

Heather: Today we are airing a new interview series called We Are Here, about a woman who is on a mission to shine light and love on her indigenous heritage.

Humanity is a capricious thing, we want a voice but have a history of silencing others, we want space, but have a history of pushing others out of theirs- as in America's tumultuous history with Indigenous People. The Native People were misunderstood, silenced and pushed out of their space.

What do you do when all you have is suddenly gone? How do you save yourself? This was the question the Karankawa people of the Coastal Bend had to answer.

2,000 years ago the Karankawa People settled the area from the Galveston Bay southwestward to Corpus Christi. They lived a semi nomadic life oscillating between barrier islands and mainland. They were a tall, muscular people who made canoes, fished, hunted, socialized, and had a spiritual connection to their land.

However, as history unfolded itself in its predictable and most unsettling of ways the Karankawa had to find a way to survive the arrival of the Spaniards and learn to live under the rules of the Republic of Texas. For the Karankawa, survival meant going into hiding and camouflaging their identities. They seemed to gradually disappear from the history books, until the United States labeled them extinct. However, humanity as fickle as it is, always finds a way. Meet Love Sanchez. Love, a very fitting name, is Karankawa. She has stepped out of silence, rallied other Karankawa descents and together they are reclaiming their heritage, their culture, and their space. The descendants of these Native People are uniting and spreading word that they are still here.

Heather: What does it feel like not to be recognized as a people by your own country?

Love: Personally, ya know, not being recognized especially in the state of Texas is not surprising. Because in the last treaty that our tribe had was with the Texas Republic and that was a broken treaty with the Karankawa Tribe. There's not a process that is easy to maneuver to have people that are reclaiming their identity as Indigenous People to become a tribe or become a band in Texas. Ya know, a lot of the history books and the plaques around the area say that native people don't exist in this area especially the people that I am a descent from. So, its super disappointing to hear that but it's not a surprise if that makes sense. It's unfortunate to say that.

Heather: In our next segment Love Sanchez will share what happened to the Karankawa people of the Coastal Bend.

Heather Stark, Corpus Christi

