

Refusing Settler Domesticity: Native Women's Labor and Resistance in the Bay Area Outing Program. By Caitlin Keliiaa. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2024. 273 pages. \$30.00 paper; \$110.00 hardcover.

The Bay Area is often associated with peace and love, along with the hippie community of Haight-Ashbury, and is considered a sanctuary for the LGBTQIA+ community. However, behind those labels of humanity and progressiveness lies a much darker history. In *Refusing Settler Domesticity*, author Caitlin Keliiaa, an assistant professor of history at the University of California, Santa Cruz, shares that history.

Refusing Settler Domesticity is 211 pages, and each page delivers the history of Native women's experiences and lives as domestic workers in the Bay Area in the twentieth century. The outing program was born out of boarding schools. Indigenous children were taken away from their families and communities and placed in boarding schools, where they lived on campus full-time. Outing programs were used to keep Indigenous "students" away from their families and communities, placing Indigenous children with white families; girls and women worked as domestics, boys as laborers. Meant to be part of the "civilizing mission" for Indigenous peoples, the program's purpose in placing Indigenous girls and women as domestic laborers in private homes was to limit the federal government's responsibility for them—one way to solve the "Indian problem" in the United States. White women would find their place helping with "Indian reform" by becoming the ones to pass down civilized, Victorian, and American norms to Indigenous girls and women. White women became central to this project, becoming outing matrons or "surrogate mothers." In reality, outing matrons were the ones who would control and survey Indigenous women in everything.

In six chapters, Keliiaa focuses on topics such as early Indigenous labor in California, the creation and function of outing programs, how Indigenous women were criminalized while under constant surveillance in white homes, Native child removal from outing Native mothers, and failure of health care provided by colonial forces. Keliiaa presents readers with an Indigenous historical topic that is still being uncovered. Keliiaa found many Indigenous women's voices in federal archives; in her book, she uses their real names instead of fictional ones. Realizing it was a risky choice, the author felt the use of real names was crucial in giving even more life to the women who lived through and survived their experiences as domestic workers in the outing program. The author also mentions how she wanted the descendents of these women to know what the government did to their aunts, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers.

Keliiaa solidly balances dark and light elements in her book, and the dark elements are many. They include, for example, how Indigenous women were able to obtain jobs solely as domestic workers—and nothing else; how it was seen as *fashionable* to have

Indigenous women servants in white homes; how outing matrons maintained total control of the wages earned by Indigenous girls and women. Indigenous women had to ask outing matrons whether or not they could spend their wages, with limits on what they could spend them on. Sometimes, outing matrons would not pay wages to Native women at all.

Indigenous women were policed, literally and figuratively, by not only law enforcement but, again, their outing matrons. Keliiaa gives examples of how Indigenous women working in the private homes of white families were often under sexual surveillance and frequently criminalized for being “sexually deviant.” Native girls were forced to undergo invasive pelvic exams along with medical examinations, psychological evaluations, and testing for STIs while being interrogated about their sexual activity. Indigenous women often faced having their children removed from them by outing matrons. Infant children were enrolled in boarding schools, while other children were fostered out or put up for adoption. Keliiaa then dives into the lack of health care Indigenous women received, especially how tuberculosis was rampant in the outing program, exploring the cases of inadequate help and inconsistent compassion. However, through all the darkness Indigenous women endured in the Bay Area Outing Program, Native women were able to find light and create strong and reliable connections.

In each chapter, Keliiaa reminds readers just how resilient Native women were and still are. One major example of Native women deriving some good out of the outing program is the creation of the Four Winds Club in the Bay Area. The club offered a sense of community to Native women that was often lacking while working as live-in domestic workers, providing social activities, community organizing, and a safe space to socialize. In addition, Keliiaa does an excellent job of presenting resistance in her book, exposing readers to Native women who practiced defiance—for instance, how some would negotiate for higher wages, and if the promised wages were withheld, they would not return to that home. Or how some Native women would run away after enduring harsh working conditions. As Keliiaa says, Indigenous peoples, women and men, have always resisted colonization and its elements. Indigenous women in the Bay Area Outing Program were no different. Indigenous women found community and safe spaces among other Native nations while enduring harsh, violent, dehumanizing experiences in the Bay Area.

As a new historian, the topic of outing programs was fresh to me, and this book is a worthy addition to the list of others on this theme by authors such as Margaret Jacobs and V. K. Haskins. Keliiaa brings to the forefront an underrepresented topic, one that has seen limited study in California classrooms. The Bay Area Outing Program should be researched and discussed regularly; the people of California should know the truth. Keliiaa gives a platform for these Native women to tell their own stories, not just of their harsh experiences but of their resistance, of surviving colonization yet again, so that future generations could know the truth of their own history in California.

Gabrielle Velasquez
San Bernardino Valley College