



Family Life in 20th-Century America (Family Life through History)

By Marilyn Coleman Ph.D., Lawrence H. Ganong, Kelly Warzinik

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No other century promoted such rapid change in American families than the twentieth century did. Through most of the first half of the century families were two-parent plus children units, but by the 1980s and 1990s divorce was common in half of the homes and many families were single-parent or included step-parents, step-siblings and half-siblings. The major changes in opinions and even some laws on race, gender and sexuality during the 1960s and 1970s brought change to families as well. Some families were headed by gay parents, lived in communes or other non-traditional homes, were of mixed race, or had adopted children. Family life had changed dramatically in less than 50 years. The change in the core make-up of what was considered a family ushered in new celebrations and holidays, ways of cooking, eating, and entertainment, and even daily activities. In this detailed look at family life in America, Coleman, Ganong and Warzinick discuss home and work, family ceremonies and celebrations, parenting and children, divorce and single-parent homes, gay and lesbian families, as well as cooking and meals, urban vs. suburban homes, and ethnic and minority families. Reference resources include a timeline, sources for further reading, photographs and an index.

Volumes in the **Family Life in America** series focus on the day-to-day lives and roles of families throughout history. The roles of all family members are defined and information on daily family life, the role of the family in society, and the ever-changing definition of the term 'family' are discussed. Discussion of the nuclear family, single parent homes, foster and adoptive families, stepfamilies, and gay and lesbian families are included where appropriate. Topics such as meal planning, homes, entertainment and celebrations, are discussed along with larger social issues that originate in the home like domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and divorce. Ideal for students and general readers alike, books in this series bring the history of everyday people to life.

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Family Life in 20th-Century America (Family Life through History) By Marilyn Coleman Ph.D., Lawrence H. Ganong, Kelly Warzinik Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #3216978 in Books
- Published on: 2007-04-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.26" h x 1.25" w x 6.45" l, 1.53 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 344 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"How we define the term the American family varies widely depending on the decade and the person attempting to do the defining. The onset of urbanization, the rise of consumerist culture and the related alterations in the workforce, globalization, the reinterpretation of gender and sexual roles and opportunities, technology, and the increasing number of people whose personal lives have gone public have become family issues, and here general readers learn about the major cultural and historical trends. The authors wisely begin with a chronology listing major legislation and events that affected family life, then describe courtship, cohabitation, marriage, divorce, remarriage, bereavement, domestic arrangements and traditions, the relationship between work and family life, the changing ways of mothers and motherhood, the roles of men in families, children and adolescents, family abuse and neglect and alternative family forms." - **Reference & Research Book News**

"This volume, which will be especially useful in classes on family sociology, draws on an extensive secondary literature to chronicle a century of changes in family size, structure, roles, functions, rituals, and power dynamics. . . . The volume's greatest strength lies in reminding readers that rather than being fixed and unchanging, families, across the past century, have been dynamic, ever-changing systems in which change has been neither steady nor predictable. . . . Especially noteworthy are the book's discussions of the shifting experiences of stepfamilies, grandparenthood, and widowhood." - **Journal of Social History**

"A major strength of this book . . . is that it provides a broad overview of family change in the United States throughout the 20th century. . . . The reader of *Family Life in 20th-Century America*, whether a researcher or a student, will find much useful and illuminating information." - **Journal of Comparative Family Studies**

About the Author

Marilyn Coleman is Director of Graduate Studies and Professor in Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Missouri. She has co-authored with Larry Ganong *Stepfamily Relationships: Developments, Dynamics and Intervention* (2004), *Handbook of Contemporary Families: Considering the Past, Contemplating the Future* (2003), *Changing Families, Changing Responsibilities: Family Obligations Following Divorce and Remarriage* (1999) and *Remarried Family Relationships* (1994).

Lawrence H. Ganong is Professor in Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Missouri. He has co-authored with Marilyn Coleman *Stepfamily Relationships: Developments, Dynamics and Intervention* (2004), *Handbook of Contemporary Families: Considering the Past, Contemplating the Future* (2003), *Changing Families, Changing Responsibilities: Family Obligations Following Divorce and Remarriage* (1999) and *Remarried Family Relationships* (1994).

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