



Families, History and Social Change Life Course & Cross-Cultural Perspectives

Tamara K Hareven, Barbara Trepagnier

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One of the prevailing myths about the American family is that there once existed a harmonious family with three generations living together, and that this "ideal" family broke down under the impact of urbanization and industrialization. The essays in *Families, History, and Social Change* challenge this myth and provide dramatic revisions of simplistic notions about change in the American family. In these interdisciplinary essays that are deeply rooted in history, Hareven provides important perspectives on family relations in the present, dispels myths about family relations in the past, offers new directions in research and interpretation, and revises our understanding of social change. Hareven's essays, which are based on thirty years of research, combine empirical evidence with theoretical frameworks and discussions of the state of the art in this exciting field. The essays cover a wide spectrum of issues and topics such as the organization of the family and the household, the networks available to children as they were growing up, the role of the family in the process of industrialization, the division of labor in the family along gender lines, and the relations between the generations in the later years of life. Coincidentally, the essays revolve around three central themes: The family's interaction with the process of industrialization, the life course, and the development of the field of family history--and its future directions. They are both interdisciplinary and cross-cultural. Professor Hareven is a pioneer and leader in the development of the field of family history. Her work makes a major contribution to the theoretical and substantive aspects of scholarship on family life, past and present, and on social change. Her essays also provide a fine understanding of this field's development.

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