

# RETURN FROM UTOPIA: THE MONTALDO COLLECTION AND THE END OF THE ICARIAN DREAM

*Jordi Olivar, PhD*

Auburn University, USA

*José Miguel Lemus, PhD*

Creighton University, USA

---

## Abstract:

In 1848, Étienne Cabet moved to the United States with several hundred followers to implement the utopian society he had envisioned in *Voyage en Icarie* (1840) in American soil. Among the followers of Cabet, there were some Catalans such as Narcís Monturiol, Francisco José de Orellana, Joan Rovira, and Ignacio Montaldo. Rovira and Montaldo joined Cabet in his travel to America from Europe in 1848. In 1992, a retired librarian from Harvard University reported the existence of letters and documents "to and from" Ignacio Montaldo. Copies of these letters, written mainly in French and Spanish, are currently held at the Icarian Studies Center at Western Illinois University. To our knowledge, the letters have not been transcribed, translated or published. This may be attributed to difficulty to understand the letters due to the physical conditions of the documents. The main contribution of this article is the translation into English of the letters of the Montaldo Collection written in Spanish. (1) Finally, the content of these letters will reveal the particular impact that the defeat of the Spanish liberal project of the Progressive Biennium (1854-1856) had for Spanish Icarians.

---

**Keywords:** Ignacio Montaldo, Icarians, Nauvoo, Étienne Cabet.

## Introduction:

In the middle of the 19th Century, the most populated city in Illinois was not Chicago, but Nauvoo, in the riverside of the Mississippi River. Once settled by Mormons, Nauvoo was the base of the Icarian utopia from 1849 to 1856. The Icarians were followers of French socialist Étienne Cabet (1788-1856), who wrote the book *Voyage en Icarie* published in 1840, where he imagined a perfect religious, communist society. Among the followers of Cabet, there were some Catalans such as Narcís Monturiol, Francisco José de Orellana, Joan Rovira, and Ignacio Montaldo. Rovira and Montaldo joined

Cabet in his travel to America from Europe in 1848. The Icarian settlements include Denton County in Texas, Nauvoo in Illinois, Cheltenham in Missouri, Corning in Iowa, and Coverdale in California. The last settlement in California disbanded in 1886, making the Icarians the longest lasting utopian experiment in the United States.

In May 29 of 1992, Foster M. Palmer, retired associate librarian from Harvard University, reported to the Center for Icarian Studies of Western Illinois University at Macomb, Illinois, the existence of some original letters from Icarians in possession of one descendant of the Montaldo family. According to Palmer, he had the opportunity to meet Mrs. Victor Woronov in Clearwater, Florida in April of the same year. Mr. Palmer reported "a body of letters" from the first Icarians in America from the 19th Century. Palmer managed to make copies of the portion of these letters which in his opinion were "of Icarian interest", but he mentioned that the owner of the documents "has many other letters addressed to Ignacio during this period." As Palmer established in his letter, the owner, Victor Woronov's wife, was in fact great-granddaughter of Ignacio Montaldo (née Carol Montaldo).

After describing the poor conditions in which the letters had been preserved, Palmer also commented: "some of the copies are hard to read because the writing on the other side shows through." In his final observation about the original documents, Palmer considered Carol Montaldo is not "ready to part with them just yet, but she is aware of their historical importance and wants to make sure they are preserved." The seventeen letters and documents copied by Palmer and sent to the Icarian Studies Center at WIU, are described as letters to and from Ignacio Montaldo. These letters conform the Montaldo collection and are among other collections in the Icarian Center such as the Cabet Collection, the Baxter Collection, the Cambre Family Papers, the Dadant Papers, the Marchand Collection, French R. Deane Collection, and the Gauthier Collection.

Despite the description of the letters as "to and from" Ignacio Montaldo, the documents under custody of the Icarian Studies Center consist only in letters to Ignacio Montaldo. Of the seventeen documents in the collection, one is from Étienne Cabet, two are from F. Boissonnet, ten are from A. A. Marchand, and four are from Montando's brothers Perico and Pepe. Only the letters from Ignacio's brothers are in Spanish. The other documents are in French language. The contribution of this article is a brief contextualization of the letters, the *deciphering* of the "hard to read" writings, and the translation into English of the letters. [Fig. 1]

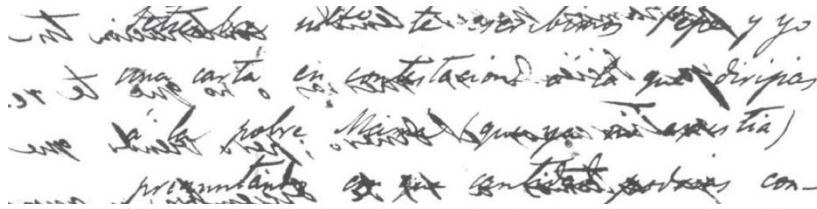


Fig. 1. Example of the text describe by Palmer as "hard to read because the writing on the other side shows through." Image from the 4th letter of the Montaldo Collection.

### The Montaldo Collection

Ignacio Montaldo (1821-1870), was among the Avant-garde wave of Icarians accompanying Cabet in his voyage in 1848. The description of the letters written by Palmer and currently in the Center for Icarian Studies at Macomb are as follows:

1. [Étienne] Cabet to the colony of Iowa, from Nauvoo. May 21, 1856 (French).
2. F. Boissonnet, headed "Citoyens Citoyennes," to the Première Avant-garde (French).
3. F. Boissonnet ? This may be his scrawled signature, very different from the neatly written from using a longs on the document headed "Citoyens Citoyennes." (French).
4. Perico Montaldo in Barcelona to his brother Ignacio Montaldo in "Nauvoo, Etat des Illinois," December 13, 1854. (Spanish).
5. Pepe Montaldo, from Tarragona June 4?, 1856, to his brother Ignacio in Nauvoo. (Spanish).
6. Apparently only the cover was copied, not the letter. (not dated, Spanish)
7. Pepe Montaldo to his bother Ignacio, from Tarragona Aug. 25, 1856. (Spanish)
8. First sheet of letter, probably from Pepe Montaldo to his bother Ignacio. (Spanish). Interesting political commentary. Icaria mentioned at bottom of second page. (Spanish)
9. A. A. Marchand, from Icaria, Adams Co., Iowa, to [Ignacio] Montaldo. June 5, 1866, (French).
10. A. A. Marchand, from Icaria, Adams Co., Iowa, to [Ignacio] Montaldo. November 25, 1866, (French).
11. A. A. Marchand, from Icaria, Adams Co., Iowa, to [Ignacio] Montaldo. December 12, 1866(?), (French).
12. A. A. Marchand, from Icaria, Adams Co., Iowa, to [Ignacio] Montaldo. January 12(12) 1867, (French).
13. A. A. Marchand, from Icaria, Adams Co., Iowa, April 16, 1867, to [Ignacio] Montaldo. Very interesting letter. Not for the only time, Marchand writes quoted material in a totally different style of handwriting.

14. A. A. Marchand, from Icaria, Adams Co., Iowa, to [Ignacio] Montaldo. May 28, 1867, (French).

15. A. A. Marchand, from Icaria, Adams Co., Iowa, to [Ignacio] Montaldo. January 8, 1868, (French).

16. End of a letter, probably to Ignacio Montaldo, from A. A. Marchand. (French).

17. End of a letter, probably to Ignacio Montaldo, from A. A. Marchand. (French).

### **The Letters in Spanish and their translation**

The letters numbered as 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, are from Ignacio Montaldo's brothers, and are written in Spanish. What follows are the Spanish transcriptions and their corresponding English translations. When the understanding of the letters has been impossible, we have indicated the omission with ellipsis in brackets: [...]

*Letter 4. Perico Montaldo in Barcelona to his brother Ignacio Montaldo in "Nauwoo, Etat des Illinois," December 13, 1854. (Spanish).*

"Barcelona, 13 de Diciembre de 1854.

Mi querido hermano Ignacio. El 22 de septiembre te enviamos Pepe y yo una carta en contestación a la que dirigías a la pobre mamá (que ya no existía) preguntando con qué cantidad podrías contar para venir a España. En ella te hicimos las reflexiones que nuestro cariño nos sugirió para que emprendieras tu marcha que creíamos poco meditada y te marcábamos que en todo caso podrías contar con 6 mil reales o sea 300 duros. Más tarde recibimos otra carta en la que manifestabas tu resolución definitiva de venir a España y no te hemos contestado a ella esperando que en vuelta de la que te escribimos en 22 de septiembre en presencia de la muerte de mamá y del estado político de España del que te dábamos cuenta, meditaras más tu resolución y dieras una contestación pronta que nos sirviese de indudable guía. Según lo que tardan ordinariamente las cartas de ida y vuelta ya en 23 ó 24 de noviembre podríamos haber tenido contestación tuya diciéndonos si querías o no que te remitiéramos el dinero; pero viendo que ya estando a 13 de diciembre y aún no has contestado me determino a escribirte esta repitiéndote lo que en la anterior decíamos Pepe y yo, a saber, que en las actuales circunstancias, sería imprudente y peligrosa tu venida; que en la crisis de subsistencias por que pasamos aquí sería insensato esperar ocupación o modo de volver: que tu venida sería una desafección que te pondría mal a los ojos de tus compañeros políticos y socialistas; y que de todas maneras, obrases como fuese tu voluntad en el bien entendido de que podrías disponer de la cantidad de 300 duros y del cariño de tus hermanos. Como verás por los periódicos la situación es de los moderados congresistas templados y la revolución hasta ahora ha sido una mentira ¡y tantos peligros

como he arrostrado yo! ¡Muy atrasados estamos! Ni un sólo hombre en España digno de una revolución.

Estoy delicado de resultas de un fuerte resfriado, y concluyo saludando a Celina y a tu niña de mi parte y demás de la familia. Tuyo siempre. Perico Montaldo.

***Letter 4. Translation.***

Ignacio, my dear brother. On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, Pepe and I replied to the letter you sent to poor mother (who was by then no longer with us) in which you asked her the amount of funds you could count on to return to Spain. In that letter, we ventured the opinions as dictated by our brotherly love as you were to embark on a journey that, we felt, was ill-advised, and we indicated that in any event you could count on 6 thousand reales, that is 300 duros. We later received another letter in which you communicated your firm decision of coming to Spain and we have yet to reply, hoping that upon receipt of our former dated on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, and in consideration of mother's passing, and of the political situation of Spain such as we described, you may reconsider your decision and you would give prompt reply that could serve us as a firm guide. According to how long letters usually take to go between us, we had expected your reply by November 23<sup>rd</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup>, but seeing as it is now December 13<sup>th</sup>, and we have yet to receive it, I have taken it upon myself to write this to you to repeat what Pepe and I said in our last letter, which is that under the current conditions, it would be foolhardy and dangerous that you come. Because given our current sustenance crisis here, it would be foolish to expect to find an occupation or means to return. That you return could be interpreted as disaffection toward your fellow socialists. And that in any event you should act as you see fit with the understanding that you could count upon 300 duros and the affection of your brothers. As you will see from the newspapers, things are controlled by the lukewarm moderates in Congress, and the revolution has to this day been a lie. And so many perils as I have faced! We are indeed very backwards! Not a man in Spain deserving a revolution.

I'm ill with as a result of a bad cold, and I end here with regards for Celina and your girl from me, and the rest of the family. Always yours, Perico Montaldo.

***Letter 5. Pepe Montaldo, from Tarragona June 4?, 1856, to his brother Ignacio in Nauvoo. (Spanish).***

Ignacio, muy difícil ha de serme escribirte en este sentido, pero la conciencia me lo dicta y nunca falto al sagrado deber por más cruel que me sea su cumplimiento. ¿Será disculpable el egoísmo de mi cariño fraternal si te ocultaba todos sus peligros? No lo fuera ni me perdonaría acallar

torcedores remordimientos. Piensa todo cuanto te digo en esta carta. Perico sigue bueno en Milán habiendo experimentado algunos contratiempos que esperamos que la esposa Adelaida Larumbe [?] haga su salida en algún teatro como dama de canto, y quiera Dios que tenga fortuna en la carrera. El tío sigue valetudinario, la tía y la prima están buenas, y mi esposa continúa sin novedad en su salud. Te escribiré en diciembre y en que inspírate el Cielo una resolución tan acertada como la deseas. Tu hermano que te quiere. Pepe.

***Letter 5. Translation.***

Ignacio, it is hard for me to write this, but my conscience dictates it, and I never avoid my sacred duty regardless of how cruel its observance may be for me. Would the selfishness of my brotherly love be excusable if I were to hide all its dangers from you? It would not, and I would not forgive myself quelling my deep remorse. Think upon everything I tell you in this letter. Perico is doing well in Milan having faced a few setbacks. And we are hoping that his wife Adelaida Larumbe [?] makes her debut as a singer in some theater, and God willing she may find success in that career. Uncle is still valetudinarian, and aunt and the cousins are well. My wife's health remains the same. I will write to you in December hoping that heaven may inspire you to make a resolution as fitting as you wish it to be. Your loving brother, Pepe.

***Letter 6. Only the cover was copied, not the letter. (Not dated, Spanish)***

***Letter 7. Pepe Montaldo to his brother Ignacio, from Tarragona Aug. 25, 1856. (Spanish)***

Mi querido hermano Ignacio: Te incluyo dos letras de los 200 duros como segundas de cambio, y recibirás las primeras por conducto de los señores Puig y Avendaño de Nueva Orleans; mereciéndoles la distinción de que se hayan ofrecido a procurar que el dinero no se extraviará, para cuyo efecto les dejé una firma tuya que corté de una carta. Por el mismo medio recibí[rás] carta mía en la que te explico el estado de las cosas públicas, la imposibilidad de que en España tengas seguridad ni subsistencia, las ventajas que tienes en ese país para procurarte medios de vivir sin trabas ni preocupaciones, y cuanto te conviene fijarte mucho en la parte práctica de la vida para no ver en la miseria a tu esposa y a la hija. Las grandes reformas necesitan muchos años y aún siglos y es preciso que los hombres se atemperen a la actualidad y se procuren [...] pero sin buscar el martirio. En España las cosas siguen al giro general de Europa. Estamos en camino de reacción desde la salida del gobierno de Espartero y la presidencia de O'Donnell.(2) La Milicia Nacional de toda la nación ha sido desarmada. Los hombres de ideas avanzadas separados del poder, y los demócratas o

perseguidos o expatriados o están continuamente vigilados. Terradas murió estando confinado.(3) Cuello fue asesinado.(4) Los Chávez y otros están en el destierro y varios en la emigración. Quizás hayan pecado de confiados pero su desgracia, les hace más dignos de compasiones que de consideraciones. Te bastará para que comprendas que lo que te conviene es procurarte alguna fortuna en esa República en la que tantos Europeos han hecho su suerte. El mismo señor que me ha dado las letras te recomendará a su socio pues me dijo que como catalán se interesaba por sus paisanos, y que hallándose en Nueva Orleans revisando el periódico [de Rovira?]. Desearía que comprendieras que lo que han hecho con vosotros ha sido explotaros y que trabajéis sin ningún beneficio. Si este sacrificio de la familia y lo que has sufrido te sirviere de lección para en adelante, será grande mi alegría. Los señores de Puig y Avendaño tal vez te den algún buen camino y logres vencer las privaciones y sin necesidad de nadie. Perico sigue en Italia con muy pocas esperanzas y sin poder regresar a España al menos por ahora. ¡Qué fatalidad! [...] porque además de que la enfermedad de las viñas da cosecha ninguna de vino, ahora le han puesto un pleito para quitarle el agua. La prima está buena. Yo sigo con mi modesta cátedra y Dios quiera que no tenga ningún tropiezo, viviendo sin [...] y sin deudas ayudado de las economías de mi virtuosa esposa.

Cuando recibas las letras escríbeme en seguida, dime cuales son tus proyectos, piensa mucho lo que resuelvas, no te hagas ilusiones, piensa en tu esposa y en tu hija, no envidies a los que vivimos en esta Nación desgraciada, procura hacer tu suerte. Con cariño a la esposa e hija de parte de mi esposa y de la demás familia, recibe el corazón de tu hermano. Pepe.

### ***Letter 7. Translation.***

My dear brother Ignacio, I'm enclosing copies of two promissory notes for the 200 duros, and you will receive the original notes from Messrs. Puig and Avendaños of New Orleans. Thanking them for the assurance that the money will not be lost. For this purpose I gave them your signature, which I cut out from one of your letters. By the same conduit you will receive my letter in which I explain to you the state of public affairs in Spain, the impossibility of you subsisting and being safe in Spain, the advantages that you have in that country to procure for yourself the means to live without hindrance or worry, and how advantageous it would be for you to mind the practical side of life so as to prevent yourself from one day seeing your wife and your daughter in penury. Great reforms take many years and even centuries, and thus men must adjust to current events and procure for themselves [...] but without seeking martyrdom. Things in Spain follow the overall direction of Europe. We are on the reactionary path since the fall of Esparero's government and O'Donnell's presidency. (2) The National Militia

has been dismantled all over the nation. Men with the most advanced ideas have been separated from power. And democrats are either persecuted, expatriated, or are under continuous surveillance. Terradas died in prison.(3) Cuello was assassinated.(4) The Chavezes and others are in exile and several had emigrated. Those who made the mistake of trusting others are more deserving of compassion than consideration. This should suffice to make to make you understand that it is in your best interest to seek fortune in that Republic in which so many Europeans have made their luck. The same man who gave me the promissory notes will commend you to his partner, for he told me that, as a Catalan, he takes an interest in his compatriots, and that after reading the newspapers in New Orleans [...], he would wish to make you understand that what they have done to you all was to exploit you and make you work without benefit. If this family sacrifice and your past sufferings should serve as a lesson for the future, it will bring me great joy. Messrs. Puig and Avendaño may offer you good advice of what it is to overcome hardship and without help from others. Perico is still in Italy with few hopes and unable to return to Spain, at least for the moment. What misfortune! Because, besides the disease in the vines preventing all harvest of wine, they have started a legal procedure against him to take away his water. Cousin is in good health. I still have my modest teaching post and God willing I will not face any obstacles, living without [...] and without debts, helped by the economies of my virtuous wife.

Write to me as soon as you receive the promissory notes, and let me know what your projects are. Think long and hard before making a decision. Don't fill your head with illusions; think about your wife and daughter. Do not envy those of us who live in this unfortunate nation. Try to make your fortune. With love to your wife and daughter from my wife and the rest of the family. Receive your brother's heart. Pepe.

***Letter 8. First sheet of letter, probably from Pepe Montaldo to his brother Ignacio. (Spanish). Interesting political commentary. Icaria mentioned at bottom of second page. (Spanish)***

Mi querido hermano, [...] tengo en mi poder tus cartas hasta la del 7 de abril y si no te he contestado a ellas no lo atribuirás a la ofensiva sospecha de falta de cariño. Desde que tú me dijiste que estabas resuelto a dejar la colonia y que necesitabas algún dinero, traté desde luego de recabarlo; pero como nuestra querida madre lo había colocado a interés, me ha sido preciso sacarlo dando tiempo a los que lo tenían para buscar la partida, y como el deudor es de Barcelona, todas las gestiones se dilataron más de lo que yo deseo. Quien no me han pagado pero lo considero cosa del pasado tiempo escribiéndote ahora para que desde luego cese la inquietud algún tanto. En el momento que reciba el dinero te remitiré todo.



[...] a Perico remitiéndome alguna corta cantidad para atender a las atenciones de la familia. Ignoro completamente tus proyectos después de abandonar la colonia, pero mucho me temo que te preparas para muchas desgracias. Lo que sí debo advertirte, como hermano. Si quisiéramos que no vengas a Europa y menos a España si no quieres buscarte conflicto y la desgracia de tu esposa y de tu hija. Después de la paz con la Turquía y la Rusia (5) ¿sabes qué hay en Europa? Los [...] que salieron de los tronos que en los tiempos de Luis Felipe era diplomático,(6) se ha convertido en armada y en un provocador en un hipócrita benevolencia al pueblo. Rusia como la Francia se entiende respeto a los gobernantes, [...] esencialmente conservadora parte.

En cuanto a España, adelanta terreno la facción conservadora, las leyes de la Asamblea Constituyente son moderadas,(7) sin larga duración ha quebrantado el poco espíritu democrático que tenía ese cuerpo al instalarse, Espartero (8) se muestra indiferente hablando mucho de Orden que es palabra de explotación y en su gobierno que se dice progresista hace deportaciones y confinamientos mandados por un Capitán General con las espadas más reaccionarias. Por esto te anuncié que me había separado de la política, retirado humildemente en el hogar doméstico. Al ver tanta defeción y una corrupción de sentimientos casi general. En la parte material hemos caído en manos del Feudalismo del dinero enteramente a grandes [...]. El crédito mobiliario francés. [...] tres sociedades de fuertes capitales que se han establecido. Aunque mi corazón se quebranta al escribir estas amargas palabras, debo decírtelo: hermano mío, no vengas a España para sufrir la privación y la miseria sin que la honradez baste para escudarte. Tus antecedentes, el pasado de donde vienes y hasta tus hábitos de dignidad, todo, todo te condena en este viejo mundo; y el odio del gobierno, los recelos del rico te ofrecerían la cárcel o la pobreza, sin otro recurso que una nueva y cruel [...]. En esos países en la América del Norte puede un hombre sean cuales fuesen sus ideales vivir con su trabajo, pero no en España cuando por su nombre descubren que es republicano y que ha estado en [...] comprenderás querido [...].

### ***Letter 8. Translation.***

My dear brother, I have your letters in my possession, up to the one dated April 7th. You should not attribute the absence of response to the offensive suspicion of lack of love. From the moment you told me you had resolved to leave the colony and that you needed some money, I of course tried to obtain it, but since our dear mother had lent it, I have had to withdraw it, allowing those who had it to look for the document and because the debtor is from Barcelona, everything took longer than I would have wished. They have yet to pay me but I consider it a matter of time. I am

writing to you now so that your anxiety may be assuaged somewhat. As soon as they pay me I will remit it to you in its entirety.

[...] to Perico, sending me a small amount in appreciation of the family's kindnesses. Your plans after abandoning the colony are wholly unknown to me, but I am afraid you are preparing yourself for great misfortunes. [...] it is my duty as your brother to tell you so. We so wish you wouldn't to come to Europe, and least of all to Spain, if you wish to avoid conflict and your wife and daughter's misfortune. Do you know what is left in Europe, after peace with Turkey and Russia?(5) The [...] who left [...] the thrones from Luis Felipe's time [...] that was diplomatic,(6) has become an armada and a provocateur in a hypocritical benevolence toward the people. Russia, like France, [...] is understood [...] respect toward those in government [...] essentially conservative part.

As for Spain, the conservative faction is taking control, the laws of the Constituent Assembly are moderate.(7) The feeble democratic spirit held by that body when it was created did not last long. Espartero (8) is indifferent, talking much about Order, which is a word of exploitation, and his government, which calls itself progressive, deports and confines, by order of a Field Marshall with the most reactionary swords. That is why I told you I had abandoned politics. I have humbly retreated to my home after witnessing so much defection and an almost generalized corruption of sentiments. As for material matters, we have fallen entirely into Feudalism in great [...] French real-estate property [...] Three societies with large capitals, which have been established. Even if my heart breaks writing these lines, I must tell you this: Brother, do not come to Spain to suffer hardship and penury, from which your integrity will not be enough to protect you. Your background, your past and even your dignity, all of these condemn you in this Old World. And the hatred of the government and the suspicion of the rich would offer you jail or poverty, with no other recourse but a new and cruel [...] Regardless of what his ideals may be a man can live off the fruit of his labor in those countries in North America. Not so in Spain, should they discover by his last name that he is a Republican, and that he has been in [...]. You will understand, beloved [...].

### **Conclusion:**

Long before the International Workingmen's Association and the groundbreaking proposals of Karl Marx, the social impact of the industrial revolution led nineteenth-century Europe into a constant search for new paths of human perfectibility. Utopian socialists like Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, and Étienne Cabet posed new models for human interaction trying to heal the wounds caused by the new capitalist model, the industrial revolution, and the frantic experience of modernity. In *Voyage en Icarie*

(1842), Cabet theorized his perspective of an ideal society and created an actual blueprint to put this model into practice. In 1848, Cabet convinced several hundred followers to implement his utopian society in American soil. According to Víctor Balaguer, the impact of Cabet in Catalonia was such that he had managed to make some young Catalans to “lose their mind” and follow him in his Icarian expedition of 1848 (25). Among them was Ignacio Montaldo.

The Montaldo letters offer an interesting new perspective on the Icarian experience. The letters addressed to Ignacio Montaldo transcribed in these pages are the testimony of a double disillusionment. On the one hand, after the collapse of the Icarian project, Ignacio Montaldo starts to reconsider coming back home to Barcelona and asks for family funding for his long trip home. On the other hand, Perico and Pepe Montaldo write him back with brief but direct accounts of their lack of confidence in the Spanish liberal revolution of 1854, which led to the brief Progressive Biennium (1854-1856). With the dream of a Spanish Republic and a socialist agenda in mind, the Montaldo brothers were doubtful about the limited extent of the social and political transformations that the 1854 revolution would bring, and afraid of the consequences of a much-feared conservative reaction. In their letters, they advise Ignacio to stay in the United States due to their lack of confidence in the success of the revolution. In 1856, Pepe’s letter confirmed their initial fears: Ignacio’s political comrade Abdón Terradas had fallen victim of the conservative counterrevolution. Rather ironically, after the defeat of the Icarian dream and the Spanish revolution of 1854, for the brothers Montaldo, the only dream left standing was the American dream—which required them to forget about the hope of a liberal Spain that had been defeated by the conservative counterrevolution of 1856, and to leave behind the withering ideal of Icaria.

Undoubtedly, the Montaldo Collection deserves more archival research and a profound critical attention. Among other things, it would be necessary to locate the documents in possession of Ignacio Montaldo's great-granddaughter in 1992. A deeper historic contextualization of the letters is also needed. A thorough analysis of the original letters would help us to understand the impact of the Icarian project not only for the actual residents of Nauvoo but for all those nineteenth-century idealists who were also looking for their own shelter from the storm.

### **Acknowledgement:**

To Mary and Robert Baxter, who kindly shared with us the story of their great grandfather Emile, who arrived in Nauvoo in 1885 to join the Icarian commune.

### References:

- Angle, Paul M. An Illinois Paradise: the Icarians at Nauvoo. *Chicago history*. Vol. 7, no. 7, p. 199-209.
- Balaguer, Víctor. *Las calles de Barcelona*. Barcelona: Salvador Manero, 1865.
- Cabet, Étienne. *Voyage en Icarie*. Paris: Bureau du Populaire, 1848.
- Jaggi Lee, Sarah. *Utopian spaces: Mormons and Icarians in Nauvoo, Illinois*. (Thesis) College of William and Mary, 2009.
- Johnson, Christopher H. *Utopian communism in France: Cabet and the Icarians, 1839-1851*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974.
- Soler Vidal, Josep. *Pels camins d'utopia*. Barcelona: Edicions de la Magrana, 1986.
- Sutton. Robert P. *Les Icariens: the utopian dream in Europe and America*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994.

### Notes:

- (1) This research has been possible thanks to the founding of the Dean's Office of the College of Arts and Sciences of Creighton University, and thanks to the help of faculty and staff of the Icarian Studies Center of the West Illinois University, especially its director Jeff Hancks.
- (2) Leopoldo O'Donnell y Jorris (1809-1867) was a Spanish general and statesman. He formed the Unión Liberal party.
- (3) Abdón Terradas (1812-1856) was a Republican politician, mayor of Barcelona, and founder of the secret "Patriotic Society." He fought for the República and was confined in Cádiz.
- (4) Francisco de Paula Cuello y Prats (1824-1851) was killed while fighting in a political campaign for the Courts.
- (5) The twelve Russian-Turkish wars date from 1568 to 1918. More likely, the one mentioned here by Pepe Montaldo is the one known as the Crimean War from 1853 to 1856.
- (6) Louis Philippe I (1773-1850) reigned in France from 1830 to 1848 as the leader of the Orleanist party. Conservative. Forced to abdicate in 1848.
- (7) He refers to the parliamentary proposals of the conservative Partido Moderado after the dismissal of the progressive Constitution of 1856, which had been written during the Progressive Biennium. After the counterrevolution of 1856, the Spanish Parliament reinstated the 1845 constitution.
- (8) Joaquín Baldomero Fernández-Espartero y Alvarez de Toro, (1793-1879) was a general and a progressive politician.