

*Reproduction on the Reservation: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Colonialism in the Long Twentieth Century.* By Brianna Theobald. (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2019. 288 pp.)

Reproduction has been of critical significance to individuals, societies, and governments and a key site for state intervention and control, as well as official neglect and popular resistance. Brianna Theobald's *Reproduction on the Reservation: Pregnancy, Childbirth and Colonialism in the Long Twentieth Century* demonstrates this to be abundantly evident in the history of Native American reproduction, with a particular focus on the Crow nation, from the late nineteenth century to the present. Crafted with sensitivity and nuance, the book fills a long-lamented void in the history of reproduction and childbirth. Theobald places Native women, "what [they] said and did" (p. 10), at the center of her analysis, drawing from their own frameworks as well as theories of colonialism, including what Patrick Wolfe termed "the logic of elimination," to interpret federal efforts to intervene in Native reproduction. Based on oral histories, family records, ethnographic sources, federal government documents, and other sources, the study is organized chronologically and thematically, with chapters alternating between broader analyses of federal reproduction-related policies and practices targeting Native women and finely grained case studies focused on the Crow nation. While others have analyzed the high rates of sterilization of Native women in the 1960s and 1970s, this book places that tragic episode in the context of a much longer history of reproductive injustices and resistance.

*Reproduction on the Reservation* makes a number of important interventions and insights. To begin, it demonstrates that the push by government agents to medicalize childbirth, while uneven, came early to the reservation, propelled by the Save the Babies infant mortality reduction campaign. Further, Theobald argues for a more complex and broader understanding of Native women's agency and responses to colonial policy. At the turn of the twentieth century, for example, a minority of women embraced hospital-based childbirth while others continued to have their children at home, usually in the care of midwives and female kin. Women like Susie Walking Bear Yellowtail, a Crow nurse, midwife, and mother who once stated that "the Indian is not militant" strove throughout her life to protect maternal and infant life and encouraged other Crow women to use the federally funded hospital and health services guaranteed

them by treaties. Others, like Mohawk activist and midwife Katsi Cook, later called on Native women to take back control of their reproduction from the state, a movement that included for some a return to Native midwifery and home birth.

While the author's assertion that "colonial politics have been—and remain—reproductive politics" is clearly demonstrated in several chapters, particularly those focused on state actions characterized by intervention and control such as involuntary sterilizations and child removal, the link between colonialism and reproduction could be more fully developed in discussions of assimilation-oriented policies and programs. This aside, *Reproduction on the Reservation* is a clearly written and thought-provoking study that will interest a wide range of scholars in the fields of Native American, Western, medical, social and women's history, Native studies, and women's studies, appropriate for both undergraduate and graduate courses as well as non-academic audiences.

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*Choosing to Care: A Century of Childcare and Social Reform in San Diego, 1850–1950.* By Kyle E. Ciani. (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2019. 342 pp.)

Kyle Ciani's extensively researched *Choosing Care: A Century of Childcare and Social Reform in San Diego, 1850–1950* focuses on four areas where San Diego reformers, civic leaders, and businessmen built local systems that provided urgently needed programs for the care and protection for poor children. She concentrates specifically on interventions that departed from or contributed to national welfare agendas. These programs addressed the enduring impact and economic insecurity of families who crossed the U.S. and Mexican border for work, provided civic-supported educational programs to build a literate and vocationally trained workforce for local industry, opened nursery schools that enabled some women to work full time, and established emergency day-care programs during the Great Depression and World War II.

These efforts played out against multiple seismic economic and demographic shifts in the San Diego area between 1850 and 1950. There, diverse participants—social reformers, religious orders, philanthropists, local governments, and to some degree the poor ethnically diverse families needing help—