

We are Still Lipan

Erasure, Settler Colonialism, Historical Memory, and the Persistence of the Non-Reservation Lipan Apache

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Abstract

- Examines Lipan Apache endurance under Spanish, Mexican, Texan, and U.S. settler colonial regimes.
- Highlights violence, displacement, missionization, racial classification, and identity erasure.
- Argues Lipan survival occurred through concealment, kinship, mobility, and assimilation into Mexicanidad.
- Uses archival documents, oral histories, autoethnography, and decolonizing methods.
- Five chapters address Lipan origins, colonial encounters, the Republic & State of Texas, family memory, and modern resurgence.
- Concludes that Lipan survivance challenges colonial narratives of extinction and affirms sovereignty.



Research Question

How did settler colonialism, white supremacy, and state violence shape both the erasure and survival of the non-reservation Lipan Apache from 1650 to the present?



Methodology & Theoretical

- **Decolonizing methodologies** (Linda Tuhiwai Smith): challenges colonial archives, centers Indigenous knowledge
- **Settler Colonial theory** (Patrick Wolfe): logic of elimination; contextualizes land seizure and identity erasure.
- **White supremacy & racial ideology** (Belew, Gutiérrez, Kendi): explains racial classification and invisibility.
- **Oral history**: family testimony, community interviews, cultural memory as alternative archives.
- **Autoethnography**: Indigenous positionality grounds historical analysis.



Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1 – Emergence & Encounter

- Lipan origins through oral tradition
- Decentralized Apache governance and land-based sovereignty
- Spanish missions, military campaigns, and racial hierarchies
- The Lipan people's response included resistance, diplomacy, and cultural continuity.
- Positions Lipan as an active agent navigating Spanish and Mexican rule

Chapter 2 – Settler Logic & White Supremacy

- The Republic of Texas was built on racial ideology and land seizure
- Anglo settlers imported pro-slavery beliefs and opposed Mexican abolition
- The settler “logic of elimination” framed Native peoples as obstacles
- Laws, military campaigns, and treaties enabled dispossession
- Texas constructed a racial state aimed at removing Indigenous nations

Chapter 3 – Texas & Genocide

- Texas (1845-1924) expanded the Republic's racial ideology into genocide
- Policies, Texas Rangers, and U.S. Indian doctrine enforced removal
- Treaties like the Council Spring facilitated control and displacement
- Petitions, reports, and testimonies document cultural, structural, and physical genocide
- Concluded Texas intentionally targeted Lipan identity and territorial rights

Chapter 4 – Oral History & Family Memory

- Oral testimony reveals strategies of survival: baptism, assimilation, mobility, silence
- Family stories show cultural continuity under persecution
- Oral memory challenges archival claims of Lipan extinction
- Highlights the agency and survivance of non-reservation Lipan families

Chapter 5 – 20th and 21st Century Identity & Recognition

- 2009 & 2019 Texas legislative resolutions affirmed historical continuity
- Interviews reveal resilience despite stereotypes, erasure, and barriers
- Modern Lipan demonstrates continuity

Conclusion

- Lipan Apache were never eradicated; they survived through adaptation and concealment.
- Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, and the United States promoted the systematic

References

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- Patrick Wolfe**, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native”
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- Benjamin Madley**, *An American Genocide* (comparative genocide framework)
- Kathleen Belew & Ramón A. Gutiérrez**, *A Field Guide to White Supremacy*
- Ibram X. Kendi**, *Stamped from the Beginning*
- Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz**, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*
- Thomas A. Britten**, *The Lipan Apaches: People of Wind and Lightning*
- Nancy McGown Minor**, works on modern Lipan resurgence and tribal recognition
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