



**Paul Conrad.** *The Apache Diaspora: Four Centuries of Displacement and Survival.* America in the Nineteenth Century Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021. Illustrations, maps. 400 pp. \$34.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8122-5301-6.

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Colonialism was, and is, a shattering experience for North America's Indigenous people. For centuries, colonizers displaced Indigenous individuals, families, and sometimes entire communities from their homelands. These countless forced movements of Indigenous peoples created a confused patchwork geography of Indigenous people across North America and sometimes even beyond it. In short, Native American history is also a diasporic history, defined by movement and exile. This is not a new insight, but historians still have difficulty grasping it fully, in part because diaspora is so difficult to track and to narrate. Understanding Indigenous diaspora means tracing centuries of movements that went in myriad directions and occurred for different reasons. It necessitates following the stories of individuals as well as communities. It forces historians to eschew the easy confines of fixed geography, polity, or time period. Telling the history of Indigenous diaspora means embracing the chaos at the heart of the colonial experience.

Paul Conrad's wonderful new book, *The Apache Diaspora*, undertakes this ambitious and important task by training its focus on the Ndé, or Apache peoples of the American Southwest. Span-

ning the first Spanish contacts in the late sixteenth century to their final forced removals in the early twentieth century, Conrad argues that the experience of diaspora—both for those Apaches who were displaced and those who remained at home—has formed the essential dynamic of Apache history since European colonization began. Generation upon generation, Apache people have reckoned with captivity, enslavement, and forced removal. In effect, the Apaches (a term that actually refers to many distinct southwestern groups speaking related Athapaskan dialects) became a diasporic community. Only in the context of this ongoing diaspora can we understand the changing shape of Apache politics, culture, and resiliency.

Conrad breaks his narrative into two parts. Part 1, encompassing three chapters, focuses on Apache encounters with Spanish colonizers beginning in the late sixteenth century. Colonial regulations in New Mexico generally prohibited the enslavement of village-dwelling Pueblo peoples, who were the primary targets for Catholic conversion, but allowed for the enslavement of “pagan” outsiders, namely, the mobile Apaches and Navajos who lived in neighboring lands. The frequent capture and enslavement of Apaches bolstered the

Spanish colonial economy, while also forcing Apaches to either resist by force or show interest in baptism. By the late seventeenth century, the economic incentives behind Apache enslavement shifted away from domestic labor toward the growing mining industry of northern Mexico. The kidnapping of Apaches to work in the deadly silver mines led Apache communities to mount more aggressive resistance campaigns against the Spaniards, including joining the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, which drove the Spanish from the region. But this moment of Apache triumph was short-lived: by the early eighteenth century, ascendant nations like the Comanches, Utes, and Pawnees grew their power by selling Apache captives to Europeans. Apache communities were forced either to make defensive alliances with the Spanish or to flee to remote areas of Texas.

Part 2, encompassing five chapters, demonstrates how the reasons for Apache displacement shifted from economic incentives to political ones beginning in the late eighteenth century. In the wake of the Bourbon Reforms, Spanish officials re-focused their energies on subjugating mobile Apaches. Rather than putting captives to work on the frontier, the Spanish increasingly sent Apache war captives to distant Mexico City and Cuba where escaping home would be impossible. The threat of such transportation forced many Apaches to settle at designated locales near Spanish military forts and presidios, a system that Mexico and the United States later mimicked. Conrad draws a direct line between Spanish colonial strategies and the US reservation system that arose in the middle of the nineteenth century, which he describes in the book's final two chapters. As the United States colonized the region, they shuffled entire Apache communities between poorly located and mismanaged reservations in Arizona and New Mexico while resistant Apache groups were captured and removed to Florida and Alabama for decades. The final, dismal episode of forced Apache diaspora unfolded

when generations of children were sent to distant boarding schools, many never to return.

This book makes important contributions to several scholarly conversations in southwest borderlands, Native American, and early North American history. Most directly, it provides a wealth of clarity and understanding to the history of the Apaches—perhaps the most recognizable yet poorly understood Indigenous group in the Southwest. Building on the work of Andrés Reséndez and others, this book also contributes to the growing scholarship on Indigenous enslavement and captivity and, in particular, demonstrates how these practices enabled Spanish colonization in the North. Diaspora likewise fundamentally shaped the politics of the region, as key alliances and conflicts often hinged on exile or the threat thereof. Building on seminal works by Juliana Barr and James Brooks, Conrad shows how Native relationships to colonizers centered on recovering kin, ransoming and selling captives, and forming new kinship and family units. Finally, Conrad does well to build on the growing scholarship on genocide in Native American history. As he demonstrates at many points in the book, forced displacement was frequently a calculated strategy to eradicate the Apaches as a people and as a community.

For historians of American and Native American history, this book also provides a crucial lesson in the importance of *continuity* in the colonization of the Americas. Historians tend to periodize colonial history, especially the history of the Southwest, and to assign essential differences to the Spanish and American eras. This book tends to show the opposite. While there were some key differences, both Spain and the United States (as well as Mexico, briefly) wielded displacement and relocation as weapons against Apache people. Equally important, this continuity of experience is essential for understanding the perspective of Apaches, who drew strength and strategic insight based on their long experience with removal. Whether it was the Spanish or Americans displacing them,

they sought out creative ways to maintain connections and to preserve their communities despite great odds.

This note of resilience is perhaps the book's most lasting message. Generation upon generation, century upon century, Apache people were targeted for erasure and endured unimaginable sorrow. The fact that Apache communities continue to exist and thrive throughout their diaspora—from Arizona to New Mexico to Oklahoma to Louisiana—is incredible. Conrad does an admir-

able job of weaving individual stories, and importantly, Apache voices, throughout the book to put a human face on this remarkable and difficult story.

In sum, this is an essential contribution to the historiography and an outstanding piece of historical scholarship. *Apache Diaspora* will stimulate important conversations in graduate seminars and will make an invaluable read for anyone interested in the broad and chaotic scope of conquest.

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