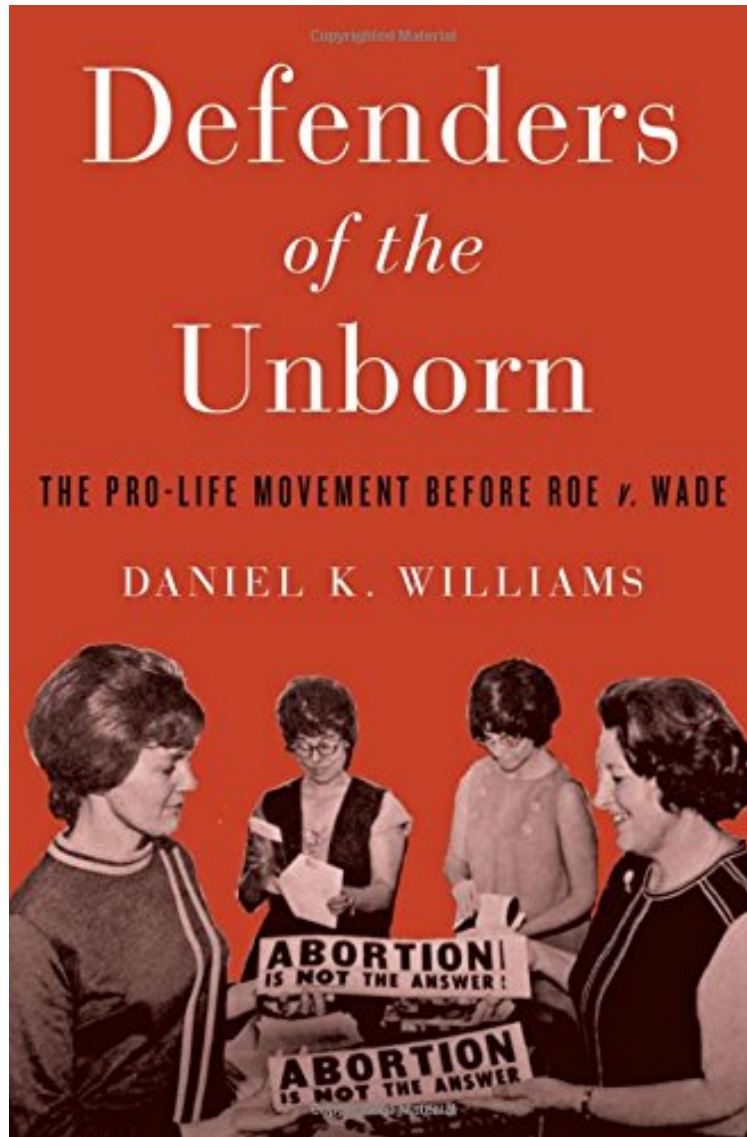


(Download pdf ebook) Defenders of the Unborn: The Pro-Life Movement before Roe v. Wade

Defenders of the Unborn: The Pro-Life Movement before Roe v. Wade

Daniel K. Williams

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File size: 39.Mb

Daniel K. Williams : Defenders of the Unborn: The Pro-Life Movement before Roe v. Wade before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Defenders of the Unborn: The Pro-Life Movement before Roe v. Wade:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF ABORTION LAW IN THE US By MARLIN R. Informative and interesting ; the author provides a thorough and objective narrative of legal attempts to liberalize abortion law and the opposition to them in the 20th century. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Could barely put this down By Customer Really have enjoyed this, excellent job covering a history of the pro-life movement not often talked about. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Teresa C Careful analysis of the arguments of both sides, notwithstanding the title.

On April 16, 1972, ten thousand people gathered in Central Park to protest New York's liberal abortion law. Emotions ran high, reflecting the nation's extreme polarization over abortion. Yet the divisions did not fall neatly along partisan or religious lines—the assembled protesters were far from a bunch of fire-breathing culture warriors. In *Defenders of the Unborn*, Daniel K. Williams reveals the hidden history of the pro-life movement in America, showing that a cause that many see as reactionary and anti-feminist began as a liberal crusade for human rights. For decades, the media portrayed the pro-life movement as a Catholic cause, but by the time of the Central Park rally, that stereotype was already hopelessly outdated. The kinds of people in attendance at pro-life rallies ranged from white Protestant physicians, to young mothers, to African American Democratic legislators—even the occasional member of Planned Parenthood. One of New York City's most vocal pro-life advocates was a liberal Lutheran minister who was best known for his civil rights activism and his protests against the Vietnam War. The language with which pro-lifers championed their cause was not that of conservative Catholic theology, infused with attacks on contraception and women's sexual freedom. Rather, they saw themselves as civil rights crusaders, defending the inalienable right to life of a defenseless minority: the unborn fetus. It was because of this grounding in human rights, Williams argues, that the right-to-life movement gained such momentum in the early 1960s. Indeed, pro-lifers were winning the battle before *Roe v. Wade* changed the course of history. Through a deep investigation of previously untapped archives, Williams presents the untold story of New Deal-era liberals who forged alliances with a diverse array of activists, Republican and Democrat alike, to fight for what they saw as a human rights cause. Provocative and insightful, *Defenders of the Unborn* is a must-read for anyone who craves a deeper understanding of a highly-charged issue.

"[Williams] rightly and convincingly argues that historians of abortion and reproductive politics in the U.S. have not paid significant attention to the activists who resisted legalization. As a result, the book will be important to historians working to achieve a full understanding of the ongoing legislative controversies over elective abortion."--The Catholic Historical "[M]ust-read for any person--pro-choice or pro-life--who is interested in the abortion issue."--National Catholic Register "This book provides a thoroughly researched and engagingly written history of the pro-life movement in the United States from roughly 1930 to the present..."--Reading Religion "Williams provides a valuable, granular account of the politics of abortion, especially the legislative debates before *Roe*, and he offers an important reframing of the history."--Christian Century "This is a superb book on a chapter of history that has, until now, largely eluded modern historians Williams has produced a thoroughly researched and wellwritten chronicle of how pro-life Catholics fought the movement toward permissive abortion laws and how the pro-life position evolved to include not only Catholics but also evangelical Protestants by the end of the 1960s Williams's account of state and local and national figures in the abortion movement makes *Defenders of the Unborn* an excellent addition to the literature on abortion politics in America."--Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains "A deeply researched, evenhanded, accessible and surprising history of anti-abortion before *Roe v. Wade*."--New York Times Book "Masterful...[A] meticulous reconstruction of a historical moment that we think we know but don't."--Christianity Today "There's a lot here that will surprise even those who stay current with the battle over reproductive rights."--Publishers Weekly "Daniel Williams recasts the history of the pro-life movement, showing that it is not simply a backlash against women's rights, the sexual revolution, or *Roe v. Wade*. He challenges popular opinion and scholarship on the anti-abortion movement in truly original ways that should recast our thinking about the politics of abortion, social issues, and social movements in modern America."--Donald T. Critchlow, author of *Intended Consequences: Abortion, Family Planning, and Federal Policy* "Daniel Williams' splendid book *Defenders of the Unborn* explodes many common myths about the history of the pro-life movement and provides the first detailed and accurate history of the cause. Anyone who wonders how the movement emerged, why it has persisted, and whether it is likely to continue to grow in numbers and influence needs to read this book."--Robert P. George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence, Princeton University "Daniel Williams' compelling book upends conventional ideas about the origins and ambitions of the pro-life movement. Using an impressive variety of sources, *Defenders of the Unborn* establishes that the identification of pro-life activism and conservatism was not inevitable, and illuminates how successful and savvy pro-lifers were in the decades before *Roe v. Wade*. Williams' important and original contribution to the history of abortion politics offers reason to rethink today's debate."--Mary Ziegler, Stearns Weaver Miller Professor of Law, Florida State University College of Law "This book provides a thoroughly researched and engagingly written history of the pro-life movement in the United States from roughly 1930 to the present, though the center of gravity of the historical treatment is the late 1960s and early 1970s. The author's main contention, which he

establishes convincingly, is that the pro-life movement did not suddenly arise in the wake of Roe v. Wade. It preexisted Roe and was in a pitched battle with the pro-choice camp on a state-by-state basis for many years."--Reading Religion"Daniel Williams (author of *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right*) has deployed his skills to reveal complexity and contour in the history of abortion in the United States since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Williams is adept at unpacking the history of abortion in a way that may leave readers looking for support for their side scratching their heads."--Fides et Historia"Daniel K. Williams has accomplished his goals. He has provided the country and the church with a rich instructive account of a momentous social struggle."--American Catholic Studies

About the Author Daniel K. Williams is Associate Professor of History at the University of West Georgia. He is author of *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right*.