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Story or History?

A Romeo and Juliet-style Love Story of Pablo and Exuperancia and a closer study into their story

By Heidi Riboldi



Illustration 1 Pablo Montaña's picture from his Documento Nacional de Identidad (DNI).

1881-1946

The game telephone starts with someone whispering a particular phrase in the ear of another person. The phrase is then repeated to the next person, and so on until the final person in the circle tells the entire group what the phrase is. The typical outcome is that the phrase is altered from person to person until it is completely changed when the final person receives the whispered phrase. In many cases, stories that have not been written down end up the same way over time, somewhat distorted or fragmented. Some of the details in the family traditional love story of Pablo Montaña and Exuperancia Fernandez San Juan may have suffered the same fate.

This is how the traditional family story goes: In late 19th century Spain, Pablo Montaña, an orphan, was a seminarist studying to be a priest when he met and fell in love with Exuperancia Fernandez San Juan. He decided to leave the seminary so they could be married. Exuperancia's parents, however, did not want them to marry. The economic gap between the Montaña family, who were poor farmers, compared to the landowning Fernandez family, made Exuperancia's parents wary of their union. Pablo and Exuperancia decided to elope and then emigrated to Argentina. He worked in a shipyard until they could afford passage across the Atlantic to the New World. Together they had 13 children, many of whom died in infancy.

This research project will attempt to answer three questions to validate the family story: Was Pablo Montaña an orphan? Did Pablo and Exuperancia elope? Was there an economic gap between the Montaña and Fernandez families?

Records Kept by Family Members

Fortunately, there are eight preserved records in the possession of a family member from Pablo Montaña and Exuperancia that can shed light on their family traditional story. See charts 1-3.

- 1914 to 1935 *The Family Biography*, loose journal pages written by Pablo Montaña¹
- 1922 Argentina ID card of Pablo Montaña²
- 1925 Official baptism record certificate of Josefa Montaña, daughter of Pablo and Exuperancia³
- 1927 Argentina ID card of Pablo Montaña⁴

¹ Montaña, Pablo. Journal, 1914-1935, loose "Biografía de la Familia, datos autenticos," Journal pages 8-18 from unknown journal; digital images made by Santiago Amiel, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, 2019. The journal apparently originated with Pablo Montaña; comparisons of ink and penmanship suggest most entries were recorded 1914-1935. The journal or its pages passed to his daughter Maria Esther (Montaña) Riboldi, and then to her daughter, Graciela (Riboldi) Amiel of Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, who still owns the original loose leaves.

² Pablo Montaña National ID document, 1922, "Documento Nacional de Identidad," (DNI); digital images made by Santiago Amiel, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, 2019. The identification document apparently originated with Pablo Montaña and passed to his daughter Maria Esther (Montaña) Riboldi, and then to her daughter, Graciela (Riboldi) Amiel of Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, who still owns the original.

³ Parish of San Vicente Mártir of Bilbao, Baptism Certificate of Josefa Esperanza Montaña Fernandez, book No. 67, folio 276 entry 407; digital image made by Santiago Amiel, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, 2019. Pablo Montaña apparently requested a copy of his daughter, Josefa Esperanza Montaña's baptism record on 19 November 1925, which resulted in a certified copy being sent by D. Domingo Abona y Vidaurrázaga. The baptism certificate passed to his daughter Maria Esther (Montaña) Riboldi, and then to her daughter, Graciela (Riboldi) Amiel of Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, who still owns the original certificate. The original baptism record is housed in San Vicente Martir Parish, 1918-1920, "Libro de Bautismos," No. 67; Archivo Historico Diocesano de Derio, Bilbao, Spain, Num. 407, p. 277, as verified on-site by this author.

⁴ Pablo Montaña National ID document, 1927, "Documento Nacional de Identidad," (DNI); digital images made by Santiago Amiel, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, 2019. The identification document apparently originated with Pablo Montaña and passed to his daughter Maria Esther (Montaña) Riboldi, and then to her daughter, Graciela (Riboldi) Amiel of Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, who still owns the original.

- 1932 Exemption for military service for Pablo José Montaña, son of Pablo and Exuperancia⁵
- 1937 Argentina ID card of Silvano Montaña, son of Pablo and Exuperancia⁶
- 1947 Nationality Certificate of Exuperancia⁷
- 1947 Argentina ID card of Exuperancia⁸

Chart 1 Pablo Montaña’s Argentina ID cards	
<p style="text-align: center;">Argentina ID and Naturalization Card</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 May 1922 • Parents: Victorio Montaña and Antonina Carnero • From Cañizo, Zamora, Spain • Birthdate is 15 Feb 1881 • Marital status is married • Profession is empleado, “employee” • Knows how to read and write • Barba, afeitada • Color, Blanco • With photograph and thumbprint 	<p style="text-align: center;">Argentina ID Card</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Feb 1927 • Birthplace is Villalpando, Zamora, Spain • Birthdate is 15 Feb 1881 • Physical description: white, med brown eyes, straight medium nose, 1 meter and 61 cm in height • With a photograph and thumbprint

⁵ Argentina Exemption for Military Service of Pablo José, 1932; digital images made by Santiago Amiel, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, 2019. The exemption form apparently originated with Pablo José Montaña and passed to his sister Maria Esther (Montaña) Riboldi, and then to her daughter, Graciela (Riboldi) Amiel of Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, who still owns the original.

⁶ Silvano Montaña National ID document, 1937, “Documento Nacional de Identidad,” (DNI); digital images made by Santiago Amiel, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, 2019. The identification document apparently originated with Silvano Montaña and passed to his sister Maria Esther (Montaña) Riboldi, and then to her daughter, Graciela (Riboldi) Amiel of Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, who still owns the original.

⁷ Nationality Certificate of Exuperancia, 1947, “Certificado de Nacionalidad, N.º 207,” 20 February 1947, Consulado de España en Rosario, Rosario, Argentina; digital images made by Santiago Amiel [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, 2019. The Nationality Certificate apparently originated with Exuperancia (Fernandez San Juan) Montaña and passed to her daughter Maria Esther (Montaña) Riboldi, and then to her daughter Graciela (Riboldi) Amiel of Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, who still owns the original.

⁸ Exuperancia (Montaña) Fernandez San Juan National ID document, 1947, “Documento Nacional de Identidad,” (DNI); digital images made by Santiago Amiel, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, 2019. The identification document apparently originated with Exuperancia (Montaña) Fernandez San Juan and passed to her daughter Maria Esther (Montaña) Riboldi, and then to her daughter, Graciela (Riboldi) Amiel of Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, who still owns the original.

Chart 2
Exuperancia's Argentina ID's

Nationality Certificate	Argentina ID Card
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued in Rosario on 20 Feb 1947 • Valid for two years, expires on 31 Dec 1948 • Parents: Ildefonso Fernandez and Sandalia San Juan • Birthplace: Villárdiga, Zamora, Spain • Birthdate: 26 April 1883 • Widowed • Profession: homemaker • Residence: Ayacucho 1627 Rosario • In Argentina since 1908 • Signature: Exuperancia Fernandez de Montaña • Official Stamp "Class 9a—Gratis" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued on 27 Feb 1947 • Widow of Montaña • Profession: Homemaker • Birthdate: 26 April 1883 • Birthplace: Villárdiga, Zamora, Spain • Physical description: 1 m 53cm tall; brown hair • With a photo and thumbprint

Chart 3
Documents/ Records of three of the Children of Pablo and Exuperancia

<p>Baptism Certificate of Josefa Esperanza</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate request date: 19 Nov 1925 • Birthdate: 28 Sept 1919 • Birthplace: Bilbao, Vizcaya, Spain • Baptism date: 12 Oct 1919 • Baptism place: San Vicente Martir • Parents: Pablo Montaña from Cañizo, Zamora; profession is laborer and Exuperancia Fernandez San Juan from Villárdiga, Zamora. • Paternal grandparents are Victorio and Antonina, both from Cañizo. • Maternal grandparents are Ildefonso and Sandalia, both from Villárdiga. • Godparents are Modesto Carnero and Carmen Carnero. • With official certification stamp 	<p>Argentina Exemption for Military Service of Pablo José</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued on 26 May 1932 • This certified that Pablo José was exempt for military service and no other information was given. <p style="text-align: center;">Argentina ID Card of Silvano</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Son of Pablo Montaña • 26 July 1939 • Single marital status • Profession, employee • Birthdate is 4 May 1917 • Birthplace is Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina
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Chart 3 Notes: The certificate of Josefa is an official record extraction form filled out by D. Domingo Abona y Vidaurrázaga, the Priest from the parish church of San Vincente Mártir, Bilbao. Pablo Montaña must have requested this information six years after Josefa was born and baptized in Bilbao.

The Journal of Pablo Montaña-the Family Biography

The journal pages of Pablo Montaña can be classified as an authored source, with primary information, giving indirect evidence. Pablo Montaña titled the first of the 12 pages, “The Family Biography, dates are authentic.” He provides exact dates, time of births, and locations of 27 events (18 birth/baptisms, one marriage, and eight deaths). He also provides the identity of the paternal and maternal grandparents of the children, godparents and their relationships to the child, the circumstances of the death of several children and parents, and where the records are in the Civil Register. He not only had first-hand knowledge of most of these events, but evidence from the journal pages reveals that Pablo Montaña recorded the information in a timely manner. For example, at the end of the entries of three of his children, Santiago Alfonso, Agapito, and Josefa, he writes the date when he wrote the information in his journal. In the case of Santiago Alfonso and Agapito, the event date and entry date are on the same day. The entry date of Josefa is less than two months after her baptism. See Images 1 and 2. Another example that shows Pablo Montaña had first-hand knowledge of many of these events is the relationship of the godparents to the child. For example, the godparents listed in Josefa’s baptism certificate is written as Modesto and Carmen Carnero. However, in the journal pages of Pablo Montaña, before the name Carmen, Pablo inserts the words, “su hija,” his daughter. Pablo knew that Modesto was the father of Carmen because he had first-hand knowledge of their relationship. See Image 3.

The entry dates, the precise time of births, and the relationship of the godparents to the child, all give evidence that the dates and information given in the journal pages are authentic, as Pablo Montaña indicated in the title page of his journal. A closer look at the information from these eight documents and records could provide clues to the parentage of Pablo Montaña.

Image 1

Journal entries six through eight

Santiago Alfonso (entry 6), Agapito (entry 7), and Silvano (entry 8).

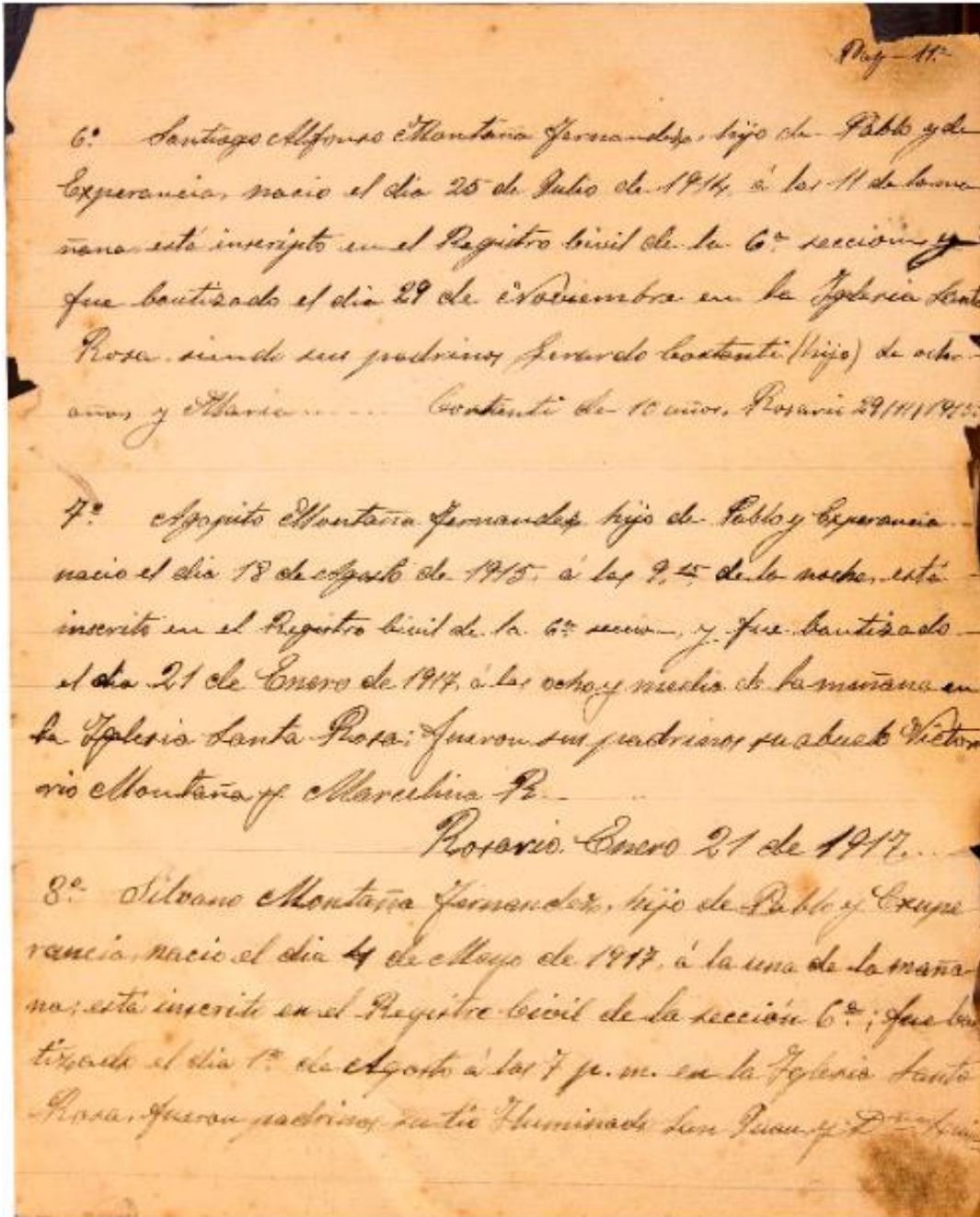


Image 2

Journal entries nine through eleven

Josefa Esperanza (entry 9), Maria Esther (entry 10), and Aurea (entry 11).

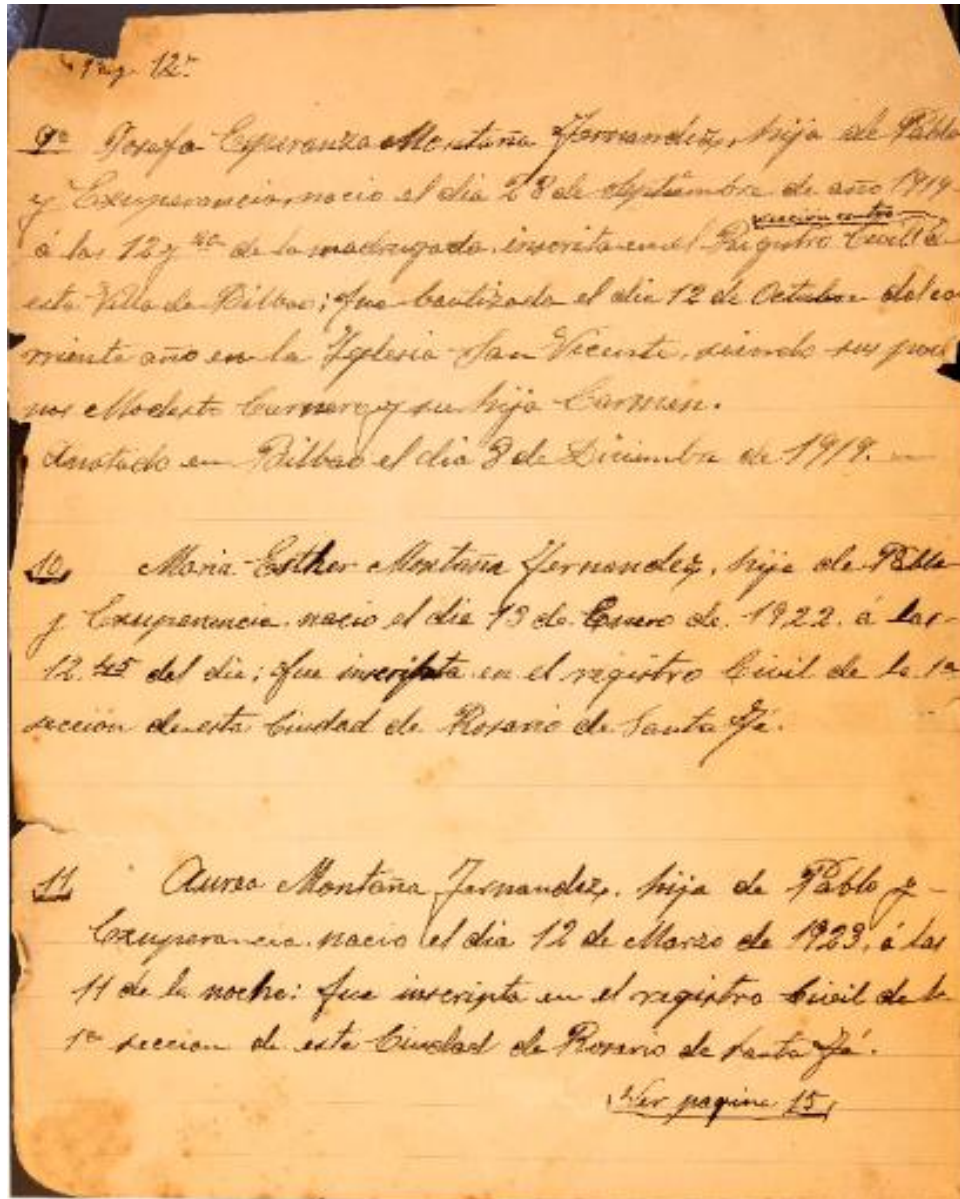
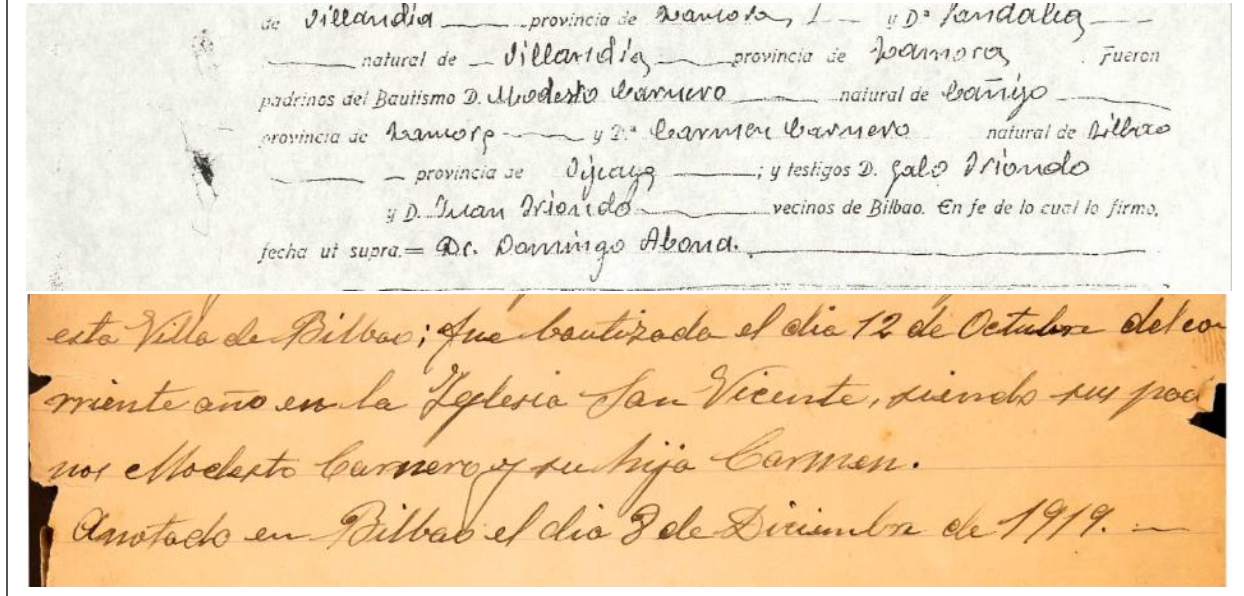


Image 1 and 2 Notes: The precise time of the birth of these children signify that Pablo wrote these events down in a timely manner. For example: Santiago Alfonso was born at 11 a.m., Agapito was born at 9:15 p.m., Silvano was born at 1:00 a.m., Josefa was born at 12:20 in the early morning, Maria Esther was born 12:45 in the afternoon, and Aurea was born at 11:00 p.m.

Image 3

Josefa's baptism certificate compared to the journal page of Pablo Montaña



Was Pablo Montaña an orphan?

Part of the undocumented story of Pablo Montaña is that he was an orphan raised by a Catholic priest.

This is not out of the ordinary for nineteenth-century Spain where mortality rates were still high, leaving many children without fathers and mothers. Reher presents data showing that the crude death rate in Spain hovered between 27 to 31 deaths per thousand between 1860 and 1900 and that life expectancy only gradually improved during this same time period, indicating a high infant mortality rate.⁹ Reher also shows that "the interior and southern parts of the peninsula had high death rates, often exceeding 36 per thousand."¹⁰ This area includes the birthplace of Pablo Montaña.

The leading causes of this high mortality rate were epidemic diseases such as typhus, malaria, yellow fever, and cholera, which affected children and adults. Therefore, children losing one or both parents at an early age was not uncommon.

In his article, "Orphans and Adoption in Early Modern Castilian Villages," Vassberg suggests that there were several solutions for an orphaned child to find a home, informally or legally.¹¹ Close family relatives would typically be the first place an orphaned child would go; grandparents, aunts, uncles, older siblings,

⁹ David S. Reher, *Perspectives on the Family in Spain Past and Present*, Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, New York. 1977, p. 126, Table 1.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 126-127, Map 5.1

¹¹ David E. Vassberg (1998) Orphans and adoption in early modern Castilian villages, *The History of the Family*, 3:4, 441-458, DOI: [10.1016/S1081-602X\(99\)80257-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1081-602X(99)80257-7).

and especially childless couples. Priests who were close of kin would also sometimes provide a home in exchange for service that was needed by the Priest.

Even though the family story of Pablo Montaña being an orphan raised by a priest is entirely plausible in 1880's Spain, the records found during this research do not support the story. Pablo's parents are identified in several different documents and records, as Victorio Montaña and Antonina Carnero. Pablo's ID card from Argentina, the baptism record of Josefa, and the first page of the family biography, all identify his parents. The journal pages offer more details than just the names of his parents:

Victorio Montaña Herrero

- Born 17 Nov 1856 in Cañizo, Zamora
- Father is Enrique Montaña Gambrino from Cañizo.
- Mother is Josefa Herrero Dominguez from Villalba de la Lampreana.

Antonina Carnero Gonzalez

- Born 10 May 1858 in Cañizo.
- Father is Bartolome Carnero from Villárdiga.
- Mother is Isabel Gonzalez from Cañizo.

It is clear then that Pablo knew who his parents were yet, the names of the parents, alone, do not provide proof that Pablo is not an orphan. There is a possibility that Victorio and Antonina could have died, leaving Pablo to be raised by someone else. The journal pages were consulted to determine if Victorio and Antonina were still living during Pablo Montaña's lifetime. In most cases, Pablo provides in the birth entries, the relationships between the godparents and the child. Victorio and Antonina were mentioned as godparents and identified as a grandfather or grandmother of that child. See Chart 4. This not only supports evidence that Pablo Montaña knew who his parents were, but also that his parents were living throughout his lifetime in Spain and Argentina.

Chart 4
Journal Extractions of Godparents and Their Relationship to a Child

Birthyear	Child	Godfather	Relationship	Godmother	Relationship
1906	José Victorio Montaña Fernandez	Sabas Montaña from Villárdiga	unknown	Arsenia San Juan from Villárdiga	unknown
1908	Jacinta Montaña Fernandez	Idefonso Fernandez	Maternal Grandfather	Antonina Carnero	Paternal Grandmother
1910	Pablo José Montaña Fernandez	None mentioned, quick baptism because he was very sick with a stomach infection	--	--	--
1912	Pablo José Montaña Fernandez	Victorio Montaña	Paternal Grandfather	Sandalia San Juan	Maternal Grandmother
1913	Josefa Montaña Fernandez	Victorio Montaña	Paternal Grandfather	Antonina Carnero	Paternal Grandmother
1914	Santiago Alfonso Montaña Fernandez	Gerardo Constanti Jr.	8 years old	Maria Constanti	10 years old
1915	Agapito Montaña Fernandez	Victorio Montaña	Paternal Grandfather	Marcelina R[equera]	Unknown relation
1917	Silvano Montaña Fernandez	Iluminado San Juan	Uncle	Doña Luisa	Unknown relation
1919	Josefa Esperanza Montaña Fernandez	Modesto Carnero	Father of Carmen	Carmen Carnero	Daughter of Modesto
1922	Maria Esther Montaña Fernandez	None mentioned			
1923	Aurea Montaña Fernandez	None mentioned			
1927	Dora Nelinda Montaña Fernandez	None mentioned			

There is a slight possibility that Victorio and Antonina were adoptive parents. However, Pablo's birth record located in the Cañizo town archive and baptism record located in the Archivo Histórico Diocesano in Zamora dispels this notion. Both the birth and baptism records verify that Pablo was born at 6:00 a.m. in the house of his parents, identified as Victorio Montaña and Antonina Carnero. Furthermore, Victorio, the father of Pablo, was recorded as the informant for the birth record. The time and place of his birth suggest that his mother, identified as Antonina Carnero, gave birth to Pablo Montaña and gives evidence that he was not an orphan or adopted.

Did Pablo and Exuperancia Elope?

The process of marriage had been developed over the centuries by both civil laws of the Crown and canon law of the Catholic Church. Civil and canon laws both regulated, defined, and protected the institution of marriage and family in Hispanic Culture. As part of the premarital process prescribed by Catholic canon law, the priest was required to investigate the couple, ensuring that they followed all the procedures. The banns were posted for three days in the town of the soon-to-be bride and groom to announce their intended marriage. This allowed local townsfolk to bring forth any reason for this couple not to be

married.¹² Another required procedure was to receive the consent of each of the bride and groom's parents. Regulations added to canon law throughout the late 1700s, required the parental consent to minor children (under 25 years old) with a threat to disinherit without the parent's approval.¹³ Verena Martinez Alier explains that when the parents refused to give consent to a marriage for various reasons the couple resorted to something radical:

“It was at this point, when parents objected to the match and placed obstacles in the path of the young couple, that the latter resorted to elopement. The aim of this drastic step was to reverse the attitude of the dissenting parents towards the intended marriage, to create a situation which would render marriage wholly desirable to them. Usually the young couple disappeared for a few days, and the girl was deflowered. Then the young man gave himself up, or they were found by the police. The essential point was that the girl had lost her honour. In view of a daughter's shame, few parents would persist in their aversion to her suitor. The rationale behind this maneuver was that, whereas initially the family's honour was thought to be damaged by a marriage with an unsuitable candidate, in the face of the daughter's shame it was precisely the family's honour that now demanded the marriage.”¹⁴

As explained, the purpose of the elopement was to manipulate the consent of the parents to the couple's marriage. One reason a parent would dissent was that their child was marrying below their station, and it would make an unequal union. The next generation needed to marry their equal to preserve the economic status and honor of a Spanish family. The undocumented story of the family continues that Pablo and Exuperancia eloped when Exuperancia's parents would not give their consent to be married because Pablo was from a poor family, and they threatened to disinherit Exuperancia.

One subtle clue from the journal pages written by Pablo Montaña shows that Pablo and Exuperancia eventually received some approval from her parents, Ildefonso Fernandez and Sandalia San Juan, to their marriage. They were listed as godparents to two children of Pablo and Exuperancia. See Chart 4. One child, Jacinta, was born in 1908 in Villárdiga with Ildefonso listed as godfather. The other child, Pablo José, was born in 1912 in Argentina with Sandalia acting as godmother. Not only did they follow Exuperancia, emigrating to Argentina and staying there for the rest of their lives, but they also acted as spiritual guardians to their grandchildren demonstrating indirectly, an acceptance of their daughter's marriage.

The final record that can give insight concerning the parent's consent of the marriage of Pablo and Exuperancia is their marriage record. It was required by canon law to record in the marriage record, the premarital investigation including, the banns that were read and if there were any impediments raised against the couple to be married. The marriage record can be broken up into several essential phrases and gives clues about the premarital process and the outcome of each procedure; for example, when and where the banns had been posted, if there were any impediments, and if they were given the wedding blessings and so on.¹⁵ The marriage record of Pablo Montaña and Exuperancia is a typical marriage record where all the procedures of the marriage are recorded as prescribed by the canonical law. The

¹² Ryskamp, George, “Chapter Six, Foundations of the Family: Marriage in Facie Ecclesiae,” Prepublication manuscript, 2019; Brigham Young University Family History BA Program.

¹³ Martinez-Alier, Verena. “Elopement and Seduction in Nineteenth-Century Cuba,” *Past and Present*, No. 55 (May 1972): 91-129. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/650224>: 2019; p. 94.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 97-98.

¹⁵ Ryskamp, George, “Chapter Six, Foundations of the Family: Marriage in Facie Ecclesiae,” Prepublication manuscript, 2019; Brigham Young University Family History BA Program.

banns were read for three days in the towns of Villárdiga and Cañizo, and there were no impediments. See Chart 5. Ildefonso and Sandalia, therefore, gave their permission for Pablo and Exuperancia to be married.

Chart 5 Phrases of the marriage record of Pablo and Exuperancia	
Pablo Montaña Carnero Esuperancia Fernandez S. Juan	Marginal Note Phrase
73 [written in the top right-hand corner]	Temporal Reference Phrase
En la villa de Villárdiga provincia y obispado de Zamora	Place Phrase
En diez y seis de Noviembre de mil nuevecientos cuatro	Marriage date Phrase
El que suscribe Cura párroco de su única iglesia asisti al matrimonio Canonico que in facie Ecclesiae contrageron	Marriage Ceremony Phrase
Pablo Montaña Carnero soltero natural y vecino de Cañizo	Groom Identification Phrase
Hijo legitimo de Victorio Montaña y Antonina Carnero de referido Cañizo	Groom Parents Phrase
Esuperancia Fernandez S. Juan también soltera	Bride Identification Phrase
Hija de Ildefonso Fernandez y Sandalia S. Juan de esta villa	Bride Parents Identification Phrase
Fureron leidas al ofertorio de las misas parroquiales Santo de esta como de la de Cañizo las tres Canónica, moniciones sin resultar impedimento alguno según certificad del Sr. Párroco de dicho Cañizo fechado en seis del corriente	Pre-Marital Process Phrase: the banns were read in Villárdiga and Cañizo and there were no impediments.
Fueron examindados y aprobados en Doctrina Cristiana Confesaron	Confession and Mass Phrase
Comulgaron recibiendo las bendiciones nupciales	Blessing Ceremony Phrase
Fueron padrinos Sabas Montaña Herrero de dicho Cañizo y Arsenia S. Juan Alonso de esta villa	Godparent Identification Phrase
Fueron testigos Santiago Martinez Raucos Miguel Asensio y Antonino Martinez Ramos de esta villa	Witnesses Phrase
Esta que firmo en dicho dia Cura Lopez	Certification Phrase

There is still a possibility that Pablo and Exuperancia could have eloped as described by Alier, to change the dissent of Ildefonso and Sandalia. However, the dates between their marriage and the birth of their first-born child show no pre-marital pregnancy. Pablo and Exuperancia were married on 16 November

1904 in Villárdiga, the birthplace of Exuperancia.¹⁶ Their first child, José Victorio, was born on the 6th of May 1906, 18 months after they were married.¹⁷

An interesting side note to the question of parental consent was the finding of a marginal note in the baptismal record of Exuperancia, of 28 April 1883. Exuperancia is identified as “hija natural” instead of “hija legitima.” In the margin the following note appears:

At the Parrochial Church of Saint Mary of Realengo of the town of Villardiga, Bishopric and Province of Zamora, natural daughter of Ildfonso Fernandez and Sandalia San Juan. This child has been legitimized by the subsequent marriage as can be seen at the entry found in the number forty seven of marriages, folio thirty, page 73 (signed) Lopez¹⁸

Ildfonso and Sandalia were married six months after the birth of their first child, Exuperancia, 20 October 1883.¹⁹ This background could have made her parents more sympathetic to a less than ideal marriage in their eyes. If that was the case.

Was there an economic gap between the Montaña and Fernandez families?

The family story recounts that the primary reason Exuperancia’s parents did not want her to marry Pablo was because he was from a poor family. There are five original source records available for this research that give indirect evidence to the economic situation of these families:

- 1847 Marriage Record of Bartolomé Carnero and Isabel Gonzalez,²⁰ maternal grandparents of Pablo Montaña.
- 1880 Marriage Record of Victorio Montaña and Antonina Carnero,²¹ parents of Pablo Montaña.
- 1881 Birth Record of Pablo Montaña.²²
- 1883 Marriage Record of Ildfonso Fernandez and Sandalia San Juan,²³ parents of Exuperancia.
- 1919 Baptism Record of Josefa Montaña,²⁴ daughter of Pablo and Exuperancia.

Each of these sources provide the occupation of several individuals showing that the Montaña/Carnero and Fernandez/San Juan families had similar occupations. See Chart 6.

¹⁶ Pablo Montaña and Exuperancia Fernandez San Juan, "Libro de Casados 1875-1955," AHD Zamora, Villárdiga, Villalpando, Zamora, Spain; Libro 248-17, p. 73.

¹⁷ José Victorio Montaña, "Libro de bautizados en la Parroquia de Santa Maria de Realengo de Villárdiga," AHD Zamora, Zamora, Spain; vol. 248-5, libro 7, Folio 292.

¹⁸ Exuperancia Fernandez San Juan, "Libro de bautizados en la Parroquia de Santa Maria de Realengo de Villárdiga," AHD Zamora, Zamora, Spain; vol. 248-5, libro 7, Folio 87.

¹⁹ Ildfonso Fernandez and Sandalia San Juan, "Libro de Casados 1875-1955," AHD Zamora, Villárdiga, Villalpando, Zamora, Spain; Libro 248-17, p. 30, entry no. 47.

²⁰ Bartolomé Carnero and Isabel Gonzalez, "Libros de casados 1794-1882," Archivo Historico Diocesano of Zamora, Cañizo, Villalpando, Spain; vol. 135, Libro 11, p. 63v.

²¹ Victorio Montaña and Antonina Carnero, "Libros de casados 1852-1928," Cañizo, Villalpando, Spain; vol. 135-6, Libro 12, Folio 36v.

²² Pablo Montaña, "Juzgado de Cañizo de 1878-1881," Ayuntamiento de Cañizo, Villalpando, Zamora, Spain; Seccion de Nacimiento, Libro 7, Folio 85.

²³ Ildfonso Fernandez and Sandalia San Juan, "Libro de Casados 1875-1955," AHD Zamora, Villárdiga, Villalpando, Zamora, Spain; Libro 248-17, p. 30, entry no. 47.

²⁴ Josefa Esperanza Montaña, "Libro No. 67 de Bautismos de la Parroquia de San Vicente Martir 1918-1920," Bilbao, Spain; Archivo Historico Diosesano de Bilbao, Num. 407, p. 277.

Chart 6
Occupations for individuals as listed in the Marriage, Birth, and Baptism Records

Family	Person	Year	Occupation	Record
Carnero (Montaña)	Bartolomé (Maternal grandfather of Pablo Montaña and father of Antonina Carnero)	1847	Creicio [SIC.] labrador	Marriage record of Barolomé Carnero and Isabel Gonzalez
Montaña	Victorio (father of Pablo)	1880	Oficio Labrador	Marriage record of Victorio/Antonina
Montaña	Victorio	1881	Jornalero	Birth record of Pablo Montaña
Fernandez	Ildefonso (father of Exuperancia)	1883	Oficio Labrador	Marriage record of Ildefonso and Sandalia
Fernandez San Juan	Sandalia		[Homemaker]	ditto
Fernandez	José (Pat. Grandfather of Exuperancia)		Labrador	ditto
Fernandez	Petra Ramos (Pat. Grandmother of Exuperancia)		Labrador	ditto
San Juan	Felipe (mat. grandfather of Exuperancia)		Labrador	ditto
San Juan	Antonia Alonso (mat. Grandmother of Exuperancia)		Labrador	ditto
Montaña	Pablo Montaña	1919	Jornalero	Josefa, Bilbao baptism record

The “Diccionario de la Lengua Castellana” of the Real Academia Española, 12th edition of 1884, defines the terms “jornalero” and “Labrador” this way:

- Jornalero. El que trabaja á jornal (estipendio que gana el trabajador en un día entero por su trabajo).²⁵
- Labrador: Que labra la tierra. || Persona que posee hacienda de campo y la cultiva por su cuenta.²⁶

A “jornalero” is a day-worker, who gets pay daily wages for his/her day’s work—clearly a profession of one of the lower social class. A “labrador” is more ambiguous. This term can refer to someone who works the land but does not necessarily own the land he/she works (better than a jornalero, but still lower social class). However, this term can also refer to the person who owns land and cultivates it for his/her profit, clearly belonging to a middle or upper social class, the landed class (depending on how much land they owned).

The marriage record of Ildefonso and Sandalia identify the Fernandez and San Juan families as labradores. These families most likely owned land; however, there is a possibility that they worked land owned by someone else. More research is needed to locate wills or bills of sale to ascertain their socio-economic position definitively.

The Montaña family position is less clear-cut. Pablo’s maternal grandfather, Bartolomé Carnero, is a labrador when he was married. Pablo’s father, Victorio, is identified both as labrador at his marriage and as a jornalero a year later at Pablo’s birth. Pablo Montaña is a jornalero in 1919, at the baptism of his daughter, Josefa. Considering just this information, it seems that the Montaña family could have been in a lower socio-economic class than that of the Fernandez San Juan families.

CONCLUSION

Unwritten stories tend to evolve into blurred lines of fact and fiction. Pablo Montaña wrote clear, detailed accounts of births, deaths, and a marriage of his family, which provides an excellent starting point into understanding the family traditional love story of Pablo and Exuperancia. However, according to factual data found in researched genealogical records, it can be safely concluded that (1) Pablo Montaña was not an orphan, he was born at the home of his parents, Victorio Montaña and Antonina Carnero. (2) The marriage record of Pablo and Exuperancia follows all typical proceeding of canonical law, indicating that they did receive the consent of her parents to marry, and most likely did not elope. And (3) there may have been an economic gap between the Montaña/Carnero and Fernandez/San Juan families.

As with most research projects, this one raises more questions and the need to continue investigating this fascinating family story.

²⁵ Real Academia Española, Diccionario de la Lengua Castellana, 12th edition, 1884, p. 617, <https://archive.org/details/diccionariodel00acaduoft/page/616>.

²⁶ Ibid. P. 624.