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# Lipan Apache tribe of Texas: Ethnic and racial identity

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# LIPAN APACHE TRIBE OF TEXAS:

# ETHNIC AND RACIAL IDENTITY

A Thesis

by

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# ABSTRACT

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The findings presented in this study are based on a series of semi-structured interviews, focused on racial, ethnic and cultural identity, with 20 registered members of the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas. Analysis of the interviews show that while members are spread across the country the basic cultural identity still remains the same: they are all cultural and tribal ambassadors to future generations and the world around them. Results indicate that interviewed members share the same aspirations of becoming federally recognized by the United States government, not for any type of benefits but to be seen as *real* Indians through "authentication." This thesis identifies three key factors that play a large part in the overall formation of identity within tribal members and tribe as a whole and those are: community, environment/land, and culture.

# DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my wonderful family who has supported me through this entire journey, my thesis committee who never gave up on me, the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas and my mother who always aspired to learn more about her connection to the tribe but left this world far too soon – may her legacy live on.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have many people to thank and acknowledge, but would first like to start off with my wonderful husband and sons who have been my main source of encouragement and motivation to keep going and never stop. I love you three with all my heart and am eternally grateful for your never ending support. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Russell Skowronek, chair of my thesis committee, for his continued support and understanding throughout this process. I would also like to thank my wonderful committee members, Dr. Linda English, Dr. Frank Dirrigl, and Dr. Thomas Britten who had the choice to say, "No" when I came to them at the beginning of my journey but instead gave this girl a fighting chance, and for that I thank my eclectic thesis committee for their support to the end.

My thanks also go out to my tribe, The Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas, who supported my study from the beginning and the many tribal members that I interviewed who believe in the importance of my study and took time out of their day to meet and share their stories with me – I am forever grateful. Special thanks to Chairman Bernard Barcena and Vice Chairman, Robert Soto for the constant availability and support.

And lastly, a special thanks to my father who drove me to Laredo and Alice, Texas, to obtain interviews with tribal members and attend the Annual Laredo Powwow, thank you for always being there for me and thank you for being dad and "mom," – you did good.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

"We've known who we are from the get-go, from the beginning."
-Ru. S., 2013.

This ethnographic study reviews and documents racial and cultural identity of the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas. The overall identity of the group is highlighted through twenty registered tribal members who volunteered to take part in interviews. As a tribal member myself, I intend for this study to be a wealth of information for academics who wish to focus on native peoples of South Texas and/or the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas in the modern era. This thesis is not intended to generalize an entire tribe's identity but instead understand key components that make up tribal members' view of self, such as community and culture.

The research topic originated from my connection to my tribe and my own journey to self-identification as a Lipan Apache after my mother died. After talking with other natives from across the country, the topic of identity always seemed to reoccur, this often would result to the implementation of language and cultural preservation programs. For the Lipan Apaches, most of the language has been lost and the tribe holds no piece of land to identify as home base, so for these reasons, I decided to interview tribal members to further understand the identity journey and educate others on the modern Lipan Apaches.

*Lipan* is speculated to mean "The Light Grey People," possibly originating from the Lipan words *lépai* for the color gray, and *ndé* meaning "the people" (as cited by Minor, 2009: 6;

Leal, 2014:1). The Lipan are also widely known simply as *Apache,* a name derived from the Zuñi word *ápachu* – which translates to "the enemy" (Dunn, 1911: 202). In historical texts, the Spanish word *Lipanes* can be seen throughout primary accounts to identify the Lipan people. However, for the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas, the names most often applied both within and out of the tribe is *Lipan Apache* or *Ndé.*

There is a growing amount of books about the Lipan Apache, however, nothing has been written about their sense of identity from an anthropological perspective. Four books are dedicated to the study of the Lipan Apache people and two are written by Nancy McGown Minor, who was the Lipan Apache tribal historian for a short time before her death in 2010. She dedicated several years to the documentation of the Lipan Apache people, completing, *Turning Adversity to Advantage* and *The Light Grey People*. The other two authors are Thomas A. Britten of *The Lipan Apaches: People of Wind and Lightening* and Sherry Robinson, *I Fought a Good Fight: A History of the Lipan Apaches*. Their works are also mostly written as historic pieces and not an anthropological study.

**Purpose of Study**

An Anthropological study of the Lipan Apache, especially the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas, is needed more today as native people are fighting harder to stem the tide of further assimilation and acculturation by holding on to their ancestral roots, oral histories, and cultures. This ethnographic study can facilitate the study of a tribe that people may otherwise assign to history and dismiss as extinct. For the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas, this study allows for the written literature of tribal members' oral history, culture, and identity which might otherwise be lost.

For some of the tribal members interviewed, the journey of self-identification as a Lipan Apache came later in life like "A.G." (Interviewees will be addressed by their initials only in this study) from Alice, Texas. At age 62, A.G. claimed his American-Indian ancestry in the 2010 census for the first time in his life. A year earlier, A.G. had only identified with his Mexican heritage and his census records reflected that fact.

Now, the 65-year old is discovering his identity as a Lipan Apache by immersing himself in tribal traditions and folklore. Every day is an exercise in piecing together stories told to him by his grandmother and actively participating in tribal functions. Similar to A.G., the rediscovering of ancestry germinates from cultural practices, literature, and language (Horse, 2005: 66; Maduram, 2011: 19; Minor, 2009: 198).

Today, tribal members are at the forefront of cultural rejuvenation after many were raised as Mexican or Mexican-American. The history of the Lipan Apache and their presence in South Texas and Northern Mexico plays an important role in the overall construction of this ethnographic study. Identification as both Mexican-American and Lipan Apache is understandable once the history of the people is unfolded through oral history and text.

Lipan Apaches resided in western Texas in the seventeenth century until pushed off the land, not without fight, by larger and stronger tribes like the Comanches (Britten, 2009; Minor, 2009; Robinson, 2013). Suffering a high number of casualties from the constant warfare between the two groups, the Lipan Apaches were pushed south (Leal, 2014: 48). However, warfare continued among the Lipan Apaches and Comanches, in some accounts for days (Campbell 1983; Hester, 1980; Minor, 2009; Leal, 2014:49). The tribe would eventually make alliances with the Spanish and, later, with the newly-independent Texans. While these alliances increased

stability and security for the tribe, the fight to sustain their culture and identity as the Lipan people, still continue (Leal 2014: 50; Minor 2009:140).

Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas historian, Nancy Minor, crafted a detailed portrait of the Lipan in her book *The Light Gray People*. As Minor mentioned in her preface, one of the main reasons an ethno-historic study about the Lipan didn't exist was because many of the eighteenth-century documents were written in Spanish (Minor, 2009: xi). *The Light Gray People* is well researched and anchored with data obtained by linguist Harry Hoijer in 1939 (Minor, 2009). Hoijer, a renowned linguist, dedicated his life to the lexicon of American Indian languages, specifically Southern Athapaskan (Fromkin, 1977: 169). Among his works is an interview with a Lipan Apache women, Augustina Zuazua, in 1939, who lived on the Mescalero reservation in New Mexico (Minor, 2009, xi). Zuazua spoke of the origin stories and customs of the Lipan that were passed to her by her grandmother in the Southern Athapaskan Lipan language (Minor, 2009). The folklore and information obtained through Zuazua was valuable to the overall collection of history for the tribe, but there is little light shed on the present standing of the Lipan. Minor, however, does dedicate the last chapter of *Turning Adversity to Advantage* to acknowledge the tribe's present day condition (Minor, 2009: 193-198). This is one of the first comprehensive books written about Lipan Apache history. Minor uses historical accounts, spanning 200 years, to create a detailed portrait of the tribe for future researchers to continue tracing the tribe's path through South Texas and Northern Mexico.

Professor of History at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Thomas A. Britten authored a book in 2009 titled, *The Lipan Apaches: People of Wind and Lightning*. Britten provides a detailed chronological timeline of events similar to Minor's. He begins the book with a visual genesis, providing a wonderful map showing the Lipan Apache's migration and using

anthropological evidence to support various claims throughout the text. Britten also challenges some popular thoughts of the Lipan historiography by providing a more analytical perspective. An example of this would be the duration of the "nine-day battle" with the Comanches, which Britten says seems improbable due to past battles between native tribes and the amount of wars the Comanches were involved in at the time (Britten, 2009: 62-63). Similar to Minor, Britten dedicates his last chapter to the Lipan Apache people in the modern era and their contemporary political and inter-tribal battles. This is a great reference for academia and an informative read for those curious about the history of the Lipan Apaches.

Sherry Robinson authored, *I Fought A Good Fight: A History of the Lipan Apaches*, in 2013, which centers on the relationship between Lipan Apache and Mescalero Apache people. Robinson includes interviews with Meredith Magoosh Begay, Lucy Evelyn Smith from the Mescalero Apache Reservation in New Mexico, family stories from Daniel Castro Romero, Jr., and the Lipan Apache Band of Texas written history archives [family stories of Daniel Castro Romero, Jr and other tribal members of the Lipan Apache Band] (Robinson, 2013: xi).

Minor (2009) was not referenced in Robinson's book; only a mention of Minor's previous work with William Chebahtah on the Apache warrior *Chevato* found its way into Robinson's work. Minor's work isn't the only thing missing in Robinson's literature review. She also fails to mention the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas, a state-recognized body stemming from a inter-tribal dispute within the Lipan Apache Band of Texas. While Robinson does mention, toward the end of her book, the attempts to connect with the tribe, she was mostly unsuccessful in scheduling interviews (Robinson, 2013: 384). Even with a lack of communication and a difficult time obtaining interviews from the tribe, by giving voice to tribal members Robinson's study would have provided greater detail on the overall sentiment of the Lipan Apache people.

Robinson does provide an easy "go-to guide" for researchers to identify Lipan Chiefs and the dates they are speculated to have served, as well as oral and folklore history accounts from Lipan Apache.

Perry Horse, a federally-recognized Kiowa tribal member, writes about Native American identity and the disruptions which steer native people in various directions (Horse, 2005: 66). Horse looks at various views of self-identity as a personal journey for individuals, as well as a social and racial journey (Horse, 2005:66). This was clearly shown in this study, with many, but not all, tribal members interviewed feeling their identity was achieved after a long road to acceptance.

While there are other groups that claim Lipan Apache ancestry, like the Lipan Apache Band of Texas, the only group with recognition by the State of Texas is the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas. With over one hundred years of family lineage and tradition, the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas was recognized on March 18, 2009. After receiving recognition from the state, the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas began work toward receiving federal acknowledgment by the United States Federal Government.

But why is this recognition so important? Is it not enough for a person to know they are of native descent? Historically, because of laws handed down by the American government, recognition and membership of a tribe has become the foundation to identifying as native.

## Significance of the Study

Identity became increasingly important for individuals of Native American descent as they sought to reconstitute their tribal affiliation, and gain recognition from the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs during the latter two-thirds of the twentieth century. This came about with the passage of the Dawes Severalty Act in 1887 which divided communally-

held tribal lands into allotments for individual Indians (Kamins, 1992:111). A half century later, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 ended these allotments and renewed Indian rights to reorganize and govern themselves, however, in 1954, it was apparent the Indian Reorganization Act was failing (Kamins, 1992: 111-112). While legally tribes might be reconstituted, the question would remain, how would membership be determined? This question and how individuals "become native" has been argued for the past eighty years challenging the question of identity.

For the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas, tribal membership is determined by proof of ancestry, either matrilineal or patrilineal. This differs from other Native American tribes like, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, who use blood quantum level testing to determine their tribal members enrollment (www.ebci.com). While the tribal enrollment topic has become flooded with differing opinions, the blood quantum testing was "pioneered by the federal government as means to limit the number of "recognized" Indians" in hopes of less financial responsibility to enrolled members (Beckenhauer, 2003: 167). While the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas has an enrollment process, currently, genealogical ancestry is sufficient proof to obtain membership.

This study examines and provides essential information about the present-day Lipan Apache people, and recognizes the significance of the Lipan Apache in the South Texas area. Historically seen as a warrior society and one of the most feared in the region, the Lipan Apache people, as with most native people in the twenty-first century, are woven into modern American culture and often relegated to historical texts or old western movies. This study attempts to shed light on the impact state recognition has on the tribe, tribal members, and the surrounding community.

According to Hilary N. Weaver, cultural identity is often rooted in a particular place of origin where "spiritual and cultural practices are inextricably linked to the land" (Weaver, 2012: 475, 476). Native people who are stripped from their land often face challenges with their cultural identity (Weaver 2012: 475, 476). Authors, Reynalds, Sodano, Ecklund, and Guyker reference P.G. Horse's theory showing the role acculturation had in diminishing American Indian values and traditions. In this article, cultural effects of acculturation were studied through the Native American Acculturation Scale and Demographic form with native youth in college as participants (as cited in Ecklund et al, 2012: 101).

The meaning of acculturation is useful in many contexts but for American Indians, Reynalds, Sodano, etal use the definition given by Choney, Berryhill-Paapke and Robbins which claims acculturation is determined by the individual's adherence to both the Euro-American and tribal values (as cited in Ecklund et al, 2012: 102). In *The Tapestry of Culture*, Rosman and Rubel claim acculturation is defined by "the process of culture change resulting from the contact between two cultures" (Rosman and Rubel, 2004: G-1). This can be seen with the Lipan Apache people and the Mexican culture. Due to the close proximity of Mexico, many Lipan Apaches crossed what is now an international border for resources and safety (Sjoberg,1953:79). For those who ventured south, and eventually stayed, the Mexican culture overtook some parts of their tribal identity. In this study, all participants are familiar with the Mexican culture, and while most even speak the Spanish language, they have all eventually identified as Lipan Apache.

**Summary**

Today, many, like A.G. and H.G., grapple with a dual-cultural identity. Russell Thornton addresses tribal distinctiveness within the American Indian community as being mixed with "old" and "new" Native Americans (Thornton, 1997:39). He states the "old" Native Americans

who speak their native language and have a tribal identity will lessen with the growing rate of intermarriage, and eventually replaced with "new" Native Americans with little to no tribal affiliation or identity (Thornton, 1997: 39). Lipan Apache seem to fall in line with Thornton's theory, because, while the Lipan have lost most of their native language to acculturation and intermarriage, they are devoted to keeping what traditions they have left. The 2010 census shows an increase in people claiming Native American or Alaskan heritage (Hoeffel, 2010; Leal, 2014). While the raw data may not be enough to distinguish between a higher birth rate or an increase in identity itself, what is compelling is the increase of cultural centers and programs aimed at recovering native identity (Thornton, 2005: 25-34).

The terms emic and etic, first coined by linguist Kenneth Pike to strategize behavior, provides a better way to look at surrounding cultures from the inside (knowledge of culture) or outside (no knowledge of culture) (Harris, 1976: 331). Applying this method to my study allows for an in-depth look into tribal members lives, the tribe as a whole, as well as family oral histories. In the articles referred to previously, all contain a key element that forms identity or sense of identity for Indian people, this study further examines if community, land and culture are central to the identity of the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas as well.

# CHAPTER II

## BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE LIPAN APACHES

> "Adaptive, brave, and resilient, the Lipans waged a relentless campaign for survival, seeking alliances with and/or protection from, both Indian and non-Indian peoples"
>
> -Britten, 2009: 60

While the story of the Lipan Apaches appears in historical textbooks and scholarly monographs during the 20th and 21st centuries, you can still experience the tribe's vibrant culture at the fall and spring powwows in McAllen and Alice, Texas. The Ndé, as many tribal members call themselves, are not "extinct" and their efforts to connect with their heritage can be seen at annual gatherings and other events discussed in this ethnographic study.

For modern day Lipan Apaches, it is important to explore where they originated from. In order to better understand the impact of tribal identity for tribal members in the modern era, it is appropriate to provide a brief history of the tribe. This chapter examines the Lipan Apaches' origins, their historical significance, and their influence on the histories of Texas and northern Mexico in an effort to provide a foundation in understanding how their unique history affects today's modern-day Lipan.

### Origins

According to scholars from a variety of disciplines like archaeologists, historians, linguists, and anthropologists, the Lipan Apaches are descendants of "a much larger language

family known as the Na-Dene family (or phylum) who traversed the Bering Strait at some point between 7000 and 5000BC, and settled over a broad area in subarctic Alaska and Northwestern Canada" (Britten, 2009: 34). Linguistic evidence shows additional migrations took place around A.D. 1100, as divisions between the Athapaskan-speakers became apparent (Britten, 2009: 37-40,55; Hoxie, 1996; Minor, 2009: 11; Reeve, 1946: 189). Three distinct groups emerged from the Athapaskans after they completed the long migration out of Alaska and Canada (Tweedie, 1968: 1132; Leal, 2014).

The northern Athapaskans continued to settle in subarctic interior of Alaska and western Canada (Britten, 2009: 39). The western group of Athapaskan speakers, along the Pacific Coast, began to settle in Oregon and northern California around 700 to 900 A.D., and adopted many technological innovations like food-gathering systems (Britten, 2009: 39). The southern Athapaskans continued moving south toward Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas (Britten, 2009: 40; Minor, 2009:11). Two groups emerged along the Southwest and southern plains, further splitting off into the Chiricahua, Navajos, Mescaleros, Jicarilla, Kiowa Apache, Western Apache and Lipan Apache (as cited by Minor, 2009:11; Hoijer, 1938:75-86; Opler, 1975:182-192).

According to Minor, the separation between the Lipan Apaches and the rest of the Southern Athapaskan-speaking migrants are only hinted at in historical record; however, linguist Harry Hoijer links the Lipan and Jicarilla dialects as most phonetically similar to each other (Minor, 2009, 13; Britten, 2009: 55). Morris Opler concluded that the Lipan and Jicarilla Apaches [a Southwest and Apachean-speaking tribe] are very likely to have been the last to separate at some point in the seventeenth century and primarily resided in eastern New Mexico and west Texas (Opler, 1940,5-6; Britten, 2009: 55; Minor, 2009,13-14).

## Historical Impacts

During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it is estimated that there was a large scale migration into south Texas by the Lipan. Britten states the Lipan moved south for two reasons: the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, which may have pushed the Lipan south to escape the oppressive Spanish who wanted to eradicate the Indian way of life by Christianizing natives, and the increase of new powerful Indian groups making their way into west Texas (Britten, 2009: 60-61; Bowden, 1975: 220-221). Foremost among these were the Comanches, who moved into the Texas Panhandle for "hunting grounds and control of the lucrative bison-hide trade" (Britten, 2009:62). The Comanche succeeded in weakening the Lipan after years of warfare and took control over the territory (Britten, 2009: 62-63; Minor, 2009: 31-33).

Minor and Reeve both discuss a nine-day long war between the Comanches and Lipan, which proved to be key for the Comanches success in gaining control of the territory (Minor, 2009: 32-33; Reeve, 1946: 194). However, Britten notes that not all scholars agree with this theory because nine-day battles were rather uncommon for native peoples and the Comanche were already spread thin due to their warfare with other Apache bands in Colorado (Britten, 2009:62-63). One thing is certain, however, the Lipan kept moving southward. The first written record mentioning the Lipan reports their presence in the San Sabá River region in 1732. "Governor Bustillo y Zevallos, who was leading a Spanish military expedition against the Ypandi (pronounced Yeh-Pandee) and three other tribes who were massing north of San Antonio" gets credit for introducing the Lipan Apaches into the historical record (Reeve, 1946: 194; Sjoberg 1953:77; as cited in Minor 2009:7, 33).

Despite the attacks by Bustillo, the Lipan frequently attacked the San Antonio de Béxar presidio and surrounding ranches for horses and cattle (Britten, 2009: 77-80; Reeve, 1946: 194-

195). Many occupants of the Spanish mission at San Antonio were so fearful of the Apache attacks that they packed up and left (Britten, 2009: 86-89). However, the Lipan Apaches were not the only ones they needed to fear.

The Comanches were beginning to attack both the Spaniards and the Lipan so frequently that the strategic choice to settle at the San Antonio mission was made by the Lipan, which prompted more attacks by the Comanches who assumed that the Spaniards and Apaches were allies. (Britten, 2009: 96-97). In the hopes of using the Lipan to shield Spanish settlements around San Antonio from Comanches attacks, as well as bringing Christianity and "civilization" to the Lipan, the Spaniards constructed the San Sabá mission near present day Menard, Texas, for [the Lipan] in 1757." A year later, the Comanche and their Indian allies attacked and destroyed the San Saba mission (Sjoberg, 1953: 77-78). The Lipan moved once again, this time to "present-day Southern Texas and northern Coahuila" causing additional dispersals of the Lipan people (Sjoberg 1953:78). By 1780, Lipan had separated "into two large groupings reflecting their position with respect to the Rio Grande" – the Upper Lipan and Lower Lipan (Britten 2009:144).

Control of the Indian people was key for the Spanish in order to maintain their tenuous hold on Texas (Britten, 2009: 170,177-179). In September 1806, Governor Antonio Cordero met with Lipan and Comanche leaders to make a peace agreement and to end the constant intertribal warfare that complicated Spain's hopes of settling Texas. (Britten, 2009: 170). The peace between the two groups lasted for an estimated two years (Britten, 2009: 170). The Lipan continuously fought to protect their lands and hunting grounds, but with more settlers arriving to claim these lands, their situation became increasingly desperate. Ongoing Lipan raiding and warfare played a significant role in Spain's inability to make Texas a viable part of New Spain.

After Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, Mexican leaders looked to bring order to the Indian tribes residing on its northern frontier of Texas. In July of 1821, Lipan chiefs Cuelgas de Castro and Volcna Poca Ropa (Yolcha Pocaropa) visited with Mexican officials at San Fernando de Austria in northern Coahuila and signed a peace treaty with the government of Mexico. The Lipan were widely dispersed by this time, residing across South Texas and Northern Coahuila. The arrival of thousands of Anglo-American settlers ushered in new trading opportunities and the promise of mutual defense against the Comanches (Britten, 2009: 178).

**The Effects**

Since the migration of Comanches into Texas, the Lipans split into smaller bands allowing for a greater survival rate (Minor, 2009: 93). Minor states that it is estimated that the "Lipan bands ranged from ten to fourteen" by early eighteenth century where some later absorbed with other tribes or had a loss of leadership that resulted in varying ideas. Britten states that the most notable divisions of the Lipan, were the Upper Lipan who were closer in proximity to the Comanches, which may have been a reason for their wish for peace and siding with the Spanish and the Lower Lipan who wanted to be able to continue to move without restriction so they can continue to raid south of the Rio Grande border (Britten 2009: 160). Historian Andrée F. Sjoberg, author of *Lipan Apache Culture in Historical Perspective*, states the Texas Revolution (1835-1836) further divided the Lipan people, with the Upper Lipan generally siding with Mexico and the Lower Lipan with the Texans (Sjoberg, 1953: 79; Britten, 2009:183). The Republic of Texas gained its independence after the Mexican army's defeat at the Battle of San Jacinto in April 1836 (Dunn, 2011; 389). While this was a celebratory time for Sam Houston, the Lipan were again in limbo with the newly-founded Republic of Texas. Many new settlers wanted the removal of Indians, but President Houston's Indian policy stressed the importance of a "well-

regulated system of trade with the Indians" (Britten, 2009: 194). While the new government did not recognize tribal ownership of land, in January of 1838, Lipan leaders signed a peace treaty in which they promised to remain peaceful and to maintain in good relations with the Texas government. Some even served as scouts and auxiliaries for Texas frontier troops (Britten, 2009: 186-188). In November 1838, Mirabeau Lamar succeeded Houston as the second President of Texas and had his own ideas on how to deal with native tribes. Lamar's nationalistic view of what he believed Texas should be can best be seen through his Indian policies (Parker, 1981: 327-329; Winfrey, 1955: 193). During his first days of office, Lamar adopted an Indian policy that centered on the "ethnic cleansing" of natives from Texas lands (Winfrey, 1955: 192-193). Devoting much of his presidency to the removal of all Texas Indian tribes, Lamar critiqued the United States Indian policy in his second address to the Texas Congress (Scheer, 2014: 57; Winfrey, 1955:193).

> "The white man and the red man cannot dwell in harmony together. Nature forbids it. They are separated by the strongest possible antipa-thies, by colour, by habits, by modes of thinking, and indeed by all the causes which engender hatred, and render strife the inevitable consequence of juxtapos."

He petitioned the new Texas Congress for funds and created a military force to eradicate the Indian population in Texas (Bowes, 2016: 216; Britten, 2009: 184; Muckleroy, 1922: 130-136). Although he found a Congress sympathetic to his goals at first, by the end of Lamar's presidency, the Congress lost patience and grew hostile toward him, his policies, and "the failure of the financial system" (Sheer, 2014: 57; Christian, 1921: 317).

The Lamar administration left office and, in December of 1841, Sam Houston returned to the presidency once again. In his second term as president, Houston worked to reinstate his

Indian policy while working to improve relations between settlers and Indians. While Lamar's policies were no longer enforced, "Lipan security and self-sufficiency" declined since Republic of Texas officials refused to recognize their land claims and imposed strict regulations on the Lipans' commerce and movement (Britten, 2009: 196). The United States' annexation of Texas in 1845 brought about renewed struggles and difficulties for the Lipan Apaches (Britten, 2009: 199). Britten states that there were an estimated three-hundred Lipan residing in South Texas during this time (Britten, 2009: 202). In accordance with its annexation agreement with the United States, Texas retained control of all its lands and most Texans opposed setting aside any part of these lands for the Lipan. In order to repay the debts incurred during the decade long Republic period, the Texas government sought to sell land—not sign it away to Native Americans (Britten, 2009: 203). With new settlements, ranches, and military installations appearing across the state during the late 1840s-1850s, the bison food supply declined which placed renewed pressure on the Lipan and other indigenous peoples of Texas (Britten, 2009: 208-209).

In order to ensure the survival of their families, Lipan leaders—along with the leaders of other Texas tribes—met with U.S. government officials at Spring Creek in 1850 and signed the Fort Martin Scott Treaty (Britten, 2009: 211). However, this accomplished little since attacks and raids continued (Britten, 2009: 211). The inability of the federal government to protect Texas residents from Indian raids and attacks was said to be one of the main reasons the state of Texas decided to secede from the United States in 1861 (Britten, 2009: 217-218; Robinson, 2013: 258).

Lipan Apaches, along with other tribes, used the window of opportunity provided by the Civil War to raid for cattle and livestock (Britten, 2009: 218). By the end of the United States Civil War, some Lipan moved with other tribes to reservations north or southwest, but the larger

body of Lipan stayed in Texas where they continued to rely on raiding, stealing, and trading to survive (Britten, 2009: 221). The dispersal of the Lipan Apaches continued in the post-Civil War era. While some groups remained in South Texas, others withdrew south of the Rio Grande into Mexico. The village of Zaragosa, Coahuila, became an important place of refuge and a staging area for Lipan raiding activities northward into Texas. After a successful raid, the Lipan would return to Coahuila and sell stolen livestock and horses to Mexican traders (Britten, 2009: 221). Small bands of Kickapoos also resided in northern Mexico and were involved in raiding activities as well, over time conducting raids against each other (Anderson and Wallace, 1965: 106). The Mexican army, Texas Rangers, and U.S. soldiers stationed at forts along the Rio Grande also made life perilous for the Lipan (Smith, 1996: 506). By 1877, their position in northern Mexico became so hazardous that some Lipan moved to the San Carlos Reservation in Arizona, while others sought refuge with the Mescalero Apaches in New Mexico (Britten, 2009: 229; Reeve, 1946: 204; Smith, 1996: 506-507).

According to Britten, "the Lipan Apaches no longer possessed a discernible presence in what was once their homeland" following two centuries of migrations through South Texas (Britten, 2009:231). In addition to thinning numbers brought on by engaging in a raiding economy, the Lipan dispersed further into smaller groups as smallpox and other epidemic diseases ravaged their communities (Robinson, 2013: 299). In many historical accounts, it seems that the Lipan simply ceased to exist, however, this is just not the case. While some Lipan resided with other Native tribes like the Mescalero and Chiricahua Apaches or relocated to Oklahoma, there were certainly remnants of the Lipan in the South Texas region and in northern Mexico (Reeve, 1946: 213-214). An unknown number of Lipan assimilated as Mexicans – becoming Mexican Americans as they later moved north to the United States. In the early 1900s,

Reeve mentions the Lipan "lost their official identity in the records of the Office of Indian Affairs" (Reeve, 1946:208). The exact number of Lipan living during this time is speculated in academic sources; however, in an annual report dated 1942, a few hundred were still living (Britten, 2009: 236; Reeve, 1946: 209). In 1946, the Indian Claims Commission (ICC) was created by the United States Congress in an effort to resolve outstanding grievances between Native American tribes and the government, as a result, "the entire Apache Nation filed a petition… for the lands they had lost in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas" (Britten, 2009: 236). A year and a half later, the Lipans and Mescaleros amended the petition so that each Apache group can file a new petition in 1959 where they sought for compensation for land lost in nineteenth century in Texas (Britten, 2009: 236). After many years, claims and hearings, the result ended in February 19, 1976 where the ICC awarded five million to the Mescaleros and five million to the Lipan Apaches whom resided on the Mescalero Reservation, this in turn excluded many Lipan (Britten, 2009: 237).

## Lipan Apache in Modern Society

As time passed and cultural lines blurred, Lipan descendants began to band together for a cultural rejuvenation. In 1970, R.S. and his family would dance in their front yard to reconnect to the land and their culture, later opening up their home in 1980 to friends and other natives. Leal notes that, only twenty years later did they begin to rent a facility for the public to have the opportunity to learn about the Lipans and other natives in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (Leal, 2012: 1-2).

> "So when the (.8) when we decided to make our pow wow (.5) when we decided to open it up to the public because um… (.3) up to um..1989, we were having our gatherings and pow wows but it was more for our family, our tribe, and our own, those who we've

invited. And they were under, for a while we did it under a telephone pole under a light, in a, in our front yard. And then later on we built an little arbor on the back. And so, those were our, our gatherings just under the telephone pole. And we did that for the longest time, for almost twenty years. And then um,,,, the um,,, in 1989 we decided to open it to the public by renting a facility. And, allowing people to come and uh, and uh, and uh, and see who we were as Indian people, kinda educate the people. Uh, uh, as far as the pow wow concerned, it wasn't started by a, the pow wow is Pan-Indian, it's a Pan-Indian things, that, that's connects us. It only started about 100 years ago, 125 years ago. (.3) but the… the pow wow is one of the few.. things that we have that connects us as Indians. That's why we have them. and a, and so, so our ceremonies, that are no longer being done. Uh, where the pow wow took over the ceremonies" (Leal, 2012: Appendix A; R.S. Personal Interview. 1 Feb. 2012 and 4 April 2012).

Walking into one of the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas annual powwows, one would hear jingle from the bells tied around dancers' ankles, a loud drum beat, and the voices of Lipan men singing. Men, women, and children are seen dressed in tribal or modern powwow regalia (cultural clothing) dancing clockwise in the circle (area designated for dancers). The culture and identity is clear and present. The Lipan are alive and thriving thanks to their resiliency and adaptive nature.

Today, many Lipan reside in the South Texas region but are not limited to this one area. As history clearly shows, the Lipan adapted to their environment and the changing social structures around them. The Lipan are proudly showing their roots and culture by holding annual gatherings around the South Texas region, and performing at local education institutions and public events. They seek to educate the local community about native people and the presence of

the tribe (Personal Interview with R.S., 2014). It is important to note that not all tribal members participate by dancing, drumming, or even going to meetings. However, all tribal members interviewed for this study did participate in some capacity with tribal dances and gatherings.

While most of the Lipan language has been lost, the available written records from Spanish missions and oral histories are helping to slowly piece the language back together. Findings by anthropologists Harry Hoijer and Morris Opler are used today to demonstrate how Lipan and Jicarilla are most phonetically related to each other (Britten, 2009: 55; Minor, 2009: 12, Opler; 1940: 5-6). This has led some Lipan tribal members to learn their language by using the Jicarilla language to fill in any gaps.

On March 11, 2006, a federal agent with the Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife disrupted the sacred dance circle at the spring powwow and confiscated eagle feathers from Robert Soto, his family, and other tribal members who supposedly had migratory bird feathers on their regalia. Soto and his family filed suit against the Department of Interior for violating the sacred circle and seizing their eagle feathers. Robert Soto, a pastor of Grace Brethren Church in McAllen, Texas, battled for almost nine years with the U.S. government until the feathers were finally returned to the Soto family. On March 10, 2015, after the "Fifth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled unanimously that the seizure had violated Soto's rights under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act," the eagle feathers were returned (ICTMN Staff, March 10, 2015).

In 2007, the tribe incorporated as the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas. Before this time, many were connected to the Lipan Apache Band of Texas Inc., but separated due to an intra-tribal dispute with Castro Romero (Britten, 2009: 239). Both are still in existence; however, only the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas is recognized by the State of Texas in 2009. Many of the tribal members interviewed in this study explain their desire for federal recognition, but also explain

their understanding of the long process required in these proceedings. The interviewed tribal members in this study state that their only desire is to be recognized as true ancestors of the Lipan people.

According Grenville Goodwin, author of *the Southern Athapascans*, he notes that respectfully 300 Lipan Apache were living by 1870 (Goodwin, 1938: 5). However, he does not note whether this number reflects Lipan who resided on the Mescalero reservation in New Mexico or Kiowa reservation in Oklahoma. We now know there are over 3,000 registered Lipan Apache tribal members. So who are the Lipan Apache? How do they "know" they are Lipan? What does it mean to be Lipan? The remainder of this study will explore these questions and key components that cement cultural and tribal identity.

# CHAPTER III

## METHODOLOGY

With over three thousand registered tribal members within the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas, the first step as a researcher was to look at that number and figure out the best way to accurately depict the tribe. After formally introducing my study to the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas Council and members in attendance in McAllen, Texas, it was clearly explained that the study was on an all-volunteer participation basis with no cap on the number of members interviewed. After the council approved my study, the tribal members were then free to sign up to be interviewed. The main goal was to get as many participants as possible to create the most unbiased and accurate depiction of the modern Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas.

After collecting twenty registered tribal members' names, all were successfully interviewed for this study for an overall view of the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas identity within the members and tribe as a whole. It should be noted that as a registered member of the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas myself, some may question my ability to stay unbiased as a researcher throughout this process; however, I found the only difference between myself and a potential "outsider" conducting the study is the time a researcher must spend with the tribe to gain trust and obtain a key informant. As what some might call a "Native" anthropologist, the tribe and the researcher have an understandable knowledge of each other and can bypass most of the "getting to know" phase. Anthropologists, like Khalil Nakhleh, who conducted ethnographic research on their tribes or villages have created unique pieces of work without personal bias. Nakhleh, an

Israeli Arab who returned to the area where he grew up to interview community members about "membership in the Nakhleh patrilineage," explains that being from the area was more of an asset than an impediment (Nakhleh, 1979: 343-345). Other anthropologists, like Delmos J. Jones, in his 1970 article *Towards a Native Anthropology*, call for more views from the "oppressed" rather than just those observing and studying the oppressed. Reflecting on this theory again, Jones authored an article titled *Anthropology and the Oppressed: A Reflection on "Native" Anthropology*, in 1995, where he centers his discussion on social justice and equality, stating "native Anthropology and/or insider research should be practiced but should also be scrutinized the same as any other Anthropological study" (Jones, 1995: 58).

As stated in the *How Native Is a "Native" Anthropologist* article by Kirin Narayan, the idea of being labeled in the field of anthropology made him cringe. Narayan proposes the disappearance of "walls" in anthropology as well as other fields which categorize researchers (Narayan, 1993: 682). He stresses "writing that depicts authors as minimally bicultural in terms of belonging simultaneously to the world of engaged scholarship and the world of everyday life" is a more accurate representation of the growing population of people today (Narayan, 1993:671-672). I expect to be held to the same standards as any other cultural anthropologist in the field and, while this is an ethnographic study about a familiar group, I hope this unique piece of work from an insider's perspective can begin a conversation about Native American identity in the modern era.

The decision to do ethnography rather than other methods was simple. I felt this was the best way to most accurately portray the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas and its tribal members by allowing for their voices to be heard rather than speaking for them. As defined by John Van Maanen, "ethnography is [a] written representation of a culture (or selected aspects of a culture)"

that provides both information and familiarity with others (Maanen, 2011 [1988]:1). Similarly, Robinson explains that she gives voice to the Native people rather than simply recounting historical records (Robinson, 2013: xxi). She does so by obtaining Lipan oral histories as well as written Lipan family records which helped her "fill in many blanks to reconstruct the Apache view" (Robinson, 2013: xxii). Similar to Robinson's point of view, this study is not just from the anthropologist point of view but from each of the twenty registered tribal members interviewed. The semi-structured questions asked to each of the participating tribal members were as follows;

Q1) Tell me a little bit about yourself (education, employment, family)

Q2) How do you identify yourself, racially and culturally? Why?

Q3) Do people react in any way when you say that you are Native American? Lipan Apache?

Q4) Do you feel that State Tribal Recognition changed you and your families' view of self? Why or why not?

Q5) What are some, if any, informal and/or formal activities or gatherings that go on within the tribe or among tribal members?

Q6) Do gatherings and tribal recognition bond members with each other and the community? Do you feel this is important?

Q7) Tell me a little bit about your family ancestry?

Q8) Would you like to add anything else to this discussion?

The questions never changed in the twenty interviews, but the length of time each tribal member chose to talk about particular questions varied. The last question often resulted in a contemplative stare or a continuation of the participant's family stories and/or self-identity.

## Participants

In this study, there were a total of twenty registered Lipan Apache tribal members interviewed from the South Texas region in May 2013. Many of the tribal members interviewed currently reside in McAllen, Alice, and San Antonio, Texas. The all-volunteer group of interviewees was composed of 4 females and 16 male tribal members. The age range of female participants ranged from 27 to 83 (M*age =55.25*) and the male ranged from 19 to 68 years old (M*age =51.31).* It should be noted that the oldest member interviewed is the maternal mother to three of the participants and grandmother to four of the total participants in this study. While the sample size of 20 greatly differs with the almost 3000 plus member total, over 600 tribal members are registered in this regional demographic, which results in a well-balanced study.

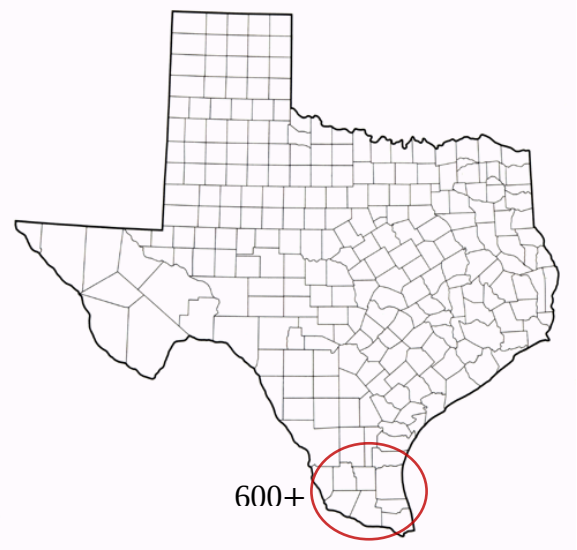


**Figure 1: 2016 Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas Member Enrollment Count in South Texas**

## Measures

A variation of measures were used to ensure accurate data collection including, semi-structured questions and Institutional Review Board (IRB) forms for each participant. The IRB forms are used to ensure that the human subjects interviewed are being treated ethically and researcher is in accordance to the institutional and federal guidelines.

This included an informed consent form authorizing the voice recording of the interview and use of the participants' stories and information for the completion of this thesis (IRB Form

can be found in Appendix B). Among the measures used was a voice recorder and notepad to document each participants' name, age, time, place of meeting, and write extra field notes.

## Procedures

This study was conducted through a qualitative approach, where I looked for recurring themes in my interviews or for a better description "aim[ed] to provide an in-depth understanding of peoples' experiences, perspectives and histories in the context of their personal understandings and settings" (Dillon, Lucy, Lewis, Jane, National Centre for Social Research, Ritchie, Jane & Spencer, Liz. 2003: 3). Ethnography is utilized in my research as the primary study method, but is not the only way to conduct research on the Lipan Apache. A historical approach can be taken to study the Lipan Apache as well, but would not give direct voice to those Lipan Apache living today. This ethnographic research provides the outsider with an inside and very intimate view into the life and culture of the Lipan Apaches of Texas from their point of view and perspectives.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, I began my fieldwork by introducing my study to the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas council and tribal members in McAllen, Texas at the spring of 2013 council meeting. After explaining the thesis and intentions, the council unanimously approved my study and, a few weeks later, I received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the University of Texas –Pan American. The study first began with participant observation at tribal gatherings where I both participated as a tribal and fancy shawl dancer and observed as an anthropologist. Participant observation is a term Malinowski states is, "to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of his world" (as cited in Tedlock 1991: 69-70).

Scheduling times to interview each tribal member that signed up at the council meeting began shortly after. The semi-structured interviews with the twenty participants lasted from May to early June of 2013. While interviewing individuals, I also attended the Laredo, Texas, Comanche annual powwow where I collected both observation notes and interviews from tribal members both at the event and in Alice, Texas where many of the signed up participants resided.

Some ethical considerations that needed to be addressed in this study was the use of each participant's name. Nineteen of the twenty participants consented to use their real names in this study. A pseudonym will be used for any quotes used from the one participant who did not want to have their name listed. However, even though I have received signed release form from nineteen participants, as a researcher, I have abbreviated all names for added confidentiality.

All confidential records and signed release forms are archived with the Community Historical Archaeological Project with Schools (CHAPS) Program at the University of Rio Grande Valley and will eventually be transferred to the UTRGV library archives. As far as the data handling, all recorded material of the interviews are in the interviewer's possession and are securely stored. The data analyses of all twenty interviews have played a key role in the construction of each chapter. By replying and transcribing interviews, many key identifiers were obtained that proved key to the formation of this thesis and tribal identity. Transcriptions of each interview are omitted from this thesis due to confidentiality purposes but excerpts are included within each chapter topic however, a sample transcription can be found in Appendix C for reference (Appendix C).

## Evaluating Qualitative Research

Throughout this research, one thing is clear: the interactions between each participant is unique, but the underlying view of self as a native person remained the same. Since this study is

mainly through an ethnographic approach, the participants were open to express themselves without any bias. The validity of the research can be questioned because this is only a portion (20) of the more than 3,000 registered tribal members' view of self and the tribe as a whole. However, out of the over 3,000 registered tribal members over 600 are located in the lower Rio Grande Valley region, which is the largest concentrated population total for registered tribal members and provides a foundation for the modern Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas identity and cultural standing that is a starting point for future researchers to utilize.

## Summary

The methodology for this distinctive ethnographic study has proved to be more difficult than first perceived because of my personal attachment to the subject matter. In addition to compiling the information for all the participants after outlining interview questions that would elicit conversations and participants' memories. While I cannot be completely detached from my study, I realized that all I can do is be open to listen to tribal members' stories and appreciate them allowing me to document their stories and view of self.

I have learned that as a "native" anthropologist, I will never be detached and have realized no one should be expected to be, especially when it is about their people. This may go against what some anthropologist view about ethnography; this is not a science to me, but a bank of information for future generations. As Van Maanen states, "ethnographies of any sort are always subject to multiple interpretations. They are never beyond controversy or debate" (Van Maanen, 2001 [1988]: 35).

# CHAPTER IV

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AS LIPAN

"I was born into it, but it took me a while to actually accept it"
-R.A.S., 2013.

The acknowledgement of Lipan Apache ancestry is reached through many avenues one is through family oral history. Growing up with family stories told about the Lipan and what it means to be *Indio(a)* is something all of the twenty tribal members interviewed shared. Each of the tribal members shared what they wanted, some with long family stories and others with short narratives of their family life. Interviews point to older members having more detailed and lengthy oral histories, while the younger members had shorter narratives. In this chapter, the oral history, self and tribal acknowledgment, genealogy, and state recognition are all covered to understand the formation of tribal members' view of self today.

## Oral History

While interviewing A.S., the oldest member of the participants, her face filled with joy as we walked around the living room where photos of her entire family hung on all four walls. She pointed at all her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren pictured in the frames and recollected details of each photo as we sat down on her couch. We then began to start the interview in the living room surrounded by her family history. After stating and spelling her full name, I proceeded to ask her about her life; education, family, children, and jobs. A.S. was quick to respond, explaining her education went up to the fifth grade and then talked about her

children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. She then explains ranching as being the one job she has always had besides being a mother. Stating since she was a child she has always worked on the land, raising her own animals in which she still continues to date. She then promptly explained that she identifies herself as *puro India* meaning pure Indian in Spanish.

> **Researcher:** So, has anybody ever reacted to you in any way when you said you were Indian, I know you said that for your mom it was,,,
>
> **A.S.:** My mother, my mother's family, my grandfather keep telling when they were little ones not to say they were Indian - *THEY WERE MEXICAN*. You know, *por que* he had this thing that the Mexicans do bad things with the guns. And this is the way that my mother, you know, raised *pero* she knew she was Indian - everybody knew. As soon as she grown up but when she was a little one that's the thing… we were raised in Oja de Agua or Abram but my mother never said she was a Mexican she always said she was Indian - she was very proud to be an Indian you know.

A.S. ended her interview with her wish for her family: "that they never forget where they come from" (personal interview with A.S., 2013). R.S., son of A.S., explains how he identifies himself racially and culturally and the history behind it all. As vice chairman of the tribe, he is well versed and educated on Native American history, especially the Lipan Apache. His responses reflect the wealth of information that he possesses.

> **Researcher:** Okay, and um… how do you identify yourself? Racially and culturally?
>
> **R.S.:** Um…pretty much all my life I identified myself as Apache. My knowledge of being Apache happened when I was 8 years old…about 8 years old, 7 or 8

years old. I don't remember much before them besides that we were living breathing and having fun. But when I found out that were Lipan Apaches, even as an 8-year-old kinda changed my whole life. Because living in a Hispanic community where the majority of people are about 85 to 90% of the people are Hispanic, you just kinda blended in as Native you just blended in with everybody else, you learn Spanish and stuff like that. But, one thing I noticed, I got a letter from one of our new, newer, well some of the family members from the Tribe, and uh, and I used to know here in high school and she said, " I always wondered why we never celebrated Mexican holidays, I always wondered why um, um, my grandmother was against the Texas Rangers and when my brother became a Texas Ranger, she kind of protested and that's when it all came out that you know Texas Rangers back in the days were hard to capturing and kill the Apaches they were like the enemy to Apaches. And she said, I always wondered that but now that I realize who I am, she said I understanding all the stuff, understanding life a little better and understanding why we did what we did and why my grandparents acted this way. And so that is sort of what happened to me as an 8-year-old, all of a sudden I started to see that were weren't like everybody else. We didn't celebrate the holidays and um… I started noticing the little artwork that my grandmother would do was not Mexican in style but more Native in style. And I started noticing her spirituality was different. She wasn't a church goer but yet she always a very spiritual very different, she always considered herself Catholic but she hardly ever went to the church and the church was just two blocks away, so it wasn't like she had to drive real far. But her spirituality was very different,

methods of healing, uh…um…curing diseases, ceremonies. And all of a sudden my eyes started opening and discovered that we were not like everybody else but that we were very different. And um..umm.. I remember that when she was a little girl, when I was a little BOY, excuse me, um…she was telling me, she always told me that, something like that, little sayings and things, and came up to me one time and said that, "R.S., the more you know about your past, the more you know where your going in your future." And at that time I didn't understand exactly what that meant until I started growing up and discovered what she was trying to tell me that I need find out who I was as a Native person. Because the more I find out about being Native, the more I discovered why I acted the way I reacted, how I responded the way I responded, my anger, my frustrations, you know my mannerisms, everything. You know, everything, everything that I did kind of connected to being Native. And, and, and that in many sense explained a lots of things, because I kind even questioned myself many times. Why didn't I respond this way, why did I react this way, why did I run away, why did I hide, why did I not speak up? You know, and just stuff like that, just putting all this stuff into perspective, you know. I remember being told when I was a little boy, that never to look into the eyes of a White or a Mexican because they believed that your soul will be taken away. But I never understood that and I would always get frustrated and I remember my teacher telling me, "to look in my eyes. look at my eyes." And I couldn't look into her eyes you know because I thought you know a {giggling} demon would come and suck my soul away. And I couldn't and they, they would interpret that as rude, uncooperative and disobedient. And of course

> my dad could come in and I just found out though genealogy that my dad was part Apache too, but my dad was raised Hispanic. And he would come in and start yelling at me and say" why are you being rude?" And I tried to explain but he would never understand why, the things that I did. And, but it was just the way my grandmother was bringing me up now, when she discovered that I discovered that I was Native now. Our whole relationship changed and all of a sudden it was like she was training me for the future you know because she know she would be gone and she kind of wanted me to take over this path of hers.

For each tribal member, the stories vary but the oral history is a key component to unlocking each individual's acknowledgement as Lipan Apache. As in other racial and cultural groups, you can be born into a particular race or ethnicity but choose not to identify oneself as such – the same goes for Lipan Apaches. While all the twenty tribal members interviewed identify themselves as Lipan Apache, some also identify themselves as Mexican-American or other ethnicities, creating a multiracial and multicultural identity. This is not uncommon in Native Americans narratives today and will be discussed further in chapter five in regards to racial identity.

## Self and Tribal Acknowledgment

Self-acknowledgement as a Native American and/or Lipan Apache after being told, for some, for the majority of their lives that they were Mexican-American or Hispanic caused confusion and even an identity crisis. A few older tribal members interviewed expressed their resentment and confusion for not knowing at an earlier age, but they have realigned that confusion to curiosity and learning more about their family's history. The curiosity of their family's ancestry lays within the untold stories and genealogy. As a Lipan Apache tribal

member, H.H.G. shares the moment that he found out he was Lipan, for him, this is the key piece to his personal journey.

> **H.H.G.:** In 2011, when I got back from visiting with R.S., I got on the phone and called my sister (name of sister) who lives in McAllen and asked her, "hey did you ever hear of dad talking about us being Apache?" And she said no, but if you're interested in finding more about that call this lady and she gave me (tribal member genealogist) phone number. And so I called (researcher omitting name) [her] who is the oh, oh I don't know what her title is but she deals with the genealogy, maybe that's what it is, a genealogist and she verifies the genealogy. And I called her briefly talked to her and said, mam, I am so and so and interested in my ancestors you know and this is what I know and I gave her like three or four of my ancestors and I said, can you help me? She said well, right off the back, she said I think we're related but give me a few weeks and I will get back to you. So about two weeks later, she emailed me genealogy chart and I was amazed to see how much connection there was with indigenous people, on both sides of the family, my dad and my mom's. And uh, so from that point on, I began researching the internet, and just looking for anything that, that dealt the Lipan Apache. The more information I got the more the picture became clearer or the bigger picture was painted. So basically that's where I am right now, still researching and um.
>
> **Researcher:** Still researching. So can you, um. Well how do you identify yourself then racially and culturally? When you have to identify yourself on a census or when you tell people. How do you identify yourself?

**H.H.G.:** Now I identify myself as an indigenous person and in particular a Lipan Apache.

For others, like V. R., she had always known she was Apache but was curious to find out more. She was twenty-five years old when she and the rest of her family found out they were of the Lipan Apache people.

**V. R.:** Yeah, well we, the the, I had known from the time that I was a teenager, like twelve years old that I was an Apache, I think before that it really didn't matter. But we knew we were Apache and then we knew we were Lipan in 1983 and that was when my grandmother passed away and my great aunt [researcher omitting name] sang an Apache song at her funeral, a song that she said they sang when they were children that she just remembered, it was really touching. And uh my sister [researcher omitting name] and her husband, [researcher omitting name], worked at the University of Iowa, he was a teaching there and she was attending school there and the family was living there and they took it to a linguist to find out what, you know, what branch of Apache it was and the linguist said it was Lipan. And in '83, that was probably more confirmation, I mean that probably a time we were more ecstatic because now we can put, you know, a name to it because there are other branches of Lipan, there's other tribes. And this really, more than the state recognition, more than anything, that was like a really big turning point - in my life anyway because now we had not just a complete name but my great aunt [researcher omitting name], who we'd see occasionally because she hadn't live in the area when I was growing up, she had before but she had moved to California, she lived in Dallas so we'd always saw

her briefly when she would have coffee with my grandma or you know, we never chatted. She loved to see our outfits and we showed her some video and she said, you know that was the way it used to be, but it wasn't until that time she sang that song it was like, "Wow" because we knew it wasn't Spanish, it wasn't European, I mean you know, I took French in high school and college, it wasn't French, you know and uh, when that linguist, linguist professor said oh, it was Lipan, he studied it, it was Lipan. I mean, that was more affirmation than anything, I mean that I could ever receive.

V.R. has two young adult sons who she has raised since birth knowing they were Lipan Apache. Her eldest son Da. R., honestly, and, to the point, explains how he identifies himself.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that you're still, you know who you are or do you still feel that you're still on a journey to uh, self-identification?

**Da. R.:** The journey was settled since I was born. Like it was, I didn't have to go ask when I was younger, "am I an Indian?" I didn't have to ask or find out go on this spiritual journey to find out how to live to be an Indian in this modern age. That's something we grew up with and accepted instantaneously.

**Researcher:** So you never questioned it?

[Shakes head]

**Da. R.:** Even when we were little, we would always tell our friends or classmates or whatever that we were Indian and proud of it and they would be like, "Oh that's cool!"

Tribal member V. R's. youngest son, Di. R., explained the same, he was raised Lipan and still identifies as such today. There was no journey for V.R.'s children, just acceptance of who

they are, but all explained the importance of cultural practice such as the participation of annual powwows.

**Researcher:** So, Di. R. how do you identify yourself, racially and culturally and why?

**Di. R.:** Well, I guess I have to identify myself as a Lipan Apache, I was born that way and I practice the culture a lot. That's, hm, pretty much all I know and all I do essentially. Along with everyday stuff.

**Researcher:** So when you say, "pretty much all you do" can you explain more about that?

**Di. R.:** um, well that includes going to powwows, dancing, listening to songs, occasionally drumming, I really don't do it that much so, my dad and my brother do it mostly.

## Genealogy

Ryan Schmidt, anthropologist at the University of Montana, and author of *American Indian Identity and Blood Quantum in the 21st Century: A Critical Review* explains that tracing one's ancestry through the use of genealogy was first used to prove one's "Indianness" by the United States government, but then came blood quantum level testing which started during the Treaty Period from 1871 to 1917. (Schmidt, 2011: 1). Schmidt also explains that, "Although the use of blood quantum defined certain treaty rights to specific individuals, the definitions were not extended to tribal membership" and the question of whether or not taking blood quantum for "proof" is racist or not is highly debated. (Schmidt, 2011: 3-4). With over 60 percent of natives married to non-natives today, tribal memberships have become dramatically affected (Schmidt 2011:6). The choice to switch over proof of ancestry by some tribes become more appealing.

The Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas uses proven ancestry from either the mother or father's lineage. Tracing one's genealogy back has been pivotal for many of the registered tribal members and their identity as Lipan Apache. In a time when genetic testing is used for member qualification in other tribes around the country, the Lipan use matrilineal and patrilineal ancestry. The tribe has a genealogist who stores all ancestral information that individuals can go to for results or they can choose to go to another genealogist. Steps to take to seek recognition as a Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas member is first to provide proof of ancestry providing as much supporting documentation as possible. Second, is to submit application with ancestry to the tribe via email provided on their website at www.LipanApache.org. Third, is a review by tribal council members and then lastly, council members take the new applicants to vote in their next council meeting. Applicant is then notified of the results and if accepted, are then provided with a tribal id number and supporting documents.

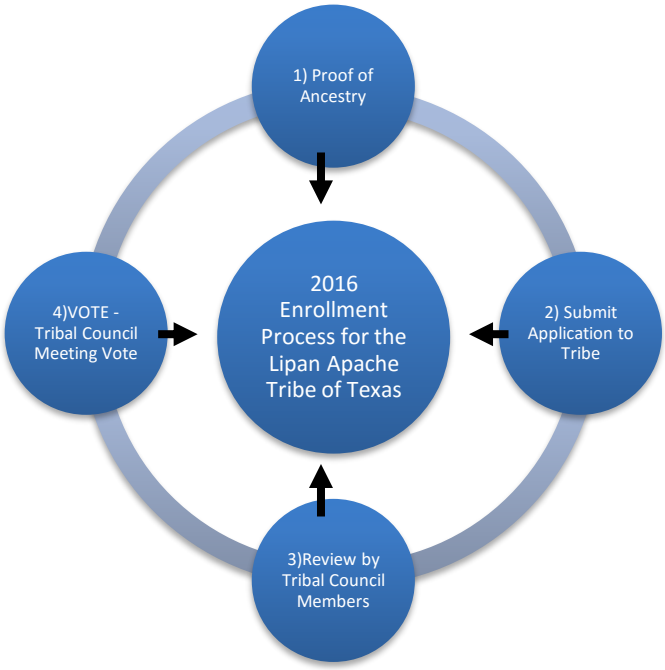


**Figure 2: 2016 Enrollment Process for the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas**

Responses received about identification all varied. Some like H.H.G. found out they were Lipan at a later age in life, others, mainly the younger generation, were raised as Lipan and don't self-identity with any other race; however, they are familiar with the Mexican culture simply because of the demographic region the tribal members interviewed reside.

For tribal member R. R., he has compiled a wealth of information from his research after finding more on his ancestry and confirmation three years earlier that he was Lipan Apache. R.R. resides in San Antonio, Texas but traveled to Alice, Texas to meet with me and other tribal members at the local What-a-Burger. When it came time for me to interview him, he came prepared with a large white binder filled with information on the tribe's history and language. Throughout the interview, he would shuffle through pages detailing his findings and aspirations to learn more about the rich history of the Lipan Apaches.

> **R. R.:** We've been here 10,000 years, you know, from the last Ice Age. We came from Europe through the Bering strait when it was froze over and we filtered down into Canada and all the way down into the United States all the way to the tip of South America. And that's where our ancestors were from. We were Plains Indians and then followed the buffalo into Texas about the 16 or 17 hundred[s] and actually made home around the San Antonio area and then of course we were pushed out by the Texans and the Spaniards. We were pushed out further, some of us went across the border into Coahuila, Mexico, that's were some of our ancestors are from and then the Eastern Lipan, which were in South Texas, that's were all of my grandparents were from, between small villages between Matamoros and Monterey, these small villages and that's where the bulk where a lot of Lipan Apaches ended up after the um, after Texas became a Republic. Of course they ran all the, tried to run all the Indians out, Lamar did, not Sam Houston, I think Sam Houston was our second president, he tried to run all the Indians out. So our people moved across the border and of course, a lot of people don't know that in the early late 1800's and even up to early 1900's, there were

> bounty's on all Native American heads, no only by the Texas, the Americans, the Mexicans and Spaniards, they all had bounty's on Native American heads for their scouts. So our people, in my research what I found, is that they assumed Mexican names, they assumed, picked up the language talking Spanish and that's why the majority of us speak Spanish and we got Hispanic surnames and all that. So we were kind of hiding but in plain view, you know, we did that in order for us to survive. You know, like I said, the research that I've been finding, this is what I have been finding out.

After finding out later in life of his Lipan Apache roots, he now understands why, growing up, his father would always say he was an Apache. He now aims to learn as much as he can about his people and be able to share it with as many as he can.

**State Recognition**

On March 18, 2009 in Austin, Texas, the House of Representatives passed HR No. 812 introduced by Representative Todd Hunter of Corpus Christi, Texas and recognized the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas as a Texas Native American tribe. In order to get this recognition by the state, tribal members interviewed explained that they needed to show proof of a community in Texas within the Lipan Apache people for the past 100 years. The chairman and vice-chairman of the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas both have a proclamation from the State of Texas they and their immediate family received years ago stating their ancestry to the tribe and tribal leaders – this helped the tribe receive state recognition. With over 150 tribal members present for this historical day, they celebrated the victory in the rotunda of the capitol building (Personal Interview with R.S., 2013, Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas Official Website).

While members rejoiced for the tribe's acknowledgment, they also knew that this proclamation was just the first step to federal recognition. For the majority of the tribal members interviewed, state recognition didn't affect them and their families' view of self.

> **R.C.:** The fact that we got the state recognition doesn't really affect us that much. In that it doesn't give you the - not benefits but the recognition from other Indians - so we don't get the respect that that a federal recognition would give you so it's more of a, it's the first step to being considered a "real" Indian by the government so really what we are is Indians trying to be recognized. And that's really what I am feeling with the state recognition.
>
> ---
>
> **V.R.:** It really hasn't changed anything. The ultimate goal for me is really [to be] federally recognized or we're just who we are because even though were state recognized we're still considered non-status Indians. You know, the big prize is federal recognition and without that, you know, you're just...what they say, a non-status Indian not acknowledged by the federal government and unfortunately you need that acknowledgement for credibility among other Indians, at powwows, for scholarships, for jobs.
>
> **Researcher:** So you need that federal stamp of approval?
>
> **V.R.:** Yeah, but our lives, at least my families, it hasn't changed at all. I mean, it's an accomplishment, we're proud of it, it's something that was long overdue, but you know, our ultimate goal, at least for me is that federal recognition.
>
> ---
>
> **Researcher:** How did you feel when the tribe got state recognition?

**A.S.:** I was VERY proud! *Por que* - finally! That's my wish, that the President you know admit US, we don't want anything, we don't want anything from them, I DON'T WANT ANYTHING FROM THEM. You know, I raised my children and NONE EVER got any help from the government. I help myself like I do right now.

---

**Researcher:** And, do you feel that the state recognizing the Lipan Apache tribe has made a influence or difference in your life or your family's life?

**E. A.:** I would say that it hasn't really but I know in me, it has. Now that I know where my bloodline comes from. And my whole family is proud of it too.

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**Researcher:** And so, do you feel that the state tribal recognition that the Lipan Apaches received, do you think it changed you or your families view of self?

**R.R.:** Oh yes, most definitely, most definitely! I mean, we shouldn't even, and of course I know our ancestors did not sign the Dawes Row, that's where the government says, oh yeah we'll take care of you forever, but what they don't tell you is that 2/3$^{rds}$ of the native Americans there, when they had them all corralled in Oklahoma you know, what they don't tell you is that 2/3$^{rd}$ of them left there, *THEY LEFT* without signing anything. But that doesn't necessary mean we aren't Native American, so the government, the US government only claims the *recognized* the recognized tribes, you know. So if you go and say well, I am a Lipan Apache, they will say sorry, your name is not on the Dawes act, you're not a recognized tribe. And I feel that our tribe, you know the Lipan Apache and our

council is doing, you know, the right thing trying to get us federally recognized but like they said, we don't care of what they're going to give us, or anything, we just want to be federally recognized that *were here and we've been here and we will always be here!* And of course getting state recognition was one step towards the federal recognition and all that.

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**R.S.:** The other day I was talking to the chief and he was saying, "you know Robert you and I may never see us being federally recognized but 98 years from now if anything we will have our petition complete and our great grandchildren will experience what you and I fought for" and that's the way I see this, and I don't see this fight for federal recognition as I want benefits, I want healthcare, I want, you know, I'm not seeing it for me anymore, because you know I am 61 years old I don't know how much life I have left but, but when I look at my grandchildren and my kids getting older, I mean, I'm fighting on their behalf and hopefully when I die, I leave this world a little better for them just because we are fighting all these issues.

For tribal member H.H., state tribal recognition was an overdue victory, he explained that he and the tribe are excited for the step closer to federal recognition (personal interview with H.H., 2013). He continued to state his view on the tribal recognition and the statehood of the tribe.

"We [Lipan Apaches] are still here, uh you know, and that were not just some ethnic group on the side or nothing talking to the dogs or whatever, were here, were staying. And uh, you know were pushing forward and living our lives, trying

to live our lives as best as Apache as we can while still being in the modern day society we have"

The same sentiment expressed by H. H. was apparent after all the interviews were conducted. The tribal members were thrilled by the state recognition by Texas, but ultimately would like to see the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas recognized by the federal government.

## Summary

The interviews with the tribal members revealed that oral history and genealogy still continues to take an active role within their lives and explains why they acknowledge themselves as a Lipan Apache. As an ethnographer and tribal member, my genealogy eliminated any doubts I had ever had in the past because it provided a sense of confirmation for the family and I. The tribe dedicated its time to see state recognition by Texas come to fruition - proclamation that now every Lipan Apache tribal member claim. In this process, the Lipans had no demands just simply the desire to be recognized (Personal interview with R.S., 2013).

# CHAPTER V

## CULTURAL INFLUENCES

"...we sponsored a little powwow back in 1980, three years before she [grandmother] died and I remember it was February and a cold front was coming in and it was kind of cold and we prepared our backyard because dancers were coming from all over the state of Texas to be with us. So we formed a little circle flattened the grass, we prepared it for months knowing we were going to have this and my sister was princess and that's why we sponsored it down here, the organization."

-R.S., 2013.

Walking into the home of Lipan Apache Vice Chairman, R.S., you get an immediate sense of his and his family's culture and self-identification. The wood-panel walls are decorated with portraits of Apache leaders, beadwork from past and present as well as a special corner of the wall dedicated to literature on the Lipan Apache people. R.S. and his family started a group in 1970 called the South Texas Indian Dancers Association and he is currently the pastor of Grace Brethren Church in McAllen, Texas. Dedicating his life to restoring his family's culture and way of life, R.S. and other tribal members gathered their resources to start a cultural center in McAllen as the gathering center and place to go for tribal history and council meetings. The Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas also holds annual *powwows* (gathering place for native and non-natives to participate and be educated) twice a year (spring and fall) for all American Indians to gather and participate in traditional dances, songs, and drumming. The powwow also serves as a learning tool for others who are unfamiliar with American Indian culture or simply want to enjoy the vibrant colors and variety of dances.

Growing its popularity in the 1960s and 1970s, the "powwows are primarily dance events, where people wear sometimes elaborate beadwork, feathers, and other regalia and dance to a wide array of songs performed by numerous drum groups, each comprised of anywhere from five to twenty singers" (Treuer, 2012: 68-69). Today, there are three distinct types of powwows; the contest powwow where money or prizes are earned for dance or drumming, traditional where no prizes are offered but participants gather for tribal and/or community purposes, and family gatherings that are just for the family and friends as in a warriors homecoming, graduation, wedding or other small get-togethers (Personal interview with R.S., 2013). R.S. does note that the powwow, while derived from the Pan-Indian movement, is one of the main gatherings that connects all Native people (Personal interview with R.S., 2012).

## Cultural Centers

Ida Maduram studies the importance of cultural centers in shaping Native American students' identity (Maduram, 2011: 19) through a qualitative study with ten 9th to 11th graders who all participated in a book-talk centered format to express their feelings about culture and race in Native youth. Thus, while schools are increasingly growing in cultural diversity, Native American students still "face particular challenges in expressing cultural identity, as their historical culture has been lost to dominant, external cultures" (as cited in Maduram 2011: 19). While exploring the significance, if any, of a cultural center and cultural literature in supporting Native American youth in their overall formation of identity, Maduram analyzed the journal entries of all the participants to get their inner views.

The results revealed that students felt the cultural center was a, "space to voice positive and negative emotions without fear of being judged or criticized" (Maduram 2011: 21). The study also revealed that, while the students were "insiders" because they too are Native

Americans, they could also be considered "outsiders" because they did not live on a reservation (Maduram 2011: 22). For the studies reading, "*Who will tell my brother?*, the ten students increasingly identified with the many beliefs of the characters in the lyric poetry, expressing their thoughts in their journal and during reflection time" (Maduram 2011: 22). Maduram concluded that the cultural centers "supported the students' desire to become agents of their own cultural and social transformations" and showed some of the appropriate type of readings to give to American Indian students (2011: 24).

In 2008, the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas opened the doors to the Cultural Center and Museum in Corpus Christi, Texas for the first time (Minor, 2009: 197). After a successful time in Corpus Christi, the decision was made by the tribal council and members to relocate the center to McAllen, Texas in order to save tribal funds on rent. The cultural center easily blends in with the surrounding environment, with no sign currently in front of the building, one could easily miss it. While the Cultural Center and Museum relocated, the mission remains the same, "to preserve and maintain Lipan heritage and cultural traditions" (as cited by Minor, 2009: 197).

As R.S. and the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas continuously add to the Cultural Center for insiders and outsiders of the tribe, the Center promotes cultural revitalization, educational resources for community members, and a safe environment for those who need it. However, some of the youth tribal members feel the cultural center and powwow are great but smaller gatherings are ideal for creating a stronger bond within tribal members and a cultural identity.

> **R.A.S.:** The younger generation lack the interest and passion that the older ones have.

**Researcher:** How do you think that can be or is rejuvenated within the younger people to get that interest? Where do you think it starts or where do you think it can start?

**R.A.S.:** Smaller gatherings instead of only meeting at the powwows, like little self-gatherings sometimes, maybe like ten to fifteen people and just chillin' out at the drum.

For 23-year-old Lipan Apache, R.A.S, getting the younger generation motivated to learn and continue their native customs starts with more intimate small group gatherings, not just at powwows. For others, like 65-year-old A. G., powwows are very important to attend and be connected with the tribe (Personal interview with A. G., May 26, 2013).

## Powwows

Powwows provide a connection to the past for modern native and non-natives, those who are on the reservation and those who are not. To be "Indian" one does not need to dance, sing, or dress in the custom regalia (distinctive clothing), but for some the connection is clear as the dance circle and loud drum beats draw in crowds. Anton Treuer explains that the powwow, "is vibrant because an overwhelming majority of tribal population participates in powwows, and the custom transcends lines of religious choice, tribe, and even race" (Treuer, 2012: 69). He also explains that the powwow is rapidly changing Indian country, but many do not feel that the powwow can ever replace traditional lifeways and customs (Treuer, 2012: 69).

**Figure 3: 2016 Dancers at the McAllen, TX Powwow**

In 1972, R.S. and his family founded the South Texas Indian Dancers Association to help preserve the traditional dances and songs of the Lipan (Minor, 2009: 196). According to Minor, the South Texas Indian Dancers average eighty performances a year, even traveling as far as Europe, Canada, and South America to spread the voice of the Lipan people (Minor, 2009: 196). He explained that it all started with a small powwow gathering in the backyard of his family's home and now, R.S., his family, and the tribe hold the Ndé annual powwows at the Lark Community Center in McAllen, Texas where many native and non-native people take part.

It was at a powwow in Laredo, Texas that I was participating in when I interviewed three Lipan Apache tribal members who were also in attendance and participating with drumming, singing, and dancing. The powwow was taking place in the city's gymnasium, a circle cut out in the center with benches for dancers and seats for spectators around. Behind the seats, the whole gym was outlined with numerous vendors with items varying from genuine native works of art and random knick-knacks. As the spectators arrived, the dancers began to line up in the far right hand corner - Grand Entry (first entrance with all dancers) was about to begin. More dancers began to appear and line up by style of dance; U.S. Military Veterans and the flag staff always appear in the beginning. The drum began to beat and the dancers gradually began to move into the circle. By the end of the grand entry song, all dancers from all types of tribal backgrounds are gathered together inside the circle, dancing and singing to the same songs. While this is just one of many powwows taken place around the country, they share many similarities. This may be a result of Pan-Indianism and the large movement to unify native people.

Powwows do not form the identity of the Lipan Apache tribal members interviewed, but do, however, create a large part of who they are as a person and/or family unit. For the family of V.R., right as you walk into their home, you can immediately tell the family are Native American

artists and very involved with the powwow culture. With finished and unfinished regalia lying around the house, a beading and sewing workstation located in the corner of the living room, a large center drum covered with a blanket in the kitchen along with various family photos at powwows throughout the years, V.R. and her family consider themselves a powwow family.

> **Researcher:** And uh, let's see here. So you are talking about powwows and going to powwows um, can you expand a little on that and what are any some informal and formal gatherings that go on in within the tribe and/or tribal members? You can talk about powwows here.
>
> **V.R:** Um, the powwows, that's, you know a lot of people think you go to powwows on the side or when you're bored or whatever but to us powwows, its apart of our lives. We don't go to fairs I mean to parks. We don't go to Disneyworld, we don't do. We've taken the kids to SeaWorld once but they were like, they didn't like the rides, it wasn't fun to them. We go to powwow and it's fun to them. It always has been, so it's just a part of who we are, its embedded in us. And so when we go to a powwow, even though they may not mention the Lipan, we always feel we're are representing. We're representing. The other tribes there, they're representing their tribes, we're representing our tribe. And it's always important to us to represent ourselves in a GOOD way. Not to go there, I mean, you take, and you have fun! and we do have a lot of fun and we joke around and we laugh and we talk and we eat and do all that good stuff but you know, we take it seriously also. Because we follow the traditions, we don't want to break the tradition, we don't want to do something that would hurt someone's feelings or offend somebody or, or make the tribe look bad. So it's one thing I

> have always told the boys you know, "We represent, we represent our family but you know, we also represent the tribe." And so we always try go out there and try to do the best we can. In everything, even if it's a mini powwow, if it's a big powwow, if it's a contest, if it's just traditional or fun - we're there to represent, so we should always be in our best behavior, following the traditions, even though some of those traditions may not be our traditions, but you know, you know, when in Rome you do as the Romans. So when we're at a powwow and let's say the MC [Master of Ceremonies] is, let's say he's from Oklahoma and they do something a certain way and we have to respect their ways and we do it according to their ways and again were representing.

While the powwow culture seems to be the most popular avenue for many Native American people to reconnect with their roots, it must be noted that not all native people participate in these types of gatherings. For the twenty Lipan tribal members interviewed, fifteen were highly involved with dancing, while the other five were more involved with the tribal powwows and small gatherings in their communities through drumming and singing and/or teaching others about the Lipan people. The powwow sphere offers a, "safe, sober environment that brings communities together and usually involves people of all ages, making them a healthy social option" (Treuer, 2012: 69).

**Small/Family Gatherings**

A study done by Schweigman, et al, focuses on California Native American youth and the connection, if any, between participation in cultural practices and a stronger ethnic identity. They analyzed "945 Native American adolescents (416 male, 529 female) aged 13-19 across California" (Schweigman, et al, 2015: 1). While only focusing on four main cultural practices in

the area - the powwow, sweat lodge, drum group and roundhouse dance- the results clearly showed that, "association between cultural activates and ethnic identity was significant among urban youth but not significant among reservation youth" (Schweigman, et al, 2013:5). Relocation was stated as one of the main factors for the urban youth cultural practices connection because there is more stress and reinforcement throughout generations to continue traditions that may otherwise be lost (Schweigman, et al, 2013:5).

Similar to the study, participating in cultural practices made all the tribal participants feel closer to the tribe and their culture. The small gatherings primarily mentioned in the interviews were family powwows that usually involved a special ceremony (graduation, naming or wedding), drum practice at a tribal member's home, and small potluck gatherings involving both the church of R.S. and the tribe.

Some tribal members, like M.H., participate in small gatherings that help educate and support overall Native American history knowledge within his community of Alice, Texas. Throughout our interview, he was one of the few elders interviewed that was direct and to the point throughout. He expressed the importance of educating the public about Lipan Apaches as well as the importance of continuing to be involved with tribe and educate oneself.

> **M.H.:** We do the dance and performance in private schools, nursing homes, we just had one last Saturday down in San Diego about ten miles away. And uh, we have another one scheduled for next month on June the 21st at La Familia Daycare Center here in Alice. We dress up as Native Americans and play the drum and dance and do performances for the elders. And we are getting to enrich the public (.7).
>
> **Researcher:** You educate the public?

**M.H.:** Yes, what we are trying to do here is that we are trying to bring, not only the performances of the Native American but its history, history for our students and educational.

**Researcher:** Okay

**M.H.:** About the way of life, the way of living, the way of doing things as a Native American. Because sometimes we just read it in a book and we see pictures of a Native American on a horse but we never see any performances done that the public would see with their own eyes and experience it.

**Researcher:** And that to you is very important?

**M.H.:** To me, it's very important. (.5) To reach out to the community with our Native American history and education.

Small gatherings tended to be more common within the participants interviewed, because they happen within families and tribal members. These gatherings usually involve about 10 to 15 people, sometimes less, which helps to cement relationships between family and tribal members.

## Summary

In this study, all members interviewed expressed the importance of member involvement. Whether it be from tribal powwow attendance or practicing dances and/or drumming at small family gatherings. A sense of community brings them together as a people and plays a key part into the overall composition of identity. Culture can be seen through the formal and informal gatherings held and community shows social structure within the tribe, this can be best seen with the powwow gatherings. For the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas, small gatherings, usually with family, provide the roots for the cultural growth, where the cultural center and larger gatherings provide sustainability for the tribe and tribal members.

# CHAPTER VI

# SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

"When I do die and go to Heaven, if I go to Heaven, that uh, I will be recognized and remembered as Native American, as an Apache, and that I did try to encourage younger generations to follow their roots- it is very important"

- E. A., 2013

Caught "between individual acknowledgement of their Lipan heritage and governments which ignored or denied their existence," the modern, non-reservation Lipan are reclaiming their heritage (Minor, 2009: 198). While many obstacles, historical and modern, have come their way, the Lipan were quick to adapt and became a resilient people as their world changed around them.

This ethnographic study allows for the Lipan to speak for themselves. This gives those studying tribal identity a clearer portrait of what makes a person consider themselves a member. The quotes throughout the study express the sentiments most shared among the interviewed tribal members. Looking at the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas and the members interviewed for this study, three key factors play a vital role in the identity of the tribe and its members - these are community, environment, and culture and at least two of these factors were spoken of by each member as shown in table 1 below.

## Community

A sense of community within the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas and its members is clear. The gatherings alone show the immense tribal support for cultural rejuvenation and

sustainability. While the social gatherings such as the annual powwows are popular in tribal members self-identity, so is their faith community.

| # | Tribal Member Identifier | Community | Environment | Culture |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | R.M | X | | X |
| 2 | R.A.S. | X | X | X |
| 3 | A.G. | X | X | X |
| 4 | A.S. | X | X | X |
| 5 | Da. R. | X | X | X |
| 6 | D.R. | X | | X |
| 7 | V.S-M. | X | | X |
| 8 | Di.R. | X | | X |
| 9 | Ru.S. | X | X | X |
| 10 | J.H.G. | X | | X |
| 11 | R.C. | X | X | X |
| 12 | V.R. | X | X | X |
| 13 | H.H. | X | X | X |
| 14 | H.H.G. | X | X | X |
| 15 | E.A. | X | | X |
| 16 | J.H. | X | | X |
| 17 | R.A-R. | X | X | X |
| 18 | M.H. | X | X | X |
| 19 | R.S. | X | X | X |
| 20 | ANON | X | | X |

**Table 1: Summarization of Key Components to Self and Tribal Identity**

Throughout interviews, the identification as a Lipan Apache always began at home, with family. All the participants explained, even if they were not raised knowing they were Lipan Apache, they knew they were native because it was always confirmed by parents and/or grandparents in the home. However, because of the fact that most of their families had assimilated into the Mexican culture before settling in South Texas, twelve of the participants were primarily raised as Mexican-American. Four participants were raised knowing they were Apache; they did not fully participate in their culture until later on in life. Once their cultural identity had been proven through genealogical research, they were able to immerse themselves in

a culture that, while foreign at the time, became a central part of their family life. The last four participants – all children of tribal members who were under the age of 27 – were raised knowing they were Lipan Apache since birth and culturally identify as such.

Powwow gatherings are one of the main opportunities for tribal members to participate in their culture. All interviewed participants said they take part in tribal powwows because it allows them to stay connected to others within the tribe. For the participants who found their identity later in life, this connection to a larger community is especially important. The urgency to learn as much as possible through powwows and expose their children and grandchildren to the native culture, stems from the belief their true heritage was kept from them. The re-education of the Lipan Apache culture and traditional native ways is how they find themselves and ensures that later generations have a good foundation in their identity.

Younger tribal members who were raised with a clear sense of tribal participation at powwows, stressed the importance of smaller, more intimate, gatherings. They believe that having these types of gatherings can close the communication gap between the elders and themselves. For R.A.S., the unification of tribal members is essential for the future of the tribe. He explains, "separated your nothing, united you can actually do something and we have a cause to fight in getting federal recognition and the only way that's going to happen is if we all work together" (personal interview with R.A.S., 2013).

**Environment and Land**

Stripped from their lands multiple times, the Lipan Apaches preserved their tribal and ethnic identity through resiliency and strength. While some reside on the Mescalero and Kiowa Apache reservations, the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas is an example of a modern, non-reservation Native American group (Minor, 2009: 197). While no reserved territory officially

connects them, the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas continues to be a part of the same land their ancestors once lived and died on. Minor ends *Turning Adversity to Advantage: A history of the Lipan Apaches of Texas and Northern Mexico, 1700-1900*, by stating "[Lipan Apaches] are as much a part of Texas and northern Mexico as the limestone and alkali, as enduring as oaks, mesquite and cactus" (Minor, 2009: 198).

## Culture

In anthropology, culture is defined as "sets of learned behavior and ideas that humans acquire as members of society" (Levenda and Schultz, 1995: 4, 20). Levenda and Schultz also state, "Members of a society who share a common culture tend to think and talk about themselves in the same conceptual terms, and tend to organize their activities by the same principles" (1995: 22). While I found similarities in views concerning identity as Lipan Apache from those interviewed, the fact that members found their identity at different points of their lives created differences in their cultural behaviors. For instance, the family of R.S., who were mostly raised knowing their heritage, identifies strongly with dancing and powwow culture. Other interviewees, like E.A., enjoy the camaraderie found at powwows but don't derive their tribal identity through gatherings. Their main focus is relearning and sustaining a culture that has been impacted by modern American and Mexican influences.

One way society learns their behavior is through shared language. Wendell H. Oswalt, author of *This Land Was Theirs: A study of Native North Americans*, estimates about four hundred indigenous languages were spoken at the time of Columbus and, by the early 1900s, tribal native speakers were in rapid decline (Oswalt, 2009: 19). While this proved to be an obstacle for all native people, the Lipan Apache lost all of their fluent adult native speakers. Without the knowledge of the adult speakers, the generations after them eventually lost the Lipan

language. Today, there is no native speaker for the Lipan people; however, efforts to restore the language are underway (Personal interview with R.S., 2013).

Through historical research and the linguistic records of anthropologists Harry Hoijer and Morris Opler, the Lipan Apache language is being pieced together and learned by the tribal members. While many words have been identified as Lipan, today many tribal members are also learning the Jicarilla Apache language which Hoijer and Opler stated is most linguistically related to the Lipan language.

While all interviewees agree with the active participation in tribal affairs and gatherings, the majority of the tribal members also deeply identify with their faith/religion. The spiritual side for all but two participants, held the foundation to their overall cultural and tribal identity as a Lipan. For R.S. who serves as the tribal vice chairman and pastor of the Grace Brethren Church in McAllen, Texas, faith and identity as a native person go hand in hand. However, he does explain that his identity as a native person has always been a fight, even within the faith-based community.

> **Researcher:** So you feel like it was a fight your whole life to claim your identity?
>
> **R.S.:** Yeah, I think my whole life has been a fight. Because, um, even my wife would not understand sometimes, and by that I don't mean that she would get mad or anything, she would just look at me and say, "I don't understand" and you know I can tell by her reaction sometimes, that even my kids, and then, at the church as a pastor and here [I am] wanting to dance, and wanting to drum and wanting to sing, what Christianity has always looked down at as being native. And just the problem I have even with the church and churches I didn't even know, just because there was an article written about me, I have lost a lot of

pastor friends to being native because they see everything as demonic. [clears throat] So for me it has always been a battle. I mean, if I could describe my life, it's been a battle…

R.S. also explains how he and the tribal council ensure that tribal members feel a sense of community within the tribe by starting annual powwows and holding quarterly council meetings. Having these types of gatherings also proves to the U.S. government that the tribe congregates regularly and identifies as a community. Community is always needed and the powwow gatherings and family tend to be the tribe's foundation in their cultural identification.

**Researcher:** [phone ringing in background] Okay, and so, I have just a few more questions. What are some formal and informal gatherings that go on within the tribe that solidify that identity?

**R.S.:** Well, the powwow is the biggest one and that's why, one reason for the powwow was for two reasons, because one of the things we have to prove to the government is that we are a community but when half of the tribe live outside the state of Texas and the other half live within hundred-fifty to two-hundred miles within each other it's kind of hard to say we have a community. We have communities *within* the city itself but nothing unifying us, so I thought of the powwows as another source to prove we are a community with the native and coming together not just with the state of Texas but people from all over the united states people driving to this gathering which happens Saturday after thanksgiving and probably if we had it another weekend it would be bigger but um, for the people, local people, they think it's the best date. So you have that, you know, the gatherings there and we don't take an active part in reburials but

> when were invited we participate in reburials because that kind of connects us together. And when I tell people when you have gatherings just declare who you are, you know. And in my family, more specifically my family because we have been doing this forever that means dancing has become a big factor. I mean everybody in McAllen that's been here at least 30 years knows this. The other day I went to, we went to a mother's day celebration at Kentucky Fried Chicken, just become a tradition to take our mom to get Kentucky Fried Chicken and everything, and we were just standing there and two people go "Aren't you those Indians" [chuckles] I mean we look a little different and everything without our feathers and everything and our outfits, and they go "I thought that's who you were, we were all looking at you and staring at you." And so because of all that dancing and drumming, you know, we put our pin on the world that we are here and identity ourselves Indians. So we have the powwow, dancing, drumming the singing *all* is a part of our identity.

## Future Research

The future direction for this research would be to work with tribal leaders and expand the primary documentation of the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas archives. This will include the tribal member's participation in the collection process for oral histories, photographs, newspaper clippings, fliers and other primary sources about their family's ancestry and tribe as a whole.

Some, like native activist and author Vine DeLoria Jr., argue against the continued research of native people because, "the massive volume of useless knowledge produced by anthropologists attempting to capture real Indians in a network of theories has contributed substantially to the invisibility of Indian people today" (DeLoria, 1988: 81). While I agree that

the simple cataloging of natives and their complex societies tends to relegate them to a museum exhibit Americans can visit on the weekends, there are ways to give voice to the modern-day native. Ethnographic studies allow tribes to represent their cultural identities and individual experiences in the ever-changing world around them. The result allows for native people to speak of, and for, themselves, rather them being spoken of in past tense which only further induces the perception of extinction.

## Summary

The choice to conduct this study using an ethnographic method has allowed me, as the researcher, to take an emic and etic view of the tribe to which I am a member. I believe interviews conducted by a member of a specific community or group of people can help ease tensions within the study group. As I have seen through my interviews, the willingness for members to be frank and thoroughly explain their journeys in achieving tribal identity with a fellow tribal member allowed for open conversations about the reality of tribal life. This research shows that the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas are all bonded and strongly identify with their community, environment-land and culture. Within culture, gatherings and language played the largest role in the participants' view of self and self-identification.

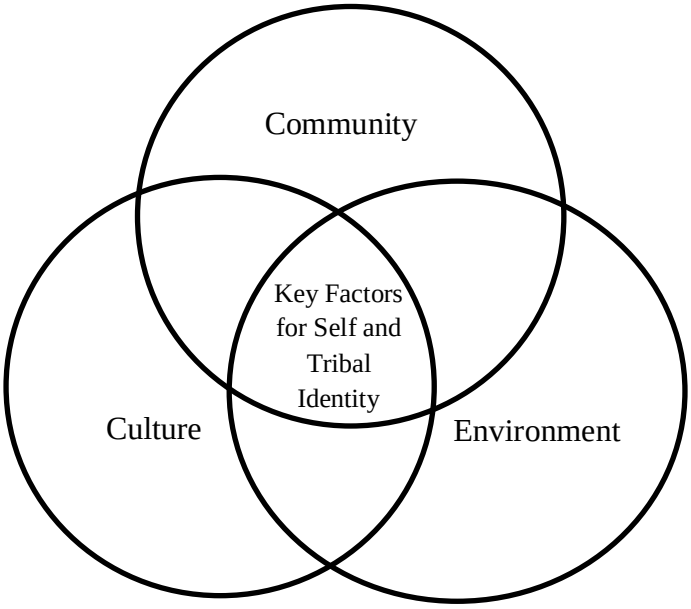


**Figure 4: Key Factors for Self and Tribal Identity**

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# APPENDIX A

# APPENDIX A

## LIST OF TRIBAL MEMBER PARTICIPANTS

All interviews were conducted in the spring of 2013. All participants are listed with abbreviated initials and their specific age at time of interview.

1) R.M.

Age 53, male, originally from Laredo, Texas but resides in Alice, Texas for over thirty years. Mechanic, married with five children, three boys and two girls. Family participates with gatherings identify themselves Lipan Apache. His father is Indio-Azteca from Central Mexico; the Lipan Apache comes from his mother's side. The entire interview was answered in Spanish; he said that he identifies more with his mother's side then his father's because at a young age he traveled to Oklahoma to live with some of his mother's family, where he learned a lot about being a native person.

2) R.A.S.

Age 23, male, originally from La Joya, Texas but now resides in McAllen, Texas with his family. His mother is Mexican and father is Lipan Apache, before the age of sixteen he identified more with his mother's side, but after receiving his families' genealogy, he started to identify more with his Lipan Apache side. He participates in gatherings either as a drummer/singer and/or a fancy dancer (style of dance). State tribal recognition affected him and his view of self and has high hope for federal recognition for the tribe.

3) A.G.

Age 65, male, born in Corpus Christi but since the age of one has lived in Alice, Texas. He drums and dances for local elders and schools. He was raised as Hispanic but, after confirmation of his ancestry from his father's side, he now states he claims Latino and Lipan Apache on census records. His father was originally from Laredo, Texas and his grandmother on his mother's side was from Piedras Negras Coahuila and also has Apache blood. He is very proud to be Lipan Apache and feels strongly about being involved with the tribe.

4) A.S.

Age 83, female, originally from Oja de Agua (near present day Penitas), Texas and moved to McAllen, Texas in 1935 and has lived there since. The matriarch of her family. She has nine children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She has ranched all her life. She identifies herself as "Puro Indino." Her mother was Lipan Apache and she got her strong sense of identity from her. She dances and attends annual gatherings. She is very proud to be Lipan Apache and hopes for federal recognition for the tribe.

5) Da.R.

Age 20, male, resides in Mission, Texas and has identified himself as Lipan Apache his whole life. His mother is Lipan Apache and his father is Creek. State tribal recognition hasn't changed his view of self because he has always identified himself as such but has hopes for federal recognition. He actively participates in annual tribal and non-tribal gatherings where he dances (grass) and drums/sings.

6) D.R.

Age 37, male, resides in McAllen, Texas. Married and has four children. He identifies himself as a Native American specifically - Lipan Apache. Lipan Apache is from his mother's side. He actively participates in tribal and non-tribal gatherings where he dances (fancy dancer) along with his children. He started dancing at the age of 5 years old. State tribal recognition has changed some of his family's view of self but not his.

7) V.S-M.

Age 27, female, resides in McAllen, Texas. She identifies herself as Hispanic and Native American because her mother is Mexican and her father is Lipan Apache. Her brother and father are also interviewed in this study. She actively participates in annual tribal and non-tribal powwows as a fancy shawl dancer. She has always been told she was Indian since she was born. Happy for the state tribal recognition but doesn't change her view of self.

8) Di.R.

Age 18, male, resides in Mission, Texas with his family. He identifies as Lipan Apache since he was born, he has never identified as anything else. He, along with his mother and brother are interviewed in this study. He gets his Lipan Apache from his mother's side. He is also a grass dancer and attends many annual tribal and non-tribal gatherings where he drums/sings and dances. He hopes to be able to see federal recognition for the tribe.

9) Ru.S.

Age 52, male, resides in McAllen, Texas with his wife and children. His mother is Lipan Apache and father is Mexican-American and Lipan. He identifies himself as Lipan Apache. He is happy for the state recognition of the tribe but has always known he was native since he was a boy. He attends and participates in annual tribal gatherings as a drummer/singer and dancer.

10) J.H.G.

Age 64, male, resides in Harlingen, Texas. His father was Apache and German and his mother was mixed as well. He identifies as Lipan Apache from his father's side. He does not dance, since or drum but does state he attends annual gatherings and council meetings when he is able and was present for the state recognition at the capital in Austin, Texas and said, "it made me feel great!" He feels that it is very important for tribal members to bond together.

11) R.C.

Age 54, male, born and raised in El Paso, Texas until he joined the Navy in 1977. After retiring from the Navy in 1999, he moved to South Texas. He is married and resides in Santa Rosa, Texas. It wasn't until 2010, after his genealogy was done by the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas genealogist, that he found out he was Lipan Apache but is very proud to identify himself as a Native American, specifically Apache. The state recognition did not change his view of self. Unity is what he feels fuels the tribe rather than gatherings or state tribal recognition.

12) V.R.

Age 54, female, resides in Mission, Texas with her husband and two sons. She has always identified herself as an Apache but it wasn't until 1983 that she found out she and her family were of the Lipan Apache. She is a Southern Cloth dancer and is very proud of her and her family's participation and dedication to annual tribal and non-tribal powwows. She is very happy for the state tribal recognition but states, "the goal is for federal recognition."

13) H.H.

Age 36, male, resides in Edinburg, Texas. His dad always said they were Apache growing up but states that they never lived as such. As he got older, he began to identify himself as an American Indian. He says that state recognition hasn't changed his view of self but hopes for the continued push for federal recognition. He is very active with the tribal members, participating in R.S. ministry travel and church as well as dancing fancy dance at annual gatherings.

14) H.H.G.

Age 65, male, resides in Alice, Texas. He is married and retired from law enforcement. It wasn't until 2011 that he made a connection with tribal leaders that lead to him getting his genealogy done and when he received confirmation of his Lipan Apache roots. He grew up with the Mexican culture but no lives his life as a Lipan as learning the traditional ways. State recognition has not changed his view of self but is happy for the acknowledgement. He attending tribal gatherings as well as small gatherings that he feels helps members bond.

15) E.A.

Age 68, male, resides in Alice, Texas. At the age of nine years old, he knew his heart was Apache but never received confirmation until later in life when he got his genealogy done and found that he was Lipan Apache on his mother's side. He states that not all his family identify as Lipan and it has been a hard journey for him because he was raised as Hispanic and didn't have all the education he should have. He participates in tribal gatherings as well as small local gatherings where he drums and sings.

16) J.H.

Age 49, male, resides in Alice, Texas with his family. He is now retired but enjoys sharing his identity and culture with others in the local community by dancing for them. He is proud to be Lipan Apache. States that state tribal recognition was great but it didn't change how he saw himself of who he is. He is active in tribal annual gatherings by drumming/singing and dancing. His father was Lipan Apache.

17) R.A-R

Age 68, male, resides in San Antonio, Texas with his wife. He identifies himself as Lipan Apache, Spanish and Mexican. He states that the state tribal recognition most definitely changed his view of self and hopes to see the tribe gain federal recognition. He is very active within the tribe and tries to always make it to annual tribal gatherings and functions because he feels it is very important to be active within the tribe.

18) M.H.

Age 52, male, resides in Alice, Texas with his family. He is a professional carpenter and proud to call himself Lipan Apache. His mother's side is Lipan but was raised as Hispanic until they discovered they were Lipan Apache. He stated that not much changed in their lives. He states that state tribal recognition motivated him to research more about the Lipan's rich history and educates others. He is active within the tribe and attending tribal annual gatherings. He is a dancer, drummer and singer who feels it is very important to reach out to the community and educate them about the Lipan.

19) R.S.

Age 61, male, resides in McAllen, Texas with his family. He is the vice-chairman of the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas as well as pastor of the Grace Brethren Church. He identifies as a Lipan Apache and has been dancing, singing, drumming since he was a young boy. His mother, sister and brother are also interviewed in this study. He feels that it is very important to be involved with the tribe and annual gatherings. State recognition was something the tribe had been fighting for, for a long time so it was gratifying to receive it from the state but it did not change his view of self. He is hopeful that the tribe will receive federal recognition.

20) Did not consent to have name released in study but took part in interview.

Age 51, female, resides in South Texas with her husband. She does not feel that the state recognition has made a difference in her life but she is happy the tribe is recognized by the state of Texas. She dances and participants in tribal gatherings when she can but thinks that more can be done to unify the tribe as a whole. She is proud to be Lipan Apache.

# APPENDIX B

# APPENDIX B

# IRB APPROVAL FORM

Approved by:
UTPA IRB
Expires: 5/03/2014
IRB# 2013-046-04

## The University of Texas - Pan American

### Informed Consent Form

Lipan Apache: Racial/Ethnic and Cultural Identity

Investigators: *Ashley Leal, Graduate Student in Interdisciplinary Studies*

Background: I am conducting a research study on the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas and the formation of identity within tribal members and the tribe as a whole. The study focuses on racial/ethnic and cultural aspects that form each tribal member's view of self. This research study is to fulfill Ashley Leal's Interdisciplinary Master's degree in Anthropology; the study will be under the supervision of faculty advisor, Dr. Russell Skowronek. All participants must be registered with the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas and be willing to participate in the study.

Procedure: If you agree to participate, I will ask you to talk with me about your discovery of self and the path that led you to your identification as a Lipan Apache. All interviews will take place in a location that you feel most comfortable. The amount of time for the interview will be completely up to the participant and how much they would like to express about the research topic. The participants have the right to refuse to answer any of the semi-structured questions that are asked and can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Participants' have the right to confidentiality in the research if he/she so pleases. If the participant would like to be kept confidential he/she should make sure not to provide identifiable information in the research interview. During the interview there will be the option to be videotaped for future knowledge as well as audio taped. Each participant will be given separate permission forms for the recordings. The confidentiality of the recordings will be secured in a locked secured container for data. The purpose of the recordings is for transcription (written out) uses in the research process that will possibly be added into the end literature of the study. The primary researcher will be the only one that has access to the records and will be erased by deletion off the recording device and/or off the computer drive after the time span of usage is up.

After each tape is transcribed (written out), you will be asked to review it. If there is anything you want to have taken out or added in, you can have that done.

You might be contacted later to do a follow up interview on this same topic. As with the initial interview, you have no obligation to participate. If you do participate in the follow up, the same rights and levels of confidentiality agreed to in this consent form will apply.

Approximate Number of Participants Involved in the Study: This study will be comprised of as many Lipan Apache Tribal members as possible and whom are willing to participate, as to create a better understanding of the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas identity as a whole. By interviewing many tribal members it will allow for a less biased image of the people.

Risks or Possible Discomforts Associated with the Study: There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation in this study.

Benefits of Participation: The only benefits of the research is for the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas as a whole, meaning that information collected in the interviews will be accumulated and

1 of 2

## Informed Consent Form

written into literature that can be used for future reference on tribal identity. Otherwise, there are no individual benefits of participation in this study.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. If for any reason you decide that you would like to discontinue your participation, simply tell the researcher that you wish to stop.

Anonymity and/or Confidentiality: All information collected in this study will be kept in confidentiality in the security of the primary researchers, Ashley Leal, security container that will be opened and used for research purposes only. All confidential files and/or audio recordings will be stored in a secure storage of files that will have separate areas dedicated to consent forms and data. Any data that has any identifiable information that the participant would like to be left out, will be blacked out and kept in storage as such. All records and data will be kept in confidentiality for up to five years.

Who to Contact for Research Related Questions: For questions about the research itself, or to report any adverse effects during or following participation, contact the researcher, Ashley Leal at (949) 981-5221, Ashley_lealphoto@hotmail.com and/or faculty advisor, Dr. Russell Skowronek at (956) 665-3561, rskowronek@utpa.edu.

Who to Contact Regarding Your Rights as a Participant: This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Protection (IRB). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, or if you feel that your rights as a participant were not adequately met by the researcher, please contact the IRB at 956.665.2889 or irb@utpa.edu. You are also invited to provide anonymous feedback to the IRB by visiting www.utpa.edu/IRBfeedback.

Signatures: By signing below, you indicate that you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study and that the procedures involved have been described to your satisfaction. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this form for your own reference. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years of age. If you are under 18, please inform the researcher.

_____ ____/____/_____

Participant's Signature Date

# APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

A PARTIAL TRIBAL MEMBERS TRANSCRIPTION SAMPLE

Interviewee: R.S.
Interviewers: Researcher
Date: May 16, 2013
Location: Home of R.S. located in McAllen, Texas.
Transcribers: Researcher

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The interviewee R.S. who is Vice-Chairman of the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas as well as Pastor of Grace Brethren Church in McAllen, Texas. The interview was conducted by Ashley Leal (Interviewer and Recorder). The interview was held at R.S. home located in McAllen, Texas. The purpose of the interview was to fulfill the researchers, graduate thesis course requirements and research on the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas and identity within members and the tribe as a whole. During the interview, R.S. addressed his connection to the tribe and his formation of identity.

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**Researcher:** I will just put that there {Placing recorder on desk} Okay, so, Robert can you please uh…just tell me a little bit about yourself. Your education, employment, family life, whatever you would like to...

**R.S:** Okay, well, I am married, I have two kids… uh, biologically. Well, I have three kids, we lost one. And then we have one adopted son, we have three biological grandchildren and uh, two, two grandchildren through our adoptive son. Uh… I have a bachelors of arts in biblical education, a masters of divinity and a masters in school administration and I have been working as a pastor for uh..36 years.

**Researcher:** Okay, for over 36 years {writing down} And um… lets see, so um,,. your family life when you were growing up? You have uh, sisters, brothers…?

**R.S.:** Yeah, I have um… four brothers and four sisters, a mother and a father. Well, my dads not here, my real father of course.

**Researcher**: Okay, and um… how do you identify yourself? Racially and culturally?

**R.S.:** Um…pretty much all my life I identified myself as Apache. My knowledge of being Apache happened when I was 8 years old…about 8 years old, 7 or 8 years old. I don't remember much before them besides that we were living breathing and having fun. But when I found out that were Lipan Apaches, even as an 8-year-old kinda changed my whole life. Because living in a Hispanic community where the majority of people are about 85 to 90% of the people are Hispanic, you just kinda blended in as Native you just blended in with everybody else, you learn Spanish and stuff like that. But, one thing I noticed, I got a letter from one of our new, newer, well some of the family members from the Tribe, and uh, and I used to know here in high school and she said, " I always wondered why we never celebrated Mexican holidays, I always wondered why um, um, my grandmother was against the Texas Rangers and when my brother became a Texas Ranger, she kind of protested and that's when it all came out that you know Texas Rangers back in the days were hard to capturing and kill the Apaches they were like the enemy to Apaches. And she said, I always wondered that but now that I realize who I am, she said I understanding all the stuff, understanding life a little better and understanding why we did what we did and why my grandparents acted this way. And so that is sort of what happened to me as an 8-year-old, all of a sudden I started to see that were weren't like everybody else. We didn't celebrate the holidays and um… I started noticing the little artwork that my grandmother would do was not Mexican in style but more Native in style. And I started noticing her spirituality was different. She wasn't a church goer but yet she always a very spiritual very different, she always considered herself Catholic but she hardly ever went to the church and the

church was just two blocks away, so it wasn't like she had to drive real far. But her spirituality was very different, methods of healing, uh…um…curing diseases, ceremonies. And all of a sudden my eyes started opening and discovered that we were not like everybody else but that we were very different. And um..umm.. I remember that when she was a little girl, when I was a little BOY, excuse me, um…she was telling me, she always told me that, something like that, little sayings and things, and came up to me one time and said that, "Robert, the more you know about your past, the more you know where your going in your future." And at that time I didn't understand exactly what that meant until I started growing up and discovered what she was trying to tell me that I need find out who I was as a Native person. Because the more I find out about being Native, the more I discovered why I acted the way I reacted, how I responded the way I responded, my anger, my frustrations, you know my mannerisms, everything. You know, everything, everything that I did kind of connected to being Native. And, and, and that in many sense explained a lots of things, because I kind even questioned myself many times. Why didn't I respond this way, why did I react this way, why did I run away, why did I hide, why did I not speak up? You know, and just stuff like that, just putting all this stuff into perspective, you know. I remember being told when I was a little boy, that never to look into the eyes of a White or a Mexican because they believed that your soul will be taken away. But I never understood that and I would always get frustrated and I remember my teacher telling me, "to look in my eyes. look at my eyes." And I couldn't look into her eyes you know because I thought you know a {giggling} demon would come and suck my soul away. And I couldn't and they, they would interpret that as rude, uncooperative and disobedient. And of course my dad could come in and I just found out though genealogy that my dad was part Apache too, but my dad was raised Hispanic. And he would come in and start yelling at me and say" why are you being rude?" And

I tried to explain but he would never understand why, the things that I did. And, but it was just the way my grandmother was bringing me up now, when she discovered that I discovered that I was Native now. Our whole relationship changed and all of a sudden it was like she was training me for the future you know because she know she would be gone and she kind of wanted me to take over this path of hers.

**Researcher**: So was it your grandmother that really, instilled this identity within you?

**R.S.:** Yeah, and I think my grandfather would of too but he died when my mom was 6 and so you know my grandmother kind of just brought up everybody. One thing about my grandma she brought up three sets of families you know, she brought up her 13 kids and then when they got all married and left uh one of my uncles wife died remarried and the new wife didn't like the new kids so they gave her six kids, so she raised six more kids till they grew up and when they all moved out and just as she was getting ready to go home and die, she was still raising one of my cousins was a married and her husband left her and she had to work so she brought up a third generation that's where she died. Um, and so but um, with all that, and of course that was the Acosta side, the Soto side they just prided themselves with being Spanish even though it didn't jive because they just didn't look Spanish [giggles] but that's what they wanted to think. They were very strict and very structured and a so I just depended on my grandma as being my mentor and teacher and even then she didn't remember a lot she had already assimilated and the little she knew she was teaching us. I think a lot of times she didn't understand what was going on in her life you know. The only thing I remember once is that we sponsored a little powwow back in 1980, three years before she died and I remember it was February and a cold front was coming in and it was kind of cold and we prepared our backyard because dancers were coming from all over the state of Texas to be with us. So we formed a little circle flattened the grass, we

prepared it for months knowing we were going to have this and my sister was princess and that's why we sponsored it down here, the organization. And I remember my grandmother coming and one of the older people, because she was just sitting in a chair looking all the dancers and it was dark but there was light so you could see and and uh they a Pendleton blanket on her. I wish I could find the picture that someone took with a Polaroid you know there was no films. And uh, but I remember this man putting a Pendleton blanket on her and for the first time all the glory exposed herself and she was like, she looked just like Geronimo but in the female form. And it was just spiritual and I went to give her a hug and I noticed she had tears in her eyes and she said, "This is the way it should have been, always been." and basically saying we have to stop this but this is the way it should have been and then she thanked me for having it. And then she died about 2 1/2years later. [.3] But yeah, she was more like my mentor, she was I think my grandmother saw something different in me then everybody else, I am a big guy but I never used my bigness to hurt people or bother them even though I could have and I think my grandmother saw the uh, spiritual side of my life and I so she started exposing her spiritual side of her life to me and it was kind of saying that I am going to be gone soon you know and I want you to take over and that's the way she treated me up until she died in 1983. Just kind of treated me special, I liked to think I was special but I think she just knew the road, the path I was taking and it was her path but it's not that she was already a Christen but my path was going to be a little different then her path but at the same time she was telling me not to forget who we are as native people. [knock on door – R.S. talking to daughter .5]

**Researcher:** Um, okay that was great. And um, so um, do people react in any way when you say that you're Native American or Lipan Apache?

**R.S.:** Um, the first time that I noticed, the um, that I noticed peoples reaction was, you say you can't remember that far back was first grade and the reason I know it was first grade because I was in that school for two years, Kindergarten and First grade. You know when I was in Kindergarten I didn't think too much but it was in that transition between kindergarten and first grade that I realized that I was Apache. And I remember the kids saying that I look Indian and kids would say I am Mexican, what are you and I would say that I was Apache and they would all laugh. Really and they would want to know more but I really didn't know much more than I was an Apache. And I remember then we would just go and play there was nothing to it but then I realized a few days later that he kids weren't talking to me. And some of those kids, some of those kids where actually afraid me.

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIPTION FROM 2012 UNPUBLISHED PAPER
POWWOW: TRADITIONAL FAMILY GATHERING IN SOUTH TEXAS

This interview was conducted my Ashley Leal on March 2, 2012 at R.S. home in McAllen, Texas. During the interview, R.S. son was in the kitchen and made some noise during the recording, which was noted in the transcription. During my transcription I have used various codes to indicate voice tone, break, etc. The codes are as follows;

| | |
|---|---|
| \| | Line break. Indicating when somebody was talking over the other or right on top of the others speech. |
| **BOLD** | Used when there was an emphasis on a word. |
| (.0) | Used to indicate the specific amount of time paused in between a sentence or thought. |
| {} | Used to indicate sounds like, giggles, sneeze, mhm, etc. |

Self: Okay, so Robert, if you can state and spell your name.

RS: My name is Robert Soto, R-O-B-T-E-R-S… No.. {giggles} R-O-B-T

Self: R-O-B-E-R-T ?

RS: Thank you {giggles} S-O-T-O {giggles}

Self: {giggles} You are spelling it. Okay, and umm, Robert can you tell me a little bit about the Lipan Apaches and where does the name come from just what does it mean?

RS: Well, nobody really knows for sure what Lipan means, a lot of people think its Spanish, um… uh… and there was a name given to us by the Spaniards when they first met us, uh, as far as where does the word Lipan actually mean, a lot of people say, "the people of great mountains." So there's just a lot of herssay to what the word actually means um… Nobody really knows for sure what the name means. The um… did the tribe itself, um, uh, well most along time ago, which is something that we try to re, reinforce is that at one time, the tribe, we came from three bands and most of the people that are here in the valley, uh, come from the Ko' nitsa, Ko'nitsaahii band, um…

Self: Ko'nitsaahii band?

RS: Ko'nitsaahii.

Self: Ca, can you spell that?

RS: I will try to spell it to you because it's, it's told various different ways, but a Conesahe is, C-O-N-I-T-S-A-A, Conitsaa he Conitsaa b, band. and um, the word Conitsaa it's, it's two words uh,uh. Con is water and itsaa is the people belonging to. um (.3) and so, and actually and actually the the, Conitsaa, but we call ourselves Conitsahe, Conitsahe, which means the people of the deep water that's a spelled Conitsaahii, a the word co means water, nitsa means belong, big or be, uh, and he means belonging to. And so, the, the, the tribe was originally divided into three bands, and you had the, as I said earlier, the Conitsaahii, which was the big water and the you had the chishiihii people which were the people of the forest or the mountains and then the Goigahii people who were the plain Lipan's, the people living in the Plians, or the people living in the um… ah… in the desert.

Self: Okay, can you, um, (Robert Soto's Home phone Rings) do you have the spelling for those?

RS: Yeah, yeah, the,

Self: Or the last one?

RS: The Chicahee people are (ringing) C-H-I-S-H-I-I-H-E-H-I-I (ringing)

Self: Do you need to answer that?

RS: No. And the a (ringing) and that's the forest people and the plains and desert people were the, was a G-O-L-G-H-H-I-I (.3) Gol-ghh-hii, the I, the "L" is silent.

Self: K

RS: and a, and uh they were called the plains or the desert people, and so that's why we were kinda divided into these two groups. My family, uh, come from the Conitsaahii, which means the big water people, and more likely your people come from the same people the big water people. Um…and so that's what we called ourselves. Traditionally, we call ourselves NDE , N-D-E, nde a which means the people, the principle people, or the people and that was the, uh, the um, (.5) the name we called ourselves as a nation.

Self: the NDE?

RS: NDE. Nde, then nde, NDE, which means, it just means simply people, the principle people or the main people. And so, and so that's why a lot of people really don't know what Conisa- what Lipan means (computer sound) because it was just a name given to us given to us by the Spaniards more likely.

Self: Okay.

RS: Uh, as, one of the definitions somebody has out there that Lipan means,

Self: light..

RS: the mountains or the uh, you know but, but a lot of us were not from the mountains so.

Self: Okay

RS: You know, and so, so, anyway (gust of air in) and so that's why my family, kinda, kinda stuck around the, the big water, the big water is not the ocean but the big water is the Rio Grande River, we call it Ko'nitsaa, which means the big water, um, and so, so my family has stuck to the Rio Grande River north and south because at one time, there was no Mexico and no, and no Texas, it was just a land divided by just, body of water and our lands would go as far down as, where's now Mexico City, and as far west as the alpine mountains, uh, as far east as the gulf of Mexico, and just as far north as a little, a little past San Antonio, like to about Llano, Llano, Texas. Which is about another 15 -16 miles north, so all that was Lipan territory. We didn't go beyond the, the Alpine mountains because that was they, uh, the mountain range was the boundary between us and the Mescalero's apaches. And even though we were both Apaches, were both sort of enemies, and so the Mescalero's wouldn't cross the Alpine mountains or uh, and we wouldn't go across there either. And if we did or THEY did, of course there would be a kind of war. (GASP IN) and um…. but that's just a little bit, but uh, I don't know what else you wanted to know.

Self: Yeah

Self: Now, the Mos, Mescalero's, I heard or I thought I saw something that, are they federally recognized? And do they have a reservation? And is that here in Texas here but up north, or?

RS: Yeah umhm

RS: New Mexico.

Self: It's in New Mexico?. Okay.

RS: The South East, South East New Mexico.

Self: New Mexico (softly speaking, writing on paper), Okay. and um...

RS: I don't know if you want to know about the um, why this makes an historical significance for us. That anytime they would capture a Lipan, they would dump them in Mescalero's, at the reservation, and the problem with that is the Mescalero's considered us sub-human and we considered them sub-human. So,,, when they a first allowed us to come there, or they didn't had no choice. Ah, a lot of the relatives, they put them in a crevice, on a side set of town where there was no food, and there was no way of substating, there was no animal life, it's a reservation, it's a prison, not a community, a gated, a gated community with guards.

Self: Yeah.

RS: And, and so, the Mescalero's treated the Lipan really bad. A to the point that there's a lot of animosity between the Lipan's and the Mescalero's, specifically the ones who live on the reservation today. There's a lot of them on the reservation.

Self: Really? So even still today, there's this um, rivalry between Lipan Apaches?

RS: Yeah

Self: Okay.

RS: Yeah, in matter of fact, maybe in march, I will be speaking to the tribal chairman of the Mescalero's, um, and the reason for that is because, um, the reason for that is because, um, there was um, a lot of harm done to our relationship with the Mescalero's in recent times by one of our previous tribal leaders, he's no longer with us, and because of that, we've, we've had to find the need, in view of federal recognition to develop relationships with them. And the thing is, they don't trust us. And so, uh, the Chief has kind of heard of me through some friends, and he would like just to sit down and have a meal, no, no business, just to kind of get to know me. And, uh,,, about a year in a half ago, I spoke at a, a little church in Mescalero's. Normally there was only about twenty-five people but there was about hundred people there that day, and most of the council was there, because they wanted to hear what this Lipan had to say and if all this stuff was

true. I got to talk to the future vice chairman, she's a lady, I can't think of her name, I spent quite a time talking to him. I also heard, I supposedly talked to the future chairman of the tribe, because he was running, because they wanted to know more about the Lipan, wanted to know what may be different than the rest of them. You know, there's, and so, but, but where the problem is today is that a lot of the council members there are part Lipan, and so they have to be a little more sensitive to the issues of Lipan because a lot of them have Lipan blood in them now, (.4) 100 years later.

Self: Wow.

RS: So, so anyway, so that was kind like our aim toward the North and uh, we have a little connection to the Kiowa Apaches, which were the Apaches in Northern Texas and southern Oklahoma but the Lipan's are cousins to the Jicarilla Apaches.

Self: Your cousins to the…

RS: the Jicarilla Apache.

Self How do you spell that, is that an 'H'?

RS: H, 'J'

Self: a 'J'?

RS: 'J'. I have to…

Self: {speaking to self, writing down on paper} Jic-ar-illa

RS: Well, I know, I can spell it because I have it right here, (Robert turning pages in book). This is um

Self: And what is that that your looking at?

RS: This is Jicarilla, it's J-I-C-A-R-I-L-L-A. Uh, this actually this is a, um…a in my language study, this is actually a dictionary, a language course from the Jicarilla Apaches. I told people their going to learn Apache, to learn Jicarilla because they have the best language course right now, and, and, and were related to them, and in the back, uh, and this is one of the, various historical documents that were written in the Lipan language. I have, we have… 500 pages of this.

Self: And wha, what is that?

RS: This is a story… about a lady called Augustina whose a, and the guys name is Harry Koyer, he's a Swiss German linguistic, and um, and um, he um, he found the language very fascinating and came by here and interviewed people and so he recorded the language, and but what he did

was, he translated it. I, I am the one who did, did this {points at the revised version in his book} but before it was the Lipan in the front and then the, you had to go like this all time. {flipping book from front to back}.

Self: Yeah.

RS: So, I rewrote everything and I had it put, a

Self: Just underneath.

RS: Yeah, and what makes it so neat about it, he a, he, he would place, it says, HA-KA-NOKIA, that's an easiest one to translate says, "right here/ the Lipan's/ their country". And so he slashed it, so he also slashed the translation so you can put the, the English translation on the bottom, so everything coincides with a slash.

Self: interesting.

RS: Anyway, and then a, a there was another guy uh, this was something we found just recently. (Flipping pages) uh… I couldn't think of his name. {Sigh} Anyways, this is actually a hand written dictionary in Lipan language.

Self: mmm..

RS: but the guy, you have to work really hard. Some words are in English, some words are in Spanish, um… some words you can't read {chuckle} {closed book and taps on dining table}. So, so you just sit there and try to find out the best you can.

Self: And so who was that by, you don't remember? or

RS: um… (.8) {Looking at document} the um…

RS (cont): You see, it's kinda hard to read, it says the a name.

Self: By… 'L'...

RS: It looks like a G-a-t-s-c-h-e-q

Self: {slowly repeating letters above} …….

[skipped some]

RS: …But in the um,,um,,um,, he told me the history of the Lipans, I already knew the Jicarillas were our cousins, and apparently there was a white, two bands of Jicarillas, the red band and the white band, the red band was the forest and the mountains and the white band was the desert or the prairie people. And apparently among the white band, there was um, a disagreement, and a

group of the white band, left northern New Mexico and went into central Texas. And from the white band is from where the Lipan's, came from.

Self: From the white band?

RS: Yeah. and so that's why, uh, when we look at our language, of course its changed a lot in, in 400 years and also because there are a lot things unique to this area , like that are not unique to New Mexico, so there are words, new words here, but if, you, when you say the language very close, you find that the roots and that a lot of the words are very similar to each other.

Self: Wow.

RS: You know like Ko, for water, COO for water, CO for us is Water and for them is C-U, I mean K-U, you got KO and KU {sounding the words out} and just a lot of that, a lot of similar words have similar spelling, so that's why I tell a lot of people that want to learn the language in our tribe to study the Jicarilla , and if we want to every develop our language then we have a better ground roots about it.

Self: And you said the Jicarilla um, there from Northern New Mexico?

RS: Northern New Mexico.

Self: Okay.

RS: um, Around a… the.. they, they, they use to cover like the north - northern 1/3 of New Mexico border into Colorado. (.4)

Self: Wow (softly)

RS: uh, just, just a, if we go like just central. If you go to New Mexico, ah, it will be right in the middle of 1/3 just all the way to Colorado. It it's what now is, uh, uh, Jicarilla Apache. Before, it was all the way through HUCNUKU territory of Oklahoma, it that area but now there's a little reserve there.

Self: And um, you kept saying something about, um, you kept about bands. Now Lipan Apaches were originally were a…or apaches' really. um… Lets, lets focus in on Lipan Apaches, they were just a band…? They were a band originally and or they had or they had,

RS: Well, there was..

Self (cont. from last): or they were a tribe and they had different bands?

RS: There was a tribe with different bands but among the apaches, um, it was really difficult to determine who was the leader because more tribes have a chief and so what we always tell people, uh, Apaches is a tribe, uh Lipan is the band. You know because, um (.3) Apache territory went all the way to the (.4) gulf of Mexico and as far north as uh,um the borders of Colorado

where is Oklahoma today and all the way down to central Mexico. I mean it's a large territory and that's why we have the, the six main tribes which till today still exist. um, um, the um, in Arizona we have the Chiricahua Apaches, which is **Geronimos band**, that's where Geronimo came from. And, and then in the north after Arizona you have the White Mountain Apaches.

Self: In Arizona? Northern Arizona?

RS: Yeah, those are the two Apache tribes in Arizona.

Self: White Mountain?

RS: Yeah, you have the, the Chiricahua in the South and the white mountain in the North. uh… in New Mexico, you have the Mescalero's in the South and the Jicarilla Apaches in the North. (.8) And then the, in Texas you have the Lipan Apaches in the South and the **Kiowa** Apaches in the North.

Self: Okay {softly speaking as I write on my notepad}

RS: And so, you're talking about a **massive** territorial area, soo… what connected us what the world Apache that's what we were, Apache. uh, the **bands** were the um, the names that went into the Terokowa, the Kiowa, the Lipan, the Jicarilla, Mescalero, white mountain, and the um, the terokowa. And out of that you have **other** sub-bands that like the toe-toe, con toe, …

Self: Okay.

RS: but those are the six major tribes right there. {Using hands to talk, pats down on table} and the western apaches then, the San Carlos Apaches are not, is not a tribe but where San Carlos and a, in Arizona was a reservation where they threw all the Apaches in there. So, just about **today**, if you go there and start asking question, you will find about every, every, every band in the United States, in,in the southwest.

Self: And they pretty much, the people there, know, who, what what kind of Apache they are?

RS: Most of them **do**…

Self: … or are there trouble with identifying?

RS: Most of them do still, because, for two reasons, uh, the, the first reason, there seems to be a native pride among apaches. (.3) okay. This is, well, there is Native Pride among every tribe but there's, there's this, this sense of pride among apaches and, a, **because** and of course the explanation is also the second reason because we were the last ones to give up, the fight. (.2) And because we were the last ones to give up the fight, the apaches as a whole, **kept** most of their, their tribal identity, cultural identity, spiritual identity, uh, and all that stuff wasn't lost. Because, you're talking about, well they say that the last, and, um, the, well it not document

because they say it was Mexico but the last Indian war was I think about 1916, northern Houston where they slaughtered a, a, a band of Lipan Apaches. Who were settling in the forest. But they just wanted to live.

Self: Who slaughtered them? the….. okay. mmhm.

RS: uh, the, the Justinians. you know, they still a, that was the last battle but they don't count that as a battle because this is, some of this was Mexican Apaches. Because we're all Mexican Apaches, if you judge on the territory taken by Spain and then by Mexico. um, and then so, and so anyway because were were the last ones to be conquered, history stayed intact. (.2) And so, so that's the, the other thing that makes us, gives us a sense of pride. You have the Pride aspect and then you have the factor, the, the reason we can still connect to everything we still have is because we were the last ones to get conquered and because we were the last ones to get conquered we kept a lot of identity, you know...

**(Stopped at 23 min. in the recording, and started back up at 39.27 minutes in the 1 of 2 recordings)**

Self: Okay, and um, so tell me a little about the um, **current Eagle** Feather situation, with the um,

RS: Well, the Eagle feather situations, in current, is that we're going back to court, back to court on March the 8th (.3) of this years, two thousand thirteen. uh, but this battle has been going on, uh, since March 11th of two thousand six. So, it's been, its going, it will be six years this year. And uh, and the basic problem with the eagle feather is (.4) is that, this whole issue of control. Because the federal government, which consist of, for us, consist of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the Department of Interior. uh, they're the ones that determine who can use these objects, we call **Sacred Objects**, and, and who cannot. And uh, and uh, a lot of natives, don't realize it but the federal government is, is placed a lot of restrictions on the use of sacred objects by native people. If the object is not issued to you, **by** the federal government. uh, then it's illegal. You, uh, illegal object. So basically what it comes down to. That if a native wants to use an eagle feather, **legally**, she or he must **obtain** it from the federal government. And if they **don't** obtain it from the federal government, then there not legal. and uh, what the problem is, is that the laws are written in such a way that the only people that can legally **obtain** a sacred object, like an eagle feather, are those that belong to a tribe that are recognized by the federal government. And um, (.4) and um, one of the things that came out of the court case is that the federal government, um (.8) uh law of the federal government says that if Robert Soto wants an eagle feather then Robert Soto could go through the proper steps of requesting it by the federal government and uh, and, and, and turning over the paper work. But then our lawyer asked them so, (.3) how many, how many people, a year… request for eagle feathers, that are not, that are groups that are not recognized by the federal government. And,,, he says thousands. More specific he says like two thousand **plus**. And he said out of the two thousand plus that **request**

these feathers every years that are not part of a recognized tribe, how many of them get their feathers? And he said none. And that's when our lawyer said, I rest my case you know {hmhm} as far as that's concerned…

(Robert Soto reaches down beside him into his brief case and pulls out a letter, he opens the letter while talking and starts to read)

… but the reason for that is cuz the federal government recognizes a native American as a person **belonging** to a tribe recognized by the federal government. So, if you claim to be native American, and you do not belong to a tribe recognized by the federal government, you are even violating the law just by calling yourself native American. One of the things that we discovered in this lawsuit that a lot of people didn't know about, uh, was that in October 30th of 1997, the United States Government **re-defined** who we are, before then we were Native Americans but after October 30th 1997, we were recognized as American Indians. And the reason for that is that they discovered that the, that, the definition for native American is one that went back to 1962 that says that you are native American **if** you belong to a tribe recognized by the federal government. So, what does that mean? That means, that the United States Government doesn't recognize any Canadian Indians, because they don't recognize them, even though they may have, like the Lakota and the Blackfoot, uh, have some in Canada and in the United States {mhm}, but it doesn't matter because they don't recognize them in Canada. And that meant that there were no Indians South of the Southern borders because they don't recognize any of the tribes in Mexico, central America, and south America. And so the law, in many ways, now, with all the, with everybody immigrating into the united states, you know you have all these Indians coming into the united states, they **wanna** to use their sacred objects or **wanna** to be recognized as Indians but they **can't**, because according to the law, uh, is, is that if you do not belong to a tribe recognized by the federal government, you're not Indian, you're not native American. And what they did in the 2000 census, the federal government got together and redefined native American, and so, the definition no changes it to American Indians because it covers the whole basis of north, south, and Central America. And so, I carry a copy of this law here. {READS COPY OF LAW} The uh, it says, under the federal law, as stated, in federal registry notice dated October 30th (.2) 1997, entitled "revision to the standards of federal data on race ethnicity" uh and then it says the number of the citation, 6-2- dash F-R- dash 5-8 -7-8-2 dash 0-1 and then it says the definition of an a American Indian **is**, and so this is what the definition is now, " a person have origins of the original peoples of north and south America, including central American, XXX and whose, and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment." And so the new law doesn't allow for, well your American Indian if we say we are, the new law basically says that if you belong to a peoples groups from north and south American including central American, and if you do one of two things. If you maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment. And what tribal affiliation means, basically {pots banging in kitchen} well, I'm from the Lipan Apache tribe, "are you a member of the Lipan apache tribe?" no but I come from that background. So you see, or community attachment can refer to any kind of native organization. Uh, for an

example, our native church can be community attachment. The south Texas Indian dancers association can be community attachment. The united San Antonio Pow wow organization can be community attachment, uh, intertribal, urban intertribal organizations can be community attachment. Just anywhere where natives hang out, if your apart of that group then you're part of the community. Native community. Because you're identifying yourself..

Self: xxxx

RS: … as far as the indigenous people. The only **problem** is. That every, every branch of the federal government recognizes this new law change except for the depart of interior who still says that you're a native American if you belong to a tribe recognized by the federal government and that was established in a,, 1962. (.5) And a, and because of that, this is one of the reasons why we are still fighting in court. Because,,, there hammering us with the laws that were established based upon the definition of native American of 1962 and **we're** hammerin' with the law change that, that the, we're no longer called native Americans were American Indians and based upon the new definition, of who we are, that gives us the right to use sacred objects.{mhm} and so,,, um, there was, there was in the last three years. (.2) Two cases who were lost. And one was another young man from our community whose mother had a booth who was selling um, a dream catcher with four.. wild pigeon doves, two were morning dove and two were white wing. But the federal agents sounded like we were selling eagle feathers. They just said {mmm} 'feathers of migratory birds'. But they never explained what migratory birds they are talking about. I mean, a hunter can pay, whatever he could pay now, to get a permit to **kill**, these white wings and morning doves and **eat** them and do whatever they want their feathers but if an Indian picks up some feathers off the ground that was dropped and put them in a dream catcher or in their outfits or anywhere in their home, that's an illegal actions. And so, anyway, he, um, we lost that case, because, he could not prove he wasn't selling it, he says he wasn't XXXXX, um, and he couldn't prove that so he lost that case. And the other case, and I can't remember the other cases, but the other case was in Colorado where two **non Indians** okay, um (.8) were stopped by the state trooper, and um, and for the suspicion of ***Drugs*** but they didn't find any. And uh, my understanding of the story was that they were they were on their way to a Pow wow, and since they didn't **look** Indian, they called the, uh, field agents for the fish and game. And they, uh, they arrested them for the illegal possession of eagle feathers. Um,, their claim, and it was found that it was a legitimate claim that one of them was adopted by the **Piute Tribe.** uh, and the other was adopted by the, by uh, uh, a holy man in the Navaho tribe and so the Piute spiritual leader gave this other man his feathers and the guy who was adopted by the Navahos got his feathers by the Navaho. But the whole emphasis was on the fact that they were not federally recognized. Now they fought it in court under they Religious Freedom Act, saying as American citizens we have the right to worship God, uh, as we please, and if we want to worship God as natives, then we have that right to worship God as Natives **and** use all their sacred objects. And they **won** that case. But, the federal government didn't want to admit they had been defeated and they took it to

the high courts and that, that just this last year, that um, they overturned the lower court's decision. But then they took it one step **further** because of **my** law suit. And they even said, and state recognized tribes. So in other words, now, if you just say your Indian but do not belong to a tribe recognized by the federal government but now even if you belong to a tribe recognized by the state of, by the state {clears throat} then those tribes don't have the right use eagle feathers…

Self: wow

RS: {CLEARS THROAT} So, the department of interior communicated with our lawyers a few months ago, saying that based on this case and this other case in Colorado, that we are recommended to voluntarily drop the law suit (.4) uh, **personally**, I told my lawyer that um, that, that I wanted to fight it to the very end you know? um, I mean of course that's what the lawyer wanted to hear. But, but, but our lawyers reminded them of a third case that has already been settled and already out of court. I mean was settled in court but, but can no longer go back to court {mhm} because it was already been established. And there was one place, and he says that the reason we want to pursue it because Roberts's case… is more similar to that case. And this was a native who was a member {hits hand on table} and my understanding of the Jicarilla Apache tribe but for some reason because of land changes and border changes he lost his status. And he was, he said that if you want to remain Indian you need to move into the reserve and if you stay on your ranch you will lose your status. And of course said, "Why, this has been our ranch for over one hundred years so why should I move."

Self: Yeah.

RS: And so what they chose, so they chose to stay there. And so and so doing, he lost status as an Indian. So one day he was a tr. one day he was a Native American and the next moment he wasn't. And he was a dancer and he got stopped and they, they took away his eagle feathers and took them to court and won and got them back. So he had the right. So because of that case, my case has stayed alive because they say that Robert is not a member of a, he's a member of a genuine tribe recognized by the state of Texas, acknowledged by the state of Texas. Uh, he goes, historically you can prove your existence here so, so that's why we will continue to fight. So, that's where it stands as far as, and the, the March the 8th, uh, about a couple of months about a month and a half, will be a status hearing and a status hearing is where the lawyers will come in front of a judge and try to settle the **issue**. (.3) {pots banging in Kitchen} But it it's not going to be settled because the department of interior doesn't want to give up that right to tell who can and who cannot. So, so I know they are not going to bend over to our desire and I know our lawyer will not bend over to their desires and it's just going to end up in stale-mate and then we're going to go back into the court system.

Self: …So, in your opinion, um, why do you think that is, that they, they, they keep on… it seems like there doing it for something you think? or is it for personal satisfaction?

RS: both. mmm… I think it's more for personal satisfaction because the federal government has lost control over Indian people completely, um, except for one area now.

Self: mhm.

RS: you know, we, we call it; we call it the **last frontier**. {Roberts's son is making food in kitchen, pans banging} (.3) and even thought the federal government controls a lot of aspects of our nativeness, the federal government um, we call it the last frontier, it controls all of our sacred objects. (.3) So, if an Indian wants a sacred object, legally, he or she, must go and basically **beg** the federal government. And so because, because, because and because they control our sacred objects, then they have the right to determine, who can use them and not use them. (.4) So this who issue is still the issue of **control**. um, and that's the problem that they have with me, cause if I win this case, then they're gunna lose a little more control over the native population. you know?

Self: Yeah.

RS: And so, they don't want to lose control, they don't want to change the objects. Because, one of the things you're going to learn in this, this, experience is that the, that the department of interior has placed a lot of **sub-laws**, (.3) as to who is violating the law. {Chuckles} Like for example, one of the states that they stated in court was that I violated two principle law, **three** principle laws in use of my eagle feathers. uh and actually it was four I think. 'Cause I can't remember them all. The, the very first law that I violated, was that I advertised our **pow-wow.** We say that our pow wow is a sacred gathering because everything we do in the circle is sacred.

Self: Okay {softly/ under breathe}

RS: And, you know there's **protocol,** into entering the circle. And not everybody can just get up and jumping around, like most dances. There's protocol, there's a system to follow. Well, they say that if we **advertise** our protocol, if we advertise our circle, our gathering, and not just our pow wows, it could be any kind of gathering. It could be our **church**, native church, it could be a religious gathering, uh, it could be uh, you know a native ceremony for.. a **wedding**. Anything. Any kinda gathering, if we advertise it in a newspaper, it ceases to be sacred. and thus the federal government can go in to your sacred grounds and, and basically violate your law, violate your, your freedom. And a, and do whatever they want. That was the first law that I broke. um.. The second law said that if, a non-status Indian, and what what are they find as a non-status Indian, a non-status Indian is one that um, that doesn't belong to a tribe that is recognized by the federal government. That if a non-status Indian organizes, um, these events, then they seize to be sacred and gives the government the right to come and do whatever they want to do into what we call sacred grounds. Um,,, the other law that we violated was the law that um, that states the exchange of money, the exchange of money, uh, the in the gathering then it seizes to be sacred and gives the government the right to go in and do what they want. and of course the um, (.2) they, they pointed out examples of how we violated that law. You know um, give aways,

honoring people, uh, {mhm sound from me} cake walks, raffles, vendors fees, vendors selling.. things, {yeah} so you know selling food, so all that are examples of us violated the laws, um, and so because of that it gave them the right to go in and, and do what they wanted to do. So those are the kinda laws that

Self: they had.

RS: we waiting to change, the other law that we violated was that, there is a law that, you know native people would like to share things. you know, and a lot of the times, when a person legally gets a feather from the government, they get full eagle. But like I said, well but why do I want full eagle for, we don't need all these feathers? So what they do is take the feathers from the carcass they got, the skin. and they share with their relatives. {hmm} you know, but if a feather ends up in the hands of a native, who is **NOT** from a tribe recognized by the federal government. Then they, that's a violation of a federal law. {Clears throat} Because the law says that if a native, um, gets an eagle feather, and gives it to somebody, that person needs to apply for what they call a special per, use permit. It's given to by the repository in Colorado. And so you they send that, paperwork, you fill in the paperwork, and in there they'll ask you know, who you are, your tribal identification number, and then they're going to ask who gave you the feather and his tribal identification number. And let's say your native but you don't belong to a tribe recognized by the federal government. So, and then, Uncle Joe over here got this feather legally because he's recognized by his tribe but for some reason you're not. {Mhm.} So, uncle joe here took a feather and gave it to you. Well, when you send in that piece of paper, it'll show that **he** has a tribal id number, **but** you don't. So, now, they'll come after you and cite you for that feather but furthermore then will go to Uncle Joe and cite him for illegally contra banding. You know, the distribution of eagle feathers. So he'll get cited and fined to. So you both get in trouble. And so, that's, that's, kinda violates, all this, you know, because, one of our, you know (.8) cultural.. (.3) um (.2) Traditions where there given to people, we give everything we had away. We get people, you know, we killed a deer and we didn't just hog it to ourselves we shared it with people and that's just another way to control this whole thing about, who we are as native people.

Self: and um…uh… I just wanted to conclude it by, if you could talk a little bit more about the Pow wow, um, when , I ,I know it was started by your father? is that correct?

RS: Well,,

Self: or how long has that been going on and the purpose.

RS: {breathe in} We have two pow wows a year, {clear throat} and its getting, getting more expensive, and I'm actually thinking about narrowing it down to one, because of the expense. {clears throat} but we have two pow wows a year. One is in October which is the fall and one is in March which is the spring. Um, the reason we chose these two months is because a long time

ago when I was a baby, little boy, I say baby but little boy. When I was a little boy, our family would have a fall gathering and a spring gathering. The fall would be like a Thanksgiving gathering you know? But we would do it in October. Because October traditionally, is the end of the harvest season for, for the Apaches. That's when everything dies for the winter time. And March, is when we have the other gathering and that's, that's, the second season, which is new life, for spring. And traditionally, we have those two gatherings. So when the (.8) when we decided to make our pow wow (.5) when we decided to open it up to the public because um… (.3) up to um..1989, we were having our gatherings and pow wows but it was more for our family, our tribe, and our own, those who we've invited. And they were under, for a while we did it under a telephone pole under a light, in a, in our front yard. And then later on we built an little arbor on the back. And so, those were our, our gatherings just under the telephone pole. And we did that for the longest time, for almost twenty years. And then um,,,, the um,,, in 1989 we decided to open it to the public by renting a facility. And, allowing people to come and uh, and uh, and uh, and see who we were as Indian people, kinda educate the people. Uh, uh, as far as the pow wow concerned, it wasn't started by a, the pow wow is Pan-Indian, it's a Pan-Indian things, that, that's connects us. It only started about 100 years ago, 125 years ago. (.3) but the… the pow wow is one of the few.. things that we have that connects us as Indians. That's why we have them. and a, and so, so our ceremonies, that are no longer being done. Uh, where the pow wow took over the ceremonies. That's symbolic of the fact that,

Self: Yeah

RS: yeah. And uh, I thought it was ironic that thee um… the um, when we started the spring pow wow, Uh, I didn't realize until a couple of years later that it was being held across the street from where the spring ceremonies were being held many years ago. But, back then, there was nothing but a wooded and a canal that went right through there.

Self: The Lark Community Center? Is that what you're talking about?

RS: Yeah, this was before there was a community, there was nothing but woods. And where Jordon, where it's now Jordon was just a dirt road, and ware road was just a little dirt road, {mhm} you know. And right in that area there was just nothing but wooded area. So, everything around that intersection was nothing but just wooded area. And there was nothing but mesquite and cactus. And they would celebrate by cutting mesquite, mes, no by cutting cactus. So that's what took place of the, of the ceremonies of the Pow wows. (.5)

Self: So, are there still, um… do you guys try to keep the, uh, maybe the rituals or the ceremonies in your Pow wow?

RS: We, um {clears throat V+} We um..

Self: And how important is that?

RS: With the, with the Pow wow, comes all these a (.3) rituals that come with the Pow wow, kinda like a package deal. A, a lot of times, the rituals, the rituals, are, are interpreted in view of the tribe that are holding the, the gathering, so in that sense, yeah a lot of the things we do, um, are what we call tribal identification. But a lot of the things we do are, are **not** tribal identification. Just things, that we um, that we have accepted as native. And um,, almost every native tribe is doing today and we just kind of just joined the band wagon.

Self: Okay, so that would lead up to my last question. Do you feel that the Pow wows are becoming more… geared and maybe catered to the public? general public?

RS: Yeah… well, (.3) the, the general public, before we never cared about the general public cause it was just our Pow wow, our gatherings. {mhm sound by me} But today because of the vendors..

Self: Yeah

RS: And the need of making money, you invite the public in. You know, so we try to get the public in, uh,, just to to try to finance the gatherings. um, so yes, in that sense they are becoming more public uh, in that sense to, they are becoming more **inter-tribal.** You know because of the fact that, a lot of them are becoming **contest** Pow wows, where they go and compete against each other.

Self: Yeah

RS: So that allows, and what they most comfortable with rapid travel today with jets, um… cars and freeways. Uh, that means you can be at one Pow wow one week and then you have five days to get to the next one. So a lot of people make that as a professional.. to me you have the professional dancers and then you have the more traditional {doorbell rings} dancers (fast).

Self: Okay. Okay, aw,,, I want to ask more questions.

RS: Let me go get that and you can pause it.

Self: Okay, okay

( Turn off recording until Robert Soto gets back from the front door)

**(Turn on Recorder #2)**

Self: Okay, last question I wanted to ask was about the pow wow because that's where we left off. And is there a reason that the pow wow has not gone to the competition type of Pow wow? {Robert Soto clears throat} Or you just wanted to keep it the Traditional…?

RS: Uh, I, one of the reason, well there's several reasons why we haven't gotten to the competition. First of all, it cost more money to put a competition pow wow. And while competition pow wows attract more people, more dancers. Um.. um, one of the problems with a completion pow wow is that, um, that every year, you have to keep giving more, and more, and more, so it becomes more expensive ,more expensive, more expensive. And then, one day you find out you don't have any more money and you stop having it as a competition pow wow, and then you lose your Professional dancers who were, which were coming **just** because it was a competition pow wow. And by **that** time you lost your local support, because the local support say, "well why should we go to the pow wows, there just catering to the needs of the professional dancers." A lot of large pow wows, like there use to be a **real** large one in Corpus Christi, the moment they stopped making it a competition pow wow, it died out. um, Canyon Lake was another big competition pow wow, as soon as it stopped being competition pow wow, it died out. And so a lot of the pow wows, if they start as a competition pow wows, and then they stop being competition pow wows, they die out. because the a.

Self: Completely?

RS: you don't have the dancers support. They were coming specifically coming to win money. not ..

Self: Not.. for … the … traditional…

RS: We, we, the only reason we have not gone to a competition pow wow, is because we wanted it to be a, more of a family.. fun time. And by family, it's not just Soto family but family come together and have a good time and just dance because they just want to dance {Yeah}. And so they support the pow wow because they want to support it. Support the traditions not because we're bribing them or giving them money.

{Pans clanking in the kitchen}

Self: Oh..kay, Well thank you for your time.

**(Voice recorder turns off)**

# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ashley Sommer Leal was born and raised in Edinburg, Texas. She received the Bachelors of Arts in Anthropology from the University of Texas – Pan American in December 2011 and her Masters of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) with a focus on Anthropology from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in December 2016. Her mailing address is 409 Powell Pl, Harlingen, Texas 78550. Leal is a Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas member and fancy shawl dancer. She has worked as a graduate research associate with CHAPS (Community Historical Archaeology Projects with Schools) located at the University of Texas – Pan American [currently UTRGV]. She currently works for a non-profit organization that helps America's military families after the loss of a loved one in database and research. She currently resides in South Texas with her husband and two boys.