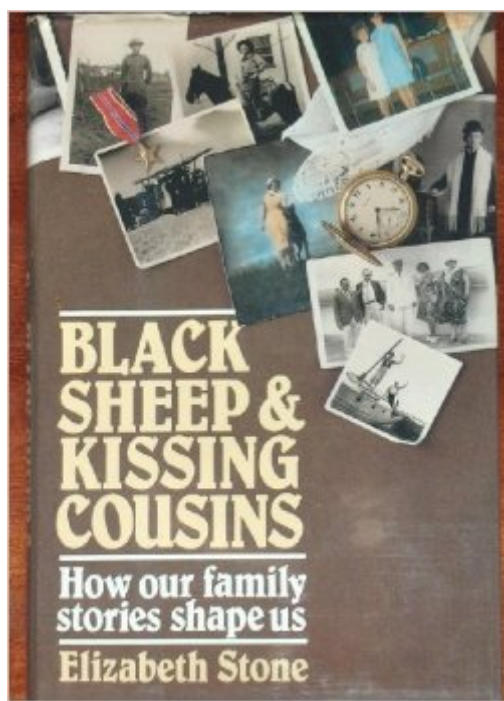


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# Black Sheep/kissing Cousins



## Synopsis

Elizabeth Stone interviewed more than 100 people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds and asked them to recount stories from their own family histories. She found that these stories not only impart a sense of belonging and of shared history, but also help us to define ourselves. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I found this book to be most interesting because it made me think about my own family stories in an entirely new way. Why do we care about certain traits, how we define ourselves, what measures success - the answers are buried in those family stories - the ones we choose to retell, that is. I have used this book in classes, as well as in rethinking my own family. Fun, and thought provoking.

I use this book nearly every year as a reference in designing college courses on family (family myths, family as a subculture, family memoir writing), and sometimes also as part of students' assigned or recommended reading for the course. Reading this book (or parts of it) alongside a range of other texts--memoir, fiction, film, visual art--students have reported that a) they loved it and b) they have not liked it at all. Some complain that it moves too ploddingly, adding that they wish there were more analysis, more discussion using a variety of theoretical frameworks and scholarship. On the other hand, for many students, Stone's own family story and her analysis of its themes, preoccupations, myths, and values has served as a charming, accessible entry into considerations of their own

families and the legacies passed down to them. Stone has also gathered primary source material from many interviews, and has organized them into categories that students and I find useful as a starting model for thinking and discussing family themes, and later, for structuring the material they gather through their own research.

This book is fascinating to read because it will remind you of your own family stories and lead to self reflection. I reexamined some of my own family myths and legends and discovered, what I believe, are new understandings which were previously not obvious. For example: The 'fried chicken story' my mom always told about how bad a cook she was when she first married my dad and how, regardless of what poor meals she'd been cooking for him, he would rave to family & friends about how her fried chicken was fantastic. He never even mentioned to her that her cooking was often crap, just complimented the hell out of her fried chicken, which she says she prepared several times a week until her cooking abilities improved. "Great" my dad would say, "fried chicken". She never broached the subject openly either because she was ashamed that she was so bad at such an important and expected (this was the 50's) skill. My mom always told this story to illustrate how my father, who was not a patient or overtly supportive person, came through for her when it was something that he really could have hurt her feelings over. Once I read this book I got a different perspective. The old 'elephant in the room' idea - a big theme for my family. Don't talk about problems & they'll go away. Don't acknowledge difficulties and offer help (like a cook book or lessons), just ignore it. Which is not to say my mom's take is entirely wrong, it's just probably not the only thing going on. Because no one likes fried chicken that much.

This book contains a lot of great stories. The sequence of how and why the family stories are told are very interesting. Quick read and will leave you thinking...

The ideas presented in this book, are interesting to think about in regards to each individual's family. However, this updated version only had an introductory chapter to address changes in the story and new research. A lazy approach to an update, and leaving misinformation in many chapters. I would recommend a more recently published volume in this same area of interest, as there are many available.

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