

Piedmont Families Organization History

In the early 1970's representatives from the families of Waldensian descendants met and created the Piedmont Family Organization. In 1980 PFO was registered with the Internal Revenue Service (under section 501) as a fully tax-deductible organization. Since April 1992 it's major purpose is to support on-site research. **PFO Report No. 61, May, 2014:**

A tribute to Ron Malan, by Boyd L. Cardon and Donna Malan:

Ron's interest in family history began in the mid-1950's. His Piedmont interest began about 25 years ago in 1989 when he learned from Hugh Law that there were many volumes of records in Torino, Italy which had not been microfilmed. The Family History Library had so many other projects going and that those records would likely never be microfilmed—but he was given the name of an Italian researcher who might be willing to extract information from those records. That researcher, however, was no longer in Italy. He was, instead, teaching Italian at BYU. That visit resulted in his making a phone call—and the Brother Cena era began.

The first Cena report Donna can find (in 10 file drawers full of family history) is dated April 1992. Not long after he began extracting from those records, Brother Cena told Ron that he was having so many spiritual experiences working in those records that he was retiring early so he could devote more time to this important work—and retiring at a significant loss in retirement benefits. He suggested \$10/hour, an unheard of bargain then, and even more so now.

When Sister Cena died unexpectedly a few years ago, there were still two small sons to care for. Brother Cena moved to the Canary Islands so he would have the help of grandparents to care for those boys. Yet he continued to make trips back to Torino, Italy to extract those Waldensian records for us.

Ron incorporated the tax-exempt PFO, an umbrella organization for all families from the Piedmont Valley, and wrote the PFO reports in order to get financial support for the research to share the results with families who have ancestors from the Piedmont Valleys. PFO donations are vital, not only to sustain the research, but also because we--the Piedmont descendants—are essentially Brother Cena's financial support due to his loss of other income which he so willingly gave up.

Donna records: "During much of the snail mail era, our children gathered around our dining room table to assemble and fold the pages of the PFO Reports, stuff the envelopes, attach the address labels, lick the stamps and seal the envelopes. For those who are still receiving the snail mail version, Ron financed the printing and mailing of the PFO Reports (except for during our four missions) so the donations to PFO could be used solely for research.

A highlight of our 2000 International Malan Reunion in the Valleys was a day the two of us spent with Brother and Sister Cena. . . Brother Cena introduced us to the head of the National Archives who called for another lady to give us a private tour. The elevator operated only with a key, and every room we went in had to be unlocked with a separate key. We saw stacks and stacks of books—old fragile, ink-smudged, and ink bleeding through the pages. The library lady allowed Ron to pull out some volumes and look through them. Ron held in his hands a volume dated 1615-1616—records of his ancestors, written by people who actually knew those ancestors. What an experience for him after having devoted so much of his life to finding those ancestors. Ron and I have both had many spiritual experiences doing family file temple ordinances for these people. We know they have accepted the Gospel. They are dependent on us to financially support the research so their temple ordinances can be done.”

Ron Cardon:

On July 12, 2007, when we were almost ready to scale down and perhaps abandon continuing our research with Bro. Giovanni Cena, Ron wrote the following: “Brother Cena was having enough spiritual impressions while he was doing this work that he felt he needed to spend his full time on the project.

Most of us using your reports are getting older. If we stop, we may not finish before one or more of us passes away, or becomes incapacitated in some other way. I can promise you that it would be a long, long time—many year, if ever—before we got the project moving again if that happened.

According to the cardiologist (Ecuadorian, but trained in the U.S.), I should have died the day of my heart attack there. When one of the local temple missionaries was able to talk his way past hospital regulations and help give me a blessing, the Spirit assured me that thousands of ancestors and relatives were pleading that I remain so that these ordinances could be done. Immediately after the blessing, the enzymes began to return to normal, rather than continuing toward death. The cardiologist was astonished.

But there’s an important distinction to be noticed; I was given “enough time” to get the ordinances done—and that is very different from being told I’ll be around UNTIL they’re done. . . I do not understand why a few of us can move fairly readily through the records and prepare names for ordinances—estimating dates and clarifying relationships sufficiently for that to happen—while others who have tried to help are not able to do so. But that is a fact, and so I think we need to utilize those who can do the maximum while they have the health and breath to help.

My opinion is that we need to move forward in faith, and that we on our end need to increase our work so that people donate more, and more consistently. We’ve shown in the past that

this system works, so we just need to work it. At the very least, I think we need to continue as we were doing—Bro Cena completing two full volumes per month if he is able to do so. But let's not give up yet. "

Ron passed away on November 25, 2013. His effort and dedication to the work is sorely missed. He and his wife donated generously each month to PFO.

My Story with Italian Research, Ron and the PFO by Boyd L. Cardon

In 1960 during my freshman year at BYU, I took a genealogy class from Archibald Bennett. He told of his experience with the Waldensian research and the history of the microfilming done by Bro. Barker in the Waldensian Parish records. These microfilms were reserved reviewed by professionals and names were grouped into what was called the Piedmont Project. I was thrilled to see the names of our ancestors on these films. However I felt restricted from helping them. After returning from serving as mission president in 1997, I visited with Ron to become acquainted with what was being done. Ron became my mentor on how to do the research. I may endeavor to find and extend the Cardon and Stalle lines by use of the notary records. I began my contributions to the PFO Rep[orts in 2000. I have spent many hours searching the notary records to identify connections to our ancestors. I have felt the inspiration and direction of the spirit in doing the research and helping others do the ordinance work for our ancestors. At one time, some were ready to abandon our research because we were thousands of dollars behind in our payment with Giovanni Cena. Thanks to the faith and the generosity of many we were able to get solvent and have a reserve of several thousands of dollars.

We are now in the same need to raise funds to keep the research going. The Italian government is scaling back the hours to the public records because of the economy in Italy. They may even close the archives down. We must continue to get all we can now.

2013 Achievements:

We launched a new website: www.waldensian.info and made Paypal available for contributions to the Piedmont Family Organization (PFO) & introduced www.cardonfamilies.org

Number of volumes available: 576; Number transcribed: 271; Number left to do: 188 volumes which will cost us \$94,000 when we them translated in to English and available to us.

We currently owe Brother Cena \$4,000. Use Pay-Pal or send a tax exempt contribution to PFO % Dick Cardon, 987 West 2200 North, Pleasant Grove, Utah 84062-9239