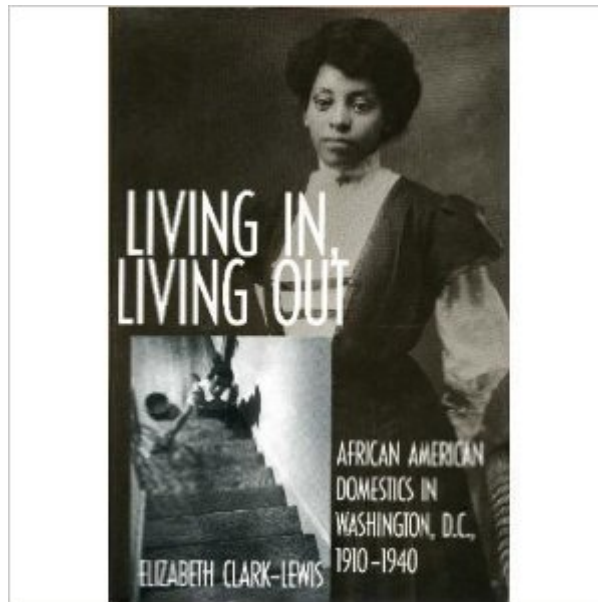


The book was found

Living In, Living Out: African American Domestic Workers in Washington, D.C., 1910-1940



Synopsis

This oral history portrays the lives of African American women who migrated from the rural South to work as domestic servants in Washington, DC in the early decades of the twentieth century. In *Living In, Living Out* Elizabeth Clark-Lewis narrates the personal experiences of eighty-one women who worked for wealthy white families. These women describe how they encountered "but never accepted" the master-servant relationship, and recount their struggles to change their status from live-in servants to daily paid workers who lived out. With candor and passion, the women interviewed tell of leaving their families and adjusting to city life up North, of being placed as live-in servants, and of the frustrations and indignities they endured as domestics. By networking on the job, at churches, and at penny savers clubs, they found ways to transform their unending servitude into an employer-employee relationship, gaining a new independence that could only be experienced by living outside of their employers' homes. Clark-Lewis points out that their perseverance and courage not only improved their own lot but also transformed work life for succeeding generations of African American women. A series of in-depth vignettes about the later years of these women bears poignant witness to their efforts to carve out lives of fulfillment and dignity. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

Hardcover: 192 pages

Publisher: Smithsonian Institution Press (October 17, 1994)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1560983620

ISBN-13: 978-1560983620

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 6.3 x 0.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (2 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,377,392 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #123 in [Books > Business & Money > Economics > Unemployment](#) #825 in [Books > History > Americas > United States > African Americans > History](#) #1089 in [Books > Business & Money > Women & Business](#)

Customer Reviews

Dr. Lewis is an incredible writer and historian. Great work archiving the lives of our ancestors and the formidable, noble 'soldiers' that they were.

This gem of a book is absolutely essential work to understanding post-Civil War African American life in the South. I live in northern Virginia and know of many families who worked in this way to make money for their families. My only complaint is that author used pseudonyms for the women, and, although I understand the reasons, this makes it difficult for people trying to do genealogy.

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