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nchs MONTHLY VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Final Data From the National Center for Health Statistics

Vol. 36, No. 2, Supplement (2) • June 3, 1987

Advance Report of Final Marriage Statistics, 1984

Marriages increased slightly in 1984, just enough to keep pace with the increase in the population. A new national record of 2,477,192 couples married in 1984, 1 percent more than the number in 1983. The marriage rate, on the other hand, was 10.5 per 1,000 population for the second consecutive year, down from 10.6 in 1980-82 (table 1). Provisional data for 1985 and 1986 indicate that both the number of marriages and the marriage rate have since declined.

Although there was no change in the marriage rate based on the total population, there were slight declines in the rates based on populations eligible for marriage. The marriage rate per 1,000 unmarried women 15 years of age and over declined from 59.9 in 1983 to 59.5 in 1984 (figure 1), and the marriage rate per 1,000 unmarried women 15-44 years of age declined from 99.3 in 1983 to 99.0 in 1984. Despite these small declines—less than 1 percent—from the previous year, both rates reached record low levels in 1984. Thus the number of marriages was at a historic high at the same time the rate of marriages per 1,000 unmarried women aged 15-44 years was at a historic low. Currently an unusually large number of divorced and single people who are in the age groups most likely to marry are remaining unmarried.

Seasonal variation

Marriages in the United States typically follow a seasonal pattern. Most occur in the summer, particularly in June, and fewest in January (table 2). The June marriage rate was 2.4 times the January rate.

Geographic variation

In the United States, marriage rates have usually been lowest in the Northeast, intermediate in the Midwest and South, and highest in the West. This pattern continued in 1984 when the rate for the Northeast, 8.8 per 1,000 total population, was only three-fourths as high as the rate for the West, 11.9 (table 3).

The ranking of regional marriage rates has been stable over time, but there have been some changes in the levels. For example, between 1983 and 1984, rates in the Northeast and South increased slightly and rates in the Midwest and the West declined. The difference among regions was smaller in 1984 than in 1974. The rates for the West (11.9) and the South (11.7) were the same in both years, but the rate for the Northeast was 9 percent higher in 1984 (8.8) than in 1974 (8.1), thus narrowing the regional differential. Only the Midwest was lower (7 percent) in 1984 than in 1974 (9.2 vs. 9.9). However, these changes in levels did not alter the basic pattern of rates rising from the Northeast to the West.

Marriage rates for States ranged from 7.7 per 1,000 in Pennsylvania to 16.8 in South Carolina, except for Nevada (table 3). The Nevada rate of 119.7 is distorted by marriages to large numbers of nonresidents occurring in a State with a relatively small population. The States with the highest marriage rates, ranked in order, are Nevada, South Carolina, Hawaii, Arkansas, and Idaho. The lowest rates were reported by Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Nebraska, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. Four of the latter States had also been among the lowest five in 1983; Nebraska replaced Massachusetts in 1984. Among States where data were complete, the greatest increases in marriage rates between 1983 and 1984 were in Arkansas (8.5 percent), Virginia (5.4 percent), Arizona and Texas (4.8 percent each), and Hawaii (4.3 percent). The greatest declines in marriage rates from 1983 to 1984 were in Oklahoma (10.5 percent), Montana (6.1 percent), Wyoming (5.8 percent), Kansas (5.6 percent), and Louisiana (5.2 percent).

The national marriage rate was 10.5 per 1,000 population in both 1974 and 1984, but this represents a balance of increases and decreases among the States. Among the 46 States and the District of Columbia with complete and comparable data, marriage rates dropped between 1974 and 1984 in 28 States and increased in 18 States and the District of Columbia. The largest increases were 29.7 percent in Hawaii and 25.4 percent in Delaware. In Hawaii there has been a sizable increase in marriages to out-of-State residents. In 33 percent of

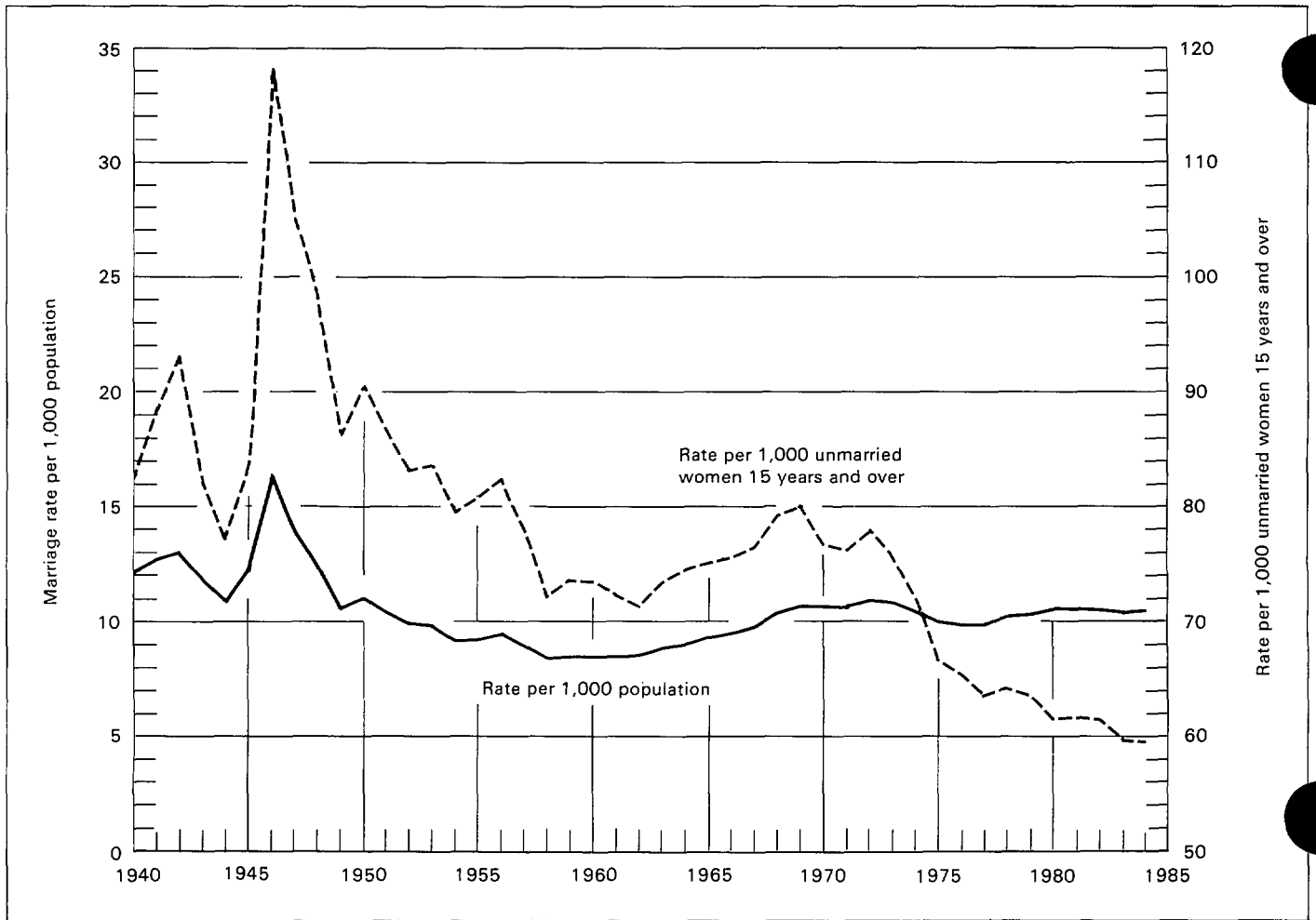


Figure 1. Marriage rates: United States, 1940-84

the marriages in 1984 both bride and groom were from out of State compared with only 12 percent in 1974. The increase in Delaware was due in large part to changes in marriage legislation that resulted in fewer residents of Delaware marrying in Maryland.

Tables 1-3 show the numbers of marriages that are obtained annually from all States and the District of Columbia. Tables 4-10 show detailed information about characteristics of brides and grooms that is reported by the 42 States and the District of Columbia that constitute the marriage-registration area (MRA). Eighty percent of all marriages took place in the MRA in 1984. It is for these States that age, previous marital history, interval to remarriage, race, education, and State of residence of bride and groom can be studied.

Total marriage rate

The total marriage rate is a hypothetical measure of the number of marriages that 1,000 men or women would have if the age-specific rates for a particular year held throughout their entire lives. The total marriage rate can be calculated separately

for first marriages and remarriages as shown in table 4 for 1972-84. The rates for 1984 show that for every 1,000 women there would be 704.6 first marriages and 434.6 remarriages. In 1984 the total first marriage rates (704.6 per 1,000 women and 698.1 for men) were considerably lower than in 1972 (866.9 and 960.8, respectively). This change at least partly reflects the postponement of marriage in the life cycle of men and women. It may also portend a change in the proportion who ever marry.

The total first-marriage rate for men exceeded the rate for women in every year from 1972 through 1981. Since then, the reverse has been true, and if this continues, more men than women will never marry. In contrast, the remarriage rate has been consistently higher for men than for women.

Previous marital status

Figure 2 shows that divorced persons marry at far higher rates than do single persons, and both divorced and single people marry at higher rates than do widowed persons. Remarriage

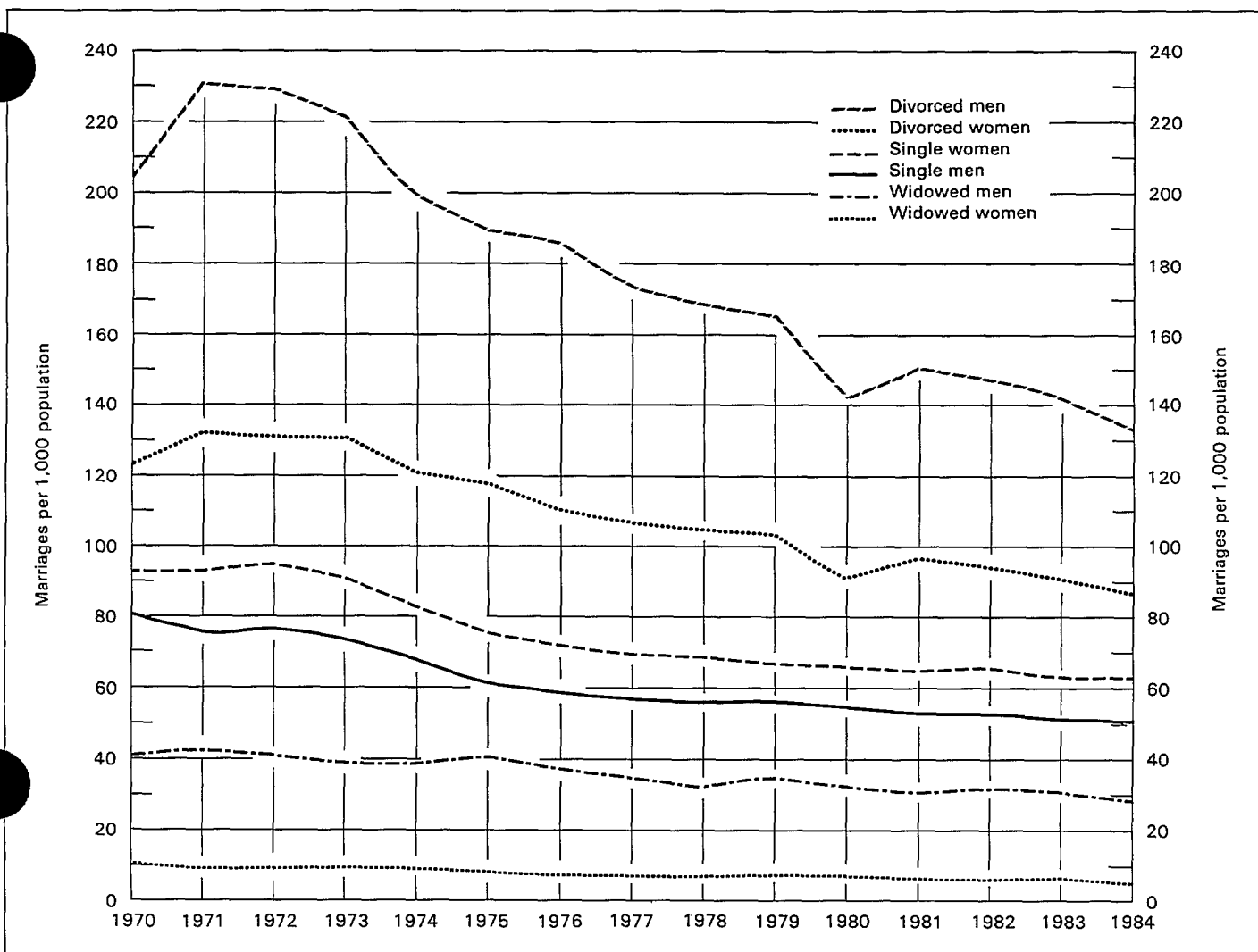


Figure 2. Marriage rates of single, divorced, and widowed men and women: Marriage-registration area, 1970-84

rates are higher for men than women, and first-marriage rates are higher for women than men.

Figure 2 also shows that the predominant trend in marriage rates since 1970 for single, divorced, and widowed men and women has been down. The declines between 1970 and 1984 ranged from 29 to 43 percent. The rates are shown in table 5.

Table 6 includes data on the age of brides and grooms as well as their previous marital status. First marriages were concentrated in the age group 20-24 years; 46 percent of previously single brides and 45 percent of previously single grooms were in this age group. In remarriages, previously divorced brides and grooms were generally older, and their ages less concentrated. Over 60 percent of previously divorced brides and grooms were 25-39 years of age. The vast majority of previously widowed brides and grooms were over 45 years of age.

As described before, overall marriage rates have declined since the early 1970's for single, divorced, and widowed persons. Table 6 shows that, with few exceptions, age-specific remarriage rates for widowed and divorced men and women

continued to drop from 1982 through 1984. However, for single persons, the data in table 6 suggest postponement, rather than outright rejection of marriage. In 1984 marriage rates for men and women under age 25 years continued to decline, but the rates for single women in all age groups of 25-49 years rose, as did the rates for single men in all age groups of 25-44 years. For some of these age groups the rise was the second consecutive annual increase and represented a substantial change; this may indicate a reversal of recent trends. For example, first-marriage rates for men and women aged 40-44 years rose 9 percent between 1982 and 1984 and the rate for men aged 35-39 rose 7 percent.

Age at marriage

The average (mean) ages of brides and grooms according to their previous marital status are tabulated in table 7 for the years 1963-84. In recent years, age at marriage has been increasing. After being relatively stable or showing slight declines

from 1963 through 1972, the mean age at first marriage started upward and reached 23.8 years for brides and 25.7 years for grooms in 1984. For previously divorced brides and grooms the mean age at remarriage dropped in general until the mid-1970's and then started upward. In 1984 the mean age of previously divorced brides reached 34.0, higher than it has ever been during the 22-year period for which these figures are available. The mean age at remarriage of previously divorced grooms increased 1.6 years from 1977 through 1984, reaching 37.7 years of age, about the level it had been in the mid-1960's.

Mean ages at remarriage of previously widowed men and women, on the other hand, increased rather steadily during the 1963-84 period. In sharp contrast to the generally persistent upward trend in age of previously widowed persons was the sharp dip in 1978 and rebound in 1979 before the mean age resumed its upward progression. This was due in part to amendments to the Social Security law that was passed at the end of 1977 and became effective in 1979. The law was changed to allow a woman to keep her widow's benefits if she remarried after age 60. Enough women postponed remarriage until 1979 to affect the trend in average age at remarriage for widows and their grooms.

Interval to remarriage

The interval to remarriage varies with the previous marital status of bride and groom. Divorced persons remarry sooner than widowed persons, and divorced and widowed men remarry sooner than divorced and widowed women. In 1984 previously divorced brides were remarrying an average 3.4 years after their last marriage had ended compared with 3.1 years for previously divorced grooms (table 8). The interval to remarriage of widows was approximately twice as long as that for previously divorced brides and grooms (6.2 years) and over 1½ times as long as that for previously widowed grooms (3.7 years).

Between 1970 and 1984 the interval to remarriage increased for all categories—divorced and widowed, brides and grooms. The mean interval to remarriage of previously divorced brides and grooms increased 0.9 years, and the mean for previously widowed brides and grooms increased 0.7 and 0.5 years, respectively. The mean intervals to remarriage of widows and widowers show the impact of the Social Security amendment described earlier. The average interval to remarriage of widowed brides declined in 1978 and then lengthened in 1979 as the postponed marriages took place under the new legislation.

Race

Race of bride and groom was reported on the marriage records of 34 States in 1984 (table 9). Of the 1,246,487 marriages in these States, race was reported for about 97 percent of brides and grooms. In these States, 88 percent of brides and grooms were white, 11 percent were black, and slightly more than 1 percent were of other races. Almost all brides married

grooms of the same race; less than 2 percent of marriages were interracial. Interracial marriages have been analyzed elsewhere.

The proportions of marriages that were first marriages and remarriages varied by race. White brides were more likely than black brides or brides of other races to remarry after divorce. In 1984, 33 States requested both race and previous marital status on marriage records, and in these States 62 percent of white brides had been single, 33 percent had been divorced, and 4 percent had been widowed. More of the black brides (74 percent) had been single, fewer (21 percent) had been divorced, and 3 percent had been widowed. The patterns were similar for grooms although the racial differences were smaller.

Age at marriage also differs by race. At first marriage in 1984 white brides (23.0 years) were more than 2 years younger than black brides (25.1 years) or brides of other races (25.2 years). The differences between races were smaller for age at remarriage after divorce; white brides were 33.6 years of age on average, black brides were 35.4 years, and brides of other races were 34.2 years. The biggest racial difference was in age at remarriage after being widowed. White brides were oldest, 53.4 years; black brides were intermediate, 49.8 years; and brides of other races were youngest, 44.4 years. Grooms, although older than brides, showed the same racial differentials. The differences for age at remarriage of white and black widowed persons undoubtedly reflects the greater life expectancy of white men and women.

Educational attainment

The educational attainment of brides and grooms was reported on marriage records of 21 States in 1984 and is shown for previously single, divorced, and widowed brides and grooms in table 10. For every category of previous marital status, the largest proportion of brides had completed their education with just 12 years of school (40-47 percent). The percent distributions show that, of those who did not complete their education with exactly 12 years of school, most single and previously divorced brides had continued their education beyond high school and most previously widowed brides had not graduated from high school. Average education was highest for single and previously divorced brides (13.6 and 13.1 years) and lowest for previously widowed brides (12.1 years). These patterns are also seen for grooms.

Educational attainment, as shown by the mean and percent distribution, differed according to sex only for the previously divorced. Previously divorced brides had an average educational attainment of 13.1 years, 0.3 years less than previously divorced grooms. Far fewer of the previously divorced brides (13.6 percent) than grooms (21.2 percent) were college graduates or had done graduate work.

Education is linked to age at marriage because teenaged brides and grooms are not old enough to have completed much

¹Wilson, B. F. Marriage's melting pot. *American Demographics*: 6(7):34, July 1984.

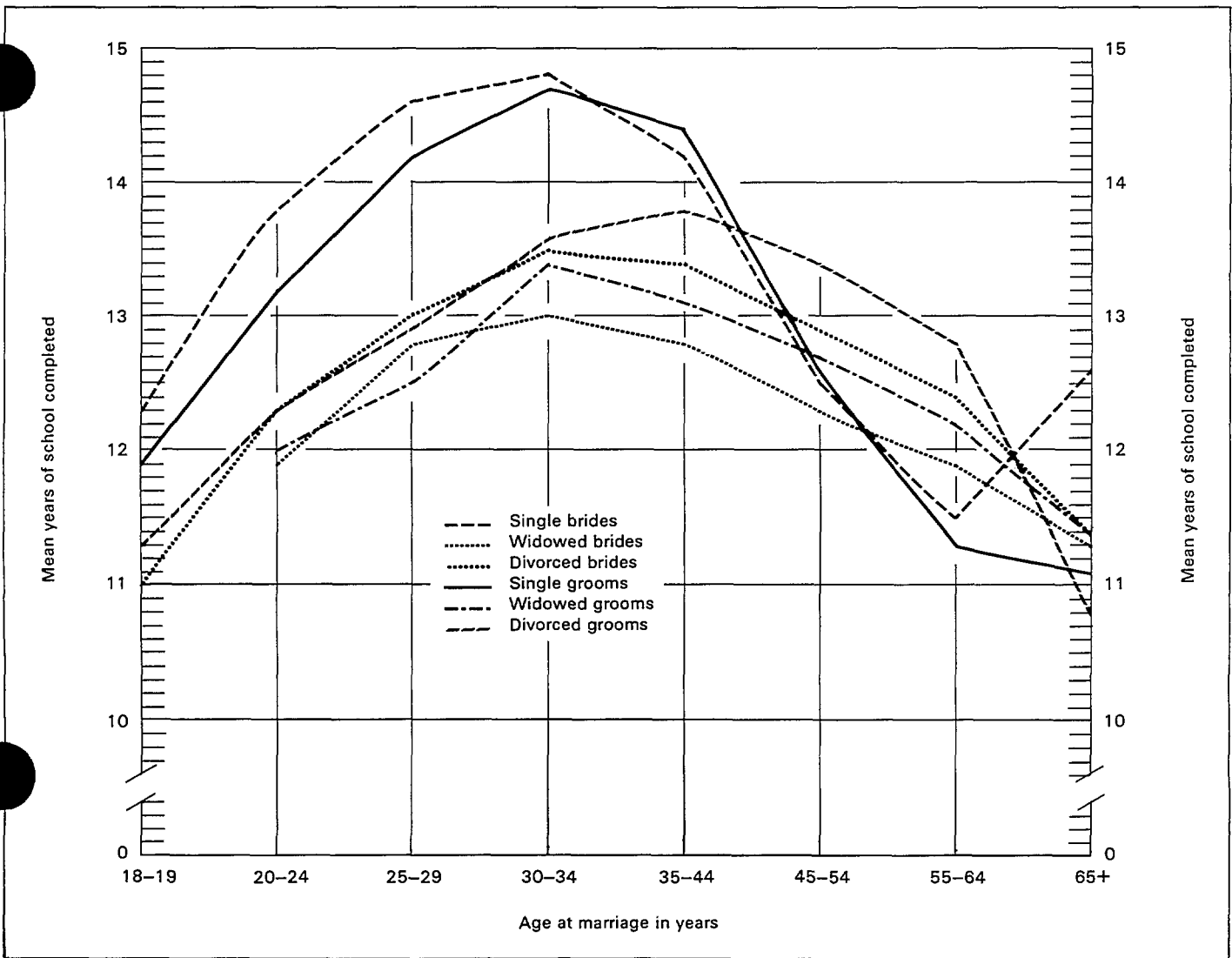


Figure 3. Mean years of school completed by single, divorced, and widowed brides and grooms by age at marriage: 21 Reporting States, 1984

higher education, and because older brides and grooms went to school when the general level of education was lower than it currently is. As shown in figure 3, regardless of previous marital status, educational attainment first rises with age at marriage, then declines. Average education was highest for brides and grooms who married at 30-34 years of age, except for previously divorced grooms who peaked at 35-44 years of age.

For most age groups under 45 years, previously single brides and grooms had more schooling than previously divorced and widowed brides and grooms. However, at ages 45-54 and 55-64 years the educational attainment was about the same or lower for previously single brides and grooms compared with those previously divorced or widowed.

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Symbols

---	Data not available
...	Category not applicable
-	Quantity zero
0.0	Quantity more than zero but less than 0.05
Z	Quantity more than zero but less than 500 where numbers are rounded to thousands
*	Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision

Table 1. Marriages and marriage rates: United States, 1940-84

[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 other years]

Year	Number	Rate per 1,000—				
		Total population	Men 15 years of age and over	Women 15 years of age and over	Unmarried women 15 years and over	Unmarried women 15-44 years
1984	2,477,192	10.5	28.1	25.8	59.5	99.0
1983	2,445,604	10.5	28.0	25.7	59.9	99.3
1982	2,456,278	10.6	28.4	26.1	61.4	101.9
1981	2,422,145	10.6	28.4	26.1	61.7	103.1
1980	2,390,252	10.6	28.5	26.1	61.4	102.6
1979	2,331,337	10.4	28.1	25.8	63.6	107.9
1978	2,282,272	10.3	28.0	25.7	64.1	109.1
1977	2,178,367	9.9	27.2	25.0	63.6	109.8
1976	2,154,807	9.9	27.4	25.2	65.2	113.4
1975	2,152,662	10.0	27.9	25.6	66.9	118.5
1974	2,229,667	10.5	29.4	27.1	72.0	128.4
1973	2,284,108	10.8	30.7	28.2	76.0	137.3
1972	2,282,154	10.9	31.3	28.8	77.9	141.3
1971	2,190,481	10.6	30.7	28.2	76.2	138.9
1970	2,158,802	10.6	31.1	28.4	76.5	140.2
1969	2,145,000	10.6	31.4	28.9	80.0	149.1
1968	2,069,000	10.4	30.8	28.3	79.1	147.2
1967	1,927,000	9.7	29.1	26.9	76.4	145.2
1966	1,857,000	9.5	28.4	26.4	75.6	145.1
1965	1,800,000	9.3	27.9	26.0	75.0	144.3
1964	1,725,000	9.0	27.1	25.3	74.6	146.2
1963	1,654,000	8.8	26.4	24.7	73.4	143.3
1962	1,577,000	8.5	25.5	23.9	71.2	138.4
1961	1,548,000	8.5	25.5	24.0	72.2	145.4
1960	1,523,000	8.5	25.4	24.0	73.5	148.0
1959	1,494,000	8.5	25.2	23.8	73.6	149.8
1958	1,451,000	8.4	24.8	23.5	72.0	146.3
1957	1,518,000	8.9	26.4	24.9	78.0	157.4
1956	1,585,000	9.5	27.8	26.4	82.4	165.6
1955	1,531,000	9.3	27.2	25.8	80.9	161.1
1954	1,490,000	9.2	26.9	25.4	79.8	154.3
1953	1,546,000	9.8	28.2	26.7	83.7	163.3
1952	1,539,318	9.9	28.3	26.8	83.2	159.9
1951	1,594,694	10.4	29.4	28.1	86.6	164.9
1950	1,667,231	11.1	30.7	29.8	90.2	166.4
1949	1,579,798	10.6	29.4	28.5	86.7	158.0
1948	1,811,155	12.4	34.0	33.0	98.5	174.7
1947	1,991,878	13.9	37.9	36.8	106.2	182.7
1946	2,291,045	16.4	44.5	42.8	118.1	199.0
1945	1,612,992	12.2	35.8	30.5	83.6	138.2
1944	1,452,394	10.9	31.2	27.8	76.5	124.5
1943	1,577,050	11.7	32.2	30.6	83.0	133.5
1942	1,772,132	13.2	35.6	34.8	93.0	147.6
1941	1,695,999	12.7	34.0	33.7	88.5	138.4
1940	1,595,879	12.1	32.3	32.3	82.8	122.4

Table 2. Marriages and marriage rates, by month: United States, 1974, 1983, and 1984

[Rates on an annual basis per 1,000 population]

Month	Number			Rate		
	1984	1983	1974 ¹	1984	1983	1974 ¹
Total.....	2,477,192	2,445,604	2,229,667	10.5	10.5	10.5
January.....	127,790	129,922	122,521	6.4	6.6	6.8
February.....	146,813	139,964	136,558	7.9	7.8	8.4
March.....	169,068	160,597	152,143	8.5	8.1	8.4
April.....	180,785	197,729	163,810	9.4	10.3	9.4
May.....	231,924	224,825	193,665	11.6	11.3	10.7
June.....	299,251	278,566	276,561	15.5	14.5	15.8
July.....	225,651	246,131	200,267	11.3	12.4	11.1
August.....	258,579	249,673	262,236	12.9	12.6	14.5
September.....	247,911	232,159	190,313	12.8	12.1	10.8
October.....	205,050	213,827	171,080	10.2	10.7	9.4
November.....	184,897	176,756	178,351	9.5	9.2	10.1
December.....	199,473	195,455	182,162	9.9	9.8	10.0

¹Data exclude 10,555 nonlicensed marriages registered in California; see Technical notes.

Table 3. Marriages and marriage rates: United States, each region, division, and State, 1974, 1983, and 1984

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

Region, division, and State	Number			Rate		
	1984	1983	1974	1984	1983	1974
United States	2,477,192	2,445,604	¹ 2,229,667	10.5	10.5	¹ 10.5
Regions:						
Northeast	436,655	429,023	402,521	8.8	8.7	8.1
Midwest ²	543,623	547,255	574,059	9.2	9.3	9.9
South	943,007	919,240	803,369	11.7	11.5	11.7
West	553,907	550,086	¹ 449,718	11.9	12.0	¹ 11.9
Northeast:						
New England	114,784	112,732	101,397	9.1	9.0	8.3
Middle Atlantic	321,871	316,291	301,124	8.7	8.5	8.1
Midwest: ²						
East North Central	³ 376,709	³ 377,400	405,672	³ 9.1	³ 9.1	9.9
West North Central	166,914	169,855	168,387	9.5	9.8	10.1
South:						
South Atlantic	447,927	434,638	385,457	11.4	11.2	11.4
East South Central	170,918	³ 168,279	161,830	11.4	³ 11.3	11.9
West South Central	324,162	316,323	³ 256,082	12.4	12.2	³ 12.2
West:						
Mountain	236,304	239,066	213,654	18.8	19.4	22.3
Pacific	317,603	311,020	¹ 236,064	9.3	9.2	¹ 8.4
New England:						
Maine	12,525	12,480	11,546	10.8	10.9	10.9
New Hampshire	11,325	10,971	9,239	11.6	11.5	11.3
Vermont	5,421	5,595	4,652	10.2	10.7	9.8
Massachusetts	50,306	48,789	44,243	8.7	8.5	7.7
Rhode Island	7,971	8,053	7,255	8.3	8.4	7.6
Connecticut	27,236	26,844	24,462	8.6	8.6	8.0
Middle Atlantic:						
New York	167,607	162,398	148,012	9.5	9.2	8.2
New Jersey	62,654	61,798	56,449	8.3	8.3	7.7
Pennsylvania	91,610	92,095	96,663	7.7	7.7	8.1
East North Central:						
Ohio	³ 98,646	³ 99,956	102,458	³ 9.2	³ 9.3	9.5
Indiana	53,719	53,982	60,524	9.8	9.9	11.3
Illinois	102,432	103,800	116,419	8.9	9.0	10.3
Michigan	80,810	78,910	88,023	8.9	8.7	9.7
Wisconsin	41,102	40,752	38,248	8.6	8.6	8.4
West North Central:						
Minnesota	36,223	36,259	33,547	8.7	8.7	8.6
Iowa	26,366	26,769	27,209	9.1	9.2	9.5
Missouri	52,464	53,258	51,434	10.5	10.7	10.7
North Dakota	5,793	5,976	5,905	8.4	8.8	9.3
South Dakota	8,057	8,013	11,928	11.4	11.5	17.5
Nebraska	13,274	13,703	13,873	8.3	8.6	9.0
Kansas	24,737	25,877	24,491	10.1	10.7	10.8
South Atlantic:						
Delaware	5,455	5,569	4,143	8.9	9.2	7.1
Maryland	47,193	47,619	47,013	10.9	11.1	11.4
District of Columbia	5,488	5,436	5,271	8.8	8.7	7.3
Virginia	66,143	61,858	56,617	11.7	11.1	11.4
West Virginia	15,513	15,930	17,409	7.9	8.1	9.6
North Carolina	52,170	52,128	45,015	8.5	8.6	8.2
South Carolina	55,357	53,691	52,996	16.8	16.5	18.6
Georgia	74,159	73,442	66,656	12.7	12.8	13.3
Florida	126,449	118,965	90,337	11.5	11.1	10.9
East South Central:						
Kentucky	42,149	³ 37,422	32,800	11.3	³ 10.1	9.6
Tennessee	55,203	56,467	54,606	11.7	12.1	13.0
Alabama	47,541	47,469	46,811	11.9	12.0	12.9
Mississippi	26,025	26,921	27,613	10.0	10.4	11.6
West South Central:						
Arkansas	32,878	30,066	³ 24,735	14.0	12.9	³ 11.8
Louisiana	41,087	43,177	38,185	9.2	9.7	10.0
Oklahoma	39,219	44,043	40,160	11.9	13.3	14.7
Texas	210,978	199,037	153,002	13.2	12.6	12.5

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. Marriages and marriage rates: United States, each region, division, and State, 1974, 1983, and 1984—Con.

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

Region, division, and State	Number			Rate		
	1984	1983	1974	1984	1983	1974
Mountain:						
Montana	7,659	8,092	7,741	9.3	9.9	10.5
Idaho	13,264	13,421	12,489	13.3	13.6	15.5
Wyoming	5,783	6,201	6,048	11.3	12.0	16.6
Colorado	35,072	36,114	25,999	11.0	11.5	10.2
New Mexico	⁴ 14,204	⁴ 17,872	⁵ 15,886	⁴ 10.0	⁴ 12.8	⁵ 14.1
Arizona	33,321	30,809	27,038	10.9	10.4	12.2
Utah	17,981	18,437	15,166	10.9	11.4	12.6
Nevada	109,020	108,120	103,287	119.7	120.5	173.0
Pacific:						
Washington	45,080	46,294	41,577	10.4	10.8	11.7
Oregon	23,074	23,346	20,002	8.6	8.8	8.8
California	227,968	220,760	¹ 160,887	8.9	8.8	17.6
Alaska	6,499	6,558	3,949	13.0	13.6	11.5
Hawaii	14,982	14,062	9,649	14.4	13.8	11.1

¹Data exclude 10,555 nonlicensed marriages registered in California; see Technical notes.

²Formerly North Central Region.

³Data are incomplete.

⁴Data are premarital health examination forms issued.

⁵Data include marriage licenses issued for some counties.

Table 4. Total marriage rate by marriage order of women and men: Marriage-registration area, 1972-84

[Based on sample data. Marriages per 1,000 women or men if age-sex specific rates for a given year were constant throughout their lives. Figures for marriage order not stated have been distributed. Beginning in 1977, figures exclude data for Iowa. For a description of the marriage-registration area, see Technical notes]

Year	Total marriage rate		Total first-marriage rate		Total remarriage rate	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
1984.....	1,139.2	1,192.4	704.6	698.1	434.6	494.3
1983.....	1,131.9	1,189.4	703.0	697.4	428.9	492.0
1982.....	1,143.6	1,206.4	710.9	703.4	432.7	503.0
1981.....	1,113.9	1,218.0	687.2	711.4	426.7	506.6
1980.....	1,128.4	1,207.5	706.2	714.4	422.2	493.1
1979.....	1,130.0	1,243.2	704.4	739.4	425.6	503.8
1978.....	1,112.4	1,227.3	696.5	733.7	415.9	493.6
1977.....	1,098.4	1,213.9	687.6	727.7	410.8	486.2
1976.....	1,100.7	1,218.0	695.5	737.5	405.2	480.5
1975.....	1,125.7	1,246.2	720.8	774.4	404.9	471.8
1974.....	1,191.5	1,317.1	789.8	852.7	401.7	464.4
1973.....	1,249.1	1,382.3	843.4	920.0	405.7	462.3
1972.....	1,254.8	1,401.9	866.9	960.8	387.9	441.1

Table 5. Marriage rates by previous marital status of women and men: Marriage-registration area, 1970-84

[Based on sample data. Figures 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. Rates per 1,000 population 15 years and over in specified group enumerated as of April 1 for census years and estimated as of July 1 for all other years]

Year	Previous marital status of women			Previous marital status of men		
	Single	Divorced	Widowed	Single	Divorced	Widowed
1984.....	63.5	87.3	5.8	51.6	132.7	28.7
1983.....	63.8	91.6	6.2	51.8	142.1	30.7
1982.....	66.0	94.4	6.1	53.1	146.9	32.1
1981.....	64.9	96.3	6.5	53.8	150.8	30.8
1980.....	66.0	91.3	6.7	54.7	142.1	32.2
1979.....	67.8	104.0	7.7	56.3	165.6	35.3
1978.....	68.2	105.0	7.1	56.4	168.6	32.7
1977.....	69.2	107.3	7.6	56.7	173.4	35.3
1976.....	72.0	111.3	7.9	58.2	185.0	37.6
1975.....	75.9	117.2	8.3	61.5	189.8	40.4
1974.....	83.5	121.7	9.1	68.0	198.7	38.9
1973.....	90.9	131.0	9.3	73.9	221.3	39.3
1972.....	95.1	130.6	9.4	77.2	229.0	40.6
1971.....	93.3	132.8	9.6	75.2	230.7	42.5
1970.....	93.4	123.3	10.2	80.4	204.5	40.6

Table 6. Marriages and percent distribution of marriages by age according to previous marital status of men and women, 1984, and marriage rates by age and previous marital status of men and women, 1982-84: Marriage-registration area

[Based on sample data. For 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 age group estimated as of July 1]

Age and previous marital status	Women					Men				
	Number	Percent	Rate ¹			Number	Percent	Rate ¹		
	1984	1984	1984	1983	1982	1984	1984	1984	1983	1982
All marriages										
Total	1,904,243	100.0	51.9	52.5	54.1	1,904,243	100.0	63.1	64.1	65.8
15-19 years	290,292	15.2	38.5	40.1	43.0	111,420	5.9	13.7	14.4	15.7
15-17 years	68,989	3.6	15.3	16.3	17.9	10,308	0.5	2.2	2.2	2.6
18-19 years	221,303	11.6	74.1	75.2	81.0	101,112	5.3	30.5	31.4	33.7
20-24 years	656,129	34.6	113.3	115.9	121.7	590,569	31.0	81.2	83.9	88.0
25-29 years	416,704	21.9	128.1	126.8	130.5	486,698	25.6	118.0	117.1	120.8
30-34 years	218,414	11.5	94.7	98.1	99.7	270,029	14.2	104.9	109.4	117.9
35-39 years	126,546	6.6	75.1	74.1	74.7	161,774	8.5	104.6	106.0	104.2
40-44 years	73,512	3.9	53.1	52.8	52.4	96,253	5.1	87.9	92.7	91.5
45-49 years	42,808	2.2	38.7	38.9	38.3	60,149	3.2	73.7	78.8	73.7
50-54 years	25,878	1.4	22.3	22.7	22.1	40,685	2.1	54.8	51.3	56.1
55-59 years	17,947	0.9	12.4	12.8	13.5	30,708	1.6	40.7	45.9	47.1
60-64 years	14,166	0.7	8.0	8.8	8.5	21,662	1.1	30.3	34.8	36.8
65 years and over	18,847	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.1	34,296	1.8	14.2	15.1	15.9
First marriages ²										
Total	1,224,507	100.0	63.5	63.8	66.0	1,210,712	100.0	51.6	51.8	53.1
15-19 years	277,066	22.6	37.5	38.8	41.7	107,988	8.9	13.5	14.1	15.1
15-17 years	67,077	5.5	15.0	15.9	17.6	10,061	0.8	2.1	2.2	2.5
18-19 years	209,989	17.1	72.1	72.6	78.5	97,927	8.1	30.0	30.9	33.3
20-24 years	566,532	46.3	104.4	106.9	111.9	540,955	44.7	77.3	79.5	83.3
25-29 years	263,519	21.5	106.6	105.2	106.5	367,620	30.4	102.9	100.6	102.8
30-34 years	77,233	6.3	64.3	61.2	62.1	128,005	10.6	72.0	69.0	74.0
35-39 years	23,262	1.9	38.4	38.3	38.1	39,004	3.2	46.9	45.4	43.7
40-44 years	8,203	0.7	23.7	21.8	21.7	12,620	1.0	27.1	27.0	24.8
45-49 years	3,674	0.3	15.4	13.9	14.4	5,822	0.5	16.4	18.5	18.2
50-54 years	2,065	0.2	7.9	9.0	9.6	3,424	0.3	11.6	10.7	12.9
55-59 years	1,362	0.1	6.1	7.5	6.9	2,498	0.2	8.4	10.4	10.9
60-64 years	865	0.1	3.7	3.3	3.6	1,408	0.1	5.4	8.0	6.8
65 years and over	726	0.1	0.8	0.9	0.9	1,368	0.1	2.3	2.9	3.3
Remarriages ²										
Total	634,717	100.0	37.6	38.4	39.2	649,836	100.0	103.1	109.1	113.2
15-19 years	5,999	0.9	*	*	*	843	0.1	*	*	*
20-24 years	72,496	11.4	248.3	244.4	260.6	32,309	5.0	229.1	241.8	292.8
25-29 years	143,960	22.7	193.8	186.8	192.8	107,321	16.5	215.9	223.1	229.8
30-34 years	137,207	21.6	127.3	140.0	137.5	136,265	21.0	178.1	206.0	212.4
35-39 years	101,421	16.0	95.3	92.3	92.1	120,310	18.5	172.1	175.8	168.5
40-44 years	64,331	10.1	62.9	63.3	62.6	82,394	12.7	133.3	143.4	148.3
45-49 years	38,595	6.1	45.1	46.9	45.2	53,436	8.2	118.2	120.8	108.7
50-54 years	23,520	3.7	26.5	26.1	24.8	36,775	5.7	83.4	77.0	82.1
55-59 years	16,315	2.6	13.4	13.7	14.6	27,845	4.3	61.7	66.3	67.6
60-64 years	13,115	2.1	8.7	9.7	9.4	19,871	3.1	44.8	49.1	53.5
65 years and over	17,758	2.8	2.2	2.2	2.2	32,467	5.0	18.1	18.9	19.8
Previously widowed ^{2,3}	54,797	100.0	5.8	6.2	6.1	50,189	100.0	28.7	30.7	32.1
15-24 years	1,342	2.4	45.2	51.3	49.0	264	0.5	124.6	149.3	138.6
25-44 years	15,572	28.4				6,716	13.4			
45-64 years	25,026	45.7				21,964	43.8			
65 years and over	12,857	23.5	1.9	1.9	1.9	21,245	42.3	16.4	16.8	17.6

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 6. Marriages and percent distribution of marriages by age according to previous marital status of men and women, 1984, and marriage rates by age and previous marital status of men and women, 1982-84: Marriage-registration area—Con.

Based on sample data. For 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 married 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 age group estimated as of July 1]

Age and previous marital status	Women					Men				
	Number	Percent	Rate ¹			Number	Percent	Rate ¹		
	1984	1984	1984	1983	1982	1984	1984	1984	1983	1982
Remarriages—Con.										
Previously divorced ^{2,3}	490,429	100.0	87.3	91.6	94.4	508,944	100.0	132.7	142.1	146.9
15-19 years	5,112	1.0	*	*	*	720	0.1	*	*	*
20-24 years	60,615	12.4	241.5	240.4	263.6	26,997	5.3	234.8	239.5	275.8
25-29 years	119,392	24.3	204.1	204.4	205.0	90,838	17.8	211.7	214.4	220.2
30-34 years	114,168	23.3	132.0	145.3	144.4	115,471	22.7	173.1	202.0	208.9
35-39 years	83,876	17.1	100.3	99.3	98.0	102,405	20.1	173.9	172.6	166.7
40-44 years	51,260	10.5	66.9	67.0	71.0	68,675	13.5	130.1	137.7	148.3
45-49 years	27,686	5.6	49.5	50.8	51.8	43,476	8.5	117.8	126.6	113.6
50-54 years	13,913	2.8	33.0	32.4	31.1	26,671	5.2	78.2	77.2	85.3
55-59 years	7,608	1.6	17.6	18.9	20.6	17,114	3.4	58.8	67.1	70.5
60-64 years	4,225	0.9	12.3	12.9	12.3	9,444	1.9	45.8	49.3	53.3
65 years and over	2,574	0.5	4.8	4.9	5.3	7,133	1.4	23.9	26.2	26.0
Not stated if widowed or divorced	89,491	...	...	...	...	90,703	...	...	...	...
Not stated if previously married										
Total	45,019	...	...	...	...	43,695	...	...	...	...

¹All rates exclude data for Iowa.

²Figures exclude data for Iowa; these data are included in "Not stated if previously married."

³Data exclude remarriages in Michigan, Ohio, and South Carolina. These data are included in "Not stated if widowed or divorced."

Table 7. Median and mean age of bride and groom by previous marital status: Marriage-registration area, 1963-84

[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	Previous marital status of bride					Previous marital status of groom				
	Total ¹	First marriage	Remarriage			Total ¹	First marriage	Remarriage		
			Total ²	Previously divorced	Previously widowed			Total ²	Previously divorced	Previously widowed
Median age										
1984	25.0	22.8	33.3	32.5	54.2	27.2	24.6	36.8	35.9	62.4
1983	24.8	22.5	32.9	32.0	54.0	27.0	24.4	36.2	35.3	62.0
1982	24.4	22.3	32.5	31.6	54.1	26.7	24.1	35.7	34.9	61.7
1981	24.1	22.0	32.1	31.2	53.6	26.3	23.9	35.3	34.4	61.0
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
Mean age										
1984	27.8	23.8	35.9	34.0	52.8	30.5	25.7	39.7	37.7	60.8
1983	27.6	23.5	35.6	33.7	52.6	30.3	25.5	39.3	37.3	60.2
1982	27.3	23.3	35.3	33.4	52.6	30.0	25.3	39.0	37.0	59.9
1981	27.0	23.0	35.0	33.0	52.2	29.8	25.0	38.7	36.6	59.5
1980	26.7	22.7	35.0	32.8	52.2	29.4	24.8	38.7	36.5	59.6
1979	26.7	22.5	35.4	32.8	53.4	29.5	24.6	38.9	36.4	60.0
1978	26.3	22.3	34.9	32.6	51.4	29.1	24.4	38.5	36.2	58.4
1977	26.2	22.2	35.0	32.5	51.8	29.0	24.3	38.6	36.1	58.9
1976	26.1	22.1	35.3	32.5	51.8	28.9	24.1	38.8	36.2	58.6
1975	25.9	21.9	35.5	32.7	51.2	28.7	24.0	39.1	36.3	58.2
1974	25.6	21.7	35.7	32.5	51.0	28.3	23.8	39.4	36.3	58.2
1973	25.5	21.7	36.0	32.8	51.0	28.1	23.8	39.6	36.4	58.1
1972	25.2	21.6	36.2	32.9	50.7	27.9	23.7	39.8	36.5	58.0
1971	25.1	21.6	36.4	32.8	50.6	27.8	23.7	40.3	36.6	57.7
1970	25.1	21.6	36.6	32.8	50.3	27.8	23.8	40.6	36.7	57.7
1969	25.1	21.6	36.9	33.0	50.4	27.7	23.8	40.9	36.9	57.7
1968	25.0	21.6	36.9	33.2	49.9	27.7	23.8	41.0	37.1	57.0
1967	25.1	21.6	37.4	33.3	49.7	28.0	24.0	41.4	37.4	56.7
1966	25.2	21.5	37.6	33.6	49.7	28.0	24.0	41.6	37.6	57.0
1965	25.2	21.6	37.7	33.6	49.7	28.1	24.0	42.0	37.8	56.7
1964	25.3	21.4	37.8	33.1	50.0	28.3	24.0	42.1	37.8	57.0
1963	25.2	21.5	37.7	33.5	49.3	28.2	24.1	42.3	37.8	56.8

¹Figures include previous marital status not stated.

²Figures include divorced or widowed not stated.

Table 8. Median and mean interval to remarriage in years by previous marital status of bride and groom: Reporting States, 1970-84

[Based on sample data]

Year	Previous marital status of bride			Previous marital status of groom		
	All remarriages ¹	Previously divorced	Previously widowed	All remarriages ¹	Previously divorced	Previously widowed
	Median interval					
1984.....	2.4	2.2	4.5	1.9	2.0	2.1
1983.....	2.3	2.1	4.3	1.8	1.8	2.0
1982.....	2.1	1.9	4.2	1.7	1.7	2.0
1981.....	2.0	1.9	4.1	1.6	1.6	2.0
1980.....	2.0	1.8	4.1	1.6	1.6	2.0
1979.....	1.9	1.7	4.3	1.5	1.4	2.0
1978.....	1.8	1.7	3.9	1.4	1.4	1.9
1977.....	1.7	1.5	4.1	1.3	1.3	1.9
1976.....	1.6	1.4	3.7	1.2	1.1	1.8
1975.....	1.6	1.3	3.7	1.2	1.1	1.7
1974.....	1.5	1.2	3.6	1.2	1.1	1.7
1973.....	1.5	1.2	3.7	1.1	1.0	1.8
1972.....	1.4	1.1	3.6	1.1	1.0	1.9
1971.....	1.4	1.1	3.6	1.1	1.0	1.8
1970.....	1.3	1.0	3.6	1.0	0.9	1.8
	Mean interval					
1984.....	3.6	3.4	6.2	3.2	3.1	3.7
1983.....	3.5	3.3	6.1	3.0	3.0	3.5
1982.....	3.4	3.1	6.1	2.9	2.8	3.4
1981.....	3.3	3.0	6.0	2.8	2.7	3.5
1980.....	3.2	2.9	6.0	2.7	2.6	3.5
1979.....	3.2	2.9	6.0	2.6	2.5	3.5
1978.....	3.1	2.8	5.7	2.5	2.5	3.3
1977.....	3.0	2.7	5.8	2.5	2.3	3.4
1976.....	3.0	2.6	5.6	2.4	2.3	3.3
1975.....	2.9	2.5	5.6	2.4	2.3	3.2
1974.....	2.9	2.5	5.5	2.4	2.2	3.3
1973.....	2.9	2.6	5.5	2.3	2.2	3.2
1972.....	3.0	2.5	5.7	2.3	2.2	3.4
1971.....	3.0	2.6	5.5	2.4	2.3	3.3
1970.....	2.9	2.5	5.5	2.3	2.2	3.2

¹Figures include divorced or widowed not stated.

NOTE: In 1970 data on interval between marriages were reported by 18 registration States (California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming). By 1984, nine additional States were reporting interval between marriages (Colorado, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Oregon, and Virginia).

Table 9. Marriages and mean age at marriage by race and previous marital status of bride and groom: 34 reporting States, 1984

[Based on sample data]

Race	Total	First marriage	Remarriages				Previous marital status not stated	
			Total	Previously divorced ¹	Previously widowed ¹	Widowed or divorced not stated		
Bride								
			Number					
All races	1,246,487	782,189	446,495	376,122	42,308	28,065	17,803	
White	1,066,863	658,719	397,838	336,042	37,586	24,210	10,306	
Black	130,134	95,145	34,028	26,945	3,647	3,436	961	
Other races	18,046	13,007	4,873	4,235	318	320	166	
Race not stated	31,444	15,318	9,756	8,900	757	99	6,370	
Groom								
All races	1,246,487	776,523	453,263	387,783	38,386	27,094	16,701	
White	1,065,241	655,547	400,189	343,460	33,815	22,914	9,505	
Black	134,544	94,199	39,347	31,883	3,587	3,877	998	
Other races	16,301	12,218	3,912	3,395	281	236	171	
Race not stated	30,401	14,559	9,815	9,045	703	67	6,027	
Bride								
			Mean age					
All races	27.8	23.3	35.7	33.8	53.0	35.1	25.0	
White	27.7	23.0	35.5	33.6	53.4	34.7	25.1	
Black	28.3	25.1	37.2	35.4	49.8	37.5	27.4	
Other races	27.8	25.2	34.9	34.2	44.4	34.6	27.2	
Race not stated	27.4	23.7	35.3	33.9	52.3	36.3	24.3	
Groom								
All races	30.5	25.3	39.5	37.4	60.8	39.0	26.9	
White	30.5	25.1	39.3	37.2	61.3	38.7	27.0	
Black	30.9	26.8	40.7	38.9	56.9	40.7	29.2	
Other races	30.1	27.3	38.8	37.6	54.3	37.6	31.5	
Race not stated	30.1	25.6	39.0	37.3	61.3	29.9	26.4	

¹Data exclude remarriages in South Carolina. These data are included in "Widowed or divorced not stated."

NOTE: Of the 42 States in the marriage-registration area in 1984, 34 reported race of bride and groom—Alabama, Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Those registration areas that did not report race are California, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, and Ohio.

Table 10. Marriages and percent distribution by educational attainment of bride and groom, according to previous marital status, and mean years of school completed: 21 reporting States, 1984

Previous marital status	Years of school completed								Mean years of school completed
	Total	0-8 years	9-11 years	12 years	13-15 years	16 years	17 years	Not stated	
Number									
Bride									
Total.....	778,066	18,985	88,075	281,777	155,189	86,289	39,057	108,694	13.4
Single.....	509,141	8,527	53,876	176,332	106,548	68,138	26,762	68,958	13.6
Previously married.....	262,846	10,442	34,102	105,128	48,462	18,058	12,245	34,409	13.0
Divorced.....	233,515	7,003	29,932	95,230	44,512	16,494	11,327	29,017	13.1
Widowed.....	26,379	3,350	3,927	9,375	3,662	1,460	837	3,758	12.1
Widowed or divorced not stated.....	2,952	89	243	523	288	104	71	1,634	...
Not stated.....	6,079	16	97	317	179	93	50	5,327	...
Groom									
Total.....	778,066	27,637	79,302	273,956	139,191	91,107	58,291	108,582	13.4
Single.....	505,249	12,100	50,464	181,848	92,226	65,123	35,695	67,793	13.6
Previously married.....	267,079	15,509	28,769	91,902	46,893	25,904	22,551	35,551	13.2
Divorced.....	240,709	10,737	25,850	84,835	44,194	23,652	20,858	30,583	13.4
Widowed.....	23,760	4,677	2,767	6,579	2,609	2,161	1,623	3,344	12.0
Widowed or divorced not stated.....	2,610	95	152	488	90	91	70	1,624	...
Not stated.....	5,738	28	69	206	72	80	45	5,238	...
Percent distribution									
Bride									
Total.....	100.0	2.8	13.2	42.1	23.2	12.9	5.8	...	...
Single.....	100.0	1.9	12.2	40.1	24.2	15.5	6.1	...	...
Previously married.....	100.0	4.6	14.9	46.0	21.2	7.9	5.4	...	...
Divorced.....	100.0	3.4	14.6	46.6	21.8	8.1	5.5	...	...
Widowed.....	100.0	14.8	17.4	41.4	16.2	6.5	3.7	...	...
Groom									
Total.....	100.0	4.1	11.8	40.9	20.8	13.6	8.7	...	...
Single.....	100.0	2.8	11.5	41.6	21.1	14.9	8.2	...	...
Previously married.....	100.0	6.7	12.4	39.7	20.3	11.2	9.7	...	...
Divorced.....	100.0	5.1	12.3	40.4	21.0	11.3	9.9	...	...
Widowed.....	100.0	22.9	13.6	32.2	12.8	10.6	7.9	...	...

NOTE: Of the 42 States in the marriage-registration area in 1984, 21 reported education of bride and groom—California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

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.

Sources of data

Figures in tables 1–3 are based on totals reported by States and counties. Figures in tables 4–10 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 by States participating in the marriage-registration area (MRA). In 1984 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 1974 the MRA consisted of the District of Columbia and all States except nine; Colorado joined in 1979. Marriages performed in the MRA included 80 percent of the marriages registered in the United States in both 1974 and 1984.

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 to report periodically 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 77,391 in 1984. NCHS has not included the nonlicensed California marriages in 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, and 100 percent of these records were used by NCHS. For all other States in the MRA, records were sampled at rates designed to give a sample of at least 2,500 for each State. All records were included in the samples for Alaska, Delaware, and the District of Columbia, where totals of less than 5,000 marriages had been expected, and for New York City. All other States were sampled at 5, 10, 20, or 50 percent, depending on the number

of marriages in the State. The total sample size, including records supplied through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program, was 758,222 marriages. Sampling errors shown in table I are for frequencies that equal a specified percent of the total MRA marriages.

Nonlicensed marriages registered in California are not available for inclusion in the MRA marriage sample. The 5-percent sample of California marriages for 1984 was drawn only from licensed marriages. The corresponding weights for sample records were based on these totals. Because 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. The sampling error is a measure of variation that occurs 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.

Population denominators

Marriage rates for the MRA by age, sex, and previous marital status for 1983 and 1984 are based on unpublished

Table I. Approximate sampling errors of estimated number of marriages shown in table 6: Marriage-registration area, 1984

Percent of total MRA marriages in subclass	Sampling error
1 or 99	413
2 or 98	581
3 or 97	708
4 or 96	813
5 or 95	904
7 or 93	1,059
10 or 90	1,245
15 or 85	1,482
20 or 80	1,660
25 or 75	1,797
50	2,075

HOW TO USE THE SAMPLING ERROR TABLE: The total number of MRA marriages in 1984 (excluding nonlicensed California marriages) was 1,904,243. For any estimate of marriages shown in table 6, determine its percent of the total MRA marriages. 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 the year. For example, in 1984 there were an estimated 634,717 remarriages of women, or 33.3 percent of all 1984 MRA marriages. Because 33.3 is between 25 and 50 percent, the sampling error is between 1,797 and 2,075, or, by interpolation, 1,889 remarriages. The chances are about 68 out of 100 that the actual number of 1984 remarriages is between 632,828 and 636,606 ($634,717 \pm 1,889$).

population estimates as of July 1 prepared by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.² National and State rates for 1984 are based on population estimates as of July 1 published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.³

Computation of percent distributions, medians, and means

Figures for marriage order and previous marital status not stated were subtracted from figures for marriages used as de-

nominators before percent distributions and medians were computed. Computations of median and mean age at marriage were based on tabulations of ungrouped data.

Nonreporting bias

Age was more than 99 percent complete on marriage records, but in 1984 marriage order for brides was not stated on 2 percent of the MRA records. No allocation of missing data was done before rates were calculated. The percent not stated for grooms was similar.

²Unpublished estimates by marital status prepared by the U.S. Bureau of the Census consistent with "State population estimates, by age and components of change, 1980 to 1984," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 970.

³U.S. Bureau of the Census: State population estimates, by age and components of change, 1980 to 1984. *Current Population Reports*. Series P-25, No. 970. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1985.

This report represents summary tabulations from the final marriage statistics for 1984. More detailed tabulations for 1984 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.

Suggested citation

National Center for Health Statistics: Advance report of final marriage statistics, 1984. *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*. Vol. 36, No. 2, Supp. (2). DHHS Pub. No. (PHS) 87-1120. Public Health Service. Hyattsville, Md., June 3, 1987.

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