a church at times when their regular churches were destroyed in battles. The second is Cianforan, the location, marked by a monument in a field, where the Vaudois met in conference with representatives of the Reformed Churches of Geneva in 1532, with the result that the Vaudois agreed to affiliate with the churches of the Protestant Reformation.

## **Pra del Tor**

You will be disappointed as you approach Pra del Tor not to see the narrows where our Vaudois ancestors rolled down stones on the invading armies. The construction of the road has forever obliterated that narrow pass.

At Pra del Tor you will see a Vaudois Temple, with the flanking Catholic parish church a short distance away. A short walk up the hill to the rear of the Vaudois temple will take you to the Collegio dei Barba, a stone structure where Vaudois itinerant missionaries were instructed. Inside you will see a thick, free-form stone table around which the pastors and elders of the faith met to decide policy issues. Still today the governing body of the church is called the Tavola Valdese or Waldensian Table, from this artifact.

## **Torre Pellice**

Returning to Torre Pellice, you may want to drive through town on the main highway. If the day is clear, look up to the right and see Mt. Vandalino, which Lorenzo Snow and his companions called "Mt. Brigham." Vandalino's distinctive castle-like prominence is called the Castelluzzo. Lorenzo Snow call this the "rock of prophecy" and it was here that the LDS Church in Italy was formally organized on September 19, 1850. There is a cable car that will take you up to a crest somewhat lower than the Castelluzzo, and if you have the time and are fit for a moderately strenuous walk, you may want to ride the cable car to the top and then walk along a well-defined path to the Castelluzzo. From this location you will have, on a clear day, views to the south across the Pellice Valley and southwest toward Monte Viso, the highest mountain in this region, where Hannibal is supposed to have crossed the Alps in 218 B.C. Along the trail a small sign directs you on a short walk into the woods to an ancient stone altar where some of your ancestors worshipped long before they were Vaudois or even Christian.

The main Vaudois buildings in Torre Pellice are a block or two north of the highway.

They include the Casa Valdese, the local headquarters of the faith (the world headquarters of the Waldensian Church are in Rome, but are smaller than the facilities in Torre Pellice.) There are several buildings associated with a "gymnasium" or high school that is operated by the Vaudois, the Torre Pellice Vaudois temple, and the "homes of the professors," a row of townhouse type dwellings that house the professors at the school and other dignitaries of the faith. Nearby is a "foresteria," a dormitory type facility where accommodations are provided for visitors at times of assemblages of the Vaudois leaders. If nothing of this nature is going on, a conversation with someone in authority around the Casa Valdese will probably result in an invitation to utilize these somewhat spartan facilities at a modest charge. More luxurious accommodations can be found at the Hotel Gilly or the Hotel Park.

There is a museum of Vaudois history eastward, across the street from the Casa Valdese, which is open only two afternoons a week. One of the days it is open is Sunday, and I believe the other is Wednesday. If you are not there on one of those days, let your disappointment be known to someone in charge at the Casa Valdese, and they may be able to arrange to have someone open up the museum for you.

Another place you probably will want to visit is the Claudiana book store a few blocks eastward, past the museum, along the same street that runs in front of the Casa Valdese. This is operated by the Waldensian Church, and will have some materials in English that you may find interesting.

## **Rorá**

As you return toward Pinerolo from Torre Pellice, you will again pass through Luserna, and in the middle of this town, you will encounter the road that runs across the Pellice River, through Lusernetta and on south to Rorá, the home of our ancestors, the Tourns and the Durands. There is a small museum in Rorá, but it is rarely open. The town is very small, and is built on the side of a hill. In the center of the town is a small market and cafe, and up the road a few houses from this cafe is the house where Victorio Amadeo II, Duke of Savoy, took refuge from the troops of Louis XIV in 1706 at the home of Antonio Durand, a distant kinsman of ours. This home is now owned by the family that runs the small market and cafe, and perhaps you could persuade them to show you the room in which the Duke stayed. It is not open to the public. In the museum at Torre Pellice you may have seen the silver spoon bestowed on Antonio Durand by the Duke as a token of his gratitude.

East of Rorá and north of the road back to Luserna is the home of the hero of the war of 1655, Giosuè Janavel, called "La Gianavella." Try to get good directions to this spot if you look for it -- I missed it the first two times I tried to find it. At no time was anyone else there. The upper part of this stone home has been reconstructed, and the significant part is the lower story, the "Gianavella inferiore" with the room in which Janavel took refuge while he was being hunted by the troops of the Duke of Savoy. For more about Janavel, see Appendix One and Appendix Six.

## **San Secondo**

To reach the Borgata Cardon, turn off the highway between Torre Pellice and Torino onto the road to San Secondo a short distance beyond Capella Moreri and before reaching Airali. As you drive toward San Secondo, you will want to recall that somewhere in this area lies the farm that our immigrant ancestor, Philippe Cardon, purchased when he moved down from the Borgata Cardon following the Edict of Emancipation issued by King Carlo Alberto in 1848. This Edict, for the first time in centuries, allowed the Vaudois to acquire property below

a certain line of elevation in the mountains. Previously they were restricted to these higher slopes, in a sort of a Vaudois ghetto. The edict also gave them all of the privileges of the other subjects of King Carlo Alberto, including full civil rights.

When you drive into San Secondo from the south, keep a lookout on the left for a vehicle gateway leading into the yard of the Vaudois temple at San Secondo. You may want to drive in and look around. This temple is one of the more recent Vaudois churches, having been built after the second World War. It was one of the first Vaudois temples to have a steeple or tower with a cross on it. Historically, the Vaudois did not look with favor on the use of the cross as a religious symbol, and this was one of their sources of conflict with Catholicism. The land for the San Secondo Vaudois temple was donated, at least in part, by Cardons. Midway through San Secondo you will take a sharp turn to the left and proceed up the hill to Prarostino San Bartolomeo.

### **Prarostino**

As at Angrogna, Prarostino is an area name (the eastern half of the Roccapiatta-Prarostino parish of the Vaudois church) which gradually became localized to the principal town, where the "new" parish church was located after 1828. The Catholics flanked this Vaudois temple with a parish church of their own, named San Bartolomeo, and the combination name "Prarostino San Bartolomeo" now is applied to the town, while the name Prarostino still applies to the area as well. As you drive into the town, you will encounter a large plaza in front of the Catholic parish church. The Vaudois temple of Prarostino is a smaller building up the street to the right of the Catholic church. There, if you have time, you may find it interesting to look in the parish records for the birth records of Philippe Cardon's and Marthe Marie Tourn's children, or even for those of prior generations of our family.

The plaza in front of the Catholic church overlooks the valley of the Torrente Turinella, and if the day is clear at all, you should stop in this plaza and take a minute to see where you are headed. As you look almost due west across the Turinella valley you will notice a number of small villages scattered down the slopes of the Prarostino side of the valley and, across the valley, on the Roccapiatta side. Part way up the Roccapiatta side of the valley you will notice a large white building standing somewhat apart from any of the villages. That is the Roccapiatta Vaudois temple that was used until the new Prarostino church was built in 1828. To the right of the Roccapiatta church and slightly lower is the village of Rostagni (Rostan). Higher up to the right are the villages of Gaudin (Godin) and Pralarossa. Just up from the Roccapiatta church and to the left a bit is the Borgata Cardon. Also to the left of the church, and a bit lower you may glimpse is a large building with some white walls. This is Cardonera Vecchia (Old Cardonera) and further to the left, also at or below the level of the church, is Cardonera.

### **Borgata Cardon**

Having located your objective, you should drive south on the street that parallels the valley and runs away from the Catholic church of San Bartolomeo. After a short distance you will come to a spot where the road branches to the right. It is a narrow, one lane paved road, and you will be headed toward Colletta. Take the right-most branch of the road, and continue to bear to the right wherever the road branches (there will be a road to Piani that branches off to the left.) You will drive several miles through the woods on this road to Colletta. When you arrive at Colletta (a large white farmhouse on the right, some barns and other houses further along to the left,) drive past the white farm house a couple of hundred feet and you should see a sign that marks the single lane dirt road to Borgata Cardon. I have always walked from that point (a couple of miles) but I believe that with the summer and weekend homes that have been

opened up in the borgata, this dirt road is probably safe for car travel. As you arrive at the borgata, you will note that there are a couple of homes to the right (the downhill side) of the road, and a larger number of homes to the left. Further up the hill (the road continues along to the village of Godin) there are two separated homes that are part of the borgata. Borgata means "small village," and each of the villages in the area would properly be called a borgata. The Vaudois (French) name for the village is "Les Cardon," and on Italian language maps it is variously denoted (when it is shown at all) as "Cardon" or "Cardoni," meaning "Cardons."

I have been told that there is a local tradition that "the Cardon who went to America" lived in one of the houses on the right (down-hill) side of the road. This would have been, if there is any basis for this tradition, before Philippe moved his family down to the farm in San Secondo, because clearly he was living in the San Secondo area when the Mormon missionaries were active in the Valleys in the early 1850s. In fact, in the records of the Italian Mission, all of the immigrant Cardons, including Philippe, were shown as having been born at San Secondo, which is incorrect since they could not have lived in the San Secondo area prior to 1848. Their births are correctly recorded in the Roccapiatta/Prarostino Vaudois parish records as having been in that parish, but the specific village is not shown. The land transaction records I examined, as reported in the main article, suggest that most of the families owned property scattered throughout the parish so without some specific record (which may exist in more recent notarial records in the State Archives -- e.g. when Philippe sold his home and bought the farm in San Secondo,) it is impossible to tell which house he lived in, or even with certainty that he lived in the Borgata Cardon and not, for example, in Cardonera or one of the other villages in the parish. However, there appears to be quite a strong and continuous family tradition among Philippe's descendants that he and his children were born in the Borgata Cardon, which itself supports this view. Cardon immigrants and descendants were returning to the Vaudois Valleys and visiting these birth places within three or four decades of the time that Philippe and his family immigrated to Utah. For example, Philippe's son Paul returned to visit his sister Anne and other relatives in the late 1880s. Some details of these visits are recorded in Richards, Dr. Daniel B., *The Scriptural Allegory* (S.L.C., Utah: Magazine Publishing Company, 1931).

### **Roccapiatta Temple**

The path down to the Roccapiatta church branches off from the road through Borgata Cardon not far beyond the houses on the downhill side of the road. The church is not presently utilized, except for special meetings, and will be locked. Someone in the village of Rostagni, a short way further to the east of the church will have the key, and will open the church for you. At the time I was there a Signora Pastore was the person who had the key. The burial yard at the rear of the church is where our Cardon ancestors were buried for several centuries. Through decomposition, the burial sites are recycled, and you will find only more recent graves in the church yard. It was at this church that all of the pastors and elders of the Vaudois faith met twice in the weeks before Easter in 1686 to determine on a course of action in response to the Duke of Savoy's decree requiring conversion to Catholicism or exile (see the main article.) The ensuing battles swept along the crest of the hills above Borgata Cardon, and beyond into the Angrogna Valley. It is very likely that homes in Borgata Cardon were destroyed at that time.

### **Balsiglia**

If your plans are to be in the area for more than a day or two, you may want to make the trip to Balsiglia, the site of the siege of the Arnaud's band over the winter of 1689-90. This is a longer trip that will take most of a day. You will go back to Pinerolo and then take the highway to Val Chisone. One of the first towns you will encounter is San Germano, the home of a number of our ancestors. Val Chisone was, prior to the religious wars of 1686, a

predominantly Vaudois area. However, after the war was over it was under the dominance of the French, and the Vaudois who returned to that area were forced into exile again, this time permanently. Many of them went to Germany where eventually the Vaudois groups were integrated into the Lutheran Church.

You will not be driving all the way into Val Chisone, just to a town called Perosa Argentina. There take the highway that branches left (westward) into the valley of the Germanasca river. You will pass through Perrero and then bear right along the Torrente Germanasca to Massello, Gros Passet, and finally, over a very rural road, to the small town of Balsiglia. The mountain north of the village is the Quatre Dent, or "four teeth," a series of ascending toothlike peaks that were the site of the Vaudois fortifications. There is a small museum in the town, and you can probably find someone to open it for you if it is not open. They do not get many American tourists in this area, and you should find the local residents accommodating.

### **Explanation of the Photographs**

**Photo 1** is a view of the valley of the Turinella looking eastward from the heights above Borgata Cardon. Borgata Cardon is in the lower left hand corner, with the Roccapiatta church and burial yard visible just above it. The building with partially white walls just to the right of the church, and a little lower, is Cardonera Vecchia. Just to the right of the middle of the picture along the lower edge is Cardonera. You can see other small groupings of houses scattered across the two slopes, the near slope (lower half of the photo) being the Roccapiatta side of the parish, and the far slope being the Prarostino side of the parish. The group of buildings nestled at the crest of the hill just to the right of center about two-thirds of the way up the photo is Prarostino San Bartolomeo, and the city just beyond in the upper center is Pinerolo. Torino is in the distance near the upper left hand corner of the photo.

**Photo 2** is a close up of the Borgata Cardon portion of the area covered by Photo 1, above. You can see the faint course of the road running into the village from the bottom of the picture. The lower houses to the right are those reputed to include the home of the "Cardon that went to America." The Roccapiatta church (large white building) with the enclosed burial yard to the rear is clearly visible. Cardonera Vecchia is the rambling, partially white building near the center of the photo.

**Photo 3** is another view of Borgata Cardon from the road approaching the village.

**Photo 4** is a closeup of some of the homes in Borgata Cardon. Since this picture was taken some of these homes have been fixed up as summer and weekend homes which are utilized by residents of Torino. I have been told that most of the property in the village is now owned by the Fornerone family.



**Photo 1**



**Photo 2**



**Photo 3**



**Photo 4**