

Monthly VITAL STATISTICS REPORT



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FROM THE
NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

In 1974 the number of marriages performed in the United States declined for the first time in 16 years. There were 2,229,667 marriages, a decrease of over 54,000 from the number performed in 1973.

The marriage rate declined 3.7 percent in 1974; from 10.9 in 1973 to 10.5 per 1,000 population in 1974. This was the lowest marriage rate for any year since 1968. In fact, the slight decline (0.9 percent) that occurred in the marriage rate in 1973 was the first reversal of the steep upward trend in the marriage rate that began in 1963.

Provisional data for 1975 indicate a continuing decline. An estimated 2,126,000 marriages were performed and the provisional marriage rate was 10.0 per 1,000 population, a 4.8-percent decline from the rate for 1974. Even so, the marriage rate remains well above those of the midfifties through the mid-sixties.

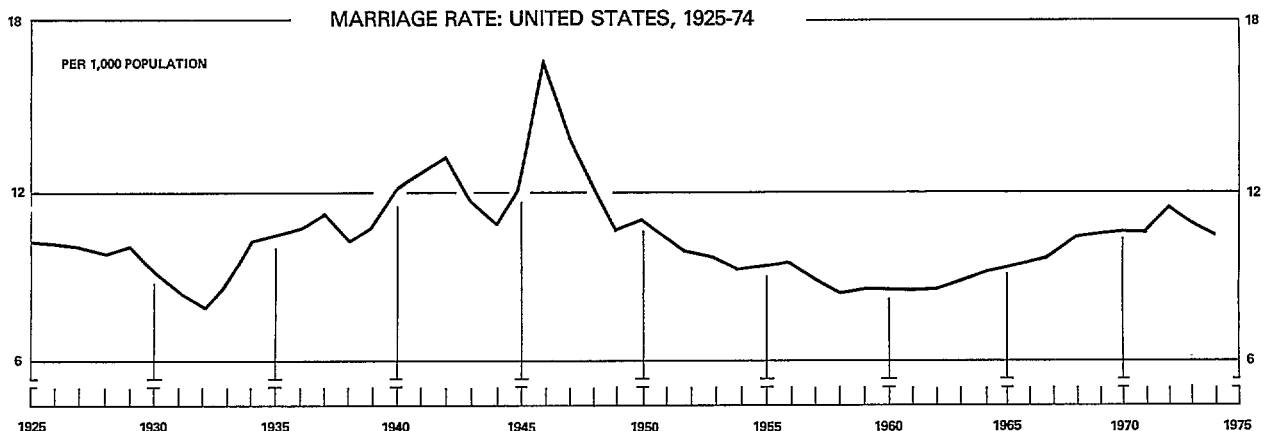
The median age of brides and grooms at first marriage remained at 20.6 years and 22.5 years, respectively. The median age at remarriage has declined steadily for more than a decade. For women the median age at remarriage was 32.1 years, 3.5 years lower than it was in 1963. For men, the median was 35.7 years, about 4 years lower than it was in 1963.

Based on information from the marriage registration area, the proportion of marriages that are first marriages has decreased slightly every year since 1968 when 77 percent of the brides and grooms were previously single. By 1974 the proportion had declined to 72 percent for brides and 71 percent for grooms.

For first marriages the marriage rates were higher for women than those for men at ages under 25 years and higher for men than for women at ages 25 years and over. At every age remarriage rates for men were higher than those for women.

Table 1. MEDIAN AGES OF BRIDE AND GROOM BY PREVIOUS MARITAL STATUS, 1963-74

Year	Median age of bride			Median age of groom		
	Total	First marriage	Remarriage	Total	First marriage	Remarriage
1974-----	22.0	20.6	32.1	24.2	22.5	35.7
1973-----	21.9	20.6	32.3	24.1	22.5	36.3
1972-----	21.7	20.5	32.8	23.8	22.4	36.5
1971-----	21.7	20.5	32.9	23.7	22.5	36.9
1970-----	21.7	20.6	33.3	23.6	22.5	37.5
1969-----	21.6	20.6	33.8	23.5	22.4	38.2
1968-----	21.5	20.6	33.8	23.6	22.4	38.3
1967-----	21.4	20.5	35.0	23.8	22.6	39.1
1966-----	21.5	20.3	35.2	23.8	22.6	39.2
1965-----	21.4	20.4	35.5	23.6	22.5	39.6
1964-----	21.4	20.4	35.6	23.6	22.4	39.7
1963-----	21.3	20.3	35.6	23.7	22.5	39.8



MONTHLY VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

First marriage rates for both men and women 20-24 years of age have been dropping sharply in recent years. They declined 28 percent from 1970 to 1974. A substantial decline (22 percent) was also observed for men at ages 25-29 years. Smaller reductions in first marriage rates occurred for all other age groups shown in table 4 except for men at ages under 18 years and at 65 years and over and for women at ages 35-64, where the rates increased over those for 1970.

Remarriage rates were higher in 1974 than in 1970 for men and women under 25 years of age, for women 30-44 years, and for men 65 years and over. They were lower for women 25-29 and 45-64 years, with no change for women 65 years and over. They were also lower for men at ages 25-64.

Table 2. MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGE RATES: UNITED STATES, 1958-74

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

Year	Marriages	Rate per 1,000 ¹ -		
		Total population	Unmarried women 15 years and over	Unmarried women 15-44 years
1974	2,229,667	10.5	72.0	128.4
1973	2,284,108	10.9	76.0	137.3
1972	2,282,154	11.0	77.9	141.3
1971	2,190,481	10.6	76.2	138.9
1970	2,158,802	10.6	76.5	140.2
1969	2,145,000	10.6	80.0	149.1
1968	2,068,000	10.4	79.1	147.2
1967	1,927,000	9.7	76.4	145.2
1966	1,857,000	9.5	75.6	145.1
1965	1,800,000	9.3	75.0	144.3
1964	1,725,000	9.0	74.6	146.2
1963	1,654,000	8.8	75.4	143.3
1962	1,577,000	8.5	71.2	138.4
1961	1,548,000	8.5	72.2	145.4
1960	1,523,000	8.5	73.5	148.0
1959	1,494,000	8.5	73.6	149.8
1958	1,451,000	8.4	72.0	146.5

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

SYMBOLS	
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-----	*

This report presents summary tabulations from the final marriage statistics for 1974. More detailed tabulations for 1974 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 3. MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGE RATES: UNITED STATES, EACH REGION, DIVISION, AND STATE, 1972-74

[By place of occurrence. Data are counts of marriages performed except as noted. Rates per 1,000 population in each area, estimated as of July 1]

Region, division, and State	Number			Rate		
	1974	1973	1972	1974	1973	1972
United States-----	2,229,667	2,284,108	2,282,154	10.5	10.9	11.0
Northeast-----	402,521	422,865	425,955	6.1	6.5	6.6
North Central-----	574,059	581,544	577,429	10.0	10.1	10.1
South-----	803,369	823,947	818,405	12.0	12.5	12.6
West-----	449,718	455,732	460,365	12.1	12.5	12.8
Northeast:						
New England-----	101,397	106,426	107,111	6.3	6.8	6.8
Middle Atlantic-----	301,124	316,459	318,844	8.1	8.4	8.5
North Central:						
East North Central-----	405,872	412,324	409,206	9.9	10.1	10.0
West North Central-----	168,387	169,220	168,223	10.1	10.1	10.1
South:						
South Atlantic-----	385,457	398,544	394,392	11.6	12.3	12.4
East South Central-----	161,850	167,174	170,054	12.1	12.6	12.9
West South Central-----	1256,082	258,229	253,959	12.4	12.7	12.7
West:						
Mountain-----	213,654	211,738	209,980	22.7	23.1	23.6
Pacific-----	236,064	243,994	250,385	8.5	8.9	9.2
New England:						
Maine-----	11,546	11,925	11,739	11.0	11.6	11.4
New Hampshire-----	9,239	9,557	9,572	11.4	12.1	12.6
Vermont-----	4,652	5,072	5,088	9.9	10.9	11.1
Massachusetts-----	44,243	46,640	48,189	7.6	8.0	8.3
Rhode Island-----	7,255	7,715	7,858	7.7	7.9	8.1
Connecticut-----	24,462	25,517	24,485	7.9	8.3	7.9
Middle Atlantic:						
New York-----	148,012	155,660	161,872	6.2	6.5	6.8
New Jersey-----	56,449	59,723	58,476	7.7	8.1	8.0
Pennsylvania-----	96,663	101,076	98,496	8.2	8.5	8.3
East North Central:						
Ohio-----	102,458	99,524	96,297	9.5	9.3	9.0
Indiana-----	60,524	58,428	61,262	11.4	11.0	11.6
Illinois-----	116,419	119,843	118,592	10.5	10.7	10.5
Michigan-----	88,023	94,486	94,447	9.7	10.4	10.5
Wisconsin-----	38,248	40,043	38,608	8.4	8.8	8.5
West North Central:						
Minnesota-----	33,547	32,971	32,227	8.6	8.5	8.3
Iowa-----	27,209	27,544	26,603	9.5	9.5	9.2
Missouri-----	51,434	51,990	53,372	10.8	10.9	11.2
North Dakota-----	5,905	5,875	5,886	9.3	9.2	9.3
South Dakota-----	11,928	12,291	12,151	17.5	17.9	17.9
Nebraska-----	13,873	13,957	14,106	9.0	9.1	9.2
Kansas-----	24,491	24,592	23,878	10.8	10.8	10.5
South Atlantic:						
Delaware-----	4,143	4,298	4,362	7.2	7.5	7.6
Maryland-----	47,013	48,169	49,924	11.5	11.8	12.3
District of Columbia-----	5,271	5,661	6,292	7.3	7.6	8.4
Virginia-----	56,617	58,431	55,863	11.5	12.1	11.7
West Virginia-----	17,409	18,199	18,270	9.7	10.1	10.2
North Carolina-----	45,015	46,951	48,766	8.4	8.9	9.3
South Carolina-----	52,996	56,876	59,983	19.0	20.9	22.3
Georgia-----	68,656	70,373	68,756	15.7	14.7	14.5
Florida-----	90,337	89,587	82,176	11.2	11.7	11.2
East South Central:						
Kentucky-----	32,800	34,379	35,423	9.8	10.3	10.7
Tennessee-----	54,606	56,285	56,184	13.2	13.6	13.5
Alabama-----	46,811	47,997	49,784	13.1	13.6	14.1
Mississippi-----	27,613	28,513	28,703	11.9	12.5	12.7
West South Central:						
Arkansas-----	124,735	25,202	25,202	12.0	12.4	12.6
Louisiana-----	38,185	39,498	38,981	10.1	10.5	10.4
Oklahoma-----	40,180	41,367	40,787	14.8	15.5	15.5
Texas-----	153,002	152,182	149,009	12.7	12.9	12.8
Mountain:						
Montana-----	7,741	7,751	7,674	10.5	10.8	10.7
Idaho-----	12,489	12,256	12,086	15.6	15.9	16.0
Wyoming-----	6,048	5,506	5,357	16.8	15.6	15.5
Colorado-----	25,999	27,991	27,095	10.4	11.5	11.5
New Mexico-----	15,888	15,178	14,187	14.2	13.7	13.2
Arizona-----	27,038	26,180	23,318	12.6	12.7	11.6
Utah-----	15,166	14,818	15,935	12.9	12.8	12.4
Nevada-----	103,287	102,078	106,348	180.3	186.3	199.5
Pacific:						
Washington-----	41,577	41,365	41,618	12.0	12.1	12.2
Oregon-----	20,002	19,661	19,265	8.8	8.8	8.8
California-----	160,887	169,320	175,924	7.7	8.2	8.6
Alaska-----	3,949	3,872	3,828	11.7	11.7	11.8
Hawaii-----	9,649	9,776	9,750	11.4	11.8	11.9

¹Data are incomplete.

²Includes marriage licenses issued for some counties.

MONTHLY VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Table 4. MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGE RATES BY AGE, PREVIOUS MARITAL STATUS, AND COLOR OF BRIDE AND GROOM: MARRIAGE-REGISTRATION AREA, 1974

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data. Rates per 1,000 population in specified group, estimated as of July 1, 1974. Figures for age not stated are distributed]

Age and previous marital status	Bride					Groom				
	Total		White	All other	Color not stated ³	Total		White	All other	Color not stated ³
	Number	Rate ²				Number	Rate ²			
ALL MARRIAGES										
Total-----	1,791,452	61.0	1,043,030	144,014	604,403	1,791,452	73.8	1,040,372	146,672	604,408
14-17 years-----	160,872	25.9	122,820	14,865	43,187	31,468	4.2	23,517	1,524	6,627
18-19 years-----	382,891	129.9	233,755	27,960	121,176	222,097	67.9	142,753	16,799	62,545
20-24 years-----	645,709	174.6	365,058	48,769	231,902	727,704	150.9	421,549	57,414	248,741
25-44 years-----	480,300	116.7	249,366	42,285	168,631	639,182	148.4	353,150	55,116	229,916
25-29 years-----	236,619	158.9	125,658	21,113	89,848	342,599	176.1	183,959	27,691	124,949
30-34 years-----	107,918	117.8	58,727	9,594	39,597	148,775	154.0	81,512	13,356	53,907
35-44 years-----	115,763	75.2	65,001	11,576	39,186	146,803	105.5	81,679	14,069	51,060
45-64 years-----	105,565	21.4	62,034	8,346	34,565	139,713	54.3	80,178	12,972	46,563
65 years and over-----	16,115	2.3	9,997	1,191	4,927	32,288	17.2	19,425	2,847	10,016
Median age-----	22.0	...	21.7	22.6	22.5	24.2	...	23.9	24.8	24.6
FIRST MARRIAGES										
Total-----	1,271,284	74.8	712,046	109,825	449,413	1,252,770	61.8	703,607	103,763	440,400
14-17 years-----	176,169	25.2	119,185	14,300	42,684	30,852	4.2	22,837	1,469	6,576
18-19 years-----	364,704	133.5	219,328	26,971	118,405	217,675	66.6	139,168	16,352	62,155
20-24 years-----	546,290	159.5	294,991	44,017	207,282	665,245	141.8	376,725	53,809	234,711
25-44 years-----	173,463	85.7	74,468	22,733	76,262	321,605	100.4	157,439	34,307	129,659
25-29 years-----	123,286	122.3	55,253	14,391	53,642	231,731	141.0	118,550	21,223	91,958
30-34 years-----	30,854	66.2	12,548	4,355	15,931	57,317	83.3	25,134	7,520	24,663
35-44 years-----	19,343	35.0	6,667	3,987	6,689	32,557	37.4	13,755	5,564	13,238
45-64 years-----	10,020	9.6	3,748	1,742	4,530	15,783	12.6	6,814	2,572	6,397
65 years and over-----	638	0.8	326	62	250	1,580	3.5	624	254	702
Median age-----	20.6	...	20.2	21.1	21.1	22.5	...	22.1	23.1	23.0
RE-MARRIAGES										
Total-----	493,841	40.0	310,747	31,302	151,782	514,163	129.1	317,440	35,317	161,406
14-19 years-----	13,564	*	11,034	374	2,156	1,722	*	1,511	71	140
20-24 years-----	87,068	⁴ 332.1	59,760	3,809	23,499	48,937	⁴ 367.1	33,757	2,312	12,868
25-44 years-----	282,780	147.3	172,309	18,852	91,619	309,765	231.9	180,431	20,107	99,227
25-29 years-----	110,601	230.4	68,448	6,290	35,863	106,359	355.7	67,734	6,043	32,582
30-34 years-----	76,363	169.7	45,787	5,149	25,427	90,024	324.1	55,367	5,684	29,043
35-44 years-----	55,816	97.0	58,074	7,413	30,329	113,312	217.5	67,330	8,380	37,602
45-64 years-----	55,023	24.4	58,043	7,138	29,242	123,096	93.3	72,997	10,244	39,865
65 years and over-----	15,406	2.5	9,601	1,129	4,676	30,643	21.4	18,754	2,583	9,306
Median age-----	32.1	...	31.5	35.0	32.6	35.7	...	35.0	39.0	36.3
Previously widowed ⁵ -----	73,530	9.1	49,687	6,048	17,785	62,890	38.9	40,621	6,070	16,199
14-24 years-----	2,661	*	1,936	208	517	694	*	449	130	115
25-44 years-----	20,087	⁶ 61.8	15,015	2,057	5,015	9,240	⁶ 136.1	5,776	1,035	2,431
45-64 years-----	39,245	16.3	26,840	2,986	9,419	32,150	69.6	20,434	3,262	8,454
65 years and over-----	11,537	2.2	7,896	797	2,844	20,806	19.2	13,962	1,645	5,199
Median age-----	51.9	...	52.1	49.8	52.2	59.2	...	59.8	57.5	59.0
Previously divorced ⁵ -----	348,007	121.7	243,076	22,737	82,194	376,026	199.7	259,945	26,212	89,669
14-19 years-----	11,134	*	9,821	337	976	1,397	*	1,333	24	40
20-24 years-----	71,601	⁴ 336.3	54,837	3,323	13,391	40,306	⁴ 368.8	31,348	2,005	6,953
25-44 years-----	221,953	166.0	149,383	15,266	57,304	255,301	266.9	174,835	17,292	63,124
45-64 years-----	41,566	41.0	27,772	3,583	10,211	73,233	101.6	46,438	6,181	16,619
65 years and over-----	1,753	6.7	1,213	228	312	5,784	34.6	3,941	710	1,133
Median age-----	30.0	...	29.5	32.7	30.9	33.6	...	33.1	35.9	34.7
Not stated if widowed or divorced ⁷ -----	72,304	...	17,984	2,517	51,803	75,247	...	16,874	3,035	55,339
NOT STATED IF PREVIOUSLY MARRIED ⁸ -----	26,327	...	20,237	2,887	3,203	24,519	...	19,325	2,592	2,602

¹In 1974 the MRA consisted of the District of Columbia and all the States in the Union except 9; Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, and Washington. It covered 80 percent of the marriages registered in the United States. Sampling errors of estimates for the MRA appear in table 5.

²Base populations exclude persons under 14 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.

³Figures include data for California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, and Ohio; these areas did not require reporting of race or color.

⁴Rates are shown for ages 14-24 years.

⁵Data exclude remarriages in Michigan, Ohio, and South Carolina.

⁶Rates are shown for ages 14-44 years.

⁷Data include all remarriages in Michigan, Ohio, and South Carolina.

⁸Figures are included in all marriages.

Place and Time of Occurrence

Marriages are those performed during the year. Marriages and marriage rates for States and other areas are by place of occurrence. In table 3, however, figures for marriages shown for some States are by place and date the marriage license was issued.

Sources of Data

Figures in tables 2 and 3 are based on totals reported by States and counties. All other figures in the tables are based on data tabulated from probability samples of records selected in the National Center for Health Statistics from copies of the records sent in by States participating in the marriage-registration area. For 1972, 1973, and 1974, 41 States and the District of Columbia participated.

Marriage Sample

Records were sampled at different rates designed to give a sample of at least 2,500 records for each State except four, where less than 5,000 marriages were performed. For these States all records were included in the sample. Florida supplied a State-coded tape of its marriage records and 100 percent were used by NCHS. One-half of all records were included from 7 States and the District of Columbia, one-fifth from 9 States, one-tenth from 13 States, and one-twentieth from 7 States. The total sample size was 290,011 marriages. Sampling errors shown in the following table are for frequencies which equal a specified percent of the MRA in 1974.

Sampling Errors

All statistics for the MRA are estimates based on the systematic sample of marriages described above; there-

fore, 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.

APPROXIMATE SAMPLING ERRORS OF ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF MARRIAGES SHOWN IN TABLE 4

Total MRA marriages in 1974	Percent of total MRA marriages in subclass	Sampling error
1,791,500	1 or 99	458
	2 or 98	645
	3 or 97	786
	4 or 96	903
	5 or 95	1,004
	7 or 93	1,175
	10 or 90	1,382
	15 or 85	1,645
	20 or 80	1,843
	25 or 75	1,995
	50	2,303

How to use the Sampling Error Table

For any estimate of marriage shown in table 4, determine its ratio to total MRA marriages. Then look in the appropriate row on the table for the percentage figures closest to the estimate to determine the sampling error. For example, there were 348,007 marriages to women who had been previously divorced or 19.4 percent of all MRA marriages. Since 19.4 percent is between 15 and 20 percent, the sampling error is between 1,645 and 1,843, or by interpolation, about 1,819 marriages. Chances are about 68 out of 100 that the actual number of marriages to divorces is between 346,188 and 349,826 (348,007 ± 1,819).

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