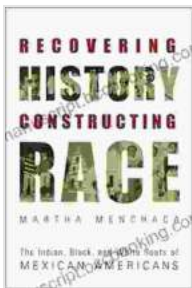


# Unveiling the Indian Black and White Roots of Mexican Americans Joe and Teresa Lozano

## A Journey of Self-Discovery and Historical Exploration

In the annals of Mexican American history, the stories of Joe and Teresa Lozano stand out as a testament to the complex and multifaceted nature of identity. Their journey of self-discovery led them to uncover a rich tapestry of ancestral roots, spanning from Africa to the indigenous lands of Mexico.



**Recovering History, Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans (Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Series in Latin American and Latino Art and Culture)** by Martha Menchaca

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 5054 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 390 pages

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## Joe Lozano: Tracing African Ancestry

racial terms. The label "gente de razón" was often used in reference to non-Indians (Collins 1976; Dobyns 1976:65, 117-119).

Moreover, Engstrand found that baptismal records frequently did not include the entire family racial history in an effort to hide the true racial identity of a child. For example, when a child's father was a Spaniard, the race of the mother was omitted and the child was classified as *criollo* (Engstrand 1992:160). In most census records, except for the mission Indians, missionaries preferred to classify their parishioners as *vecinos* or *peones* in order to avoid indicating their actual racial identity (*ibid.*, 254-255). *Vecino* was a social class and not a racial category, referring to the landed elite, whereas *peón* denoted a foot soldier and his family (see Gutiérrez 1991:82). Ramón Gutiérrez also concludes that missionaries preferred to emphasize common cultural attributes rather than distinguishing people by race, since the categories of *mestizo* and Indian carried a social stigma. The only racial categories that are certain are those used to classify the military personnel and the mission Indians. Officers were classified as Spaniard, while soldiers were counted as Indian, *mestizo*, and *afromestizo* (Dobyns 1976:2123-27, 1976:153, 171-172).

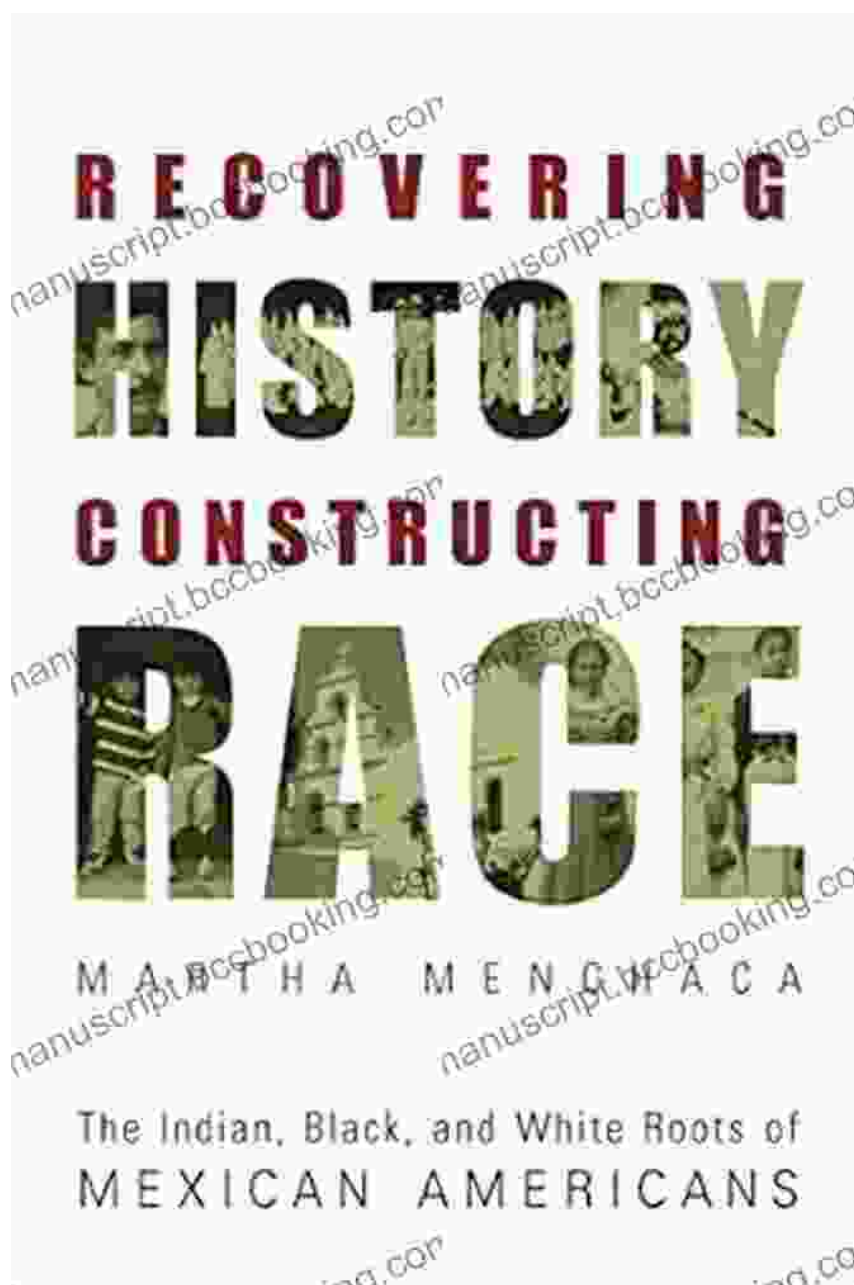
The families of the officers claimed that they were pure Spanish descent and primarily intermarried among themselves (Dobyns 1976). For example, elite marriage networks included the de Anza, Elias Gonzalez, Vildosola, Diaz del Corral, Otero, Robles, Carrillo, and Aro y Aguirre families (Engstrand 1992:160, 274-276). Moreover, these families lived in relative luxury. Their homes were well furnished, their children were schooled by tutors, and they imported clothes from Europe or from the interior of Mexico. Unlike the elites, soldiers and Christian Indian families lived in modest adobe homes, with beds, stools, and tables serving as their sole furniture. They also dressed modestly (*ibid.*, 159-161). Although social class differences distinguished the colonists, they remained a closely knit community and socialized during weddings, birthdays, funerals, and most everyday life events.

Among the commoners, intermarriage between soldiers and Indian women was an accepted practice and was encouraged by the royal crown. The Royal Order of 1750 gave soldiers incentive to marry local indigenous women (Mattison 1946:281-282). A soldier who married an Indian woman was given four square leagues of land, which was a tremendous amount of land for a commoner.<sup>10</sup> The order was designed to attract males

Joe Lozano, born in El Paso, Texas, embarked on a quest to unravel his family's history after experiencing racism and discrimination. Through DNA testing and extensive research, he stumbled upon a startling revelation: he was descended from enslaved Africans brought to Mexico in the colonial era.

This discovery shattered long-held beliefs and forced Lozano to confront the uncomfortable truth of Mexico's hidden African heritage. He dedicated his life to raising awareness about the contributions of Afro-Mexicans, advocating for their recognition and inclusion within the wider Mexican American community.

### **Teresa Lozano: Exploring Native American Ancestry**



Teresa Lozano, Joe's wife, also embarked on a parallel journey of self-discovery. Born in Chihuahua, Mexico, she had always felt a deep connection to her indigenous heritage. Through oral histories and genealogical research, she traced her lineage back to the Tarahumara people, a renowned indigenous group in northern Mexico.

Teresa's journey highlighted the rich diversity of Mexican Americans, who often possess a blend of European, African, and Native American ancestry. Her work focused on preserving indigenous traditions and promoting intercultural understanding.

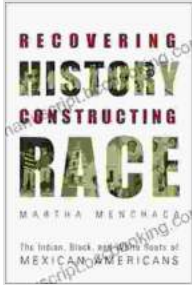
### **The Legacy of Joe and Teresa Lozano**

The stories of Joe and Teresa Lozano have left an enduring mark on the Mexican American community and beyond. Their tireless efforts to uncover their ancestral roots and challenge prevailing narratives have inspired countless others to embrace their own unique identities.

Their work has also contributed to a broader understanding of the complexities of Mexican history and the role of race, ethnicity, and culture in shaping contemporary society. Joe and Teresa's legacy serves as a reminder that even in the face of adversity, self-discovery and the pursuit of truth can lead to profound personal and historical transformation.

### **Additional Resources:**

- [The Black Mexican Americans Who Are Challenging Notions of Race](#)
- [Joe and Teresa Made in America](#)
- [Joe and Teresa Made in America: The Story of an Undocumented Worker, His Family, and His Fight to Stay in the United States](#)



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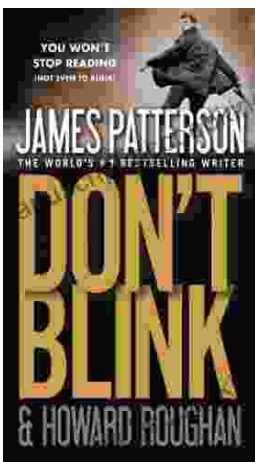
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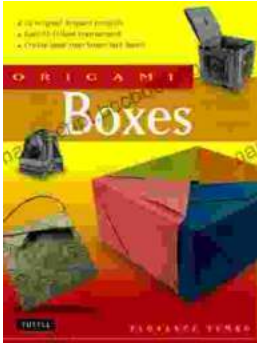
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