

Monthly

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VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Summary Report *Final Divorce Statistics, 1971*

FROM THE
NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

Divorces increased for the ninth consecutive year in 1971. Provisional data, available through the first 8 months of 1974, indicate that both the number and rate of divorces are continuing to increase. The final national divorce total for 1971 was 773,000. This was 9.2 percent higher than the 708,000 reported in 1970 and 87.2 percent higher than the figure for 1962. The divorce totals for 1969, 1970, and 1971 were all higher than the previous alltime peak of 610,000 divorces in 1946.

The divorce rate also increased from 3.5 per 1,000 population in 1970 to 3.7 in 1971. This was the second highest divorce rate ever observed nationwide; the highest was 4.3 in 1946. The divorce rate per 1,000 married women was 15.8, up from 14.9 in 1970 and 9.4 in 1962; the increases were 6.0 and 73.6 percent, respectively.

From 1970 to 1971 the divorce rate per 1,000 population increased in all regions except the West where it did not change. It also increased in all geographic divisions and States for which rates for both

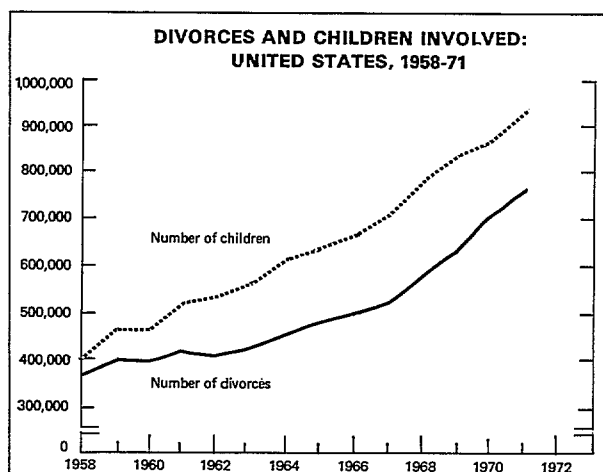
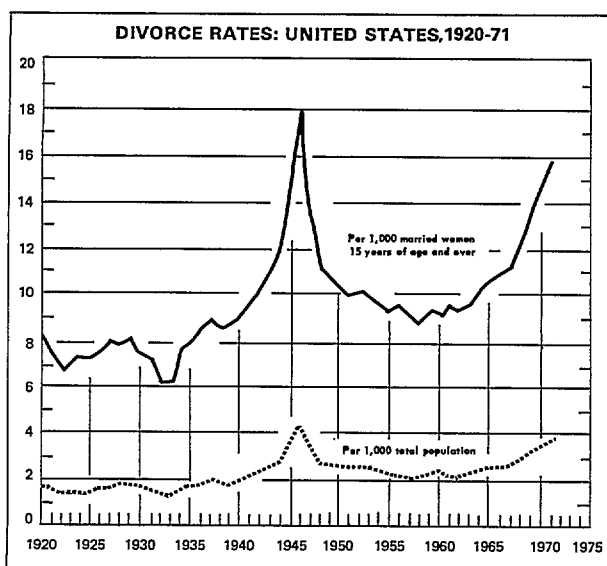
years are available except the Pacific Division and Alaska, California, Idaho, Maine, Nevada, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin.

Information about characteristics of divorces is available only from States that participate in the divorce-registration area (DRA). In 1971, 29 States participated; South Carolina was included beginning in January of that year. The number of divorces granted in the DRA in 1971 was 466,019, or 60 percent of the national total.

For the DRA in 1971 the median duration of marriage at time of divorce was 6.7 years. The same median was observed in 1970; it declined from 7.5 years in 1963 and 6.9 years in 1969.

The national estimate of children under 18 years of age involved in divorces was 946,000, an increase of 8.7 percent over the estimate for 1970 (870,000). The ratio of children under 18 years of age per divorce was 1.22 in both years. The total number of persons involved in divorce—husbands, wives, and children—was 2,492,000 in 1971 compared with 2,286,000 in 1970.

The number of divorces classified by number of reported children under 18 years of age is shown in table 5 for the DRA and each participating State.



MONTHLY VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Table 1. DIVORCES AND RATES: UNITED STATES, EACH REGION, DIVISION, AND STATE, 1969-71

[Data are counts of decrees granted (including reported annulments and dissolutions of marriage) supplied by States except as noted. Figures for the divorce-registration States differ slightly from those based on sample data shown in table 5. Rates per 1,000 population in each area estimated as of July 1, 1969 and 1971 and enumerated as of April 1, 1970]

Region, division, and State	Number			Rate			Region, division, and State	Number			Rate		
	1971	1970	1969	1971	1970	1969		1971	1970	1969	1971	1970	1969
United States ¹ -----	773,000	708,000	639,000	3.7	3.5	3.2	West North Central...Con.						
Region:							Missouri-----	19,643	17,852	17,578	4.1	3.8	3.8
Northeast-----	101,000	86,000	77,000	2.0	1.8	1.6	North Dakota-----	1,181	985	910	1.9	1.6	1.5
North Central ¹ -----	204,000	186,000	177,000	3.5	3.3	3.2	South Dakota-----	1,403	1,357	1,255	2.1	2.0	1.9
South-----	269,000	242,000	225,000	4.2	3.9	3.6	Nebraska-----	4,013	3,712	3,275	2.7	2.5	2.3
West-----	199,000	194,000	159,000	5.6	5.6	4.7	Kansas-----	9,461	8,785	7,956	4.2	3.9	3.4
Northeast:							South Atlantic:						
New England-----	29,755	25,807	24,268	2.5	2.2	2.1	Delaware-----	1,830	1,732	1,550	3.3	3.2	2.9
Middle Atlantic-----	71,107	59,880	53,180	1.9	1.6	1.4	Maryland-----	10,060	9,252	8,627	2.5	2.4	2.3
North Central:							District of Columbia--	2,629	2,268	2,313	3.5	3.0	2.9
East North Central-----	2145,305	2129,828	1131,107	*	3.0	3.3	Virginia-----	13,261	11,879	11,417	2.8	2.6	2.4
West North Central-----	53,018	48,189	45,483	3.2	3.0	2.8	West Virginia-----	6,178	5,584	4,772	3.5	3.2	2.6
South:							North Carolina-----	15,350	13,702	12,872	3.0	2.7	2.5
South Atlantic-----	119,938	106,103	99,400	3.8	3.5	3.3	South Carolina-----	6,657	5,829	5,435	2.5	2.3	2.0
East South Central-----	54,472	50,607	46,859	4.2	4.0	3.6	Georgia-----	20,245	18,649	17,315	4.3	4.1	3.7
West South Central-----	94,375	82,747	76,683	4.8	*	3.9	Florida-----	43,728	37,208	34,899	6.2	5.5	5.5
West:							East South Central:						
Mountain ² -----	53,888	48,995	47,279	*	5.9	*	Kentucky-----	11,141	10,664	9,853	3.4	3.3	3.0
Pacific-----	143,640	144,696	110,862	5.3	5.5	4.3	Tennessee-----	17,490	16,623	15,374	4.4	4.1	3.9
New England:							Alabama-----	16,905	15,109	14,146	4.9	4.4	4.0
Maine-----	3,925	3,853	3,392	3.9	3.9	3.5	Mississippi-----	8,936	8,211	7,506	4.0	3.7	3.2
New Hampshire-----	2,941	2,433	2,280	3.9	3.3	3.2	West South Central:						
Vermont-----	1,171	1,028	793	2.6	2.3	1.8	Arkansas-----	12,959	29,310	9,152	6.7	24.8	4.6
Massachusetts-----	12,881	10,994	10,787	2.2	1.9	2.0	Louisiana-----	9,431	25,065	24,885	2.6	6.7	*
Rhode Island-----	1,803	1,687	1,267	1.9	1.8	1.4	Oklahoma-----	16,417	16,842	15,728	6.3	6.6	6.1
Connecticut-----	7,054	5,812	5,749	2.3	1.9	1.9	Texas-----	55,568	51,530	46,918	4.8	4.6	4.2
Middle Atlantic:							Mountain:						
New York-----	33,101	26,404	21,184	1.8	1.4	1.2	Montana-----	3,366	3,047	2,908	4.8	4.4	4.0
New Jersey-----	12,896	10,834	10,416	1.6	1.5	1.5	Idaho-----	3,664	3,612	3,506	5.0	5.1	4.9
Pennsylvania-----	25,110	22,622	21,580	2.1	1.9	1.8	Wyoming-----	1,988	1,797	1,722	5.8	5.4	5.4
East North Central:							Colorado-----	11,809	10,400	8,998	5.2	4.7	4.3
Ohio-----	42,186	39,302	35,558	3.9	3.7	3.3	New Mexico ² -----	44,580	4,375	3,539	*	4.3	*
Indiana-----	22,266	215,153	223,396	*	*	34.6	Arizona-----	514,588	412,714	411,818	7.9	7.2	7.0
Illinois-----	40,136	36,450	35,974	3.6	3.3	3.3	Utah-----	4,419	3,912	3,841	4.0	3.7	3.7
Michigan-----	31,790	29,993	28,347	3.5	3.4	3.2	Nevada-----	9,474	9,138	10,951	18.5	18.7	24.0
Wisconsin-----	8,927	8,930	7,632	2.0	2.0	1.9	Pacific:						
West North Central:							Washington-----	19,207	17,887	16,815	5.6	5.2	4.9
Minnesota-----	9,545	8,280	7,551	2.5	2.2	2.0	Oregon-----	10,687	9,583	8,643	5.0	4.6	4.3
Iowa-----	7,772	7,188	6,958	2.7	2.5	2.5	California-----	108,309	112,942	81,546	5.4	5.7	4.2
							Alaska-----	1,746	1,895	1,516	5.6	5.6	5.4
							Hawaii-----	3,691	2,589	2,342	4.7	3.4	2.9

¹Figures include estimates.

²Data are incomplete.

³Data are estimated.

⁴Data are for divorce records filed.

⁵Includes divorce records filed for some counties.

Table 2. DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS AND RATES: UNITED STATES, 1950-71

[Data refer only to events occurring within the United States. Alaska included beginning with 1959 and Hawaii with 1960]

Year	Divorces and annulments	Rate per 1,000 ¹ —	
		Total population	Married women 15 years and over
1971-----	773,000	3.7	15.8
1970-----	708,000	3.5	14.9
1969-----	639,000	3.2	13.4
1968-----	584,000	2.9	12.5
1967-----	523,000	2.6	11.2
1966-----	499,000	2.5	10.9
1965-----	479,000	2.5	10.6
1964-----	450,000	2.4	10.0
1963-----	428,000	2.3	9.6
1962-----	413,000	2.2	9.4
1961-----	414,000	2.3	9.6
1960-----	393,000	2.2	9.2
1959-----	395,000	2.2	9.3
1958-----	368,000	2.1	8.9
1957-----	381,000	2.2	9.2
1956-----	382,000	2.3	9.4
1955-----	377,000	2.3	9.3
1954-----	379,000	2.4	9.5
1953-----	390,000	2.5	9.9
1952-----	392,000	2.5	10.1
1951-----	381,000	2.5	9.9
1950-----	385,000	2.6	10.3

¹Data are based on population enumerated as of April 1 for 1950, 1960, and 1970, and estimated as of July 1 for all other years.

Table 3. MEDIAN DURATION OF MARRIAGE PRIOR TO DIVORCE OR ANNULMENT: DIVORCE-REGISTRATION AREA AND EACH REGISTRATION STATE, 1969-71

[Based on sample data. Medians computed on data by single years, excluding duration of marriage not stated. The divorce-registration area included 28 States in 1969 and 1970 and 29 States in 1971]

Area	Median duration of marriage		
	1971	1970	1969
Divorce-registration area-----	6.7	6.7	6.9
Alabama-----	5.4	5.3	5.6
Alaska-----	5.2	5.4	5.6
California-----	6.9	6.8	6.9
Connecticut-----	8.7	8.6	8.9
Georgia-----	5.3	5.4	5.2
Hawaii-----	6.8	7.2	7.3
Idaho-----	5.0	4.6	5.0
Illinois-----	6.4	6.6	6.7
Iowa-----	5.8	5.6	5.7
Kansas-----	5.1	5.1	5.4
Kentucky-----	5.7	5.7	5.8
Maryland-----	8.6	8.8	9.2
Michigan-----	6.9	7.0	7.1
Missouri-----	5.5	5.4	5.6
Montana-----	5.3	5.1	5.6
Nebraska-----	6.2	6.0	6.2
New York-----	9.3	9.3	9.4
Ohio-----	6.5	6.3	6.7
Oregon-----	5.7	5.9	5.8
Pennsylvania-----	7.6	8.1	8.5
Rhode Island-----	8.7	9.2	9.1
South Carolina-----	7.1	---	---
South Dakota-----	5.8	5.9	6.6
Tennessee-----	5.5	5.6	5.7
Utah-----	4.7	5.3	5.5
Vermont-----	9.1	8.3	9.1
Virginia-----	8.3	7.7	8.4
Wisconsin-----	7.7	7.9	8.0
Wyoming-----	4.9	4.6	4.9

This report presents summary tabulations from the final divorce statistics for 1971. More detailed tabulations for 1971 will be published in *Vital Statistics of the United States, Volume III - Marriage and Divorce*. Prior to the publication of that volume, the National Center for Health Statistics will respond to requests for unpublished data whenever possible.

Table 4. ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CHILDREN INVOLVED IN DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS: UNITED STATES, 1954-71

[Refers only to events occurring within the United States. For 1960-71 estimated from frequencies based on sample; for all other years estimated from total counts]

Year	Estimated number of children involved	Average number of children per decree	Year	Estimated number of children involved	Average number of children per decree
1971 ¹	946,000	1.22	1962 ²	532,000	1.29
1970 ¹	870,000	1.22	1961 ²	516,000	1.25
1969	840,000	1.31	1960	463,000	1.18
1968	784,000	1.34	1959	468,000	1.18
1967	701,000	1.34	1958	398,000	1.08
1966	669,000	1.34	1957	379,000	0.99
1965	630,000	1.32	1956	361,000	0.95
1964 ²	613,000	1.36	1955	347,000	0.92
1963 ²	562,000	1.31	1954	341,000	0.90

¹Estimates are based on DRA frequencies instead of 16 States previously used.
²Revised.

Table 5. DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN REPORTED: DIVORCE-REGISTRATION AREA AND EACH REGISTRATION STATE, 1971

[Based on sample data. Data relate to children under 18 years of age except as noted]

Area	All divorces and annulments	Number of children reported						
		None	1	2	3	4	5 or more	Not stated
Divorce-registration area-----	466,019	178,790	110,931	85,235	42,139	17,931	12,410	20,463
Alabama-----	16,450	5,710	3,640	2,440	1,400	660	300	2,300
Alaska-----	1,745	712	430	318	166	48	50	21
California-----	108,280	43,660	25,590	18,680	8,810	3,190	1,680	6,670
Connecticut-----	7,036	2,122	1,548	1,376	858	346	248	538
Georgia-----	20,075	7,960	4,720	3,350	1,560	540	355	1,590
Hawaii-----	3,662	1,133	956	742	394	207	195	35
Idaho-----	3,666	1,500	852	652	330	188	82	62
Illinois-----	40,100	15,700	9,350	6,770	3,700	1,580	1,240	1,780
Iowa-----	7,818	2,808	1,892	1,522	758	414	268	156
Kansas-----	9,488	3,722	2,384	1,686	912	406	248	130
Kentucky-----	11,145	4,875	2,765	1,705	800	440	290	270
Maryland-----	10,035	3,680	2,180	1,615	735	290	205	1,330
Michigan-----	31,810	11,830	7,570	5,920	3,450	1,620	1,140	280
Missouri-----	19,635	8,640	4,645	3,380	1,675	675	500	120
Montana-----	3,569	1,255	752	643	361	171	118	69
Nebraska ¹ -----	4,056	1,458	1,038	760	422	186	182	10
New York-----	33,100	12,320	7,360	6,440	3,240	1,260	1,030	1,450
Ohio-----	42,220	15,240	10,940	8,150	4,080	2,040	1,620	150
Oregon-----	10,680	3,740	2,285	1,875	1,035	410	280	945
Pennsylvania-----	25,100	8,810	6,100	5,010	2,170	940	640	1,430
Rhode Island-----	1,800	534	407	364	225	96	69	105
South Carolina-----	6,662	2,640	1,728	1,254	553	264	146	72
South Dakota-----	1,403	449	393	271	147	80	61	2
Tennessee-----	17,340	7,430	4,305	2,815	1,315	595	380	500
Utah-----	4,172	1,504	936	744	394	182	154	258
Vermont-----	1,174	301	225	251	157	102	90	48
Virginia-----	13,250	5,415	3,485	2,290	1,190	475	325	70
Wisconsin-----	8,756	2,826	1,990	1,816	1,108	506	466	44
Wyoming-----	1,932	816	475	356	189	80	48	28

¹Data are for number of children affected by decree.

TECHNICAL NOTES

Place and Time of Occurrence

Divorces and annulments are shown in all tables by State where decree was granted, which is also the State of legal residence of the plaintiff. The time of divorce or annulment is based on the date the decree was granted.

Sources of Data

Figures in tables 1 and 2 are based on totals of divorce or annulment decrees tabulated and reported by States and counties. Figures in tables 3 and 5 are based on probability samples of divorce and annulment records that were coded and tabulated in this office.

Figures in table 4 were estimated by using several methods. Estimates for 1954-59 were prepared on the assumption that the average number of children per decree for the Nation was identical with that for the reporting States. The figure for 1960 was based on a nationwide sample. Figures for 1961-71 were prepared by multiplying the national divorce total by the average number of children per decree found in the combined States with satisfactory reporting of the number of children. There were 16 such States in 1961-69, all 28 registration States in 1970, and in 29 registration States in 1971.

SAMPLING ERROR OF ESTIMATED FREQUENCY EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGE OF AREA TOTAL: DIVORCE-REGISTRATION AREA, 1969-71, AND THE 29 REGISTRATION STATES, 1971

[Figures for Alaska, Hawaii, Montana, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming have no sampling errors because all records were tabulated]

Area and year	Sampling error of estimated frequency expressed as percentage of area total			
	1 or 99	10 or 90	25 or 75	50
Divorce-registration area				
1971 (29 States)-----	176	532	767	886
1970 (28 States)-----	171	517	746	861
1969 (26 States)-----	159	478	690	797
Registration States, 1971:				
Alabama-----	39	117	169	195
Alaska-----	...	...	...	...
California-----	98	296	428	494
Connecticut-----	8	25	36	42
Georgia-----	26	85	123	142
Hawaii-----	...	...	...	...
Idaho-----	6	18	26	30
Illinois-----	60	180	260	301
Iowa-----	9	26	38	44
Kansas-----	10	29	42	49
Kentucky-----	21	63	91	106
Maryland-----	20	60	87	100
Michigan-----	53	160	232	267
Missouri-----	28	84	121	140
Montana-----	...	...	...	...
Nebraska-----	6	19	27	32
New York-----	54	164	236	273
Ohio-----	61	185	267	308
Oregon-----	21	62	90	103
Pennsylvania-----	47	143	206	238
Rhode Island-----	...	...	...	...
South Carolina-----	8	24	35	41
South Dakota-----	...	...	...	...
Tennessee-----	26	79	115	132
Utah-----	7	20	30	34
Vermont-----	...	...	...	...
Virginia-----	23	69	100	115
Wisconsin-----	9	29	41	48
Wyoming-----	...	...	...	...

Divorce Samples

Sample data used to estimate the 1971 frequencies in table 5 and the frequencies used to compute median duration of marriage for 1969-71 in table 3 were selected by using four different sampling rates, depending on the size of the annual divorce total for a State. The rates were 10, 20, 50, or 100 percent of the divorces granted in a State. Samples were selected only from the States that participated in the divorce-registration area.

Sampling errors are given in the table for the estimates which constitute 1, 10, 25, 50, 75, 90, and 99 percent of the annual divorce totals. These sampling errors are given for the divorce-registration area and each registration State for 1971 data and only for the divorce-registration area for 1969 and 1970 data.

SYMBOLS USED IN TABLES

Data not available----- ---
 Category not applicable----- ...
 Quantity zero----- -
 Quantity more than 0 but less than 0.05----- 0.0
 Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision----- *

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