

INDIO

Mario Garza, Ph.D.

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A large majority of present-day Chicanos/Hispanics/Latinos are almost 100% indigenous (Native American race) with little or no European blood. The myth that we are a Mestizo race of Spaniard and Native American heritage has been propagated over the past 500 years despite thunderous evidence to the contrary. There is no evidence of prolific intermarrying between the two races; in fact the distinct and deliberate separation of the races has been practiced in both Mexico and the U.S. until the late twentieth century.

The two primary reasons for the continuation of this myth are: 1) the unique colonization process used by the Spaniards, and 2) the Indian extermination and removal policies of Texas and the rest of the United States. The Spaniards wiped out the indigenous identity by Christianizing the Native Americans they brought into the missions, giving them Spanish names, and bringing them into the colonial society by making them Spanish subjects. This systematic removal of their traditional ceremonies, language, lineage, and way of living, forced Native Americans to become underclass citizens in a Spanish society subservient to a European ruling class. By 1800, these indigenous, previously-Spanish subjects (and still pure blooded Indians) were known as Tejanos, Nuevo Mexicanos, Californianos or Mexicanos who had become “gente de razón,” and were an integral part of the greater society.

So when Texas and the rest of the nation started exterminating or removing Native Americans to Indian Territory, these colonized Indians declared that they were “Mexican” (not Indian) for the sake of survival. Parents made it a point never to mention to their children that they were Indian, and instead instilled in them the pride of being Mexican, a nationalistic identity – not a racially-based identity. Over the years, the need to suppress the Indian identity remained a survival imperative until eventually we even forgot why we kept our Indian heritage a secret.