

Advance Report of Final Marriage Statistics, 1980

In 1980, 2,390,252 couples married in the United States. This was 3 percent more than the number that married in 1979 (2,331,337), and a record high for the Nation. The number of marriages increased every year from 1959 to 1973, then dropped sharply in 1974 and 1975 before resuming its upward trend (table 1). According to provisional reports, marriages increased again in 1981 and 1982, for the sixth and seventh consecutive years.

The marriage rate rose to 10.6 per 1,000 population in 1980, 2 percent above the 1979 rate (10.4), and higher than it has been since 1973 (figure 1). The rate increased in stages after 1958, rising 30 percent from 8.4 per 1,000 population to 10.9 in 1972. It dropped each year after 1972 until 1977, when it remained the same as in 1976 (9.9), before starting upward again in 1978. Provisional data indicate no change in the rate from 1980 to 1981, but there was another rise in 1982, to 10.8 per 1,000 population.

Marriage rates for 1980 are based on the population enumerated in the 1980 Census in which 5.5 million more people were counted than had been previously estimated for 1980. Populations for preceding intercensal years were also underestimated. Rates for 1971-79 in tables 1 and 2 have been revised to be consistent with the 1980 Census. This permits meaningful comparisons from the 1970's through 1980. Marriage rates for unmarried women could not be recomputed because revised population estimates were not available for the intercensal years.

The increase between 1979 and 1980 in the number of marriages was nationwide; every region tallied at least a slight gain, but the increase was greatest (5 percent) in the West. Marriages rose from 1979 to 1980 in the District of Columbia and almost all States; 42 of the 50 reported gains.

Between 1970 and 1980, the national marriage total grew 11 percent. Increases were noted in three of the four geographic

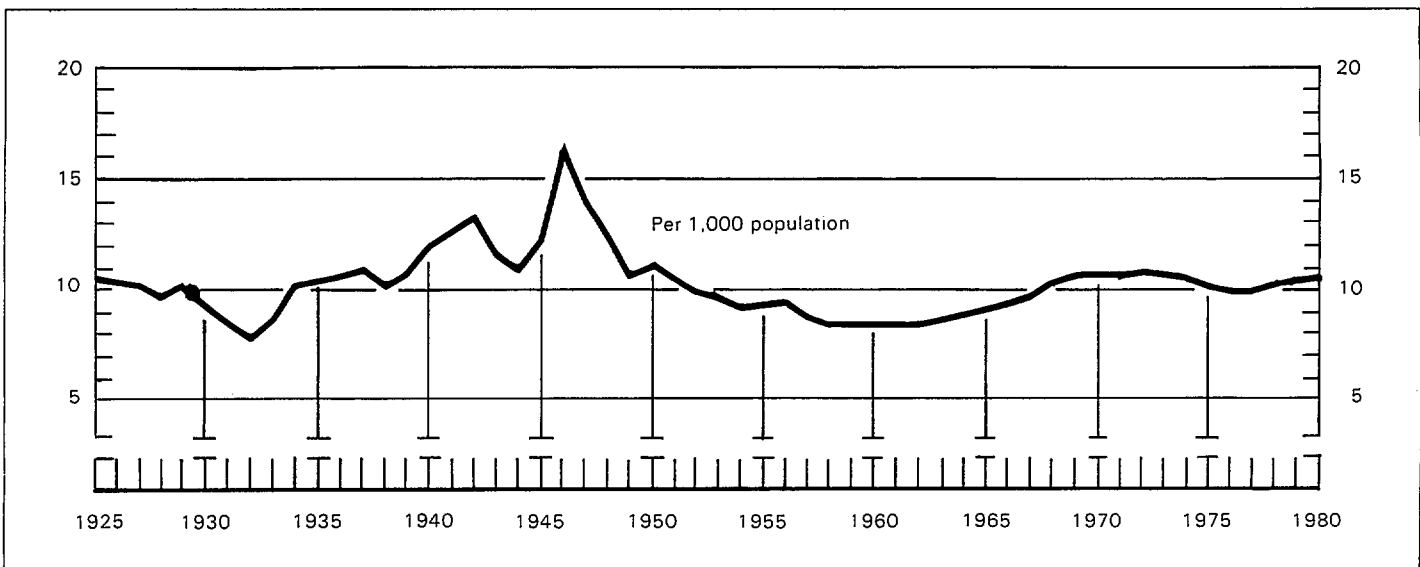


Figure 1. Marriage rates: United States, 1925-80

regions. In the West Region the number of marriages increased 25 percent during the decade. The South also showed above-average growth in marriages (15 percent), and in the North Central Region marriages increased slightly (4 percent). The Northeast was the only region to record a decline in the number of marriages between 1970 and 1980, a drop of 4 percent.

The national marriage rate for unmarried women 15 years of age and over was 61.4 per 1,000 in 1980, 3 percent below its level in 1979 and 20 percent below its level in 1970 (table 3). The rate for unmarried women 15–44 years of age was 102.6 per 1,000, 5 percent below the 1979 rate and 27 percent below the rate in 1970. This rate fell steadily after 1972 even though the rate for the total population shown in table 1 fell from 1972 to 1976, but rose again after 1977. The reason that the rate for unmarried women 15–44 years of age continued to drop was because the growth of that part of the population outpaced the increase in marriages.

Unlike the rates in tables 1 and 2, the 1971–79 rates in table 3 have not been revised because revised populations by marital status are not available. These unrevised rates are probably somewhat higher than revised rates would be and are not strictly comparable with the 1980 rates.

The following discussion about the characteristics of marriages and of brides and grooms is based on information available only from States that participate in the marriage-registration area (MRA). (See Technical notes.) The MRA comprised 39 States during 1968–70, 41 States during 1971–78, and 42 States during 1979–80. In 1980, 80 percent of all marriages in the United States were performed in the marriage-registration area.

Marriages and marriage rates—specific for age and previous marital status—are shown for the marriage-registration area in table 4. Beginning in 1980 these rates were based on the unmarried population 15 years of age and over, rather than 14 years of age, which was the standard in preceding years. Rates for 1970 were recomputed using the unmarried population 15 years of age and over.

Two-thirds of the brides and grooms marrying in the MRA in 1980 were marrying for the first time (previously single), and one-third had been married before. The comparable ratio in 1970 was three-fourths previously single and one-fourth previously married. Most marriages were in a narrow age range; three-quarters of all brides were under 30 years of age, with single brides generally younger than previously divorced or widowed brides. Almost 95 percent of previously single brides were under 30 years of age, and 90 percent of previously divorced brides were under 45 years of age. The age distribution for grooms was somewhat older and ranged more broadly than that for brides.

The age distribution of marriages shifted to older ages during the 1970's, and only part of this shift was due to an increased proportion of remarriages. Age at first marriage also increased. In 1970, 42 percent of previously single brides were teenagers. By 1980 the proportion dropped to 30 percent.

Between 1970 and 1980 marriage rates—specific for age

and previous marital status—fell. Rates declined for single, widowed, and divorced men and women in all age groups. The sharpest drop was in the rate for first marriages of single men 20–24 years of age, which dropped 52 percent from 195.7 per 1,000 in 1970 to 94.5 in 1980. Rates for single and divorced men and women in age groups under 25 years declined more than 40 percent. Rates for age groups 25 years and over declined less.

The only rate that increased from 1970 to 1980 was the remarriage rate for women of all ages. This increase occurred in spite of decreases in the rates for the widowed and divorced, primarily because proportionately fewer of the women remarrying in 1980 were widows and more of them were divorcees, whose remarriage rates are substantially higher than those for widows.

Table 4 shows by inference that even though the crude marriage rate was the same in 1980 as it had been in 1970 (10.6 per 1,000 population), the 1980 rate was at that high level because proportionately more of the population was of marriageable ages in that year. The crude marriage rate would have been higher in 1980 if men and women had continued to marry at the same age-specific rates as they did in 1970.

There was a clear trend toward older age at first marriage after 1974. For 1967–74 the median age of brides at first marriage remained at 20.5 or 20.6 years. Then it rose rapidly, reaching 21.8 years in 1980. The median age of grooms at first marriage also remained stable between 22.4 and 22.6 years until 1974. After 1974, it also began to increase, reaching 23.6 in 1980.

The median age of previously divorced brides was 31.0 years in 1980, having risen every year after 1976 when it was 30.1. The median age of previously divorced grooms increased less, moving upward from 33.6 years in 1977 to 34.0 in 1980. The median age of previously widowed brides was 53.6 years in 1980. While this statistic fluctuated from year to year, the general trend was upward between 1963 and 1980, as was the trend for the median age of previously widowed grooms.

The proportion of marriages that were remarriages increased during the 1970's, until, in 1980, 44 percent of all marriages were remarriages of one or both partners, up from 31 percent in 1970 (table 6). In particular, in 1970, 17 percent of the couples marrying had both been married before; the proportion rose to 23 percent in 1980. In 1970 the proportion of single brides marrying previously married men was 8 percent; it rose to 11 percent in 1980. The proportion of single grooms marrying previously married women grew from 7 percent in 1970 to 10 percent in 1980. Finally, the proportion of brides and grooms who were both marrying for the first time dropped from 69 percent in 1970 to 56 percent in 1980.

Men typically marry women younger than themselves. In 1980, 69 percent of the grooms were older than their brides, 11 percent were the same age, and 20 percent were younger. Forty-two percent of the grooms were 1 to 4 years older than their brides; 18 percent were 5 to 9 years older; and 9 percent were 10 years older or more. In 1970 a larger proportion of the

grooms were the same age or older than their brides. A smaller proportion were marrying older women; 71 percent of the husbands were older, 13 percent were the same age, and 16 percent were younger.

An important factor in age difference between spouses is previous marital status. In 1980, for marriages in which both bride and groom were single, the median age of the grooms was 1.8 years greater than that of the brides. For marriages with a single bride marrying a divorced man, the difference between median ages was 6.5 years. For divorced brides marrying single

men the brides were older than their husbands, with a difference in the median ages of 0.9 years. When both partners had been divorced, the groom was 3.7 years older.

The statistics for the United States and each State presented in this report (tables 1–3) are based on total counts of marriages in 1980. Data for the MRA (tables 4–6) are based on sample data and consequently are subject to sampling variability as well as other sources of error. Further discussion of sampling variability appears in the Technical notes.

Table 1. Marriages and marriage rates: United States, 1940, 1950, and 1958-80

[Data refer only to events occurring within the United States. Alaska included beginning 1959 and Hawaii beginning 1960. Beginning with 1978, data include nonlicensed marriages registered in California, see Technical notes. Rates per 1,000 population enumerated as of April 1 for census years and estimated as of July 1 for all other years]

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate</i>
1980	2,390,252	10.6	1967	1,927,000	9.7
1979	2,331,337	10.4	1966	1,857,000	9.5
1978	2,282,272	10.3	1965	1,800,000	9.3
1977	2,178,367	9.9	1964	1,725,000	9.0
1976	2,154,807	9.9	1963	1,654,000	8.8
1975	2,152,662	10.0	1962	1,577,000	8.5
1974	2,229,667	10.5	1961	1,548,000	8.5
1973	2,284,108	10.8	1960	1,523,000	8.5
1972	2,282,154	10.9	1959	1,494,000	8.5
1971	2,190,481	10.6	1958	1,451,000	8.4
1970	2,158,802	10.6	1950	1,667,231	11.1
1969	2,145,000	10.6	1940	1,595,879	12.1
1968	2,069,000	10.4			

NOTE: Rates for 1971-79 have been revised; see text.

Table 2. Marriages and marriage rates: United States, each region, division, and State, 1970, 1979, and 1980

[By place of occurrence. Data are counts of marriages performed, except as noted. Rates per 1,000 population enumerated as of April 1 for 1970 and 1980 and estimated as of July 1 for 1979]

Region, division, and State	Number			Rate		
	1980	1979	1970	1980	1979	1970
United States	2,390,252	2,331,337	2,158,802	10.6	10.4	10.6
Northeast	400,313	394,912	417,755	8.1	8.0	8.5
North Central	569,237	568,363	545,383	9.7	9.7	9.6
South	880,185	855,559	763,128	11.7	11.5	12.2
West	540,517	512,503	432,536	12.5	12.1	12.4
Northeast:						
New England	106,328	104,068	105,368	8.6	8.4	8.9
Middle Atlantic	293,985	290,844	312,387	8.0	7.9	8.4
North Central:						
East North Central	395,517	396,831	384,845	9.5	9.5	9.6
West North Central	173,720	171,532	160,538	10.1	10.0	9.8
South:						
South Atlantic	413,113	401,888	370,993	11.2	11.0	12.1
East South Central	¹ 168,828	169,207	154,917	¹ 11.5	11.6	12.1
West South Central	298,244	284,464	237,218	12.6	12.2	12.3
West:						
Mountain	241,704	226,988	187,544	21.3	20.4	22.6
Pacific	298,813	285,515	244,992	9.4	9.2	9.2
New England:						
Maine	12,040	11,918	10,975	10.7	10.6	11.0
New Hampshire	9,251	9,074	10,006	10.0	9.9	13.6
Vermont	5,226	5,175	4,524	10.2	10.2	10.2
Massachusetts	46,273	45,104	47,403	8.1	7.8	8.3
Rhode Island	7,490	7,366	7,531	7.9	7.7	7.9
Connecticut	26,048	25,431	24,929	8.4	8.2	8.2
Middle Atlantic:						
New York	144,518	142,427	161,246	8.2	8.1	8.9
New Jersey	55,794	54,740	56,625	7.6	7.4	7.9
Pennsylvania	93,673	93,677	94,516	7.9	7.9	8.0
East North Central:						
Ohio	99,832	99,752	90,056	9.2	9.2	8.5
Indiana	57,853	59,587	55,202	10.5	10.9	10.6
Illinois	109,823	108,482	115,478	9.6	9.5	10.4
Michigan	86,898	89,450	89,694	9.4	9.7	10.1
Wisconsin	41,111	39,560	34,415	8.7	8.5	7.8
West North Central:						
Minnesota	37,641	² 36,808	31,280	9.2	² 9.1	8.2
Iowa	27,474	27,925	24,648	9.4	9.6	8.7
Missouri	54,625	52,952	50,149	11.1	10.8	10.7
North Dakota	6,094	6,021	5,340	9.3	9.2	8.6
South Dakota	8,800	8,978	11,034	12.7	13.0	16.6
Nebraska	14,239	14,074	15,666	9.1	9.0	10.6
Kansas	24,847	24,774	22,421	10.5	10.6	10.0
South Atlantic:						
Delaware	4,437	4,362	4,254	7.5	7.3	7.8
Maryland	46,278	45,874	52,237	11.0	10.9	13.3
District of Columbia	5,182	4,874	7,267	8.1	7.4	9.6
Virginia	60,210	58,678	51,964	11.3	11.0	11.2
West Virginia	17,391	17,738	15,948	8.9	9.1	9.1
North Carolina	46,718	45,064	48,291	7.9	7.8	9.5
South Carolina	53,915	53,505	57,887	17.3	17.3	22.3
Georgia	70,638	68,548	63,896	12.9	12.7	13.9
Florida	108,344	103,245	69,249	11.1	10.9	10.2
East South Central:						
Kentucky	¹ 32,727	34,031	36,269	¹ 8.9	9.3	11.3
Tennessee	59,175	59,173	45,361	12.9	13.1	11.6
Alabama	49,018	48,743	46,959	12.6	12.6	13.6
Mississippi	27,908	27,260	26,328	11.1	10.9	11.9

See footnotes and note at end of table.

Table 2. Marriages and marriage rates: United States, each region, division, and State, 1970, 1979, and 1980—Con.

[By place of occurrence. Data are counts of marriages performed, except as noted. Rates per 1,000 population enumerated as of April 1 for 1970 and 1980 and estimated as of July 1 for 1979]

Region, division, and State	Number			Rate		
	1980	1979	1970	1980	1979	1970
West South Central:						
Arkansas	26,513	25,908	23,307	11.6	11.4	12.1
Louisiana	43,460	41,347	35,416	10.3	10.0	9.7
Oklahoma	46,509	44,452	39,004	15.4	15.0	15.2
Texas	181,762	172,757	139,491	12.8	12.4	12.5
Mountain:						
Montana	8,336	8,196	6,919	10.6	10.4	10.0
Idaho	13,428	13,429	10,915	14.2	14.4	15.3
Wyoming	6,868	6,459	4,495	14.6	14.3	13.5
Colorado	34,917	32,831	24,988	12.1	11.5	11.3
New Mexico	16,641	³ 16,309	³ 12,422	12.8	³ 12.7	³ 12.2
Arizona	30,223	29,603	³ 18,508	11.1	11.2	³ 10.4
Utah	16,958	16,699	11,692	11.6	11.8	11.0
Nevada	114,333	103,462	97,605	142.8	135.2	199.7
Pacific:						
Washington	47,728	47,086	41,313	11.6	11.7	12.1
Oregon	23,004	22,063	17,302	8.7	8.6	8.3
California	210,864	199,698	172,388	8.9	8.6	8.6
Alaska	5,361	4,990	3,390	13.3	12.4	11.2
Hawaii	11,856	11,678	10,599	12.3	12.3	13.8

¹Data are incomplete.

²Data are estimated.

³Data include marriage licenses issued for some counties.

NOTE: Rates for 1979 have been revised; see Technical notes.

Table 3. Marriage rates for unmarried women: United States, 1940, 1950, and 1958–80

[Data refer only to events occurring within the United States. Alaska included beginning 1959 and Hawaii beginning 1960. Beginning with 1978, data include nonlicensed marriages registered in California, see Technical notes. Population estimates were not available to revise rates for 1971–79. Rates per 1,000 population enumerated as of April 1 for census years and estimated as of July 1 for all other years]

Year	Rate per 1,000—		Year	Rate per 1,000—	
	Unmarried women 15 years and over	Unmarried women 15–44 years		Unmarried women 15 years and over	Unmarried women 15–44 years
1980	61.4	102.6	1967	76.4	145.2
1979	63.6	107.9	1966	75.6	145.1
1978	64.1	109.1	1965	75.0	144.3
1977	63.6	109.8	1964	74.6	146.2
1976	65.2	113.4	1963	73.4	143.3
1975	66.9	118.5	1962	71.2	138.4
1974	72.0	128.4	1961	72.2	145.4
1973	76.0	137.3	1960	73.5	148.0
1972	77.9	141.3	1959	73.6	149.8
1971	76.2	138.9	1958	72.0	146.3
1970	76.5	140.2	1950	90.2	166.4
1969	80.0	149.1	1940	82.8	127.4
1968	79.1	147.2			

Table 4. Marriages and marriage rates by age and previous marital status of women and men: Marriage-registration area, 1970 and 1980

[Based on sample data. For method of computation, sampling errors of estimates, and a description of the marriage-registration area, see Technical notes. Marriages of persons under 15 years of age are included in the youngest age groups; rates are based on populations that exclude persons under 15 years of age. Rates for all marriages are based on the unmarried population; for first marriages, on the never-married population; and for remarriages, on the widowed and divorced populations. Rates per 1,000 population in specified group enumerated as of April 1]

Age and previous marital status	Women				Men			
	Number		Rate		Number		Rate	
	1980 ¹	1970	1980 ²	1970	1980 ¹	1970	1980 ²	1970
All marriages								
Total	1,868,595	1,674,104	54.2	³ 69.4	1,868,595	1,674,104	66.8	³ 88.4
15-17 years.....	103,993	167,486	20.2	³ 35.8	16,297	26,973	3.0	³ 5.4
18-19 years.....	290,959	376,944	90.9	156.7	141,948	207,944	39.2	74.4
20-24 years.....	693,126	664,614	130.8	234.2	667,511	767,759	100.4	205.7
25-44 years.....	668,643	352,205	96.5	111.3	870,889	517,843	121.2	164.0
25-29 years.....	349,313	174,897	126.3	170.1	445,166	280,272	131.2	217.6
30-34 years.....	174,144	77,859	95.0	111.3	229,926	111,255	122.8	160.8
35-44 years.....	145,186	99,449	62.3	69.2	195,797	126,316	102.0	107.2
45-64 years.....	93,443	97,844	17.3	20.9	138,664	122,553	49.1	54.9
65 years and over	18,431	15,011	2.2	2.4	33,286	31,032	15.2	15.6
First marriages								
Total	1,221,460	1,251,802	66.0	³ 93.4	1,196,075	1,247,366	54.7	³ 80.4
15-17 years.....	100,150	162,855	19.8	³ 35.0	15,943	26,311	2.9	³ 5.2
18-19 years.....	271,338	360,218	87.3	151.4	136,204	203,519	38.4	73.0
20-24 years.....	577,492	576,409	119.8	220.1	598,431	711,473	94.5	195.7
25-44 years.....	264,246	140,832	74.9	82.5	430,820	288,354	87.9	119.6
25-29 years.....	195,374	96,564	101.6	132.8	307,018	202,011	109.9	181.5
30-34 years.....	48,855	25,595	56.3	66.5	89,575	51,700	75.5	98.8
35-44 years.....	20,017	18,673	27.1	31.4	34,227	34,643	37.2	44.7
45-64 years.....	7,411	10,538	7.0	8.8	13,170	15,855	11.6	14.1
65 years and over	823	950	0.9	1.1	1,507	1,854	2.9	3.4
Remarriages								
Total	591,145	392,727	38.3	36.6	618,322	399,163	108.3	116.5
15-19 years.....	9,818	11,231	231.0	317.6	1,410	1,367	219.2	350.9
20-24 years.....	90,500	73,805			44,369	40,386		
25-44 years.....	388,948	207,184	117.3	142.3	417,844	222,617	190.6	298.0
25-29 years.....	144,295	75,581	178.6	251.3	124,272	73,743	225.2	420.3
30-34 years.....	121,706	51,636	129.0	164.1	135,275	58,237	203.9	345.2
35-44 years.....	122,947	79,967	78.5	95.1	158,297	90,637	162.0	225.0
45-64 years.....	84,619	86,556	19.7	24.8	123,419	105,824	74.4	95.6
65 years and over	17,260	13,951	2.3	2.5	31,280	28,968	19.0	19.9
Previously widowed ⁴	58,612	74,719	6.7	10.2	53,922	66,122	32.2	40.6
15-24 years.....	1,744	3,472	51.0	54.1	377	725	106.7	107.8
25-44 years.....	16,235	20,818			7,624	10,663		
45-64 years.....	27,960	39,841			24,929	33,298		
65 years and over	12,673	10,588	2.1	2.3	20,992	21,436	17.8	19.4
Previously divorced ⁴	447,287	269,855	91.3	123.3	476,121	283,596	142.1	204.5
15-19 years.....	7,805	9,608	236.4	413.4	1,007	1,092	217.6	402.2
20-24 years.....	74,745	61,418			36,761	33,798		
25-44 years.....	317,084	161,070	122.8	179.6	349,706	184,489	188.8	325.4
45-64 years.....	45,148	36,101	30.3	42.6	82,108	59,925	79.1	108.7
65 years and over	2,505	1,658	5.3	6.1	6,539	4,292	22.8	23.6
Not stated if widowed or divorced	85,246	48,153	...	...	88,279	49,444	...	...
Not stated if previously married								
Total	55,990	29,575	...	...	54,198	27,576	...	...

¹Figures for first marriages and remarriages exclude data for Iowa; these data are included in "Not stated if previously married."

²All rates exclude data for Iowa.

³Previously published rates were based on populations that included persons 14 years of age.

⁴Data for 1970 exclude remarriages in the District of Columbia, Michigan, and Ohio. Data for 1980 exclude remarriages in Michigan, Ohio, and South Carolina. These data are included in "Not stated if widowed or divorced."

Table 5. Median age of bride and groom by previous marital status: Marriage-registration area, 1963-80

[Based on sample data. Figures by previous marital status exclude data for Iowa beginning with 1977. Figures for previously divorced and previously widowed exclude data for Michigan and Ohio for all years, for South Carolina beginning with 1972, and for the District of Columbia for 1970. For a description of the marriage-registration area, see Technical notes.]

Year	Median age of bride					Median age of groom				
	Total	First marriage	Remarriage			Total	First marriage	Remarriage		
			Total	Previously divorced	Previously widowed			Total	Previously divorced	Previously widowed
1980	23.7	21.8	32.0	31.0	53.6	25.9	23.6	35.2	34.0	61.2
1979	23.4	21.6	31.9	30.8	55.2	25.8	23.4	35.3	33.9	61.7
1978	23.2	21.4	31.5	30.5	52.6	25.5	23.2	35.1	33.8	59.7
1977	22.9	21.1	31.4	30.2	53.1	25.2	23.0	34.9	33.6	60.1
1976	22.7	21.0	31.7	30.1	53.0	25.0	22.9	35.1	33.7	60.0
1975	22.4	20.8	32.0	30.2	52.4	24.7	22.7	35.5	33.6	59.4
1974	22.0	20.6	32.1	30.0	51.9	24.2	22.5	35.7	33.6	59.2
1973	21.9	20.6	32.3	30.2	52.1	24.1	22.5	36.3	33.9	59.3
1972	21.7	20.5	32.8	30.3	51.4	23.8	22.4	36.5	34.0	59.1
1971	21.7	20.5	32.9	30.2	51.8	23.7	22.5	36.9	34.1	59.1
1970	21.7	20.6	33.3	30.1	51.2	23.6	22.5	37.5	34.5	58.7
1969	21.6	20.6	33.8	30.4	51.3	23.5	22.4	38.2	34.7	59.0
1968	21.5	20.6	33.8	30.7	50.6	23.6	22.4	38.3	35.1	57.9
1967	21.4	20.5	35.0	31.3	50.0	23.8	22.6	39.1	35.5	57.7
1966	21.5	20.3	35.2	31.4	50.2	23.8	22.6	39.2	35.8	57.9
1965	21.4	20.4	35.5	31.7	50.1	23.6	22.5	39.6	36.0	57.8
1964	21.4	20.4	35.6	31.7	50.3	23.6	22.4	39.7	36.4	58.0
1963	21.3	20.3	35.6	31.8	49.7	23.7	22.5	39.8	36.3	58.0

Table 6. Percent distribution of marriages by marriage order of both bride and groom: Marriage-registration area, 1970-80

[Based on sample data. Beginning in 1977, figures exclude data for Iowa. Computed from totals excluding marriage order not stated. For a description of the marriage-registration area, see Technical notes]

Year	All marriages	Marriage order of both bride and groom			
		First marriage of bride and groom	First marriage of bride, remarriage of groom	Remarriage of bride, first marriage of groom	Remarriage of bride and groom
			Percent		
1980.....	100.0	56.2	11.3	9.8	22.7
1979.....	100.0	56.4	11.2	9.5	22.9
1978.....	100.0	57.1	11.1	9.3	22.5
1977.....	100.0	57.5	10.8	9.0	22.6
1976.....	100.0	58.5	10.7	8.8	22.0
1975.....	100.0	60.1	9.9	8.6	21.3
1974.....	100.0	62.9	9.2	8.1	19.8
1973.....	100.0	64.6	8.7	7.9	18.9
1972.....	100.0	66.7	8.2	7.4	17.6
1971.....	100.0	67.7	8.0	7.3	17.0
1970.....	100.0	68.6	7.6	7.3	16.5

Technical notes

Place and time of occurrence

Marriages and marriage rates for States and other areas are by place of occurrence. Marriages are those performed during the calendar year. However, for some States shown in table 2, figures are by place and date the marriage license was issued.

Sources of data

Figures in tables 1–3 are based on totals reported by States and counties. Figures in tables 4–6 are based on data tabulated from State-coded data tapes and from probability samples of records selected and coded in the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) from copies of the records sent in by States participating in the marriage-registration area (MRA). In 1980 the MRA consisted of the District of Columbia and all except eight States—Arizona, Arkansas, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, and Washington. In 1970 it consisted of all States except 11; Minnesota, South Carolina, and Colorado joined during the decade. Marriages performed in the MRA included 77 percent of the marriages registered in the United States in 1970 and 80 percent in 1980.

Nonlicensed (confidential) marriages for California

Section 4213 of the California Civil Code allows unmarried couples who have been living together to be married confidentially without obtaining a marriage license or health certificate. In March 1972 this section was amended to require county clerks to keep sealed records of these marriages and periodically to report the total number to the California State Department of Health Services.

Since reporting began, nonlicensed marriages have increased rapidly, from 2,857 in 1973 to 48,040 in 1980. NCHS has not included the nonlicensed California marriages in marriage totals or rates for years prior to 1978. However, beginning with final statistics for 1978, nonlicensed marriages, which totaled 37,462 in that year, are included in the national and geographic totals and rates.

Marriage sample

Twelve States—Florida, Illinois, Maine, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York (except New York City), Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia—supplied State-coded data tapes of all their marriage records through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program (VSCP), and 100 percent of these records were used by NCHS. For all other States in the MRA, records were sampled at different rates that were designed to give a sample of at least 2,500 for each State. All records were included in the sample for Alaska, Delaware, and the District of Columbia, where totals of less

Table 1. Approximate sampling errors of estimated number of marriages shown in table 4: Marriage-registration area, 1970 and 1980

<i>Percent of total MRA marriages in subclass</i>	<i>1980 sampling error</i>	<i>1970 sampling error</i>
1 or 99.....	416	457
2 or 98.....	586	643
3 or 97.....	714	783
4 or 96.....	820	899
5 or 95.....	912	1,000
7 or 93.....	1,068	1,171
10 or 90.....	1,256	1,377
15 or 85.....	1,495	1,639
20 or 80.....	1,674	1,836
25 or 75.....	1,812	1,987
50.....	2,093	2,295

How to use the sampling error table:

The total numbers of MRA marriages in 1970 and 1980 (excluding nonlicensed California marriages) were 1,674,104 and 1,868,595, respectively. For any estimate of marriages shown in table 4, determine its percent of the total MRA marriages for the corresponding year. Then look in the table of sampling errors for the row containing the computed percent to determine the sampling error for the estimated number of marriages for that year. For example, in 1980 there were an estimated 591,145 remarriages of women, or 31.6 percent of all 1980 MRA marriages. Since 31.6 is between 25 and 50 percent, the sampling error is between 1,812 and 2,093, or by interpolation, about 1,886 marriages. The chances are about 68 out of 100 that the actual number of 1980 remarriages is between 589,259 and 593,031 (591,145 ± 1,886).

than 5,000 marriages had been anticipated, and for New York City. One-half of all records were included from 3 States, one-fifth from 6 States, one-tenth from 11 States, and one-twentieth from 8 States. The total sample size, including records supplied through the VSCP, was 717,553 marriages. Sampling errors shown in table I are for frequencies which equal a specified percent of the total MRA marriages for either 1970 or 1980.

Nonlicensed marriages registered in California are not available for inclusion in the MRA marriage sample. The 5-percent sample of California marriages for 1980 was drawn only from licensed marriages. The corresponding weights for sample records were based on these totals. Since no information is available on the characteristics of persons obtaining nonlicensed marriages, no accurate estimate is available for the bias introduced in sample estimates by the omission of these marriages.

Sampling errors

All statistics for the MRA are estimates based on the systematic sample of marriages described above; therefore, these statistics are subject to sampling errors. A sampling error is a measure of variations that occur by chance between sample estimates and the actual quantity being estimated. Chances are about 68 out of 100 that an estimate would differ from the true value by less than the sampling error, and about 95 out of 100 that the difference would be less than twice the sampling error.

This report represents summary tabulations from the final marriage statistics for 1980. More detailed tabulations for 1980 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.

Symbols

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

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