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VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Summary Report

Final Divorce Statistics, 1972

FROM THE

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

Divorces increased in 1972 for the 10th consecutive year. Provisional data indicate a continued upward trend through 1974.

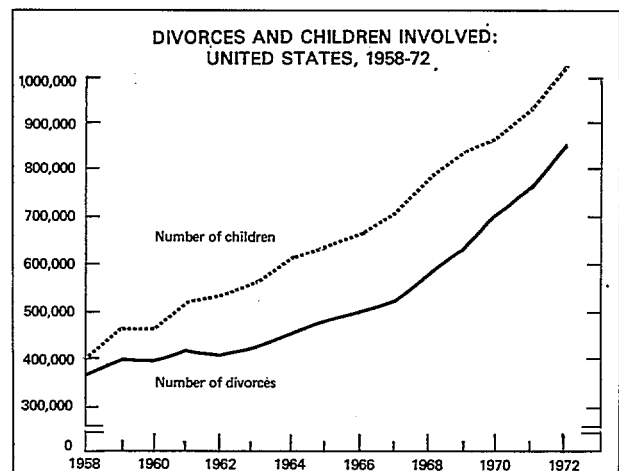
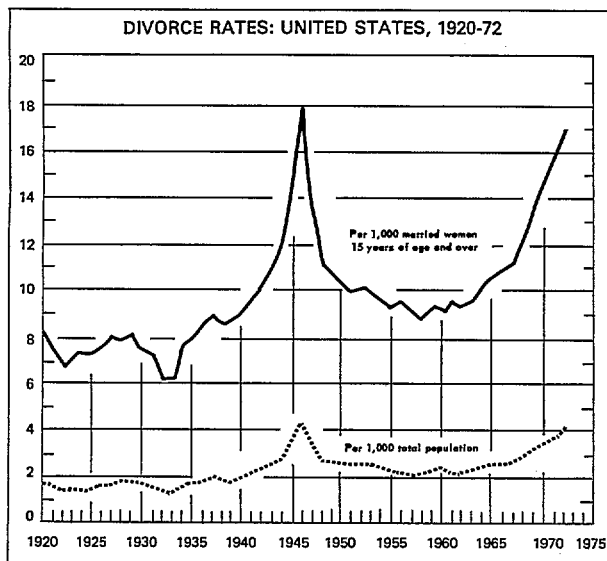
For 1972 the national divorce total including annulments was 845,000, 9.3 percent above the 1971 figure (773,000) and more than twice the total observed 10 years earlier (413,000 in 1962). Divorce rates increased correspondingly. The divorce rate per 1,000 total population was 4.1 in 1972, 3.7 in 1971, and 2.2 in 1962. Similarly, the rate per 1,000 married women was 17.0, 15.8, and 9.4 for the respective years.

The number of divorces and the divorce rate per 1,000 total population increased from 1971 to 1972 in all regions and divisions for which information is available and in almost all States (the number and rate declined in Arizona and the rate decreased

in Delaware and did not change in West Virginia and California).

For the divorce-registration area (DRA), the median duration of marriage at time of decree was 6.7 years for the third consecutive year (table 3). This median was higher in 1972 than in 1971 in nine reporting States, lower in 17 States, and showed no change in three States.

The number of children under 18 years of age whose parents were divorced was 1,021,000 in 1972 (table 4). This is the first year that more than 1 million children were affected by divorce. This number was 7.9 percent above that of the preceding year (946,000 in 1971) and 92 percent above the comparable figure 10 years earlier (532,000 in 1962). In spite of the growth in the total number of children, their average number per decree was the lowest since 1960, 1.20 compared with 1.22 children per decree in 1970 and 1971 and 1.36 in 1964, the highest average number of children per decree on record. The distribution of divorces by the reported number of children under 18 years of age is shown in table 5 for the DRA and every reporting State.



MONTHLY VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

This report presents summary tabulations from the final divorce statistics for 1972. More detailed tabulations for 1972 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 4. ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CHILDREN INVOLVED IN DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS: UNITED STATES, 1954-72

[Refers only to events occurring within the United States. For 1960-72 estimated from frequencies based on sample; for all other years estimated from total counts]

Year	Estimated number of children involved	Average number of children per decree	Year	Estimated number of children involved	Average number of children per decree
1972 ¹	1,021,000	1.20	1952 ²	562,000	1.31
1971 ¹	946,000	1.22	1962 ²	532,000	1.29
1970 ¹	870,000	1.22	1961 ²	516,000	1.25
1969	840,000	1.31	1960	463,000	1.18
1968	784,000	1.34	1959	468,000	1.18
			1958	398,000	1.08
1967	701,000	1.34	1957	379,000	0.99
1966	669,000	1.34	1956	361,000	0.95
1965	630,000	1.32	1955	347,000	0.92
1964 ²	613,000	1.36	1954	341,000	0.90

¹Estimates are based on DRA frequencies instead of the 15 States previously used.
²Revised.

Table 5. DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN REPORTED: DIVORCE-REGISTRATION AREA AND EACH REGISTRATION STATE, 1972

[Based on sample data. Data relate to children under 18 years of age except as noted]

Area	All divorces and annulments	Number of children reported						Not stated
		None	1	2	3	4	5 or more	
Divorce-registration area	496,437	189,957	121,786	69,839	43,031	19,103	12,233	20,489
Alabama	19,020	6,460	4,640	3,000	1,290	690	280	2,660
Alaska	2,151	885	513	402	170	91	63	27
California	110,500	44,740	25,790	19,830	8,530	3,030	1,780	6,750
Connecticut	8,412	2,670	1,852	1,750	949	424	266	502
Georgia	22,015	8,950	5,605	3,835	1,855	695	355	920
Hawaii	3,895	1,315	956	774	427	209	181	35
Idaho ¹	3,846	1,690	896	664	334	132	82	68
Illinois	43,620	17,130	10,490	7,290	3,920	1,730	1,370	1,890
Iowa	8,466	2,832	2,096	1,636	854	420	320	308
Kansas	9,928	4,026	2,334	1,766	872	433	266	196
Kentucky	11,970	4,940	2,620	1,825	845	545	310	375
Maryland	11,825	4,225	2,525	1,950	815	400	280	1,250
Michigan	24,600	8,830	5,720	4,780	2,670	1,230	760	490
Missouri	20,625	9,125	5,325	3,425	1,625	625	405	105
Montana	3,619	1,450	874	627	327	145	107	59
Nebraska	4,428	1,590	1,122	590	473	193	152	10
New York	40,820	15,030	10,170	7,770	3,720	1,640	1,020	1,530
Ohio	44,780	16,280	11,770	8,730	4,030	2,120	1,550	260
Oregon	10,085	3,970	2,500	1,680	870	325	180	580
Pennsylvania	27,490	9,020	6,810	5,420	2,840	1,110	630	1,660
Rhode Island	2,018	667	463	454	215	90	70	59
South Carolina	7,642	2,922	2,036	1,356	710	324	136	78
South Dakota	1,633	567	420	300	199	76	70	1
Tennessee	20,590	8,635	5,555	3,325	1,505	710	430	430
Utah	4,884	1,672	1,110	832	524	223	182	286
Vermont	1,253	366	271	276	157	85	66	32
Virginia	14,170	5,605	3,860	2,595	1,160	470	395	65
Wisconsin	10,196	3,346	2,444	2,162	1,112	612	483	32
Wyoming	2,236	921	549	415	189	103	39	20

¹Data are for number of children affected by decree.

MONTHLY VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

TECHNICAL NOTES

Place and Time of Occurrence

Divorces and annulments are shown in all tables by State where decree was granted, which is also the State of legal residence of the plaintiff. The time of divorce or annulment is based on the date the decree was granted.

Sources of Data

Figures in tables 1 and 2 are based on totals of divorce or annulment decrees tabulated and reported by States and counties. Figures in tables 3 and 5 are based on probability samples of divorce and annulment records that were coded and tabulated in this office.

Figures in table 4 were estimated by using several methods. Estimates for 1954-59 were prepared on the assumption that the average number of children per decree for the Nation was identical with that for the reporting States. The figure for 1960 was based on a nationwide sample. Figures for 1961-72 were prepared by multiplying the national divorce total by the average number of children per decree found in the combined States with satisfactory reporting of the number of children. There were 16 such States in 1961-69, all 28 registration States in 1970, and all 29 registration States in 1971-72.

SAMPLING ERROR OF ESTIMATED FREQUENCY EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGE OF AREA TOTAL: DIVORCE-REGISTRATION AREA, 1970-72 AND THE 29 REGISTRATION STATES, 1972

[Figures for Alaska, Hawaii, Montana, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming have no sampling errors because all records were tabulated]

Area and year	Sampling error of estimated frequency expressed as percentage of area total			
	1 or 99	10 or 90	25 or 75	50
Divorce-registration area:				
1972 (29 States)-----	189	569	821	948
1971 (29 States)-----	176	532	767	886
1970 (28 States)-----	171	517	746	861
Registration States, 1972:				
Alabama-----	41	124	179	206
Alaska-----	...	...	...	...
California-----	99	300	432	499
Connecticut-----	9	28	40	46
Georgia-----	30	89	129	148
Hawaii-----	...	...	...	...
Idaho-----	6	19	27	31
Illinois-----	62	187	269	311
Iowa-----	9	28	40	46
Kansas-----	10	30	43	50
Kentucky-----	22	65	94	109
Maryland-----	21	64	93	107
Michigan-----	71	213	307	354
Missouri-----	29	86	125	144
Montana-----	...	...	...	...
Nebraska-----	7	20	29	35
New York-----	60	182	265	303
Ohio-----	63	190	275	317
Oregon-----	24	72	104	121
Pennsylvania-----	49	149	215	249
Rhode Island-----	...	...	...	...
South Carolina-----	9	26	38	44
South Dakota-----	...	...	...	...
Tennessee-----	29	86	124	144
Utah-----	7	21	30	35
Vermont-----	...	...	...	...
Virginia-----	24	71	103	119
Wisconsin-----	10	31	45	52
Wyoming-----	...	...	...	...

Divorce Samples

Sample data used to estimate the 1972 frequencies in table 5 and the frequencies used to compute median duration of marriage for 1970-72 in table 3 were selected by using four different sampling rates, depending on the size of the annual divorce total for a State. The rates were 10, 20, 50, or 100 percent of the divorces granted in a State. Samples were selected only from the States that participated in the divorce-registration area.

Sampling errors are given in the table for the estimates which constitute 1, 10, 25, 50, 75, 90, and 99 percent of the annual divorce totals. These sampling errors are given for the divorce-registration area and each registration State for 1972 data and only for the divorce-registration area for 1970 and 1971 data.

SYMBOLS USED IN TABLES

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

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