

Monthly



(HRA) 77-1120
VOL. 26, No. 2
SUPPLEMENT 2
MAY 19, 1977

VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Advance Report

Final Divorce Statistics, 1975

FROM THE

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

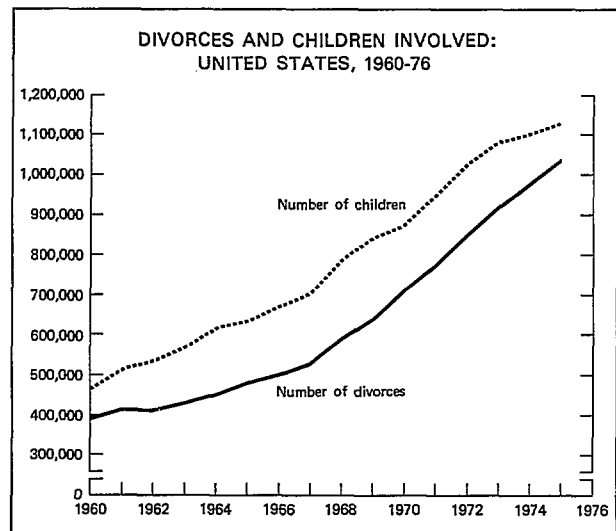
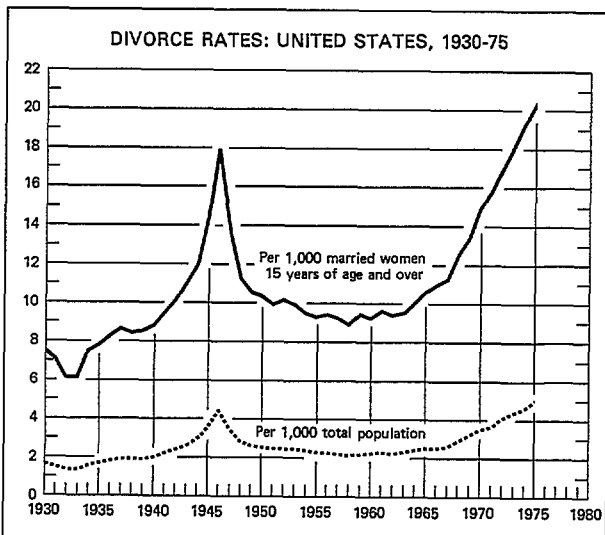
During 1975, for the first time, more than 1 million divorces were granted in the United States. The total was 1,036,000, which represented an increase of 6 percent over the total of 977,000 divorces granted in 1974.

The national divorce rate for 1975 was 4.9 per 1,000 population, the highest annual divorce rate ever observed for this country, and almost 7 percent higher than the rate of 4.6 observed in 1974. Provisional data indicate a further increase to a rate of 5.0 for 1976.

The more specific rate, divorces per 1,000 married women, reached a record high for the third consecutive year. This rate was 20.3 for 1975, indicating that more than 2 percent of all married women in the United States divorced

during this year. Prior to 1973, the highest level for this rate was 17.9, recorded in 1946. The divorce rate per 1,000 married women has increased each year since 1963; it more than doubled between 1963 and 1974, from 9.6 to 19.3 per 1,000 married women. The largest increases in this rate took place in 1968 through 1970, averaging 11 percent annually for these 3 years. Between 1963 and 1967 the average annual increase was 4.2 percent, and since 1970 the increase has averaged 7.2 percent.

The divorce rate shows pronounced variation between regions of the United States. In 1975 the rate was 3.1 per 1,000 population in the Northeast Region, 4.5 in the North Central, 5.5 in the South, and 6.5 in the West Region.



According to sample data from the divorce-registration area (DRA), which includes 29 States, the median duration of marriages ending in divorce during 1975 remained unchanged from 1974. It was 6.5 years in both 1975 and 1974, having declined slightly from 6.6 years in 1973 (table 3). The median duration of marriage to divorce began to decline in 1964, a year later than the start of the current increase in the divorce rate. In 1963 the median duration was 7.5 years.

The national estimated number of children under 18 years of age involved in divorce was 1,123,000 in 1975; this is the fourth year with more than 1 million children affected by divorce (table 4). The total number of persons involved in divorce—husbands, wives, and children—was

3,195,000, more than double the number involved in divorce in 1965.

The average number of children per decree has declined from a maximum of 1.36 in 1964 to 1.08 in 1975, even though the number of children involved in divorce has consistently increased each year since 1964. In the DRA, 43 percent of couples divorced in 1975 had no children under 18 years of age, 44 percent had small families of one or two children, and the remaining 13 percent had families of three children or more.

The statistics for the divorce-registration area presented in this report are based on sample data and consequently are subject to sampling variability. Further discussion of sampling variability appears in the Technical Notes.

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-----	*

MONTHLY VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Table 1. DIVORCES AND RATES: UNITED STATES, EACH REGION, DIVISION, AND STATE, 1973-75

[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, 1973, 1974, and 1975]

Region, division, and State	Number			Rate			Region, division, and State	Number			Rate		
	1975	1974	1973	1975	1974	1973		1975	1974	1973	1975	1974	1973
United States ¹	1,036,000	977,000	915,000	4.9	4.6	4.4	West North Central:						
Regions:							Minnesota.....	13,188	12,237	11,156	3.4	3.1	2.9
Northeast.....	153,000	146,000	136,000	3.1	3.0	2.7	Iowa.....	10,304	9,480	9,151	3.6	3.3	3.2
North Central.....	1,261,000	250,000	1,234,000	1.4	4.3	1.4	Missouri.....	24,527	22,088	21,777	5.1	4.6	4.6
South ¹	374,000	348,000	326,000	5.5	5.2	4.9	North Dakota.....	1,713	1,588	1,422	2.7	2.5	2.2
West.....	248,000	233,000	219,000	6.5	6.3	6.0	South Dakota.....	2,228	2,016	1,802	3.3	3.0	2.6
							Nebraska.....	5,570	5,193	4,924	3.6	3.4	3.2
							Kansas.....	12,559	11,484	10,472	5.5	5.1	4.6
							South Atlantic:						
Northeast:							Delaware.....	2,761	2,354	2,188	4.8	4.1	3.8
New England.....	43,182	240,034	35,029	3.5	2.3	2.9	Maryland.....	15,398	15,070	14,145	3.8	3.7	3.5
Middle Atlantic.....	110,013	106,457	100,645	3.0	2.9	2.7	District of Columbia..	3,789	3,176	2,975	5.3	4.4	4.0
North Central:							Virginia.....	19,491	16,704	16,078	3.9	3.4	3.3
East North Central ²	186,205	185,708	166,485	*	4.5	*	West Virginia.....	8,632	7,176	7,056	4.8	4.0	3.9
West North Central....	70,089	64,086	60,704	4.2	3.8	3.6	North Carolina.....	22,107	20,049	18,532	4.1	3.7	3.5
South:							South Carolina.....	9,671	8,816	8,266	3.4	3.2	3.0
South Atlantic.....	174,778	159,874	150,304	5.2	4.8	4.6	Georgia.....	29,483	26,918	25,058	6.0	5.5	5.2
East South Central....	74,423	70,505	66,290	5.5	5.3	5.0	Florida.....	63,446	59,611	56,006	7.6	7.4	7.3
West South Central ² ..	122,783	115,935	106,597	*	*	*	East South Central:						
West:							Kentucky.....	14,508	13,791	13,030	4.3	4.1	3.9
Mountain.....	70,721	66,867	259,422	7.3	7.1	*	Tennessee.....	24,611	23,725	22,074	5.9	5.7	5.3
Pacific.....	177,032	165,722	157,704	6.3	6.0	5.8	Alabama.....	23,001	21,123	20,399	6.4	5.9	5.8
							Mississippi.....	12,303	11,866	10,787	5.2	5.1	4.7
							West South Central:						
New England:							Arkansas ²	16,737	15,840	15,219	7.9	7.7	7.5
Maine.....	5,543	4,876	4,550	5.2	4.7	4.4	Louisiana ²	8,720	7,812	7,294	*	*	*
New Hampshire.....	4,241	4,051	3,856	5.2	5.0	4.9	Oklahoma.....	20,641	³ 22,521	³ 19,932	7.6	8.3	7.5
Vermont.....	1,921	21,623	1,582	4.1	2.3	3.4	Texas.....	76,685	69,762	64,152	6.3	5.8	5.4
Massachusetts.....	16,581	16,116	14,539	2.8	2.8	2.5	Mountain:						
Rhode Island.....	2,658	2,522	2,423	2.9	2.7	2.5	Montana.....	4,286	3,940	3,772	5.7	5.4	5.2
Connecticut.....	12,238	10,846	8,079	4.0	3.5	2.6	Idaho.....	5,203	4,808	4,341	6.3	6.0	5.6
Middle Atlantic:							Wyoming.....	2,835	2,523	2,275	7.6	7.0	6.4
New York.....	55,612	54,015	47,886	3.1	3.0	2.6	Colorado.....	15,733	15,082	14,370	6.2	6.0	5.9
New Jersey.....	19,446	19,870	21,754	2.7	2.7	3.0	New Mexico.....	8,413	7,863	25,383	7.3	7.0	*
Pennsylvania.....	34,955	32,572	31,005	3.0	2.8	2.6	Arizona.....	17,577	16,936	14,036	7.9	7.9	6.8
							Utah.....	6,132	5,670	5,270	5.1	4.8	4.6
							Nevada.....	10,542	10,045	9,975	17.8	17.5	18.2
East North Central:							Pacific:						
Ohio.....	52,626	49,239	48,001	4.9	4.6	4.5	Washington.....	25,848	23,909	21,581	7.3	6.9	6.3
Indiana ²	28,755	³ 33,908	22,322	*	³ 6.4	*	Oregon.....	15,562	13,538	12,382	6.8	6.0	5.6
Illinois.....	50,954	48,361	45,152	4.6	4.3	4.0	California.....	128,492	121,714	117,509	6.1	5.8	5.7
Michigan.....	40,782	41,850	39,415	4.5	4.6	4.4	Alaska.....	2,865	2,450	2,062	8.1	7.3	6.2
Wisconsin.....	13,088	12,350	11,595	2.8	2.7	2.5	Hawaii.....	4,265	4,111	4,170	4.9	4.9	5.0

¹Figures include estimates.
²Data are incomplete.
³Data include divorce petitions filed for some counties.

MONTHLY VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Table 2. DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS AND RATES: UNITED STATES, 1950-75

[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
1975.....	1,036,000	4.9	20.3
1974.....	977,000	4.6	19.3
1973.....	915,000	4.4	18.2
1972.....	845,000	4.1	17.0
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, 1973-75

[Based on sample data. Medians computed on data by single years, excluding duration of marriage not stated. The divorce-registration area included 29 States in 1973, 1974, and 1975]

Area	Median duration of marriage		
	1975	1974	1973
Divorce-registration area.....	6.5	6.5	6.6
Alabama.....	4.7	5.0	5.3
Alaska.....	5.1	5.1	5.3
California.....	6.8	6.7	6.9
Connecticut.....	8.2	8.1	8.4
Georgia.....	5.2	5.2	5.2
Hawaii.....	5.4	5.3	5.6
Idaho.....	4.8	4.7	4.5
Illinois.....	6.1	6.1	6.5
Iowa.....	5.5	5.6	5.6
Kansas.....	5.2	5.2	5.2
Kentucky.....	5.9	5.5	5.5
Maryland.....	8.3	8.5	9.0
Michigan.....	6.8	¹ 6.7	¹ 6.6
Missouri.....	5.6	5.5	5.4
Montana.....	4.7	4.8	4.8
Nebraska.....	5.9	5.9	5.7
New York.....	8.0	8.0	8.7
Ohio.....	6.0	6.3	6.2
Oregon.....	5.8	5.8	5.8
Pennsylvania.....	7.7	7.7	7.6
Rhode Island.....	7.8	8.0	8.4
South Carolina.....	6.6	6.8	6.9
South Dakota.....	5.6	5.6	5.9
Tennessee.....	5.3	5.2	5.2
Utah.....	4.9	4.9	4.8
Vermont.....	7.5	7.9	7.9
Virginia.....	7.7	7.8	7.9
Wisconsin.....	7.0	7.2	7.4
Wyoming.....	4.7	4.8	4.5

¹Excludes data for Wayne County.

**Table 4. ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CHILDREN INVOLVED IN DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS:
UNITED STATES, 1954-75**

[Refers only to events occurring within the United States. For 1960-75 estimated from frequencies based on sample; for all other years estimated from total counts. For estimating method see Technical Notes]

Year	Estimated number of children involved	Average number of children per decree
1975	1,123,000	1.08
1974	1,099,000	1.12
1973	1,079,000	1.17
1972	1,021,000	1.20
1971	946,000	1.22
1970	870,000	1.22
1969	840,000	1.31
1968	784,000	1.34
1967	701,000	1.34
1966	669,000	1.34
1965	630,000	1.32
1964 ¹	613,000	1.36
1963 ¹	562,000	1.31
1962 ¹	532,000	1.29
1961 ¹	516,000	1.25
1960	463,000	1.18
1959	468,000	1.18
1958	398,000	1.08
1957	379,000	0.99
1956	361,000	0.95
1955	347,000	0.92
1954	341,000	0.90

¹Revised.

MONTHLY VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Table 5. DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN REPORTED: DIVORCE-REGISTRATION AREA AND EACH REGISTRATION STATE, 1975

[Based on sample data. Data related to children under 18 years of age]

Area	All divorces and annulments	Number of children reported						
		None	1	2	3	4	5 or more	Not stated
Divorce-registration area.....	625,676	257,444	153,225	113,400	48,129	18,118	9,768	25,592
Alabama	23,120	10,110	6,110	3,680	1,540	520	270	890
Alaska	2,856	1,304	692	478	222	84	38	38
California.....	128,300	50,830	30,180	23,280	7,960	2,610	1,180	12,260
Connecticut.....	12,155	4,550	2,630	2,565	1,275	395	230	510
Georgia.....	29,450	13,180	7,650	4,700	2,140	720	450	610
Hawaii	4,262	1,796	970	846	366	172	96	16
Idaho ¹	5,198	2,348	1,186	952	418	152	80	62
Illinois.....	50,920	21,650	11,410	8,930	4,260	1,520	1,100	2,050
Iowa.....	10,245	3,605	2,725	2,025	835	395	190	470
Kansas.....	12,565	5,500	3,220	2,155	1,035	395	200	60
Kentucky.....	14,600	6,180	3,700	2,590	900	400	360	470
Maryland.....	15,420	6,330	3,990	2,810	1,240	520	190	340
Michigan.....	40,870	16,080	8,810	7,160	2,980	1,310	600	3,930
Missouri.....	24,581	10,981	6,347	4,434	1,709	636	368	106
Montana.....	4,304	1,904	1,018	766	346	126	62	82
Nebraska ¹	5,617	2,160	1,436	1,146	533	221	118	3
New York.....	55,612	23,009	12,792	10,648	4,817	1,798	950	1,598
Ohio.....	52,700	21,070	13,600	9,940	4,890	1,920	1,030	250
Oregon.....	15,520	7,230	3,570	2,980	1,220	340	140	40
Pennsylvania.....	34,960	12,990	8,880	6,770	3,300	1,450	660	910
Rhode Island.....	2,658	910	651	559	263	130	79	66
South Carolina.....	9,668	4,182	2,657	1,775	713	216	109	16
South Dakota.....	2,226	833	594	449	190	99	55	6
Tennessee.....	24,690	11,120	7,020	3,790	1,520	510	370	360
Utah.....	5,892	2,240	1,362	1,126	486	258	132	288
Vermont.....	1,921	700	423	429	198	90	71	10
Virginia.....	19,440	8,350	5,670	3,260	1,310	580	250	20
Wisconsin.....	13,090	5,070	3,220	2,635	1,265	475	350	75
Wyoming.....	2,836	1,232	712	522	198	76	40	56

¹Data are for number of children affected by decree.

This report represents summary tabulations from the final divorce statistics for 1975. More detailed tabulations for 1975 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.

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 data tabulated from State-coded data tapes and from probability samples of divorce and annulment records selected and coded in the National Center for Health Statistics from copies of the records sent in by States participating in the divorce-registration area. For 1973-75, 29 States participated.

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 1961-75 were prepared by multiplying the national divorce rate 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 29 registration States in 1971-75.

Divorce Samples

Sample data used to estimate the 1975 frequencies in table 5 and the frequencies used to compute median duration of marriage for 1973-75 in table 3 were selected by using four different sampling rates, including 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. Six States—Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Vermont—supplied State-coded data tapes of all their divorce records through the Cooperative Health Statistics System, and 100 percent of these records were used by NCHS. In all other States, sampling

rates depended on the size of the annual divorce total for each State.

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 1975 data and only for the divorce-registration area for 1973 and 1974 data.

SAMPLING ERROR OF ESTIMATED FREQUENCY EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGE OF AREA TOTAL: DIVORCE-REGISTRATION AREA, 1973-75 AND EACH REGISTRATION STATE, 1975

[Figures for Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Vermont have no sampling errors in 1975 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:				
1975 (29 States).....	206	620	894	1,033
1974 (29 States) ¹ ...	194	585	845	975
1973 (29 States).....	197	593	856	988
Registration States, 1975:				
Alabama.....	45	136	197	227
Alaska.....	5	16	23	27
California.....	107	323	466	538
Connecticut.....	22	66	96	111
Georgia.....	51	155	223	258
Hawaii.....	6	20	28	33
Idaho.....	7	22	31	36
Illinois.....	67	203	293	339
Iowa.....	20	61	88	102
Kansas.....	22	67	97	112
Kentucky.....	36	108	156	181
Maryland.....	37	112	161	186
Michigan.....	60	182	262	303
Missouri.....	...	...	...	...
Montana.....	6	20	28	33
Nebraska.....	...	...	...	...
New York.....	...	...	...	...
Ohio.....	68	206	298	344
Oregon.....	37	112	162	187
Pennsylvania.....	56	168	243	280
Rhode Island.....	...	...	...	...
South Carolina.....	...	...	...	...
South Dakota.....	...	...	...	...
Tennessee.....	47	141	204	235
Utah.....	8	24	35	40
Vermont.....	...	...	...	...
Virginia.....	42	126	181	209
Wisconsin.....	23	69	99	114
Wyoming.....	5	16	23	27

¹Excludes Wayne County, Michigan.