

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55793-1 - Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500-1914

Michael Anderson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

Approaches to the history of the western family,  
1500–1914

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55793-1 - Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500-1914

Michael Anderson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

## New Studies in Economic and Social History

*Edited for the Economic History Society by*

Michael Sanderson

*University of East Anglia, Norwich*

This series, specially commissioned by the Economic History Society, provides a guide to the current interpretations of the key themes of economic and social history in which advances have recently been made or in which there has been significant debate.

In recent times economic and social history has been one of the most flourishing areas of historical study. This has mirrored the increasing relevance of the economic and social sciences both in a student's choice of career and in forming a society at large more aware of the importance of these issues in their everyday lives. Moreover specialist interests in business, agricultural and welfare history, for example, have themselves burgeoned and there has been an increased interest in the economic development of the wider world. Stimulating as these scholarly developments have been for the specialist, the rapid advance of the subject and the quantity of new publications make it difficult for the reader to gain an overview of particular topics, let alone the whole field.

*New Studies in Economic and Social History* is intended for students and their teachers. It is designed to introduce them to fresh topics and to enable them to keep abreast of recent writing and debates. All the books in the series are written by a recognised authority in the subject, and the arguments and issues are set out in a critical but unpartisan fashion. The aim of the series is to survey the current state of scholarship, rather than to provide a set of prepackaged conclusions.

The series has been edited since its inception in 1968 by Professors M. W. Flinn, T. C. Smout and L. A. Clarkson, and is currently edited by Dr Michael Sanderson. From 1968 it was published by Macmillan as *Studies in Economic History*, and after 1974 as *Studies in Economic and Social History*. From 1995 *New Studies in Economic and Social History* is being published on behalf of the Economic History Society by Cambridge University Press. This new series includes some of the titles previously published by Macmillan as well as new titles, and reflects the ongoing development throughout the world of this rich seam of history.

*For a full list of titles in print, please see the end of the book.*

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55793-1 - Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500-1914

Michael Anderson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

---

# Approaches to the history of the western family, 1500–1914

*Prepared for the Economic History Society by*

**Michael Anderson**

*University of Edinburgh*



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55793-1 - Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500-1914

Michael Anderson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521552608](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521552608)

© The Economic History Society 1980

*Approaches to the History of the Western Family 1500–1914*

first published by The Macmillan Press Limited 1980

First Cambridge University Press edition 1995

Reprinted 2000, 2001

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Anderson, Michael, 1942–

Approaches to the history of the Western family, 1500–1914/  
prepared for the Economic History Society by Michael Anderson.

p. cm. – (New studies in economic and social history)

Originally published: London: Macmillan Press, 1980.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 55260 5 (hc) – ISBN 0 521 55793 3 (pb)

1. Family – History. I. Economic History Society. II. Title. III. Series.

HQ515.A53 1996

306.85'09–dc20

95–22711

CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-55260-8 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-55793-1 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2007

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55793-1 - Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500-1914

Michael Anderson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Note on references</i>	vii
1 Introduction	1
2 The demographic approach	4
(i) Marriage rates and ages	5
(ii) Patterns of childbearing	6
(iii) Extramarital conceptions	8
(iv) Size and membership of the household	9
(v) Critique of the demographic approach	14
3 The sentiments approach	25
(i) The segregation of the conjugal unit – privacy and domesticity	31
(ii) Changing attitudes to interpersonal relationships	33
(iii) Spouse selection	35
(iv) The functions of marriage	38
(v) Illegitimacy and changing attitudes to sex	39
(vi) Parenthood and childhood	44
(vii) The prime movers of social change	46
4 The household economics approach	49
(i) Inheritance	50
(ii) The family economy of the western peasant	53
(iii) The proletarianisation of labour	58

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55793-1 - Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500-1914

Michael Anderson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*vi**Contents*

<i>Update to cover literature published between 1980 and 1994</i>	68
<i>Select bibliography</i>	75
<i>Index</i>	86

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55793-1 - Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500-1914

Michael Anderson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

---

## Acknowledgements

I have benefited greatly from comments and suggestions made by Christopher Smout, Elspeth Moodie and Ann-Sofie Källemark. My current and past students will also recognise arguments worked through in discussion with them. As always the members of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure have been generous in providing information on work in progress and in providing access to references and material of which I was unaware.

## Note on references

References in the text within square brackets relate to the numbered items in the Select Bibliography, followed, where necessary, by the page numbers in italics, for example [1: 45].