

Monthly VITAL STATISTICS REPORT



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Summary Report Final Divorce Statistics, 1970

FROM THE
NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

The upward trend in divorce continued in 1970, and provisional data indicate that it continued through 1973. From 1969 to 1970 the national divorce total increased 10.8 percent, the rate per 1,000 population, 9.4 percent, and the rate per 1,000 married women, 11.2 percent.

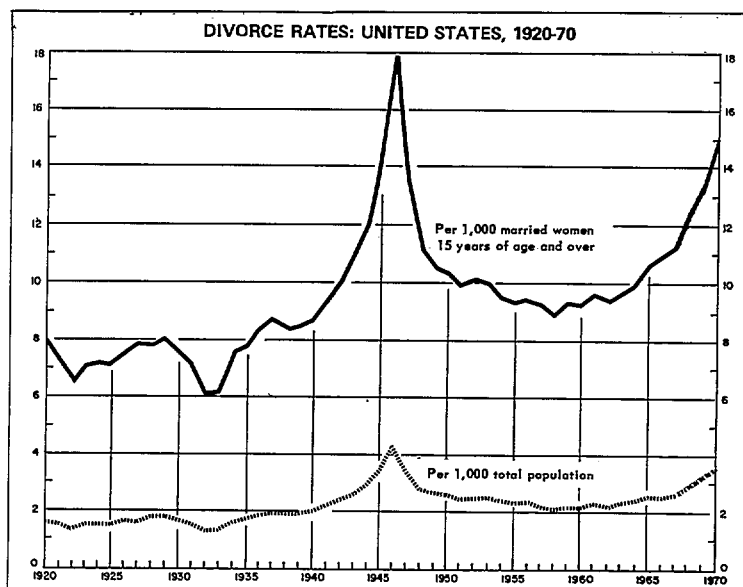
From 1962, the last year before the growth of divorces began, to 1970 national divorce totals increased 71 percent, from 413,000 to 708,000. During the 1962-70 period, divorce increases were observed every year, and the totals for 1969 and 1970 were higher than the previous highest peak, 610,000 in 1946. The rate per 1,000 total population grew from 2.2 to 3.5, and the rate per 1,000 married women increased from 9.4 to 14.9.

Divorce totals and rates increased in a majority of States from 1969 to 1970. Both the total and the rate declined only in one State, Nevada. In several States the changes are connected with the liberalization of divorce laws. The most prominent example of such change is in New York, where a new law became ef-

fective in 1967 and the divorce total increased from 7,136 in 1967 to 26,404 in 1970.

Information about various characteristics of divorces and divorced persons is available only from the States that participate in the divorce-registration area (DRA). In 1970 and 1969, 28 States were included in the DRA, in 1968, 26 States, and in 1963, 22 States.

During the period of divorce increase, 1963-70, the duration of marriage at time of decree and the ages of the divorcing husbands and wives declined consistently in the DRA and in almost all participating States. Both duration and age had shown a tendency to increase in the early 1960's. The median duration of marriage at time of decree declined in the DRA from 7.5 years in 1963 to 6.9 in 1969 and 6.7 in 1970. The median age of husband at time of divorce declined from 34.8 years in 1963 to 33.5 in 1969 and 32.9 in 1970. For divorcing wives comparable medians were 31.3, 30.1, and 29.8. These declines



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Table 1. DIVORCES AND RATES: UNITED STATES, EACH REGION, DIVISION, AND STATE, 1968-70

[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 1969 and enumerated as of April 1, 1970]

Region, division, and State	Number			Rate			Region, division, and State	Number			Rate		
	1970	1969	1968	1970	1969	1968		1970	1969	1968	1970	1969	1968
United States ¹ -----	708,000	639,000	584,000	3.5	3.2	2.9	West North Central--Con.						
Region:							Missouri-----	17,852	17,578	16,474	3.8	3.8	3.6
Northeast-----	86,000	77,000	65,000	1.8	1.6	1.3	North Dakota-----	985	910	868	1.6	1.5	1.4
North Central ¹ -----	186,000	177,000	182,000	3.3	3.2	2.9	South Dakota-----	1,357	1,255	1,245	2.0	1.9	1.9
South ¹ -----	242,000	225,000	211,000	3.9	3.6	3.4	Nebraska-----	3,712	3,275	3,010	2.5	2.3	2.1
West-----	184,000	159,000	145,000	5.6	4.7	4.3	Kansas-----	8,785	7,956	7,144	3.9	3.4	3.1
Northeast:							South Atlantic:						
New England-----	25,807	24,268	22,253	2.2	2.1	1.9	Delaware-----	1,732	1,550	1,023	3.2	2.9	1.9
Middle Atlantic-----	59,860	53,180	43,131	1.6	1.4	1.2	Maryland-----	9,252	8,627	8,151	2.4	2.3	2.2
North Central:							District of Columbia--	2,268	2,313	2,204	3.0	2.9	2.7
East North Central-----	129,828	131,107	119,703	3.0	3.3	3.0	Virginia-----	11,879	11,417	10,677	2.6	2.4	2.3
West North Central-----	48,168	45,483	41,909	*	2.8	2.6	West Virginia-----	5,584	4,772	4,243	3.2	2.6	2.4
South:							North Carolina-----	13,702	12,672	12,461	2.7	2.5	2.4
South Atlantic-----	106,103	99,400	90,487	3.5	3.3	3.0	South Carolina-----	5,829	5,435	4,516	2.3	2.0	1.7
East South Central-----	50,807	46,859	43,231	4.0	3.6	3.3	Georgia-----	18,649	17,515	15,580	4.1	3.7	3.4
West South Central ² -----	82,747	76,683	75,528	*	3.9	3.9	Florida-----	37,208	34,899	31,620	5.5	5.5	5.1
West:							East South Central:						
Mountain ² -----	48,985	47,279	42,817	5.9	*	*	Kentucky-----	10,664	9,833	9,821	3.3	3.0	3.1
Pacific-----	144,696	110,682	102,643	5.5	4.3	4.0	Tennessee-----	16,823	15,374	13,472	4.2	3.9	3.4
New England:							Alabama-----	15,109	14,146	12,918	4.4	4.0	3.6
Maine-----	3,853	3,392	3,105	3.9	3.5	3.2	Mississippi-----	8,211	7,506	7,020	3.7	3.2	3.0
New Hampshire-----	2,433	2,280	2,073	3.3	3.2	3.0	West South Central:						
Vermont-----	1,028	793	760	2.3	1.8	1.8	Arkansas-----	29,310	9,152	6,463	2.8	4.6	4.3
Massachusetts-----	10,984	10,787	9,993	1.9	2.0	1.8	Louisiana ² -----	5,065	4,885	3,826	*	*	*
Rhode Island-----	1,687	1,267	971	1.8	1.4	1.1	Oklahoma-----	16,842	15,728	14,367	6.6	6.1	5.7
Connecticut-----	5,812	5,749	5,351	1.9	1.9	1.8	Texas-----	51,530	46,918	48,852	4.6	4.2	4.5
Middle Atlantic:							Mountain:						
New York-----	26,404	21,184	14,861	1.5	1.2	0.8	Montana-----	3,047	2,806	2,598	4.4	4.0	3.7
New Jersey-----	10,834	10,416	7,944	1.5	1.5	1.1	Idaho-----	3,812	3,506	3,278	5.1	4.9	4.7
Pennsylvania-----	22,622	21,580	20,326	1.9	1.8	1.7	Wyoming-----	1,797	1,722	1,610	5.4	5.4	5.1
East North Central:							Colorado-----	10,400	8,996	8,552	4.7	4.3	4.2
Ohio-----	39,302	35,558	31,619	3.7	3.3	3.0	New Mexico ² -----	4,375	3,539	2,585	4.3	*	*
Indiana-----	215,153	223,396	223,593	3.3	3.4	3.7	Arizona-----	12,714	11,918	10,701	7.2	7.0	6.4
Illinois-----	36,450	35,974	32,119	3.3	3.3	2.9	Utah-----	3,912	3,841	3,590	3.7	3.7	3.3
Michigan-----	29,993	28,347	25,405	3.4	3.2	2.9	Nevada-----	9,138	10,951	10,103	18.7	24.0	22.5
Wisconsin-----	8,930	7,832	6,967	2.0	1.9	1.7	Pacific:						
West North Central:							Washington-----	17,887	16,615	15,789	5.2	4.9	4.8
Minnesota-----	6,290	7,551	6,704	2.2	2.0	1.8	Oregon-----	9,583	8,643	8,258	4.6	4.3	4.1
Iowa-----	7,168	6,958	6,464	2.5	2.5	2.3	California-----	112,942	81,546	75,416	5.7	4.2	3.9
							Alaska-----	1,695	1,516	1,315	5.6	5.4	4.8
							Hawaii-----	2,589	2,342	1,865	3.4	2.9	2.4

¹Figures include estimates.
²Data are incomplete.
³Data are estimated.
⁴Data are for divorce records filed.

Table 3. MEDIAN DURATION OF MARRIAGE PRIOR TO DIVORCE OR ANNULMENT: DIVORCE-REGISTRATION AREA AND EACH REGISTRATION STATE, 1968-70

[Based on sample data. Medians computed on data by single years, excluding duration of marriage not stated. The divorce-registration area included 26 States in 1968 and 26 States in 1969 and 1970]

Area	Median duration of marriage in years		
	1970	1969	1968
Divorce-registration area-----	6.7	6.9	7.0
Alabama-----	5.3	5.6	6.1
Alaska-----	5.4	5.6	5.9
California-----	6.8	6.9	7.1
Connecticut-----	8.6	8.9	9.0
Georgia-----	5.4	5.2	5.5
Hawaii-----	7.2	7.3	7.0
Idaho-----	4.6	5.0	4.9
Illinois-----	6.6	6.7	6.7
Iowa-----	5.6	5.7	6.1
Kansas-----	5.1	5.4	5.9
Kentucky-----	5.7	5.8	...
Maryland-----	8.8	9.2	8.8
Michigan-----	7.0	7.1	7.3
Missouri-----	5.4	5.8	5.7
Montana-----	5.1	5.6	5.7
Nebraska-----	6.0	6.2	6.7
New York-----	9.3	9.4	...
Ohio-----	6.3	6.7	7.2
Oregon-----	5.9	5.6	6.0
Pennsylvania-----	8.1	8.5	9.1
Rhode Island-----	9.2	9.1	9.0
South Dakota-----	5.9	6.6	7.3
Tennessee-----	5.6	5.7	5.9
Utah-----	5.3	5.5	5.8
Vermont-----	8.3	9.1	9.0
Virginia-----	7.7	8.4	8.8
Wisconsin-----	7.9	8.0	8.6
Wyoming-----	4.6	4.9	5.0

Table 2. DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS AND RATES: UNITED STATES, 1950-70

[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 ² —	
		Total population	Married women 15 years and over
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-----	361,000	2.5	9.9
1950-----	365,000	2.6	10.3

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

occurred in spite of high median ages in most States that were added to the DRA after 1963.

Many children are intimately involved in the divorces of their parents. In 1970 in the DRA 60 percent of divorcing couples had children under 18 years of age. The remaining 40 percent either had no children or had children 18 years of age or older. Of the divorcing couples, 25 percent reported one child under 18 years; 19 percent, two children; 10 percent, three children; and 7 percent, four or more children.

The total number of children under 18 years of age involved in divorce in the United States was estimated at 870,000 in 1970. When this number is added to 708,000 husbands and as many wives, a total is obtained of 2,286,000 persons involved in divorce that year, 11.2 persons per 1,000 total population. The number of all persons involved in divorce was 2,118,000 in 1969 and 2,286,000 in 1970. This number increased 7.9 percent from 1969 to 1970 and 61.2 percent from 1963 to 1970.

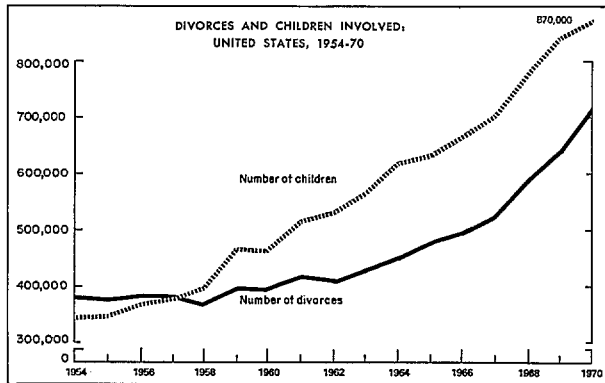


Table 4. ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CHILDREN INVOLVED IN DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS: UNITED STATES, 1954-70

[Refers only to events occurring within the United States. For 1960-70 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
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
1962 ²	532,000	1.29			

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

Table 5. DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN REPORTED: DIVORCE-REGISTRATION AREA AND EACH REGISTRATION STATE, 1970

[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						Not stated
		None	1	2	3	4	5 or more	
Divorce-registration area	433,493	164,517	100,969	76,658	39,968	17,734	11,275	19,478
Alabama	15,070	5,020	3,370	2,540	1,170	380	330	2,250
Alaska	1,694	671	374	310	136	95	69	39
California ¹	111,120	44,690	25,910	18,780	9,300	3,480	1,750	7,210
Connecticut	5,820	1,694	1,460	1,236	676	330	184	240
Georgia	18,640	7,395	4,055	2,655	1,320	490	355	2,370
Hawaii	2,555	915	551	525	275	153	141	25
Idaho ²	3,552	1,460	803	640	314	148	93	84
Illinois	36,440	13,630	8,300	6,640	3,530	1,640	1,100	1,600
Iowa	7,078	2,486	1,770	1,222	776	368	258	128
Kansas	8,690	3,362	2,096	1,576	870	430	248	96
Kentucky	10,690	4,645	2,600	1,585	885	405	310	260
Maryland	9,225	3,485	1,670	1,355	670	265	160	1,620
Michigan	29,940	11,560	6,790	5,690	3,010	1,700	1,210	180
Missouri	17,845	7,755	4,265	3,050	1,540	695	405	135
Montana	3,060	1,142	734	570	322	138	86	68
Nebraska ²	3,696	1,250	938	716	426	194	154	18
New York	26,400	9,680	6,370	5,330	2,480	1,270	730	540
Ohio	39,370	14,550	9,690	7,490	4,080	1,940	1,330	300
Oregon	9,570	3,275	2,045	1,860	895	400	240	855
Pennsylvania	22,590	8,120	5,650	4,550	1,990	940	620	720
Rhode Island	1,693	501	371	356	206	94	78	87
South Dakota	1,358	489	334	235	138	86	76	-
Tennessee	16,550	6,970	4,250	2,645	1,330	590	415	350
Utah	3,628	1,220	854	656	418	216	130	134
Vermont	1,027	259	242	200	143	91	53	39
Virginia	12,010	5,005	3,045	2,175	905	555	250	75
Wisconsin	8,360	2,738	1,902	1,696	938	568	442	26
Wyoming	1,807	740	434	313	165	73	53	29

¹Data are for number of living children.

²Data 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 1961-70 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, and all 28 registration States in 1970.

Divorce Samples

Sample data used to estimate the 1970 frequencies in table 5 and the frequencies used to compute median duration of marriage for 1967-70 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 1970 data and only for the divorce-registration area for 1968 and 1969 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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SAMPLING ERROR OF ESTIMATED FREQUENCY EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGE OF AREA TOTAL: DIVORCE-REGISTRATION AREA, 1968-70, AND THE 28 REGISTRATION STATES, 1970

[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:				
1970 (28 States)-----	171	517	746	861
1969 (28 States)-----	159	478	690	797
1968 (26 States)-----	145	436	650	727
Registration States, 1970:				
Alabama-----	37	111	160	184
Alaska-----	...	...	...	...
California-----	100	303	437	505
Connecticut-----	8	23	33	38
Georgia-----	27	82	118	137
Hawaii-----	...	...	...	...
Idaho-----	6	18	26	30
Illinois-----	57	172	248	286
Iowa-----	8	26	37	43
Kansas-----	9	28	41	47
Kentucky-----	21	62	89	103
Maryland-----	19	58	83	96
Michigan-----	52	156	225	260
Missouri-----	27	80	116	134
Montana-----	...	...	...	...
Nebraska-----	6	18	26	31
New York-----	49	146	211	244
Ohio-----	59	178	258	297
Oregon-----	19	59	85	98
Pennsylvania-----	45	135	195	226
Rhode Island-----	...	...	...	...
South Dakota-----	...	...	...	...
Tennessee-----	26	77	112	129
Utah-----	6	19	28	32
Vermont-----
Virginia-----	22	65	94	108
Wisconsin-----	10	29	42	49
Wyoming-----

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