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The American family has come a long way from the days of the idealized family portrayed in iconic television shows of the 1950s and 1960s. The four volumes of **The Social History of the American Family** explore the vital role of the family as the fundamental social unit across the span of American history. Experiences of family life shape so much of an individual's development and identity, yet the patterns of family structure, family life, and family transition vary across time, space, and socioeconomic contexts. Both the definition of who or what counts as family and representations of the "ideal" family have changed over time to reflect changing mores, changing living standards and lifestyles, and increased levels of social heterogeneity.

Available in both digital and print formats, this carefully balanced academic work chronicles the social, cultural, economic, and political aspects of American families from the colonial period to the present. Key themes include families and culture (including mass media), families and religion, families and the economy, families and social issues, families and social stratification and conflict, family structures (including marriage and divorce, gender roles, parenting and children, and mixed and non-modal family forms), and family law and policy.

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The Social History of the American Family is an ideal reference for students and researchers who want to explore political and social debates about the importance of the family and its evolving constructions.



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Editorial Review

Review

"...With its focus on America, this compilation provides a beneficial addition and needed update to the limited number of reference works on marriage and the family...Academic institutions with family studies programs should consider adding this compendium as a new staple for their reference collection. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Undergraduates through graduate students; general readers." (J.M. Enomoto *CHOICE* 2015-05-01)

About the Author

Marilyn Coleman, EdD, is a curators' distinguished professor emerita of Human Development and Family Science at the University of Missouri (United States). She is also an affiliate faculty member with women's and gender studies at the University of Missouri and a fellow in the MU Center for Excellence on Aging and the MU Center for Family Policy and Research. She is a fellow in the National Council on Family Relations. She has conducted research on stepfamilies for more than 35 years. Her recent work with Lawrence H. Ganong has focused on (a) intergenerational family responsibilities following divorce and remarriage and (b) the development, maintenance, and dissolution of steprelationships over time. He and Ganong have co-authored over 220 articles and book chapters as well as nine books. She was the second female editor of the leading family journal in the world, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, from 1992 to 1996, and has been either an associate editor or on the Editorial Board of six additional journals.

Lawrence H. Ganong, PhD, is a professor and co-chair of Human Development and Family Science and Professor of Nursing at the University of Missouri (United States). He has co-authored over 220 journal articles and book chapters as well as nine books. He and Marilyn Coleman recently finished a book that focuses on stepfamily relationships. His primary research program has focused on what post-divorce families, especially stepfamilies, do to develop satisfying and effective relationships. He is a fellow in the National Council on Family Relations and the MU Center for Family Policy and Research.

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