

(Get free) The Fifties: A Women's Oral History

The Fifties: A Women's Oral History

Brett Harvey

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Brett Harvey : The Fifties: A Women's Oral History before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fifties: A Women's Oral History:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very enjoyable read By crescentlooon211 very much enjoyed reading this book. The author starts each chapter with a little historical information about the topic she is discussing (e.g. abortion, suburban life, homosexuality), and then she lets the women she interviewed take over the story. This book could be a fast or slow read, depending on if you are taking notes or just reading for pleasure, for example, but either way, the women's voices stick with you. I still think about the women's stories long after I have read the book! I would recommend this book to people who want to learn more about women's lives in the 1950s, but specifically to people who want a history book that is accessible and full of interesting stories and anecdotes about women by women. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent work By CecilyK This book is a fantastic resource that reveals surprising information about women's lives in the 1950s. It pulls no punches on such topics as abortion and homosexuality, resulting in a complete and diverse picture of midcentury women. This is one of the most personally influential books I have ever read; it changed a lot of my historical views as well as my current political ones. I recommend this book to anyone interested in feminism, women's history, or midcentury history. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. so interesting By Sandra Dunn I have been reading a lot of 50s inspired or 50s written books lately and find myself fascinated with the women of the era. How interesting and different life was, not that long ago... I really enjoyed this book.

Harvey, a frequent Village Voice contributor, independent publicist, radio programmer, and active feminist, provides dramatic and revealing first-person stories from women growing up in the '50s--a time when lifestyle choices were narrow and second-class citizenship was all that was available for women.

From Publishers Weekly The women, aged 58 to 68 today, who reached maturity in the 1950s were more conflicted about becoming housewives than they let on, according to this colorful oral history. Harvey, a freelance journalist and children's book author, has organized the recollections of several very lively, articulate women into an exploration of sex, courtship, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, motherhood, "pocket-money" work, careers and lesbianism during the '50s. The evocative and illuminating material will jog many memories, tickle a few funny bones--remember "technical virgins"?--and perhaps even prompt a tear or two. There are wonderful descriptions of the training of a stewardess (over the hill at 35) and the fury of a New York City radical, kept at home by her husband after their baby was born. Harvey also, intriguingly, shows some women choosing marriage so they would not have to deal with the new possibilities that--albeit in a limited fashion--were beginning to open up for them. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus sFreelance journalist Harvey (The Village Voice, etc.) half- successfully orchestrates a number of women's ``coming of age" memories of the 50's, highlighting the restrictions and penalties these mostly middle-class, bright, urban, East Coast women endured. Drawing on interviews with 92 women aged 58-68, Harvey reconstructs the sexual values that shaped women's lives--the bizarre contradiction between their seductive appearance (red lipstick, pointy bras) and the repressive morality that made marriage the condition for sex, and the bearing of children and living in isolating, child-oriented suburban developments the norm. She discusses the brutality of childbirth dominated by male physicians; the naivet of young mothers (one was advised to nurse while listening to Beethoven and smoking a cigarette); birth control; and the priority placed on ``perfect" children through whom mothers acquired their value. Lamenting that no man ever had to choose between having a family and a career, she examines the working lives of those who successfully entered male-dominated professions; those who cultivated low-level jobs ``to fall back on"; the experience of lesbians (especially the freedom they enjoyed in the military); the deterrent effect of the civil-rights movement and anti-Communist activities on women's liberation; and the displacement of women in radical politics. With the election of JFK in 1960, the introduction of the Pill, and the Redbook survey examining ``Why Young Mothers Feel Trapped"--to which 24,000 women replied--the women's movement, Harvey points out, gained direction: Women like those interviewed by Harvey went to school and to work, divorced their husbands, and protested against the war in Vietnam. Harvey is a talented writer with an eye for detail and anecdote, but her study is narrow, often stereotyped, and lacks the diversity, surprise, and range of oral history at its best. -- Copyright 1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. About the Author Brett Harvey is a freelance journalist whose work has appeared in the Village Voice, Mother Jones, Mirabella, Ms., Cosmopolitan, and the New York Times Book