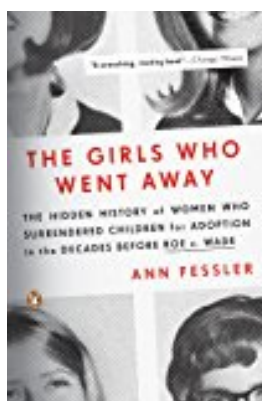


# [PDF] The Girls Who Went Away: The Hidden History Of Women Who Surrendered Children For Adoption In The Decades Before Roe V. Wade

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#### Books Details:

Title: The Girls Who Went Away: The

Author:

Released: 2007-06-26

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Pages: 368

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## Description:

**From Publishers Weekly** Nobody ever asked me if I wanted to keep the baby," says Joyce, in a story typical of the birth mothers, mostly white and middle-class, who vent here about being forced to give up their babies for adoption from the 1950s through the early '70s. They recall callous parents obsessed with what their neighbors would say; maternity homes run by unfeeling nuns who sowed the seeds of lifelong guilt and shame; and social workers who treated unwed mothers like incubators for married couples. More than one birth mother was emotionally paralyzed until she finally met the child she'd relinquished years earlier. In these pages, which are sure to provoke controversy among adoptive parents, birth mothers repeatedly insist that their babies were unwanted by society, not by them. Fessler, a photography professor at the Rhode Island School of Design, is an adoptee whose birth mother confessed that she had given her away even though her fiancé, who wasn't Fessler's father, was willing to raise her. Although at times rambling and self-pitying, these knowing oral histories are an emotional boon for birth mothers and adoptees struggling to make sense of troubled pasts. *(May 8)*

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**From** Perhaps it's no surprise that this story has gone untold for so long, considering the personal nature of the subject and the moral dilemma heaped upon the young women who gave their babies up for adoption. What is astonishing is that Fessler, a photographer and video installation artist writing her debut book, manages to tell this compelling story with a perfectly honed sense of restraint and respect. She handles the large volume of source material nimbly, letting each individual story breathe. The only complaint is that her research method—using a self-selected group—isn't up to snuff for academic rigor. In the face of such glowing critical praise, that lone complaint seems, well, a little academic.

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