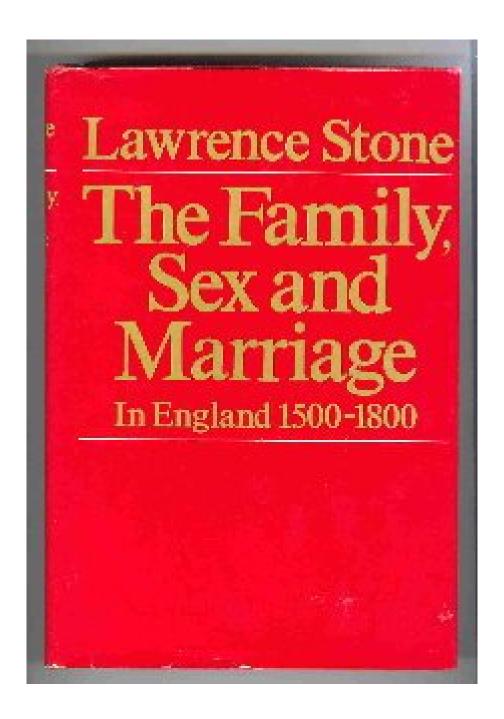


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"The best book of the history of the family in any nation or period." -- -- Lawrence Stone, Chronicle of Higher Education

About the Author

Lawrence Stone (1919-1999) was a professor of history at Princeton University. His other books include The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641 and The Causes of the English Revolution, 1529-1642.

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This book studies the evolution of the family from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century and how the process radically influenced child-rearing, education, contraception, sexual behaviour and marriage.

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Troublesome

By Joyce Haworth

When Lawrence Stone first published this book in the late 1970s, it was unprecedented. By meticulously combing through thousands of documents, Stone appeared to have reconstructed the personal relationships and family structures of an age long gone. But that was 35 years ago, and historians have had lots of time to examine his more radical ideas, such as the notion that early modern families were cold and unconnected. Stone himself retreated from some of his theses after they were shown to be overstated or incorrect. A sampling of the current status of the debate over this book can be found at:

[...]

Given that, it's hard to know how much to lean on this book. Certainly, the details and anecdotes are excellent. Who knew that the English bussed each other on the lips when they greeted each other, at a time when the rest of Europe was more reticent? But this volume should be handled with care. It is in some ways a historical document of its own, redolent with the unmistakable scent of the turbulent 1970s.

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Excellent information source for genealogists and historians

By A Customer

This densely written and lengthy book is sometimes difficult reading, but more than worth the effort! It is an excellent source of information for genealogists trying to understand the motivation of ancestors whose

actions seem incomprehensible today. By providing detailed analysis of family relationships from 1500 to 1800 in England, Mr. Stone has given us all an insight into thought processes and values that are very different from our own. The book would be equally valuable for anyone trying to understand the everyday lives of people in another time, to historians, to authors doing research for historical novels or plays, or simply to anyone who wants to take the equivalent of a "ride in a time machine". This is an outstanding book and I highly recommend it, though not for light reading!

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Sex in the Early Modern Times and What Not By David Brockert

"The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500 - 1800" by Lawrence Stone

This is a truly unusual book. It is a history book, but it's subject matter is interesting, of course, but handled very well and scholarly. Mr. Stone does us all a service in studying and presenting this subject in this fashion. His book goes back through the history of society in regards of family, sex and marriage to show how it changed in perspective and purpose. The society of 16th century England was very different from that of 19th century England. The main differences were in purposes and roles people played within their society: for instance, at the beginning of the history, children were disposable; at the end of the history, they were loved and coddled.

The extraordinary amount of change in those three centuries is what is so amazing. We do not think that there has been a time that was very unlike our own in the raising of children, and yet, from the one example above, there has been a sea change in how children are treated and raised. The same can be said for relations between husband and wife, servant and lord, merchant and customer, etc. We just do not realize the change in values and society. It is probably because of the slowness, or the subtleness, of those changes.

There are some books that have come out in the last ten years or so about the homosexual relations some of the people had through the Middle Ages on until the middle 1800's. Now I wonder if the changes in societies attitude towards homosexuals has been as gradual and subtle so that we do not even remember the alternative was prevalent not too long ago?

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