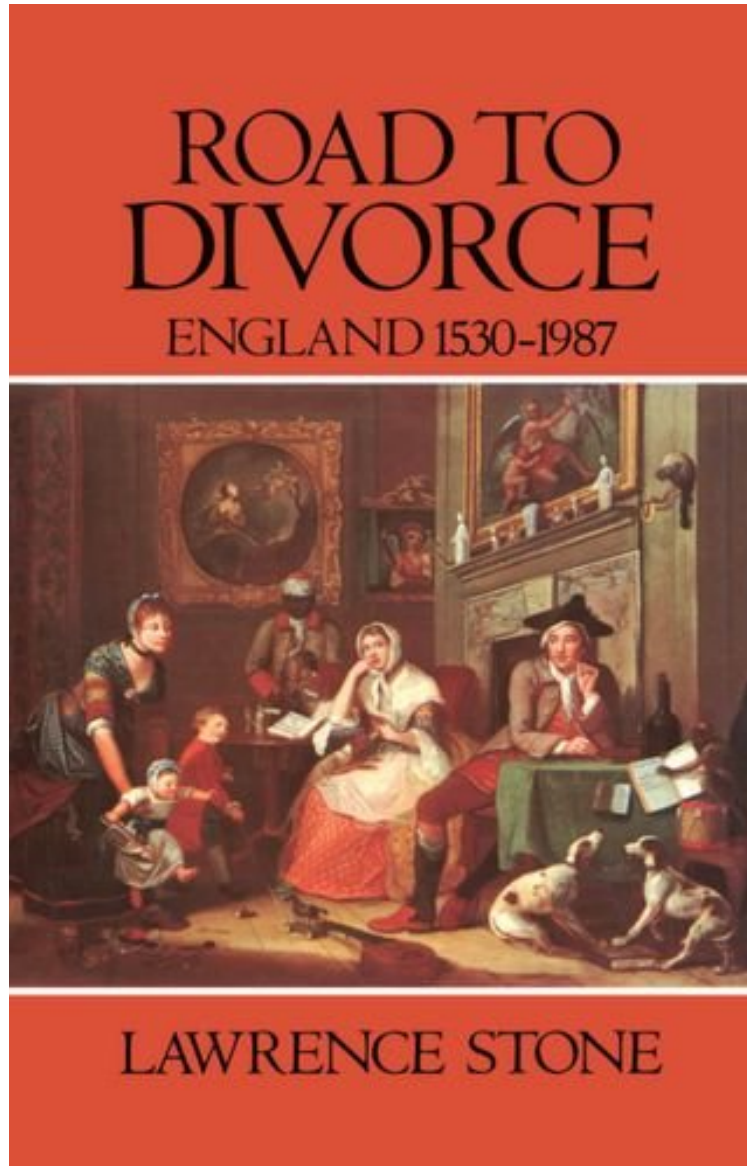


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Road to Divorce: England, 1530-1987

Lawrence Stone

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Lawrence Stone : Road to Divorce: England, 1530-1987 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Road to Divorce: England, 1530-1987:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Road to Enlightenment By An English Gardener Anyone intrigued but a little mystified by the behavior, romantic concerns, and subsequent motivations in matrimonial decisions, of characters penned by Henry Fielding, Jane Austen, the Brontes, and, indeed, authors clear through to Wilkie Collins and Thomas Hardy, will find a world of enlightenment in the pages of Lawrence Stone's most worthy book. Although

this and, it must be noted, the two prior works that compose Stone's magnificent trilogy: *Uncertain Unions* and *Broken Lives*, are works of brilliant scholarship, they are never a dull read. For, from the whip-tight mind of Stone pours forth page after page of such flawlessly woven statistics, such brightly illuminated narration, that the darkest corner of the marital bedchamber of the past is shown in such stark and, sometimes, harrowing detail, that the only wonder is that anyone ever managed to imagine a "happily ever after" in the first place. From the abduction of heiresses, the testimony of servants, and the gamble of the crim/con suite, all the way to the fabled Gretner's Green in Scotland, a map of such clarity and intrigue is laid out that one quite forgets that one is head down in scholarship. Rather, one finds one's self galloping headlong through the darkness of raging personal battles long ago fought, and won - or tragically lost - in a maze of thrashing laws and loop holes resembling, to the modern mind, nothing so much as the forest of Mirkwood. But, always and ever, Stone's brilliant torch leads one forward. From the moment I picked them up, these books were my constant companions. Not the least bit of a legal turn of mind is required; Stone writes with such organization, clarity, and compulsion, that understanding of, and enlightenment to the motivations of 500 years of those who loved - and who lost - is inevitable.

Uncertain Unions: Marriage in England 1660-1753
Broken Lives: Separation and Divorce in England, 1660-1857

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting discussion of divorce laws in historical England
By Lindsey Bayless
Surprisingly readable and enjoyable discussion of reasons why divorce was so rare in England in past times. The changes and dates of changes in divorce law were discussed. I think this would be a valuable addition to the bookshelf of anyone interested in English social history.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must have for any writer of historical fiction.
By Leelou Cervant
A must have for any writer of historical fiction.

Lawrence Stone is one of the world's foremost historians. In such widely acclaimed volumes as *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England* and *The Open Society*, he has shown himself to be a provocative and engaging writer as well as a master chronicler of English family life. Now, with *Road to Divorce*, Stone examines the complex ways in which English men and women have used, twisted, and defied the law to deal with marital breakdown. Despite the infamous divorce of Henry VIII in 1529, Britons before the 20th century were predominantly, in Stone's words, "a non-divorcing and non-separating society." In fact, before divorce was legalized in 1857, England was the only Protestant country with virtually no avenue for divorce on the grounds of adultery, desertion, or cruelty. Yet marriages did fail, and in *Road to Divorce*, Stone examines a goldmine of court records--in which witnesses speak freely about love, sex, adultery, and marriage--memoirs, correspondence, and popular imaginative works to reveal how lawyers and the laity coped with marital discord. Equally important, in tracing the history of divorce, Stone has discovered a way to recapture the slow, irregular, and tentative evolution of moral values concerning relations between the sexes as well as the consequent shift from concepts of patriarchy to those of sexual equality. He thus offers a privileged, indeed almost unique, insight into the interaction of the public spheres of morality, religion, and the law. Written by the foremost historian of family life, *Road to Divorce* provides the first full study of a topic rich in historical interest and contemporary importance, one that offers astonishingly frank and intimate insights into our ancestors' changing views about what makes and breaks a marriage.

From *Library Journal* Already recognized as one of the leading modern students of English social history on the basis of works such as *The Crisis of the Aristocracy* (Oxford Univ. Pr., 1965) and *An Open Elite?* (Oxford Univ. Pr., 1984), Stone now brings to bear his ample research skills and incisive analytical abilities in a detailed study of divorce in modern England. This is a study of sexual attitudes, the governance of religion in the affairs of humanity, and law, but most of all it is a shrewd assessment of moral values. It offers a balanced view of a topic that has long needed a historian, and while the subject alone guarantees controversy, there can be no arguing that the author has plowed new and fertile ground. Essential for all academic collections, this work cuts across a host of disciplines.

-James A. Casada, Winthrop Coll., Rock Hill, Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. `Professor Stone has produced an immense scholarly and entertaining account of the law and custom of marriage ... and the development of legal remedies for failed marriage'*Civil Justice Quarterly*. `an interesting and scholarly study of our chaotic and hypocritical attitude to marriage until, in the 1960s, we gave up the pretence that ours was a Christian country.'*Piers Paul Read, The Spectator* (Books of the Year) `... fascinating study ...'*Maureen Duffy, New Statesman and Society* `... engrossing and masterly historical survey ...'*Road to Divorce* is a serious book with a sombre subject. It is also, I'm afraid, magnificently entertaining. It will be supplemented by two further volumes of case histories, referred to in the text but not yet available, *Uncertain Unions* and *Broken Lives*. Heartlessly, perhaps, I can hardly wait to read them.'*Claire Tomalin, The Independent on Sunday* `... fascinating history ...'*Rosalind Coward, Observer* `... there can be no arguing that the author has plowed new and fertile ground. Essential for all academic collections, this work cuts across a host of disciplines.'*Library Journal* `fascinating study'*Maureen Duffy, New Statesman and Society* `The book itself is an outstanding achievement. ... a meticulous work of scholarship that demonstrates his mastery of an unbelievably vast seam of primary sources. It is also a highly entertaining book, as well as being profoundly disturbing in parts, particularly when it illustrates the fate of women in a non-divorcing culture.'*Richard Holloway, Church Times* `Stone

has written a stimulating companion to his fascinating *Family, Sex and Marriage in England* ... another splendid and original work by our leading historian of the family. 'Christopher Hibbert, *Sunday Times*' engrossing and masterly historical survey *Road to Divorce* is a serious book with a sombre subject ... It is also, I'm afraid, magnificently entertaining. It will be supplemented by two further volumes of case histories, referred to in the text but not yet available, *Uncertain Unions* and *Broken Lives*. Heartlessly, perhaps, I can hardly wait to read them. 'Claire Tomalin, *The Independent* on Sunday' From the Back Cover Much has been written about the history of the family and how marriages were made in England: this is the first book to tackle the problem of how, why, and on what scale they are broken. Written by the leading historian of family life, 'Road to Divorce' provides the first full study of a topic rich in historical interest and directly relevant to contemporary society.