

## *A case of complexity in the Latin American family. Tracing the Galleno Villafán history<sup>1</sup>*

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### ABSTRACT

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The complexity and diversity of many Latin America families create a peculiar space of real as well as phantasmagoric presences. The Latin American history draws upon multicultural and multiethnic references that are at times untraceable. Latin American families develop in this context often unaware of the constant transformation and amalgamation impacting the personal and communal consciousness. Yet memory anchors their evolutionary reference and serves to create an identity. In this essay, I present a case study of family complexity and the relevance of memory in defining or forming family identity. This is the Galleno Villafán family, my family that evolved from Peruvians and immigrants.

**Keywords:** family memories; history; heritage; generational differences.

La complejidad y diversidad de muchas familias latinoamericanas ha creado un espacio particular de presencias tanto reales cómo fantasmagóricas. La historia latinoamericana se desenvuelve entre referencias multi-culturales y multi-étnicas que son a veces poco trazables. En este contexto las familias latinoamericanas se desarrollan sin muchas veces ser conscientes de los continuos procesos de transformación que impactan la conciencia personal y colectiva. La memoria ata sus referencias comunes y sirve para crear identidad. En este ensayo, presento un caso de estudio de complejidad familiar y trato de la relevancia de la memoria en definir o formar la identidad familiar. Se trata de la familia Galleno Villafán, mi familia, que se ha originado a partir de raíces peruanas y migrantes.

**Palabras clave:** memorias de familia, historia, herencia, diferencias generacionales.

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## History of a Family and Family History: personal and methodological issues

The complexity and diversity of many Latin American families create a peculiar space in which real and phantasmagoric presences coexist. A rich prehispanic, colonial, and more modern heritage blend in a polyphonic flow to create the Latin American way of being which is diverse, complex, and disorganized. The majority of academic discourses examine colonialism, Independence, the Creole Republic, and the role of modern government. Yet, the history of natives, blacks, Asians, and those from the Middle East also unfolded simultaneously. This multiethnicity in constant transformation of amalgamation impacted Perú's historical human evolution and the dynamic of the main and official discourses together with the more silent unofficial discourses influencing the country's social evolution. Human nature is resilient and constantly transforms. Throughout the Hispanic dominance, Peruvians and newcomers blended old and new traditions and classes. Their diverse voices were also the voices of their ancestors in the Peruvian territory. This is the culture in which I was brought up, in the fusion of each otherness, evolving with cultural otherness in harmonious and dissonant ways in a racial and class prejudice milieu that makes the reality of Peru pluricultural and plurihistorical.

Transforming the dominant culture with the Independence of Perú did not decolonize the Spanish ideology that continues to exist; old prejudices became more subtle and were somehow tamed by modern ideologies and education. Surely it did not stop the prejudice and racial sanctions that psychologically impacted the self-esteem of those discounted by Perú's social system. In some instances, the best that could happen to defenseless inhabitants of color was to be dismissed, ignored, or unseen, which means, in a sense metaphorically speaking, being politically buried alive as citizens. This dismissal or metaphorical "burial" simultaneously produced the space for unofficial life styles and greater opportunities than Perú's institutions extended to marginal populations. Changing the colonial ideology, which was intensified during the Creole Republic, required Perú's government to commit to its constitutional mission. However, this challenge never found a satisfactory social resolution. It was not surprising then that by the 1980's terrorism arose as radical groups leveraged the unjust historical reality of the oppressed and uncounted. Perú has since improved and one can now find demonstrable examples that illustrate the change.

I am part of this history. I am part of this land that was and is also of my ancestors – those who were already there and experienced the colonial eras or those who came to settle and lived the chaotic transition after the Independence and under "caudillismo". I am an ethnic mosaic with two last names containing the history of my ancestors who I am still discovering. I was born in December 1959. My family structure and relationships – from my great-grandparents to my parents – have been shaped by the nineteenth to the twenty-first century and theirs by the decisions they made in the previous eras to immigrate to Latin America and to settle in Peru. I regrettably know very little about my native ancestors due to the racial prejudice that silenced their history, their blending with European immigrants or their siblings in the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth century. Currently I live in the United States where I immigrated in 1995 with my son due to the political, social, and economical chaos that terrorism and the Peruvian government created.

As is the case with many millions of Latin Americans, I had been unable to fully trace my Peruvian or non-Peruvian roots. I never knew enough about my ancestry. Recently this changed. I will share my findings in this essay as I piece together my family history from hindsight and with the help of Olga Villafán Salazar (my mother) and my oldest brother Alberto Galleno Villafán. I will reflect on the Latin American family complexity and the relevance of memory in defining or forming family identity. I will focus on the Galleno Villafán family for which I have records, tales, and recorded interviews. In this pursuit, I use a blended methodology that combines: genealogy (Héritier, 1981; Jociles, 2006; Solinas, 2013) via genealogical interviews, research of official records, comparisons of narratives, leading stories, and sight visits and autoethnography (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011) via my objective observations and accounts.

No one method alone could have unfolded this Latin American family of mine. As with many other Latin American families, this research sought to uncover polyphonic ancestral roots. Restating Héritier's (1981) view that there is no one universally valid method to fit all societal genealogical inquiries, Jociles (2006, p. 798) emphasizes the genealogical interview as it permits the quantification and statistic analysis of kinship phenomena: still, not all phenomena are quantifiable due to the lack of availability and standarization/uniformity of the recordskeeping. Therefore, the researcher needs to use her tools resourcefully and with patience, creativity, and investigative demeanor to persevere. The work is not just about collecting data. This work requires interviewing skills and a clear understanding of system dynamics. For example, one must consider the dynamics of specific family cultures and communities as well as individual and public narratives. Understanding the traditions and contexts better enables the researcher's comprehension and understanding of the storyteller/family narrator. This work was even more fraught with challenges as I turned my attention to my own family tree.

### **Uncovering My Ancestry**

Descended of Southern Coastal Peruvians, a part of my family settled in the Province of Pisco, in the Department of Ica. The convoluted history of Perú and my family was framed, filtered, and shaped by a view of the Pacific Ocean and the warm desert with its dunes where farming has always been a tradition. The vastness and wealth of the Pacific's marine flora and fauna spread the fresh smell of fish, seashells, and more. Produce came from all the nearby valleys bringing colour to the market during the weekends. Asian products too were part of the "local" traditional food due to Pisco's diversity.

Since childhood, and throughout my adult life, I wondered about my unknown ancestors. I wanted to know what brought them to Latin America and how my unknown and imaginative Peruvian family dealt with the colonial and early republic. But I did not know enough about my ancestors' origins, traditions, skills, etc. I experienced a historical and narratological dead end. A melancholic state settled as each family tale about my ancestors concluded with "that's all what we know". Not only did I not know what I wanted to know, I frequently pondered how my grandparents did not know about their own parents. I wondered when they lost interest in knowing their history. Their heritage did not seem central to them, and I thought that perhaps the colonial events decreased their desire to remember.

In fact, endless factors exist that might block or blur one's genealogical research. One impediment to organizing one's family records is the cost of accessing official records. Sometimes I had to travel. For example, in May-July of 2015 it was necessary for me to go to the little rural town of Chinchabaja where my parents secretly married. Their marriage certificate cost S/.100.00 soles (equivalent to US\$36.49) because it was stamped by the Mayor. The regular certificate fee was around S/.13.00 soles. With S/100, I could pay 7.69 regular marriage certificates. Families with no available income for this type of project would be less able to establish their genealogy.

Family members may also not be interested in maintaining the family memory and growing it, as simple as that. However, this naive indifference or lack of interest in one's lineage has a biological effect: detachment. What must be clear, as George Steiner writes in his *In Bluebeard's Castle* (1971, p. 3), is that:

It is not the literal past that rules us, save, possibly, in a biological sense. It is images of the past. These are often as highly structured and selective as myths. Images and symbolic constructs of the past are imprinted, almost in the manner of genetic information, on our sensibility. Each new historical era mirrors itself in the picture and active mythology of its past.

Steiner's thought explains the melancholic and dead end frustration I felt at a young age when my mother could not tell me more about my ancestors and the tales finished in the unknown. Where do the generations without memories mirror themselves? After all, maintaining family tales is complex for it requires time available for remembrance with one's kin and superb communication to hold the narrative space and to invite the listeners to remain attentive and invested.

During my research, the tales my family members had remembered and narrated served as point of departure and allowed me to identify family records. In my family, on the paternal side, only my father's oldest brother, Pedro Galleno Tapia, knew about the Galleno's heritage and willingly narrated his grandfather Pietro's tale and made reference to Piura, his grandmother's birthplace. On my mother's side of the family, women – particularly my mother who did not have the need to work could occupy her mind remembering family tales, narrating, and growing our history through conversation – were able to keep the fidelity of our tales. Those tales that shaped my mother's life from childhood to adulthood shaped me and my brothers; they made us part of a bigger family clan. Unfortunately, family storytelling today is frequently replaced by a TV show or other visual or audio entertainment that keeps the family together in a pseudoconnectivity that does not require actually tuning into each other. The result is a shrinking time for storytelling or, in worse cases, its disappearance leaving us without family narrative and opportunities to activate shared remembrances and family values.

### **Memory, my mother's narratives and research**

My mother Olga Villafán Salazar always told tales about her family that her mother Julia Adalgisa Salazar Tossell told her. Olga wanted to know more and her curious questions were endless. I learned about my mother's family in detail from these tales. The repetitiveness and precision of her narrations

asserted their veracity. For example, Olga narrated that her mother's parents had come from far away and spoke a different language. They were Ricardo Tossell and Antonieta Neumane/Neumane/Neumann or Neuman (see footnote 4 about the italianization and hispanicization of this germanic last name). Antonieta is believed to have been born in Turin, Italy in 1840 and died in Pisco Playa, Perú 1901. My mother did not know much about their ancestry until late November 2015 when I called her to share my findings.

Ricardo and Antonieta had three daughters: Carmela, Clorinda, and Sara Tossell Neuman. Maria Sara Domitila is my grandmother's mother. I only knew her as Sara and would have not arrived at her records with her official three names if my mother had not known the record keeper at the church in Pisco. When the familiar name differs from the name officially recorded, the complexity of tracking down lineage could end the research. Ricardo Tossell and Antonieta Neuman Turri were an artistic couple. Ricardo was a well-known daguerreotypist and painter probably from Barcelona (according to records found in MyHeritage) that worked in Ecuador, Perú, and Chile. However, on the birth certificate of Maria Sara Domitila, Ricardo's place of origin says Chile. Following this lead, I contacted by email Chile's National Library and received the following result: "Estimada Sra. Galleno: Junto con saludarle cordialmente, le informo que lamentablemente nosotros tampoco contamos con información biográfica del Sr. Tossell"<sup>2</sup>.

Ricardo Tossell's talent was recognized and his work appears in the History of Photography in Chile during the nineteenth century. Also, a brief description is given about his business location. Ricardo also worked in Guayaquil, Lima, and Pisco as a daguerreotypist. The Spanish libraries of Consejo de Investigaciones Científicas keeps some of Tossell's<sup>3</sup> photographic work such as his portrayal of Marcos Jiménez de la Espada. No other information was available about Ricardo. Yet, tracing his wife's heritage helped to relate the cultural context of this couple.

About Antonieta my mother knew very little. She knew that her greatgrandmother had become a widower and supported her family by giving piano lessons. We learned in the 1990's when we requested her death certificate that Antonieta died of a stroke in Pisco Playa. In November 2015, I learned that Antonieta was the daughter of Antonio Neumane<sup>4</sup> (famous composer) and Idálide Turri (opera singer).

<sup>2</sup> Electronic communication with Angela Hernandez Lucero, Coordinadora SIAC Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, 1/15/2016.

<sup>3</sup> [http://bvirtual.bibliotecas.csic.es/csic:default\\_scope:csicalepharc000000820](http://bvirtual.bibliotecas.csic.es/csic:default_scope:csicalepharc000000820).

<sup>4</sup> The history of Antonio's birthplace and his traveling through various countries, languages, and cultures explain the variations of the spelling of his last name. Antonio Neumane was born in Córcega, France, July 13, 1818 and died in Quito, March 3, 1871. His parents were Serafín Neumane y de Margarita Marno, Germans (Pérez Pimentel, 1994). The spelling of Antonio's last name with an "e" at the end resulted from the italianization of his German last name Neuman or Neumann. The history of Antonio's birthplace explains this italianization. Before Córcega became part of France, it was under the Genovese's control. This italianized German last name that originally could have been spelled either Neuman or Neumann, turned into Neumane or Neumane only to lose its italianizing "e" with its hispanization in Latin America. Antonio settled in Ecuador and for a long while his last name remained unchanged. His siblings, however, faced the variation of their father's last name. Nina, his oldest child, for example, moved to Perú. On her Death Certificate she appears as Antonieta Neumane, but in the birth certificate of her youngest daughter, Maria Sara Domitila Tossell Neuman, she appears as Antonieta Neuman.

Antonieta Neumane Turri called Nina, was born in Turin 1841 (?), Italy and, was the oldest daughter of Antonio Neuman Morna (Trieste or Corsica, 1818-Guayaquil, 1871) and Idálide Turri (Turin, 1822? - Guayaquil 1878). Antonio Neumane studied Music at the Conservatory of Milan and became a musician and composer. His work can still be found in the Library of the Music Conservatory “Giuseppe Verdi” in Milan and in the International Museum and Library of Music in di Bologna among various other libraries. Neumane traveled to various countries in Latin America as the director of an Opera Company. Records show him and Idálide in Cuba, Perú, Chile, and Ecuador where he settled. He lived, witnessed, and contributed to the nineteenth century national formation of these new multiethnic Latin American countries through his art at the time when politics and new judicial systems churned throughout these regions creating the new independent discourses and identities of Latin Americans. Both of these ancestors’ traces were found listed in German documents of the company’s tour revealing that their artistic work was the main reason why they immigrated to South America (Berlot, 1841, p. 749)<sup>5</sup>:

San Yago (Insel Cuba). Ende März. Die hiesige italienische Oper gab diesen Monat Donizetti's Marino Faliero und Rossini's Barbieri di Siviglia. Von den Sängern verdient kaum der Bassist Ferelli eine Erwähnung; an der Prima Donna Zoppoli ist gar wenig zu loben. Neuestes. Don Pedro Alcantara Busquier, Theilnehmer an der Impresa dieses Theaters, der unlängst nach Europa, und zwar nach Mailand eine Reise unternahm, um daselbst ein neues Sänger- und Orchesterpersonal zu organisieren, hat in jener Stadt folgende Individuen engagiert: Prime Donne: Ester Corsini, Idalide Turri Neumann; Tenore: Gerolamo Zambaiti und Paolo Ceresini; Bassist François Galvet nebst Sekundärsängern and zwölf Choristen beiderlei Geschlechts. Maestro Compositore, Anton Neumann; Primo Violino, Direttore d'Orchestra: Philippe Passaret. Chormeister, Soufleur und Copist, Stefano Busatti; dreissig Orchesterspieler<sup>6</sup>.

Finding references about these Italian performers in German made their popularity more remarkable. During his stay in Ecuador, Antonio Neumane composed the national anthem of this country and created the Conservatory of Music in Guayaquil in 1870 with the support of President García Moreno. His wife Idalide Turri was a recognized contralto under the direction of her husband.

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Neumane or Neuman or Neumann could be also a Jewish last name. At this point, no confirmation has been possible to obtain.

<sup>5</sup> Berlot's *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (General music newspaper) was a nineteenth-century German-language periodical which reviewed musical events taking place in many countries. <https://books.google.com/books?id=mggVAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA749&dq=idalide+turri&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewiRmPe7gs7LAhWGWYCYKHABHAScQ6AEITDAH#v=onepage&q=idalide%20turri&f=false> [3/19/2016]

<sup>6</sup> Santiago (Island of Cuba). End of March. This month the local Italian Opera presented Donizetti's Marino Faliero and Rossini's Barber of Seville. Among the singers the only that deserves some merit is the Bass Ferelli; there is almost no praise for Prima Donna Zoppoli. Latest News: Don Pedro Alcántara Busquier, partner of this theater's enterprise left recently for Europe, more precise for Milano, to hire the following Opera individuals: Prime Donne, Ester Corsini, Idalide Turri Neumann; Tenors, Gerolamo Zambaiti and Paolo Ceresini; Bass, François Galvet plus secondary singers and twelve choir members of both genders. Maestro Composer Anton Neumann; First Violin, Orchestra conductor: Phillipe Passaret. Stefano Busatti as Choir conductor, prompter and copyist; thirty orchestra players. (trans. Anneliese Foerster 3/20/2016)

Their work and arrival to Ecuador is referenced in a recent book on the history of Guayaquil (Gallardaz, 2014, p. 51)<sup>7</sup>:

Ya en 1842, para octubre, se anunciaba la presentación de la Compañía Lírica italiana, que de paso a Panamá, ofrecía representar nueve arias de óperas, en las que la artista Idalide Turri de Neumann, era una de las principales voces que destacaban en la partitura de “El Elixir de amor”, compuesta en 1832, por el compositor italiano Gaetano Donizetti. Todavía no existía un teatro en la ciudad y se lo suplió en una casa particular de la familia Rendón, habilitada para tal efecto. El semanario “El Correo Semanal de Guayaquil”, editado por Antonio de Irrisari, reseña en su edición de aquel mes: “He aquí que el emporio del cacao se convierte en una academia de canto; nuestro Guayaquil a la par que banquero, se hace artista...” La Compañía estaba dirigida por el distinguido Maestro Don Antonio Neumann, quien enamorado de la ciudad, se quedaría a vivir en el barrio de las Peñas, para años después, escribir la música del Himno Nacional.

In the reference in German, Neumann is written with double “n” whereas in some Spanish versions his name has one “n” or “nn” in some cases, the italianizing “e” has been kept, but in others has been dropped in later years as the result of a greater adaptability and influence received from the *hispanization*. Additional references about their work in Latin America appear in *Il Pirata. Giornale di Letteratura, Belle Arti, Mestieri, Mode, Teatri e Varietà* by Francesco Regli (1802-1866), owner and director of this journal which chronicled the lives and careers of prominent figures in the performing arts in Italy<sup>8</sup>. In addition in the Dictionary of the Peruvian Theater, Manuel Moncloa y Cobarruvias (1905) has the following entry that demonstrates the active work and traveling of the composer and his wife now in Perú:

Néumann, Antonio. Director de orquesta, por los años de 1846 y siguientes, empresario del Principal. Néumann, Idalide Turri De. Soprano que cantó en Lima con la Vera de Rendón y otros artistas, 1846//Néumann, Eduardo<sup>9</sup>. Maestro de música y director de orquesta, que enseñó y concertó la primera función del Círculo Lírico, 1893, y fundó y dirigió la Sociedad Lírica de Aficionados, 1894, que se estrenó en el Politeama con Jone, tomando parte en ella, las señoritas Néumann. Sormani, Pazos y Cot. Esta sociedad tuvo existencia muy corta.//Néumann, (del Perú.) Violoncelo de orquesta//Néumann (del Perú.) Primer violín de orquesta.

From this researcher’s digging it was finally posible to explain the memories of Antonieta playing piano and earning her living as a widow. Her parents were talented musicians and she learned from them this skill.

<sup>7</sup> <http://turismo.guayaquil.gob.ec/sites/default/files/PDF/Guayaquil-puerto-de-la-patria-historia-derecho-natural-esfuerzo-de-sus-hijos.pdf> [3/23/2016].

<sup>8</sup> For information on *Il Pirata* and other musical journals in nineteenth-century Italy, see Conati (1989). A recent assessment of Regli as a journalist and art and music critic has recently been published by Chiancone (2004).

<sup>9</sup> According to the Ecuadorian historian and writer Modesto Chávez Franco (1872-1952), Eduardo Neumann was son by Antonio Neumann’s first marriage. Chávez Franco suggests that Antonio married very young and left to Vienna, where he was noticed for his compositions by the great Spaniard opera singer Malibrán, who was married for a second time to violinist Charles-Auguste de Berlot. Cf. <http://www.efemerides.ec/1/junio/neumane1.htm>.

Antonieta's youngest daughter, however, did not have this artistic lifestyle nor did she marry well; her life was marked by illness and early death.

### *Sara, my greatgrandmother*

My mother saw a black and white picture of her grandmother Sara once. She describes her as a tall woman with severe expression and a long blonde braid, who was a head taller than her husband Pedro Salazar. She gave piano lessons. Pedro was an accountant and worked at the Vargas House in Pisco during the second part of the 1800s (Mother's report). Official documents show he had clear and careful handwriting. He liked to party too much, and Sara did not approve. It is thought that Sara had four children: Antonieta, Pablo, Angel, and Julia Adalgisa Salazar Neuman, my grandmother. Two of Sara's children died at a young age. Pablo died first from TBC or possibly rubella. My grandmother told my mother that when rubella was striking Pisco and many people were dying, Sara sealed the windows and ordered them not to be opened believing that this would protect her children. Life (or death) proved her otherwise. Antonieta, the oldest, fell from a high bench when she was painting and hit her head. She died within a few weeks at the age of twelve. Only Julia, who was then eight years old, and her other surviving brother were spared. However, Sara was depressed and poverty, as well as the death of her mother, and marital problems added to her unbearable pain. Julia remembered this bitterly as she saw her mother letting go of everything including her. Julia would say until near her death, "my mother never thought of me." Greatgrandmother Sara's death certificate states that she died of dysentery at thirty eight years of age and was buried in a mass grave. Her husband Pedro Salazar y Ojeda reported the day and time of her death.

### *Julia, my grandmother*

After the death of her mother, greatgrandfather Pedro Salazar y Ojeda placed Julia in Ica with one of his married sisters. Julia recalled being mistreated. Several years later, when her brother was married, he took her to live with him and his wife. She attended church and helped at home: cooking, crocheting, and sewing. She earned her living sewing. Her sister-in-law wanted Julia to marry her brother, but Julia did not want him. One day Tomás Villafán Villegas decided he wanted her. He began sending goats, chicken, milk and cheeses to Julia by means of her *comadre*<sup>10</sup> until one day he sent her a message telling her that he had a house for her. Julia left with him on his horse. Though Julia was a religious woman and had never had any previous relationship, she left with Tomás. He seemed to have demonstrated enough reliable character and a firm capacity for being a good provider. She chose better conditions and opportunities for her life and did not worry about marriage. Why was concubinage her choice? Her lonely and poor circumstances made marriage less urgent or necessary. Plus, it is worthy to note that concubinage<sup>11</sup> has a long history.

<sup>10</sup> Dear friend to whom Julia was the Godmother of one of her siblings.

<sup>11</sup> As Jeffrey Klaiber (1988, p. 35) writes in his book on the Church in Perú: "The bishops, priests and religious who formed the 'official' Church did not rule over a united, compact and uniform Church. In fact, the Church consisted of small groups of faithful practitioner and, beyond them, a



During Julia's time concubinage was a common practice that required a couple simply to decide to live together. Single individuals that were not married were free to enter into a concubinage relationship. Concubinage was common during the nineteenth century. Catholic values were not rooted in the people regardless of the long centuries of Spanish colonization; vulnerable women and immigrants were making new relationships while experiencing national Independence. Revolutionary ideas that came from Europe weakened religious discourses and a lax attitude prevailed. In the biography of poet César Vallejo (Velasco, 2011) one discovers that both of his parents were daughter and son of Gallican priests correspondingly:

Doña María de los Santos Mendoza y Guerreonero había contraído nupcias en la segunda mitad de la década de 1860 con don Francisco de Paula Vallejo Benites. Tanto Francisco como María eran hijos de sendos sacerdotes españoles que los engendraron en dos indias peruanas.

When the Peruvian Andean culture is referred, *concubinage* is often confused with *servinacuy*, but *servinacuy* actually requires a trial or premarriage period of six months or up to three years so that the couple know as much as possible about each other and can test the effectiveness and commitment of their relationship (Peña Jumpa, 2009). These two terms are often fused, but maintaining the differences allows for a better understanding of the relationships and their manifestations. *Servinacuy* is a sociocultural practice integral to the Andean system whereas *concubinage*<sup>12</sup> is an agreed intimate relation between two people who are not married and that decide to live together. Julia did not have close family members except her brother with whom to share the formalization of her union with Tomás. She was alone doing the best she could do. Tomás was twenty years older than her. By the time Julia was twenty seven, my mother Olga Villafán Salazar was born. She was Julia and Tomás' seventh child.

Julia liked to sing and to have fun. She was a good listener and a loving grandmother whose silence spoke her disapproval. My grandmother finished sixth grade. Her life became lonelier when her mother died and she was sent to her aunt's house where she found no love or inspiration, no music to develop her potential. She submitted to her aunt's uncaring attitude and belittlement. Life with Tomás meant freedom for Julia. She had her house, her own family, and a place to live with a man who rented lands and sold the crops. He took care of her and their ten children. Nevertheless, she told me when she learned about the birth control pill that she would have liked to have had fewer children. Later in life, my grandmother Julia became a Franciscan tertiary. She liked to laugh and

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mass of Christians vaguely identified with Catholicism by certain exterior signs and certain pious practices. Nor can one speak of a monolithic control within the 'official' Church. In the field and in the Sierra, during the Republican era, the priest was a solitary figure who was formally obedient; but in practice he used to live his own life, which often included concubinage and other practices prohibited by the Church. Many of the problems facing the Church are not due to mere lack of obedience itself, but more fundamentally to the low human and cultural level of the clergy" (Author's translation).

<sup>12</sup> In Perú the constitutional and legal recognition of concubinage took place in 1979 and 1983 respectively (Merino de Lama, 2012). It is worth noting that the Penal Code of 1863 only punished the concubinage of married men.

to visit places as well as to socialize and drink some wine or dark beer. She told me to pray and to help people in despair. She did it, my mother does it, and I do as well. My mother's memories of her mother, my grandmother Julia, is of a woman always busy doing house chores and singing. I believe that her singing contained memories of her musical family, a lively space where she departed to find solace from her hard routine of bringing up ten children.

I heard the tales of Julia, Sara, Antonieta, and the little known about their fathers and husbands throughout my life, most of the time when we were at the kitchen table and in a conversational mood – which is always – sharing some meals and fully connected from the belly, heart, and mind, in the presence of each other as a family. I learned how the women in my family made it through life and was educated by my hyper active, passionate, and caring mother and with the help of her sister Maria, my godmother, to be independent and to live life fully. Often, my mother would have close friends with her. I saw them cooking, chatting and laughing until it was time to call us and share whatever they had baked or prepared.

Retrospectively, as I write this essay, I reflect on my mother and aunt Raquel and aunt Maria's recounting of their little known grandparents' tales and assess the effect on me. They imprinted a phantasmagoric existence of my ancestors to me with their family tales. My memory was activated with curiosity for the unknown, affective connectivity, and the eternal presence of my ancestors. Their mental presence decades later helped me to organize the pieces of information gathered and to recognize that in telling and learning from the tales one becomes family and learns to see one's self clearer.

Last July, in Perú, I interviewed my 83-year-old mother, the keeper of her family history with the aim of recording her tales about her ancestors in my role of researcher. Many times in my research I had looked for Sara's and Antonieta's traces but they disappeared with their deaths. The information here about these women I have been gathering since 1990. Without the family tales my mother kept and told me, I would have not been able to learn about her artistic greatgrandparents. I would not have seen how their travels mirrored the development of arts and commerce in the nineteenth century. As Steiner said "Each new historical era mirrors itself in the picture and active mythology of its past" (1975, p. 3) What her mother told her, my mother Olga has always held dear, the stories as her heritage jewels. Without her loyalty to the narrative, I would not have been able to retrieve this knowledge of my ancestors from the female side.

### *Tomás, my grandfather*

According to my mother and her sisters, my grandfather Tomás Villafán Villegas never knew his father and lost his mother at the age of twelve. Maria Villegas died in Ica most likely, but I have not been able to locate any traces of her yet. According to my mother's memories, grandfather Tomás was born in Andahuaylas (?) and brought to Ica very young, the latter is located in southern Perú. My mother and aunts report his mother died of sadness, in other words, from the challenges that she lived with as a single woman during her time (beginning of the nineteenth century). Grandfather Tomás was a patriarch, tall with blue eyes and thick eyebrows. We would all laugh when he would take the scissors and the magnifying mirror to trim his huge eyebrows. He learned

farming as a child and worked at this until he retired. He rented land in Pisco and sold the crops when it was a good business. My grandfather held everybody responsible for their affairs and taught his children to work and to become professionals. He had two relationships and ten children with each partner. My grandmother Julia was his second partner; they married only to satisfy a requisite so that one of their daughters, aunt Maria, could be admitted to nursing school in Lima since the school was run by nuns. They were not interested in the legality of marriage for they clearly had a strong understanding of their responsibilities based on values of trust, honor, and understanding of each other's gender role.

My grandmother Julia was the same age as grandfather's oldest daughter from his first marriage; her name was Tomasa and I met her and visited with her many times during my childhood. I recall as a child seeing them together and not believing my eyes. Tomasa was like her father. Her wavy hair was gray already though she was not too old. Her eyes were almond and blue. She had run away with the tractor operator and married him. He was considered unworthy not only because he was the tractor operator of the "patrón" but he was also dark skinned. I don't know much else about him, and this silence is very symbolic because it reveals that he was never integrated into the family clan, the extended family. This silence appears whenever a member of the family married someone deemed less worthy culturally, racially, or economically. Race was not openly spoken about even though Perú is a multiethnic country. Still, the racial and cultural prejudices of the Villafán Salazar clan demonstrate the colonial mindset, which through the decades of global mobility and interethnic marriages, has decreased and lost its original purposes. What matters the most in this family of mine was making a good living and enjoying life. This was the strong and unnegotiated family expectation.

### **Piecing together memories of the Galleno family**

Unlike my mother, my father does not tell anything about his family. He worships them in silence, intimately, and robs us of knowing memories about his ancestors' deeds and faults. Fortunately, his oldest brother uncle Pedro Galleno Tapia was an excellent narrator and keeper of the tales of the Galleno.

I was perhaps between ten and twelve years of age when I learned from my grandfather Humberto Francisco Galleno Oviedo that his father, my great-grandfather, had come from a little fisherman town in Italy. One day my grandfather Humberto came to have lunch after closing "la tienda," his business selling gasoline, oil, tires, etc. He greeted my mother with flattering adages and sat in the living room waiting to be served and to be joined by my father who was still working. I hurried with the dishes at the big table and went to keep him company. My mother also came to chat and to listen to him talk about his life. Humberto had known my mother's father and she always asked him about him because grandpa Tomás did not talk much either.

### ***Pietro Galleno, my greatgrandfather***

Pietro Galleno arrived at the port of Callao in Lima, Perú. Pietro settled there but as a merchant he traveled back and forth from Callao to other ports not only up northern Perú, but also Guayaquil. "He liked to play cards with his

friends and stayed up late into the night,” grandpa Humberto said. On one of his trips up north, Pietro died in the city of Chiclayo. This saddened me deeply since I was a child, and I had always imagined that he died alone so far away from his family.

During the 1990’s I researched to find my Galleno ancestors, and it was more complicated than I expected. Nobody in my dad’s family remembered what city Pietro was from. By this time, Humberto and my uncle Pedro had passed and there was nobody to ask; none of Pedro’s daughters or sons had kept the memories. They knew that Pietro had died in Chiclayo, a city where I would need to go by bus (12 or more) or by plane from Lima, and I couldn’t travel to Chiclayo then. I had to wait until July 2015 to finally visit my greatgrandparent’s grave. I read on his gravestone “to our beloved father from his family, sons and daughters.” While reading his gravestone I noticed his name and last name were in Spanish, and they did not follow the proper order. This had made it difficult to find his grave. Discovering it would not have been possible without the help from some locals who knew the old and new parts of the cemetery. In this visit to the cemetery, searching the cemetery’s records, I learned Pietro did not die alone as I had imagined. His oldest son, also named Pedro, had been in Chiclayo as well. Most likely they enjoyed family time together. His oldest son, Pedro Galleno Oviedo, had been moved to the newest part of the cemetery by his surviving family. On my trip I visited both. When my grandfather told me the story about his father Pietro dying in Chiclayo, he omitted that his oldest brother Pedro Galleno Oviedo was with his father. Moreover, grandfather Humberto never mentioned any member of his family including a sister who lived in Callao and died when she was 92. Humberto’s family relationships will become clearer as new information appears.

Before visiting my Italian greatgrandfather in the cemetery of Chiclayo, I had read his place of origin, Vernazza, on his updated and notarized death certificate from the City Council. I requested his birth certificate as well to learn more about him. He was born August 21, 1855 and was baptized in la “Parrochia di S. Margherita d’Anticochia V.M.” His parents were “Pietro Giuseppe Galleno – maritime – from Vernazza and Angela Maria Fenelli – Contadina –” from the same town. One day I will visit their graves and Pietro’s birthplace. Pietro married my great grandmother Juana Deidamia Oviedo Lama but not immediately. Deidamia’s parents cohabitated and so did she with Pietro. They married in El Callao, where they lived, but married only because, based on my inferences, she was extremely ill, bed ridden, and could die. She was married and also received the last sacrament of Catholicism. Deidamia had a younger sister. I was able to find their baptism certificates in the archbishopric of Piura, but beyond the brief information stated in these records, I don’t know anything else about their parents.

Pietro and Deidamia had six children – three boys and three girls. The youngest was Humberto Francisco Galleno Oviedo (1895-1983), my grandfather, who was also a merchant like his father and older brothers. My father, Julio Alberto Galleno, as well as his father and grandfather, followed the same tradition and became an entrepreneur with a small business as well as a politician. Like my great grandfather Pietro, my grandfather Humberto, and my father settled on the coast and loved the ocean. I have three brothers. Two of them work with my father in his business, and the youngest has his own

business as well. I am a professor and also have a part-time business. Family culture and traditions drive our paths.

*Victoria Eybar, my greatgrandmother Tapia*

I don't recall ever meeting her, but heard from my mother that she was a seamstress. She had two partners in her life and seven children, two with Meliton Tapia: Moises and Deifilia Tapia Eybar and five with her second partner Avanzini: David, Américo, Alejandrina, Alicia, Selmira. She never married, as reported by my mother, who met Victoria, and my oldest cousin Viviana Galleno Solfi. In her late years my great grandmother Victoria suffered from diabetes and lost sight in one of her eyes.

*María Deifilia Tapia Eybar, my grandmother*

This grandmother – who was born in Humay in 1899 and died in Jesús María in 1983 – practiced syncretic spirituality (Andean and Catholic) equally and openly. She learned in her town of Humay, in Pisco, and in Ica. The latter has the famous town of Cachiche where female shamans were well known. They were referred to as “witches.” They performed cleaning rituals that my grandmother Deifilia knew very well and used on us. As a child and adolescent, I saw her perfuming the spaces with aromatic herbs that she burned. Often she would visit us at night to “clean us from evil spirits.” I was enchanted by her rituals as a child. Her presence was mysteriously wonderful for she would prepare the ritual, and my mother would consent though she did not believe in it. What else could she do? This female shaman and/or witch, in a way, was her mother-in-law. My grandmother knew about my mother's disbelief, but she did not care. She was a confident woman and a devotee of the Blessed Lady of Humay. Grandmother Deifilia passed a raw egg through our body (my brothers and I) praying several Our Fathers and Holy Mary. Then she would do the reading. To do this, she needed to pour the egg in a transparent glass of water, and she would let us know if we had been touched by the evil eye. I enjoyed doing this and seeing my mother's face trying to hold her laughter; my world has been diverse since I remember, free, compassionate, and filled with the wonder of Peru's cultures.

The marriage of my parents brought together the union of two families, whose ancestors were unknown until recently. I have traced them by searching into archive records, interviewing family members, and remembering the stories told throughout my life. My memories bring them back; my mother's memory has become sharper and whatever she remembers now she passes on to my oldest brother for life is becoming shorter and memories must be passed and kept precious for the upcoming generations.

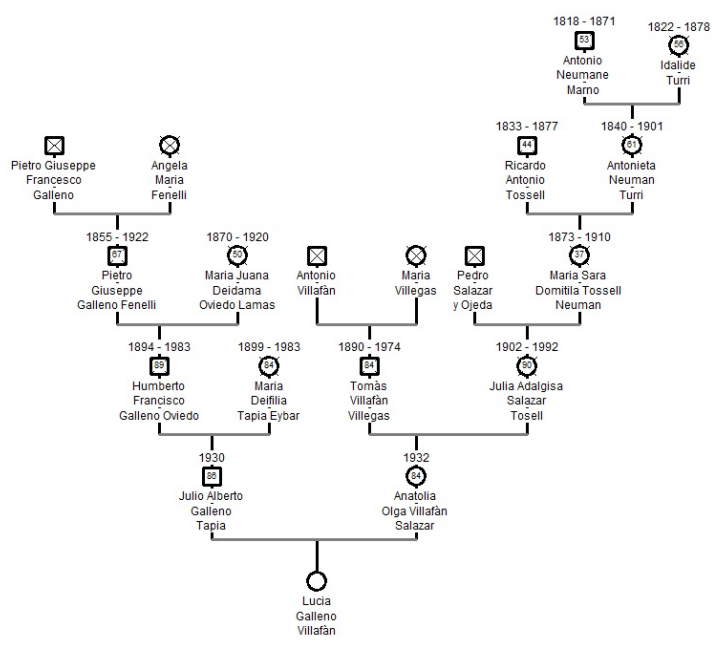
**Reflections**

Memory and the experience of making the effort to remember family tales that were almost forgotten united my family and enabled us to establish a historical reference that now reaches second great-grandparents. Remembering, allowed me to recognize official records, to draw hypotheses from them, and to identify the character of my ancestors. The process of trying to track my

ancestors from their diverse backgrounds, with the peculiar complexity of the Latin American family, forced me to recognize the challenges researchers encounter in this type of research. This research could not have begun without my mother’s narrations and the close interaction and curiosity that maintained my family throughout this project. Yet now, looking at my family heritage, one can see the diversity of Latin America mirrored and hear how each inhabitant carries the polyphonic voices of its culture in his or her being.

The process of identifying my ancestors led to reading many documents about Peru, Ecuador, and Chile’s history. The paths of my ancestors traces the commercial route that offered many opportunities for so many business people like my greatgrandparents and grandparents. Knowing of their activities and cultural traits helped me to explain why my parents’ birthplace is Pisco and not any other place.

I discovered also that within my family concubinage – which was apparently different from *servinacuy* – was a frequent practice. Perhaps the most intimate insight from this research into the development of my particular family in the Latin American multi-ethnic context, is that anyone can serve as an ancestor’s narrator. In the Galleno family, memories were shared by my grandfather, uncle Pedro, and are now maintained by my oldest brother Alberto. My mother and my aunt Raquelita also keep the Galleno Villafán story alive. Memories in the form of tales are not just data or cognition, their complex perceptual reality interweaves feelings, knowledge, and expectations, and more (Turner and Bruner, 1986). Gender is not the deciding factor in tending to family memory. Instead, what is important is the ability to both remember and tell family tales in the manner that best produces interconnectivity and pay attention to the shared inner experience that forms family culture.



Genogram of the Galleno Villafán family

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