

Duration of Marriage Before Divorce

United States

An analysis of trends and patterns of divorce according to duration of marriage at time of decree. Discusses selected characteristics of divorces and divorcing persons in relation to duration of marriage to divorce.

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DURATION OF MARRIAGE BEFORE DIVORCE: UNITED STATES

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INTRODUCTION

From its inception, marriage is subject to the risk of disruption. In the early years of marriage the greatest risk of disruption is by divorce; however, this risk declines in the later years when the risk of death of a spouse surpasses it.

Although information is not generally available on the duration of marriages dissolved by death, it is possible to obtain a fairly definitive characterization of marriages that end in divorce according to the duration of marriage at the time the divorce decree becomes final. Data on the duration of marriage, especially on the median duration to divorce, provide information that can be related to other variables associated with marital disruption by divorce. Significant among these are the number of children involved in divorce, the ages of husband and wife at marriage, and the marriage order of each spouse.

Information recorded on certificates of divorce is used to generate the statistics needed for analysis of the duration of marriage at the time of decree. States that participate in the divorce-registration area enable the National Center for Health Statistics to develop statistical information for a significant portion of the United States. A description of the divorce-registration area and technical notes on methods for data preparation are contained in the appendix.

Generally, data on the duration of marriage to divorce are more completely recorded than those for any other characteristic of divorce. In 1977, information used to calculate duration

was stated on more than 99 percent of all divorce records obtained from the States in the divorce-registration area. Moreover, statistics on duration are available for 81 years of the period from 1867 to 1977.

Each year, the National Center for Health Statistics prepares several cross-tabulations on duration of marriage to divorce by other selected variables. These cross-tabulations show the variation in duration of marriage to divorce for the various categories of the divorcing population. Most of the analysis presented in this report is based on these tabulations.

In addition to the data obtained through the vital statistics system, information on the duration of marriage is also collected by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, particularly in the decennial censuses. Census figures provide information on the duration of marriage of currently married persons at the time of enumeration. These data can be used to obtain divorce rates by duration of marriage.

SUMMARY

Recently the national divorce rate has increased. Meanwhile, the median duration of marriage at the time of decree has declined from 7.5 years in 1963 to 6.5 years in 1974-76. States with high divorce rates generally have short median duration to divorce, and vice versa.

Divorce rates by duration of marriage at the time of decree were estimated for first marriages of wives in the United States in 1970. The rate was highest for first marriages that lasted 3 years

(34.3 divorces per 1,000 first-married women in that duration interval) and declined with increasing duration to 1.0 divorces per 1,000 women in the interval of 35 years or more duration.

Information on the date of separation, reported by a limited number of States, permits tabulation of the duration of marriage to separation and the duration of separation to decree. In 1977, for the reporting States combined, the median duration of marriage at time of separation (for those couples divorcing in 1977) was 4.9 years. The median duration of separation at the time of decree was 1.1 years in the reporting States combined, and for approximately 75 percent of the couples this duration was less than 2 years.

On the average, the more times a divorcing person has been married, the less the elapsed time between marriage and divorce. In 1977, the median duration of marriage at the time of decree was 7.5 years for husbands married once, 4.8 years for husbands married twice, and 3.5 years for those married three times or more. For wives, the medians were similar.

When first marriages and remarriages are considered together, divorcing husbands and wives who married in their twenties tended to have longer marriage durations than divorcing persons who married at older ages. For divorcing husbands married in their teens, the median duration in 1977 was 7.2 years; the median increased to 7.9 years for those married at 20-24 years of age and then declined consistently with increasing age to 3.4 years for those who were married at 45 years of age and over. For wives, the median duration was greatest for those married under 20 years of age.

The median duration of marriage at the time of divorce increased with the number of reported children under 18 years of age. Although a general decline of the median duration of marriage at divorce has recently occurred, the median duration has increased for divorcing couples with two children and with three children or more. For the former, the median duration of marriage at decree lengthened from 8.9 years in 1961 to 10.1 years in 1977. For the latter group, the median increased from 12.1 to 14.2 years over the same period.

TRENDS AND VARIATION

Trends in Duration to Divorce

For most of the years between 1867 and 1977, data are available for the United States or portions thereof to calculate the median duration of marriage at time of decree (table 1). As shown in figure 1, considerable fluctuation has occurred in the median duration of marriage over this 111-year period. The median duration has ranged between 5.8 and 8.3 years and the trend has changed directions several times. The median durations for 1870-72 were almost the same as those for 1969-72 (6.9 years in 1870, 1872, and 1969; 6.7 years in 1871 and 1970-72).

In the 1870's and 1880's the median duration increased. It reached the highest level during the 1887-1905 period; during these years the median was 8.0 years or higher, with a maximum of 8.3 years occurring in 1889, 1891, 1900, and 1901. Although information on duration was not collected during the years from 1907 to 1921, the median duration of marriage to divorce did change from 7.9 years in 1906 to 6.6 years in 1922. It increased again during the 1920's, particularly as the Depression started. The second period when data were not collected, 1933-47, covered the Depression and World War II years. During this period the change was comparatively small, dropping from 7.1 years in 1932 to 6.4 years in 1948. The median for the reporting States combined reached an all-time low in the early 1950's, particularly in 1950 (5.8 years) and 1951 (6.0 years).

From 1950 to 1977, the median duration of marriage to divorce rapidly increased to a level of 7.5 years in 1963 and then decreased to 6.5-6.6 years in 1973-77. The median ran counter to the trend in the divorce rate, which declined from a peak in 1946 to a low in the late 1950's and then began to increase in 1963 (table A).

Since 1953, the third quartile of the duration of marriage to divorce followed the same trend as the median duration. The third quartile increased from 12.0 years in 1953 to 14.9 years in 1963 and then declined to 12.9 in 1976 (table A). The first quartile did not show any clear trend; in 1959-77 it oscillated between 3.2 and

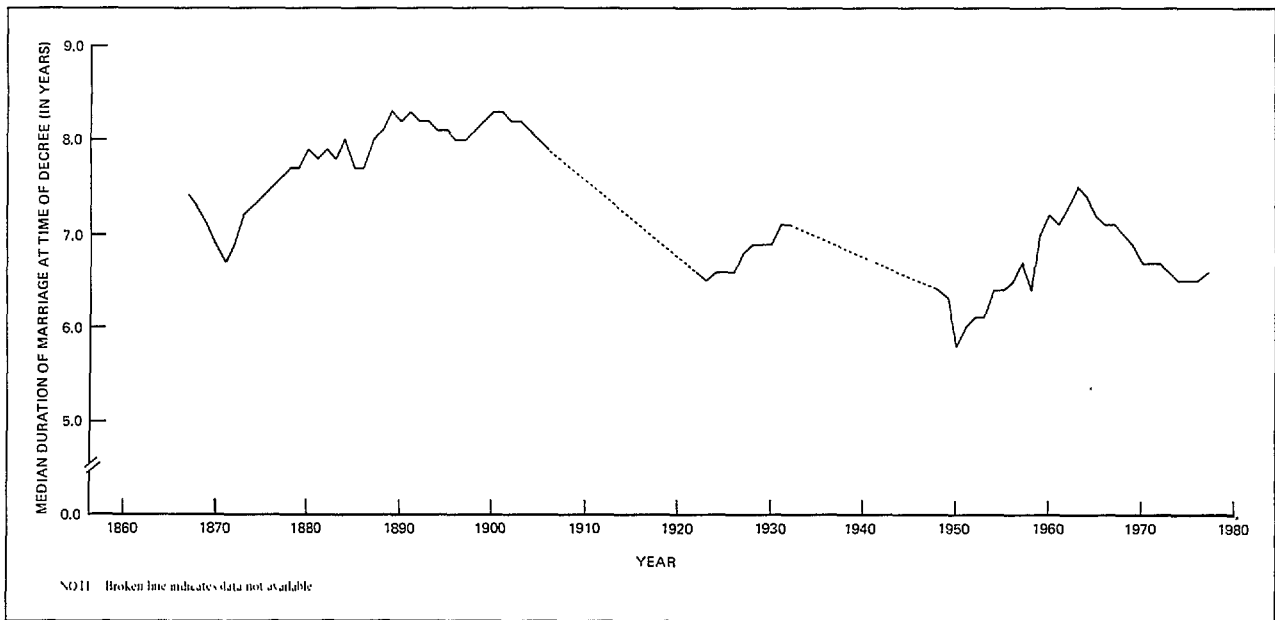


Figure 1. Median duration of marriage at time of decree: Total reporting States, 1867-1977

3.4 years. Some variations in these indexes may be caused by the changes in the number of reporting States, but the trends continued in the years when the number of reporting States did not change (1952-56, 1963-67, and 1971-77) indicating that the data give a reasonable representation of divorce behavior in the United States.

For divorces granted in the reporting States combined during the years 1950-77, the percent distributions by duration of marriage to time of decree are shown in table 2. Recently, the modal duration interval was 2 years; however, in the early 1950's it was 1 year. When the divorce rate was increasing and the median duration was declining (1963-76), the percent for the combined intervals of 1-4 years and 5-9 years showed an increase; however, the intervals of 10-14 and 15-19 years declined.

The trend in the cumulative percent distribution of divorces by duration for 1950-77 is shown in figure 2. The proportion of marriages that lasted less than 5 years declined from the middle 1950's to the middle 1960's and then increased, although the latter increase was much less pronounced than the prior decline.

Duration of Marriage at Annulment

Among those marriages dissolved by court decree, a considerable difference occurred between the duration of marriages that ended by absolute divorce and those by annulment. Duration data for the two types of decrees have been tabulated separately for the years 1951 through 1959. For all reporting States combined, the annual median duration at the time of annulment varied from 1.0 to 1.2 years over this 9-year period; however, the median duration at the time of absolute divorce varied from 5.8 to 7.1 years. Thus the duration of marriage at the time of divorce was about 5 times longer than that at the time of annulment. Annulments comprise an insignificant fraction of all judicial dissolutions of marriage, varying in recent years from 1.1 to 1.9 percent of the combined totals for all reporting States combined. Hence the overall duration of marriage at the time of its disruption by judicial decree is always similar to that at the time of absolute divorce.

Geographic Variation

Individual States show large differences in the yearly fluctuations of the median duration

Table A. Median and quartile duration of marriage at time of decree for the total of reporting States, and the national divorce rate: 1948-77

[Figures for 1948-59 are based on complete counts; figures for 1960-77 are based on sample data]

Year decree granted	Number of reporting States	Duration of marriage at time of decree (in years)			National divorce rate per 1,000 population
		First quartile	Median	Third quartile ¹	
1977.....	29	3.4	6.6	12.9	5.0
1976.....	29	3.3	6.5	12.9	5.0
1975.....	29	3.3	6.5	13.1	4.9
1974.....	29	3.3	6.5	13.3	4.6
1973.....	29	3.3	6.6	13.6	4.4
1972.....	29	3.2	6.7	13.6	4.1
1971.....	29	3.2	6.7	13.8	3.7
1970.....	28	3.3	6.7	13.7	3.5
1969.....	28	3.2	6.9	14.1	3.2
1968.....	26	3.2	7.0	14.3	2.9
1967.....	22	3.2	7.1	14.6	2.6
1966.....	22	3.2	7.1	14.6	2.5
1965.....	22	3.2	7.2	14.8	2.5
1964.....	22	3.3	7.4	14.6	2.4
1963.....	22	3.4	7.5	14.9	2.3
1962.....	21	3.4	7.3	14.5	2.2
1961.....	20	3.3	7.1	14.0	2.3
1960.....	² 50	3.3	7.2	13.8	2.2
1959.....	16	3.2	7.0	13.5	2.2
1958.....	12	2.8	6.4	12.6	2.1
1957.....	24	3.0	6.7	12.7	2.2
1956.....	23	2.9	6.5	12.4	2.3
1955.....	23	2.9	6.4	12.3	2.3
1954.....	23	2.9	6.4	12.1	2.4
1953.....	23	2.9	6.1	12.0	2.5
1952.....	23	2.9	6.1	12.0	2.5
1951.....	19	3.0	6.0	12.3	2.5
1950.....	16	2.8	5.8	12.1	2.6
1949.....	12	2.9	6.3	13.1	2.7
1948.....	12	2.8	¹ 6.4	13.2	2.8

¹Computed from grouped data.

²Includes the District of Columbia.

of marriage to divorce (table 3). In 1966, for example, the median duration increased in the majority of States despite a decline in the duration for the total divorce-registration area (DRA). This situation occurred when the increases were smaller than the declines in the aggregate.

The distribution of divorces by duration of marriage is summarized in table B, where

medians and quartiles of duration are shown for the DRA and each participating State in 1970 and 1977. The medians vary widely; however, many are concentrated within the limits of a single year of duration. In 1970, the highest median duration (9.3 years in New York) was more than twice the size of the lowest median duration (4.6 years in Idaho and Wyoming). In 1977, the medians ranged from 4.6 years in

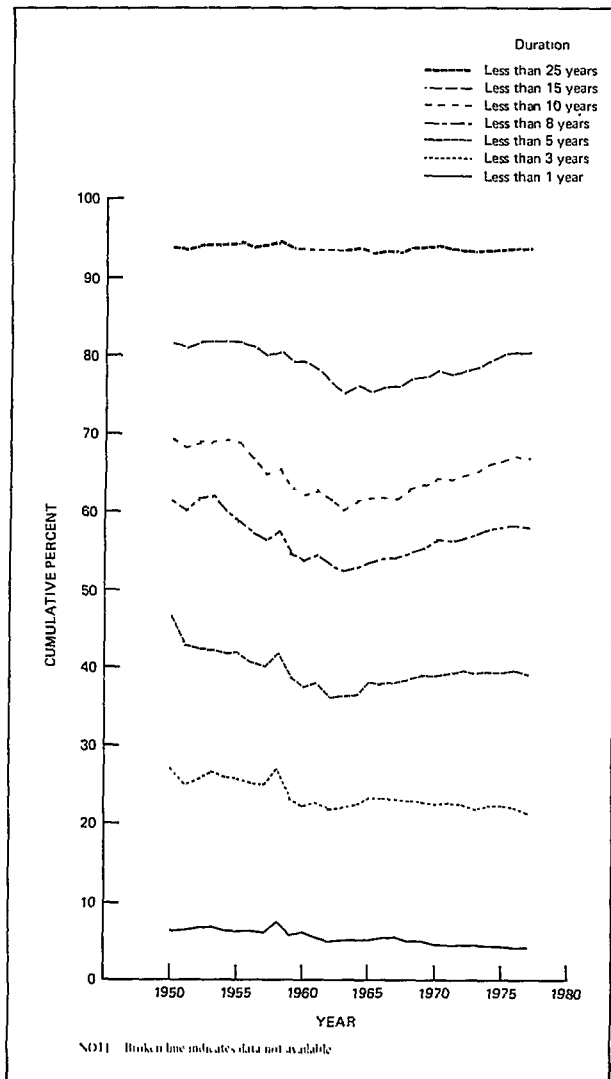


Figure 2. Cumulative percent of divorces by duration of marriage at time of decree: Total reporting States, 1950-77

Wyoming to 8.4 years in Maryland. Moreover, in both years, more than one-third of the State medians were in the 5.0-5.9-year interval. Similarly, the first quartiles ranged from 1.9 to 4.9 years in 1970 and from 2.1 to 4.9 years in 1977; however, about half of those quartiles fell into the interval of 2.0-2.9 years for both 1970 and 1977. The range of the third quartile was wider than that of the median or of the first

quartile. In 1970, the third quartile ranged from 10.3 years in Idaho to 17.1 years in New York and in 1977, it ranged from 8.9 years in Wyoming to 15.2 years in Connecticut. The distribution of the third quartile is more uniform, without a concentration in one particular duration interval.

A geographic pattern in median duration can be observed. There is a long median duration among those DRA States in the New England and Mid-Atlantic Divisions and a relatively short duration in the Mountain Division. A geographic pattern also was found in the divorce rate, indicating an inverse relationship between median duration and the divorce rate of the DRA States. High medians tend to be associated with low divorce rates, and low medians with high rates, as shown in figure 3. Thus in 1970, the correlation coefficient between the median duration and the divorce rate was -0.72 for the States in the DRA. The divorce rates used for this correlation analysis were computed per 1,000 married women in 1970.

International Comparisons

One way to gain a perspective on the previously described data on the duration of marriage at the time of divorce is to compare the median duration of the United States with that of other countries. Therefore, the median duration of marriage at the time of divorce decree was computed for selected foreign countries from data published in the *Demographic Yearbook* of the United Nations for the years 1958¹ and 1976.² The medians presented in table 4 refer to divorces granted in 1948, 1956, 1966, and 1974, unless otherwise footnoted.

Many countries do not report duration of marriage at the time of decree and the reporting is unsatisfactory in some of those that do. The countries shown in table 4 were selected primarily because they provide a representation of all major areas of the globe and a wide variety of political and social regimes.

As expected, a striking feature of table 4 is the wide range in the median duration of marriage to divorce among the countries shown. The medians for 1974 ranged from 2.2 years in

Table B. Median and quartile duration of marriage at time of decree: Divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1970 and 1977

[Based on sample data. All medians and quartiles of 10.0 and above were calculated using grouped data]

State	1977			1970		
	First quartile	Median	Third quartile	First quartile	Median	Third quartile
	Duration (in years)					
Divorce-registration area.....	3.4	6.6	12.9	3.3	6.7	13.7
Alabama.....	2.1	4.9	10.9	2.1	5.3	12.7
Alaska.....	2.5	5.0	9.4	2.6	5.4	11.4
California.....	3.8	7.0	13.3	3.6	6.8	13.6
Connecticut.....	4.4	8.3	15.2	4.6	8.6	16.5
Georgia.....	2.5	5.3	11.2	2.3	5.4	12.2
Hawaii.....	2.9	5.7	10.6	3.6	7.2	13.9
Idaho.....	2.4	5.0	9.6	2.1	4.6	10.3
Illinois.....	3.1	6.2	12.4	3.0	6.6	13.6
Iowa.....	3.0	5.8	12.3	2.6	5.6	12.4
Kansas.....	2.4	5.2	10.2	2.4	5.1	12.1
Kentucky.....	2.7	5.6	11.2	2.6	5.7	12.7
Maryland.....	4.9	8.4	14.6	4.8	8.8	16.0
Michigan.....	3.6	7.0	13.1	3.6	7.0	14.4
Missouri.....	2.7	5.5	11.4	2.4	5.4	12.1
Montana.....	2.4	5.1	10.3	2.3	5.1	12.0
Nebraska.....	3.1	6.1	12.2	2.8	6.0	13.3
New York.....	4.5	8.1	15.0	4.9	9.3	17.1
Ohio.....	2.9	6.0	12.2	3.0	6.3	13.6
Oregon.....	3.2	6.0	11.9	2.8	5.9	12.5
Pennsylvania.....	4.2	7.7	14.4	4.0	8.1	16.1
Rhode Island.....	4.6	8.2	15.1	4.6	9.2	16.3
South Carolina.....	3.7	6.8	13.1	—	—	—
South Dakota.....	3.0	5.8	12.5	2.7	5.9	13.4
Tennessee.....	2.5	5.3	11.2	2.5	5.6	12.3
Utah.....	2.3	4.8	9.7	2.5	5.3	11.6
Vermont.....	4.4	7.8	14.4	4.2	8.3	15.3
Virginia.....	4.4	7.8	14.4	4.1	7.7	15.1
Wisconsin.....	3.9	7.0	13.3	3.9	7.9	15.3
Wyoming.....	2.2	4.6	8.9	1.9	4.6	11.7

DIVORCE RATES BY DURATION OF FIRST MARRIAGE

The risk of divorce is much greater in the early years of a marriage than in the later years. However, the actual pattern that the risk follows is not well known because the information needed to calculate divorce rates by duration of marriage is not readily available in any given year. Data from the 1970 census of the United States provide estimates, according to duration of marriage, of the numbers of women who were in their first marriage in 1970. These data, with the 1970 national estimates of divorces by duration of first marriage of women, yield divorce-rate estimates for the United States in 1970 by duration of marriage for couples where the wife was married once (table C). A more detailed description of the estimation procedure is provided in the appendix.

The estimated first-marriage divorce rates are graphed by duration in figure 4. The pattern of the divorce rate shows a steep rise in the first 3 years of marriage, with a peak at 3 years' duration. Thereafter, the rate declines steadily to relatively low levels after the 19th year of duration. The divorce rate at 3 years' duration is more than double the rate of 11 years' duration, four times the rate in the duration interval of 20-24 years, and eleven times the rate in the duration interval of 30-34 years.

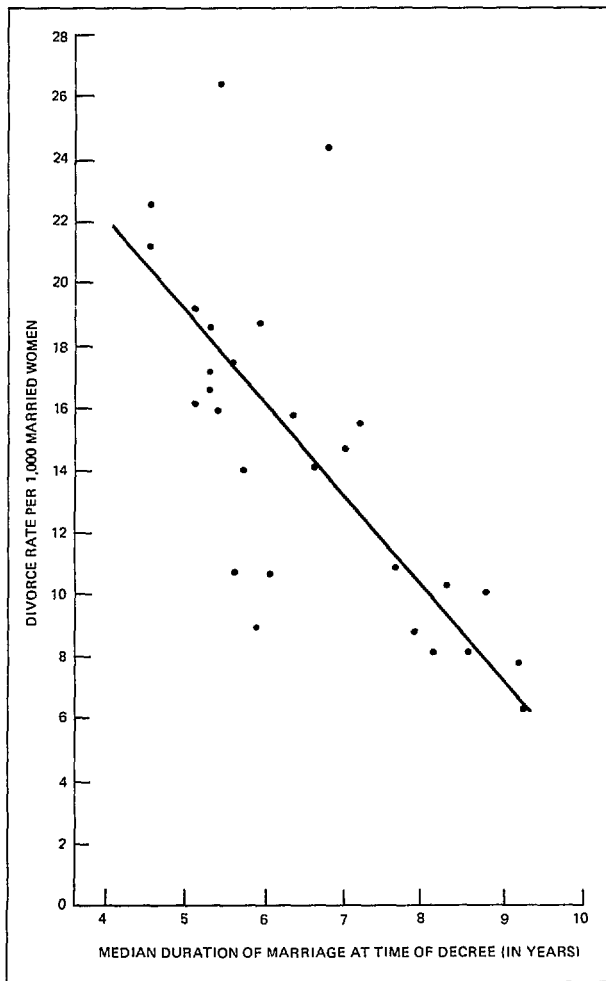


Figure 3. Regression of divorce rate on the median duration of marriage at time of decree: States in divorce-registration area, 1970

Egypt to 12.2 years in Australia; a similar variation was found for other years.

The median duration is shorter in the United States than in most other countries shown. In 1974, 9 countries out of 36 had medians lower than those for the United States; this finding was similar in 1966 (11 countries out of 36), in 1956 (6 countries out of 29), and in 1948 (5 countries out of 26). Generally, the median duration of marriage for Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe tends to be shorter than that for the United States.

SEPARATION

Duration of Marriage to Separation

The duration of a marriage to absolute divorce is divided into two distinct periods: the period when the spouses live together and the period when they are separated. At the time of the final separation the family ceases to function as a social unit, children lose one of their parents, and the household disbands. Because divorce proceedings can take many months or years, a period occurs in which the marriage is disrupted but is not yet legally dissolved. Therefore, for practical purposes the family ceases to exist at the beginning of the separation period. Consequently, the date of separation is

Table C. Estimated number of divorces of first-married women, number of first-married women, and first-marriage divorce rate, by duration of first marriage: United States, 1970

[Based on sample data. Rates per 1,000 first-married women]

Duration of first marriage	Estimated number of divorces	Number of first-married women	First-marriage divorce rate
Less than 1 year	16,190	965,980	16.8
1 year	35,969	1,496,579	24.0
2 years	45,737	1,410,789	32.4
3 years	43,700	1,275,857	34.3
4 years	39,577	1,220,062	32.4
5 years	36,802	1,187,779	31.0
6 years	29,863	1,108,683	26.9
7 years	26,819	1,040,501	25.8
8 years	22,733	995,743	22.8
9 years	19,694	979,692	20.1
10 years	18,501	1,003,917	18.4
11 years	15,719	941,639	16.7
12 years	14,422	929,847	15.5
13 years	14,514	974,706	14.9
14 years	13,031	989,706	13.2
15-19 years	51,972	4,695,929	11.1
20-24 years	41,782	5,349,177	7.8
25-29 years	21,019	4,123,652	5.1
30-34 years	10,299	3,395,529	3.0
35 years or more	6,637	6,936,401	1.0

an important demographic characteristic of marital dissolution.

The date of separation is reported by a limited number of States in the DRA (20 States in 1977). By using that date, the duration of each of the two periods may be calculated, that is, the duration of marriage to separation and the duration of separation to divorce. For couples who have separated more than once, the divorce certificate should contain a record of the date of the last separation before the decree. These separation data do not refer to separations that occurred during a given data year, nor to the entire separation population in a given year, but to separations of couples who were divorced in a given year. De facto separations are not registered and legal action is unnecessary. Spouses, if they wish, can obtain a limited divorce decree, such as divorce from bed and board, legal separation, separate maintenance, and so forth, but it is not necessary to do so. Hence, the variation between the States regarding the length of the duration of marriage

to separation is caused by factors other than the differences in the divorce laws.

The distribution of divorces by duration of marriage to separation for couples divorced in 1977 is shown in table 5 and figure 5, and the median durations are shown in table D for the reporting States. The modal year of separation is the year immediately following the marriage. In the reporting States combined, about 13 percent of all couples divorced in 1977 were separated during the first year of their marriage. The same pattern is found in 11 of the 15 States listed in table 5. In addition, generally more separations occurred during the 6 months immediately following the marriage than during the subsequent 6-month period. The percent declined with added duration, but a small number of couples (less than 2 percent) separated after 30 years or more of marriage.

In the reporting States combined, the median duration of marriage to separation declined slightly in the years 1970-74. For these States, the median duration of marriage to

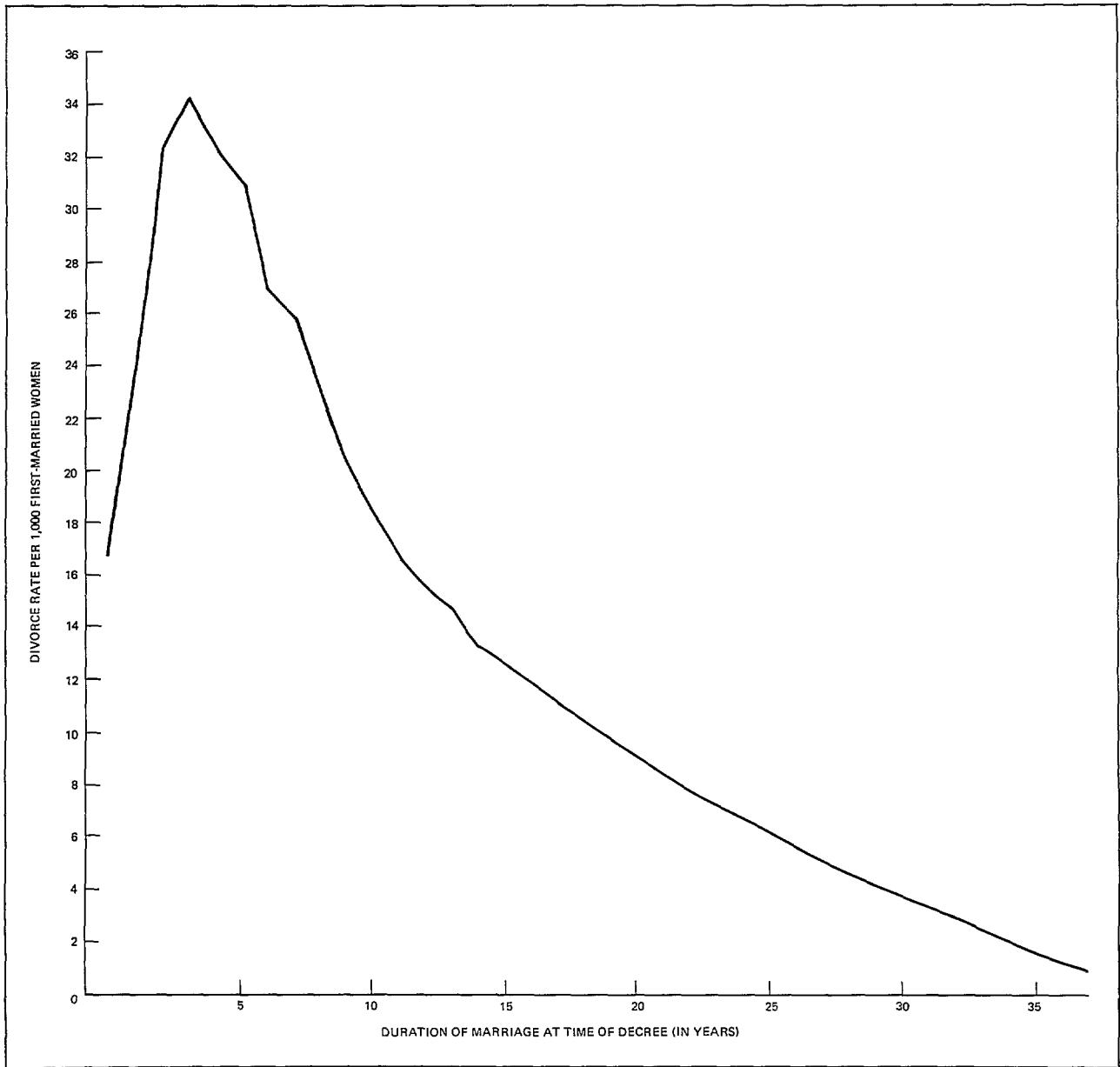


Figure 4. Estimated divorce rates by duration of marriage at time of decree for couples with wife married once: United States, 1970

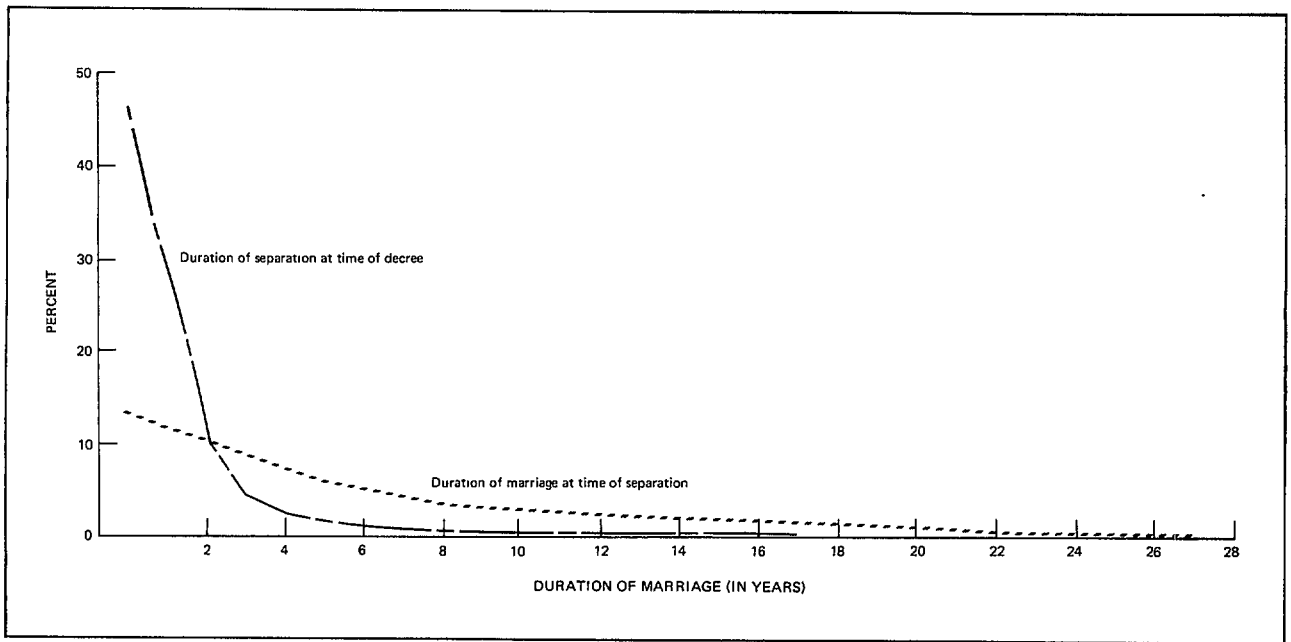


Figure 5. Percent distribution of divorces by duration of marriage at time of separation and duration of separation at time of decree: Total of 20 reporting States, 1977

separation was 4.9 years in 1970-71, 4.8 years in 1972-73, and 4.7 years in 1974. From 1970 to 1974 medians declined in 13 reporting States and increased in 3.

In addition to the duration of marriage at separation, information about age at separation is available for 18 reporting States in 1977. Median ages at separation are shown in table E for persons divorcing in 1977. For husbands, these median ages varied from 29.1 to 32.1 years among the 15 selected States shown. For wives, the median ages varied from 27.0 to 29.4 years.

Duration of Separation to Divorce

As expected, the second period of the duration of marriage—the duration of separation to decree—shows a heavy concentration of divorces soon after separation. In 1977, for the reporting States combined, over 46 percent of divorces were granted within less than 1 year after separation and over 75 percent within less than 2 years (table 6). The percent declined rapidly with increased duration of separation, so that in 1977 only 6.8 percent of divorces occurred 5 years or more after separation.

The variation among States was very pronounced, reflecting differences in legal

grounds and procedural regulations for obtaining an absolute divorce. In Idaho, over 60 percent of all divorces were granted during the first 6 months after separation and in six other States over 40 percent were granted during the same interval. At the opposite extreme, less than 2 percent of decrees were granted during the first 6 months after separation in California, Vermont, and Virginia.

In the reporting States combined, the median duration of separation at time of decree was 1.2 years in 1970 and 1.1 years in 1977 (refer to table D for 1977 figures). In 1970, the lowest State median was 0.4 years in Idaho and Wyoming, and the highest median was 2.3 years in New York. In 1977, the median duration of separation to decree ranged from 0.4 to 1.7 years. In the majority of reporting States, the median duration of separation was less than 1 year in both 1970 and 1977.

These data aid in considering whether an association exists between two variables—the duration of marriage to separation and the duration of separation to decree. That is, whether couples who have been married for a short time tend to divorce sooner, or later, after separation than those who have been married for many years. For the reporting States combined,

Table D. Median duration of marriage at time of separation and median duration of separation at time of decree: Total of 20 reporting States and selected States, 1977

[Based on sample data. Medians were computed only for individual reporting States with duration of marriage to separation and duration of separation to decree 50 percent or more complete]

State	Median duration (in years) from	
	Marriage to separation	Separation to decree
Total reporting States	4.9	1.1
Alaska.....	3.8	0.6
California.....	4.8	1.5
Connecticut.....	6.5	1.0
Hawaii.....	4.5	0.7
Idaho.....	4.3	0.4
Illinois.....	4.5	0.8
Iowa.....	4.7	0.7
Kansas.....	4.4	0.4
Michigan.....	5.2	0.9
Missouri.....	4.3	0.5
Nebraska.....	5.0	0.6
New York.....	5.4	1.7
Rhode Island.....	5.1	1.7
Tennessee.....	4.2	0.5
Utah.....	3.6	0.8
Vermont.....	5.8	1.5
Virginia.....	5.5	1.7
Wisconsin.....	5.6	0.9
Wyoming.....	3.8	0.4

the 1970 median duration of separation to decree was computed for each duration interval of marriage to separation. All medians were similar and varied only by 0.1 or less in either direction from the overall median of 1.2 years. The median duration of separation was 1.1 years for couples who had separated less than 1 year after marriage, 1.2 years for those who had separated 1-5 years after marriage, and 1.3 years for those who had separated 6 years or more after marriage.

When State medians are compared, a certain relationship between the two variables can be observed. Of the reporting States in 1970, the seven States with the shortest median duration of marriage to separation (Alaska, Idaho, Kansas, Missouri, Tennessee, Utah, and Wyoming) were among those States with the shortest median duration of separation; the four

Table E. Median age of husband and wife at time of separation for couples divorcing in data year: Total of 18 reporting States and selected States, 1977

[Based on sample data. Medians were computed only for individual reporting States with age-reporting 50 percent or more complete]

State	Median age (in years)	
	Husband	Wife
Total reporting States.....	30.9	28.5
Alaska.....	30.4	27.7
California.....	31.8	29.1
Connecticut.....	32.1	29.4
Hawaii.....	31.2	28.4
Illinois.....	30.1	27.8
Kansas.....	29.6	27.5
Missouri.....	30.3	27.9
New York.....	31.3	28.9
Rhode Island.....	29.7	27.4
Tennessee.....	29.5	27.2
Utah.....	29.1	27.0
Vermont.....	31.1	28.8
Virginia.....	30.2	28.0
Wisconsin.....	30.1	28.2
Wyoming.....	29.8	27.1

States with the longest median duration of separation to decree (New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia) were among the seven States with the longest median duration of marriage to separation.

DURATION OF MARRIAGE BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

The duration of marriage to divorce is associated with other characteristics of husband and wife and their marriage. Three of those characteristics are (1) the number of this marriage of the husband and wife, (2) the age at marriage of the husband and wife, and (3) the number of children under 18 years of age involved in the divorce. The first two characteristics are determined at the time of marriage and are constant for the duration of the marriage. The number of children under 18 years of age involved in divorce is influenced by the duration of the couples' marriage.

Number of Times Married

Generally, the more times a divorcing person has been married, the less the elapsed time between marriage and divorce. For the entire DRA, the 1977 median duration for all divorcing couples was 6.6 years, but for divorcing men and women who had been married only once, the median duration was 7.5 and 7.4 years, respectively. In contrast, for those who were married more than once the median duration was 4.6 years for both men and women (table F). Among the remarried, the median duration for divorcing persons who were married twice was considerably higher than for those who were married three times or more; the median durations were 4.8 and 3.5 years for men and 4.9 and 3.4 years for women (figure 6). The same pattern is shown by the first and third quartiles (table F). In all reporting States, with the exception of Hawaii, the median duration of marriage to divorce declined with increasing number of marriages for both men and women (table 7).

The median duration of marriage at decree has been published by marriage order by using 1959 data from a group of 10 reporting States (Alaska, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Utah).³ The 1959 median duration for this 10-State group shows the same pattern as that previously described for 1977. The median duration for divorcing persons married once was 7.7 years for

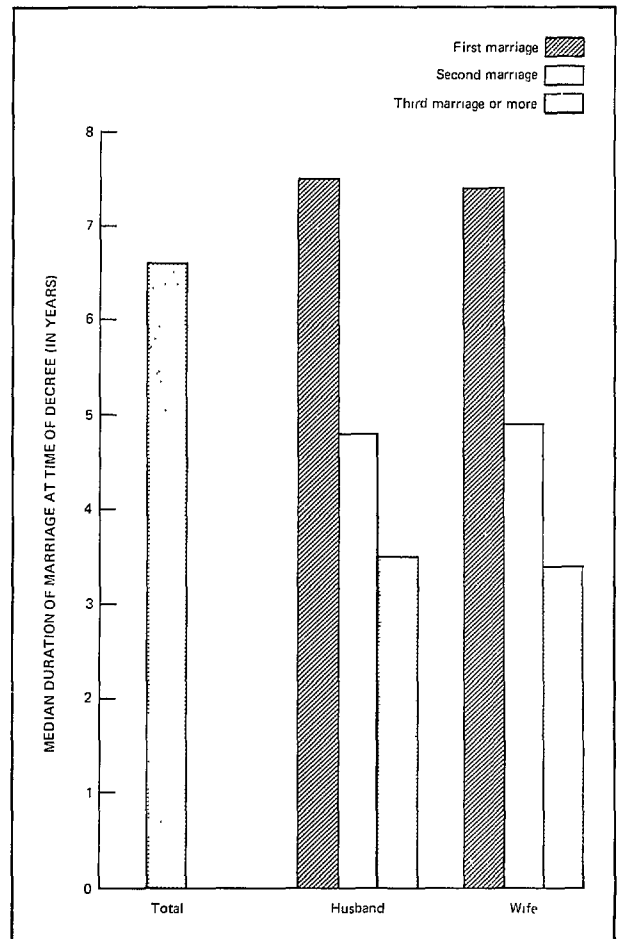


Figure 6. Median duration of marriage at time of decree by number of this marriage of husband and wife: Divorce-registration area, 1977

Table F. Median and quartile duration of marriage at time of decree, by number of this marriage of husband and wife: Divorce-registration area, 1977

[Based on sample data. Nebraska did not require reporting number of this marriage]

Number of this marriage	Husband			Wife		
	First quartile	Median	Third quartile	First quartile	Median	Third quartile
	Duration (in years)					
Total	3.4	6.6	12.6	3.4	6.6	12.6
First marriage	4.0	7.5	14.1	3.9	7.4	14.0
Remarriages ¹	2.2	4.6	8.5	2.2	4.6	8.7
Second marriage	2.4	4.8	8.9	2.4	4.9	9.3
Third marriage or more	1.6	3.5	6.9	1.6	3.4	6.7

¹Includes number of remarriages not stated.

husbands and 7.8 years for wives; the median duration for remarried persons was 4.6 years for both sexes.

Data for the DRA in 1977 (table 8) show that the proportion of husbands and wives who were ending their first marriages was fairly low among those divorced during the early years of marriage; however, the proportion who were remarried was relatively high. About 75 percent of divorcing husbands and wives were married once; however, among those married less than 1 year, 43-44 percent were married once. For those marriages that lasted 35 years or more, more than 90 percent of the divorces were among persons married only once. The percent of divorces granted to remarried persons declined with increasing duration of marriage.

According to table 8, husbands and wives who were married three times or more represented about 20 percent of those divorcing less than 1 year after marriage, but less than 0.5 percent of persons divorcing after 35 years or more. One factor regarding this relationship is the tendency, within the same duration of marriage interval, for persons married more than once to be older than those married only once. Hence, the former have a higher probability of dying at each duration interval, so that death poses a higher competing risk than the divorce risk. In addition, remarried persons generally have higher divorce rates in each duration interval.⁴ Because of death and divorce the remarried population becomes depleted earlier than the population married once, and this depletion is reflected in the decline of the proportion remarried, particularly in those married three times or more, among persons who divorce after many years of married life.

Age at Marriage

In 1977, husbands who married at ages 20-24 years and wives who married at ages under 20 years had the highest median duration for the DRA. Table G shows that after these ages, the medians declined with increasing age at marriage. The association of an older age at marriage with a shorter duration of marriage to divorce is partly due to the increasing proportion of remarriages as age at marriage increases because the second and third marriages

Table G. Median duration of marriage at time of decree, by age at marriage of husband and wife: Divorce-registration area, 1977

[Based on sample data. Medians were computed from grouped data. Figures differ slightly from medians computed from single-year data and published elsewhere]

Age at marriage	Median duration (in years)	
	Husband	Wife
Total.....	7.0	7.0
Under 20 years	7.2	7.8
20-24 years	7.9	7.5
25-29 years	7.0	5.7
30-34 years	5.7	4.9
35-39 years	5.2	4.6
40-44 years	4.4	4.1
45 years and over.....	3.4	3.1

tend to end in divorce at a shorter duration than do first marriages.

In table H, the median age at marriage was computed for nine duration intervals. As table H shows, little variation occurs in the median age at marriage among the various intervals of marriage duration, although men and women who divorced after less than 1 year of marriage had been married at a somewhat older age than other divorcing persons. This finding reflects the tendency for remarried persons to be older than first-married persons, combined with the

Table H. Median age at marriage of divorcing husband and wife, by duration of marriage at time of decree: Divorce-registration area, 1977

[Based on sample data. Medians were computed from grouped data]

Duration of marriage at time of decree	Median age at marriage (in years)	
	Husband	Wife
Less than 1 year.....	28.7	25.7
1-2 years	24.6	22.4
3-4 years	23.6	21.2
5-9 years	23.2	21.0
10-14 years.....	23.1	20.6
15-19 years.....	23.0	19.8
20-24 years.....	23.2	20.3
25-29 years.....	23.2	20.6
30 years or more.....	23.2	20.6

tendency for remarriages to end in divorce at a much shorter duration than first marriages.

Children in Divorce

Statistics concerning children involved in divorce are routinely limited to children under 18 years of age, some of whom were not born of the marriage that ended in divorce. When couples divorce after many years of marriage, most children are likely to be grown and hence are not involved in the divorce. According to the data in table J for the DRA in 1977, the proportion of divorcing couples who reported having no children under 18 years of age declined from 90 percent in the duration interval of less than 1 year to 17 percent in the duration interval of 10-14 years. In the group with a duration of 15 years or more, 33 percent had no children under 18 years of age. The proportion of couples reporting two or three or more children increased rapidly between the third and fourteenth years of duration, as was expected. For couples divorcing after less than 1 year of marriage, 1.0 percent had three children or more. This finding is explained by the inclusion of all children involved in the divorce, whether born to the current marriage or to prior marriages of the husband or wife, or adopted.

The median duration of marriage to divorce can be tabulated according to the number of children reported, as shown in table 9, for the

DRA and each registration State in 1977. In all States, the median duration of marriage increased with increasing numbers of children, but the variation among States is pronounced. This is particularly the case for those divorces with no children, where the highest duration median (6.1 years in Maryland) is more than two times as large as the lowest median (2.7 years in Alabama and Utah). The variation in the median duration to divorce is much less pronounced among couples reporting two children or more. For example, for three children or more, the State medians varied from 11.4 to 16.0 years (table 9). The wide range among States for divorcing couples with no children may reflect variations both in the proportion of marriages that are remarriages and in the age at marriage, as well as variations in other legal and regional factors.

Trends in the median duration of marriage by number of children are shown in table K. Couples who divorce with no children are ending marriages of shorter duration; however, couples who divorce with one child or more are ending marriages of longer duration. In the years 1963-69, the median duration to divorce declined for couples with no children, as did the median for all divorcing couples. The median duration for childless couples was 5.0 years in 1962 and 1963, but 4.0-4.2 years in 1971 and subsequent years. For couples who reported having children, the median duration increased regardless of the number of children.

Table J. Percent distribution of divorces by number of children under 18 years of age, according to duration of marriage of divorcing couples at time of decree: Divorce-registration area, 1977

[Based on sample data]

Duration of marriage at time of decree	All divorces	Number of children			
		None	1	2	3 or more
All divorces	100.0	45.1	25.3	18.8	10.8
Less than 1 year	100.0	90.4	6.4	2.2	1.0
1-2 years	100.0	74.7	21.7	2.8	0.8
3-4 years	100.0	57.2	32.5	8.9	1.4
5-9 years	100.0	35.0	32.3	25.5	7.2
10-14 years	100.0	16.7	19.7	37.8	25.8
15 years or more	100.0	32.9	20.3	22.0	24.8

Table K. Median duration of marriage at time of decree, by number of children under 18 years of age: Divorce-registration area, 1961-77

[Based on sample data. Medians were computed from grouped data. Figures for all divorces differ slightly from medians computed from single-year data and published elsewhere]

Year decree granted	All divorces	Number of children			
		None	1	2	3 or more
Median duration (in years)					
1977	7.0	4.2	6.7	10.1	14.2
1976	6.9	4.1	6.4	9.8	14.2
1975	6.9	4.0	6.2	9.8	14.0
1974	6.9	4.0	6.1	9.5	14.1
1973	7.0	4.0	5.8	9.4	13.9
1972	7.1	4.0	5.5	9.3	13.8
1971	7.1	4.0	5.5	9.3	13.6
1970	7.2	4.1	5.5	9.3	13.3
1969	7.2	3.9	5.4	9.2	13.8
1968	7.3	3.9	5.2	9.3	13.4
1967	7.5	4.1	5.1	9.1	12.9
1966	7.5	4.3	5.3	9.1	12.7
1965	7.5	4.6	5.1	8.9	12.5
1964	7.7	4.7	5.2	8.9	12.3
1963	7.8	5.0	5.5	9.2	12.4
1962	7.7	5.0	6.0	8.9	12.3
1961	7.4	4.8	5.9	8.9	12.1

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Table 1. Median duration of marriage at time of decree: Total reporting States, 1867-1906, 1922-32, 1948-77

[Data for 1867-1906, 1922-32, and 1960 are for the United States; data for 1961-77 are for the divorce-registration area; data for 1948-59 are for total of reporting States]

Year decree granted	Median duration of marriage at time of decree (in years)	Year decree granted	Median duration of marriage at time of decree (in years)
1977	6.6	1907-21	---
1976	6.5	1906	7.9
1975	6.5	1905	8.0
1974	6.5	1904	8.1
1973	6.6	1903	8.2
1972	6.7	1902	8.2
1971	6.7	1901	8.3
1970	6.7	1900	8.3
1969	6.9	1899	8.2
1968	7.0	1898	8.1
1967	7.1	1897	8.0
1966	7.1	1896	8.0
1965	7.2	1895	8.1
1964	7.4	1894	8.1
1963	7.5	1893	8.2
1962	7.3	1892	8.2
1961	7.1	1891	8.3
1960	7.2	1890	8.2
1959	7.0	1889	8.3
1958	6.4	1888	8.1
1957	6.7	1887	8.0
1956	6.5	1886	7.7
1955	6.4	1885	7.7
1954	6.4	1884	8.0
1953	6.1	1883	7.8
1952	6.1	1882	7.9
1951	6.0	1881	7.8
1950	5.8	1880	7.9
1949	6.3	1879	7.7
1948	6.4	1878	7.7
1933-47	---	1877	7.6
1932	7.1	1876	7.5
1931	7.1	1875	7.4
1930	6.9	1874	7.3
1929	6.9	1873	7.2
1928	6.9	1872	6.9
1927	6.8	1871	6.7
1926	6.6	1870	6.9
1925	6.6	1869	7.1
1924	6.6	1868	7.3
1923	6.5	1867	7.4
1922	6.6		

Table 2. Percent distribution of divorces, by duration of marriage at time of decree: Total reporting States, 1950-77

[Figures for 1950-59 are based on complete counts; figures for 1960-77 are based on sample data]

Duration of marriage at time of decree	Year decree granted and number of reporting States													
	1977 29 States	1976 29 States	1975 29 States	1974 29 States	1973 29 States	1972 29 States	1971 29 States	1970 28 States	1969 28 States	1968 26 States	1967 22 States	1966 22 States	1965 22 States	1964 22 States
All divorces...	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 1 year.....	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.8	5.2	5.1	5.8	5.6	5.3	5.3
1-4 years.....	34.7	35.4	35.0	35.0	34.6	35.0	34.7	34.1	33.8	33.6	32.5	32.8	32.8	31.3
1 year.....	8.1	8.3	8.6	8.7	8.3	8.3	8.8	8.5	8.6	8.7	9.1	8.9	9.3	8.8
2 years.....	9.0	9.6	9.4	9.1	9.0	9.8	9.5	9.4	9.2	9.3	8.4	8.9	8.6	8.4
3 years.....	9.2	9.2	8.9	8.7	9.2	9.2	8.8	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.1	7.8	8.0	7.3
4 years.....	8.4	8.3	8.1	8.5	8.1	7.7	7.5	7.7	7.5	7.2	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.8
5-9 years.....	27.9	27.4	27.2	26.7	26.0	25.1	24.9	25.3	24.6	24.3	23.3	23.8	23.6	24.8
5 years.....	7.2	7.1	7.4	7.2	6.9	6.5	6.4	6.9	6.4	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.9	6.2
6 years.....	6.2	6.5	6.2	6.1	5.8	5.8	5.9	5.6	5.4	5.5	5.3	5.4	5.1	5.2
7 years.....	5.7	5.4	5.2	5.1	5.1	4.9	4.8	5.0	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.5	5.0
8 years.....	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.3	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.6
9 years.....	4.1	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.4	3.8	3.9	3.8
10-14 years.....	13.5	13.3	13.6	13.1	13.2	13.3	13.5	13.8	13.8	14.2	14.4	14.1	13.7	14.6
15-19 years.....	8.0	7.8	8.0	8.2	8.6	8.9	9.0	9.0	9.5	9.6	10.0	10.8	11.2	11.4
20-24 years.....	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.9	6.1	6.5	7.0	7.0	7.1	7.3	7.1	6.7	6.5	6.3
25-29 years.....	3.3	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.4
30 years or more.....	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.8	2.8	3.1	2.9

Table 2. Percent distribution of divorces, by duration of marriage at time of decree: Total reporting States, 1950-77—Con.

[Figures for 1950-59 are based on complete counts; figures for 1960-77 are based on sample data]

Duration of marriage at time of decree	Year decree granted and number of reporting States													
	1963 22 States	1962 21 States	1961 20 States	1960 U.S.	1959 16 States	1958 12 States	1957 24 States	1956 23 States	1955 23 States	1954 22 States	1953 22 States	1952 22 States	1951 18 States	1950 15 States
All divorces...	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 1 year.....	5.2	5.1	5.6	6.2	5.9	7.6	6.1	6.4	6.3	6.4	7.0	7.1	6.6	6.4
1-4 years.....	31.2	31.1	32.4	31.4	32.7	34.2	34.0	34.5	35.6	35.6	35.2	35.2	36.3	40.1
1 year.....	8.6	8.6	9.4	8.1	8.2	9.4	9.8	9.7	9.7	10.1	10.1	9.9	9.5	10.3
2 years.....	8.4	8.3	8.0	8.1	9.1	10.1	9.2	9.4	10.0	9.7	9.8	9.0	9.0	10.3
3 years.....	7.5	7.6	7.7	7.9	8.3	8.2	8.0	8.2	8.5	8.5	8.1	8.3	9.0	10.0
4 years.....	6.8	6.6	7.3	7.3	7.1	6.6	7.1	7.1	7.4	7.2	7.2	8.0	8.8	9.4
5-9 years.....	23.9	25.3	24.7	24.5	24.3	23.5	24.7	26.0	26.9	27.1	26.8	26.2	25.2	22.7
5 years.....	5.7	7.0	6.1	6.4	6.0	6.0	6.2	6.4	6.2	6.1	7.0	7.7	8.1	5.9
6 years.....	5.5	5.1	5.6	5.0	5.4	5.1	5.4	5.4	5.4	6.1	6.7	7.0	5.1	4.5
7 years.....	5.0	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.8	5.3	5.9	6.1	4.5	4.2	4.3
8 years.....	4.0	4.4	4.0	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.7	5.3	5.5	4.0	3.6	4.0	4.3
9 years.....	3.7	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.6	4.1	4.8	4.7	3.6	3.0	3.4	3.9	3.6
10-14 years.....	14.9	15.1	15.5	17.0	16.2	15.2	15.1	14.1	12.8	12.6	12.8	13.0	12.7	12.2
15-19 years.....	11.5	10.3	9.7	8.9	9.0	8.5	8.6	8.1	7.8	7.8	7.7	7.6	7.7	7.3
20-24 years.....	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	5.6	5.4	5.4	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.8	5.1	5.2
25-29 years.....	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.1	2.7	2.9	2.8	3.0	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.1
30 years or more.....	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.2	2.9	3.2	3.2	2.9	2.9	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.0

Table 3. Median duration of marriage at time of decree: Divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1958-77

[Figures for 1958-59 are based on complete counts; figures for 1960-77 are based on sample data]

State	Year decree granted									
	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968
	Median duration (in years)									
Divorce-registration area	6.6	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.9	7.0
Alabama	4.9	4.8	4.7	5.0	5.3	5.0	5.4	5.3	5.6	6.1
Alaska	5.0	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.3	5.6	5.2	5.4	5.6	5.9
California	7.0	6.9	6.8	6.7	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.9	7.1
Connecticut	8.3	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.4	8.1	8.7	8.6	8.9	9.0
Georgia	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.4	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.5
Hawaii	5.7	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.6	6.1	6.8	7.2	7.3	7.0
Idaho	5.0	4.6	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.7	5.0	4.6	5.0	4.9
Illinois	6.2	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.5	6.1	6.4	6.6	6.7	6.7
Iowa	5.8	5.7	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.9	5.8	5.6	5.7	6.1
Kansas	5.2	5.0	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.0	5.1	5.1	5.4	5.9
Kentucky	5.6	5.6	5.9	5.5	5.5	5.9	5.7	5.7	5.8	...
Maryland	8.4	7.9	8.3	8.5	9.0	8.6	8.6	8.8	9.2	8.8
Michigan	7.0	6.6	6.8	¹ 6.7	¹ 6.6	¹ 6.4	6.9	7.0	7.1	7.3
Missouri	5.5	5.7	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.6	5.7
Montana	5.1	5.0	4.7	4.8	4.8	5.1	5.3	5.1	5.6	5.7
Nebraska	6.1	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.7	6.3	6.2	6.0	6.2	6.7
New York	8.1	7.9	8.0	8.0	8.7	8.8	9.3	9.3	9.4	...
Ohio	6.0	5.9	6.0	6.3	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.7	7.2
Oregon	6.0	6.0	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.9	5.8	6.0
Pennsylvania	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.7	7.6	8.3	7.6	8.1	8.5	9.1
Rhode Island	8.2	8.1	7.8	8.0	8.4	8.2	8.7	9.2	9.1	9.0
South Carolina	6.8	6.8	6.6	6.8	6.9	7.0	7.1	...	...	...
South Dakota	5.8	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.9	6.6	7.3
Tennessee	5.3	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.6	5.5	5.6	5.7	5.9
Utah	4.8	5.1	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.9	4.7	5.3	5.5	5.8
Vermont	7.8	7.6	7.5	7.9	7.9	8.0	9.1	8.3	9.1	9.0
Virginia	7.8	7.7	7.7	7.8	7.9	7.8	8.3	7.7	8.4	8.8
Wisconsin	7.0	7.2	7.0	7.2	7.4	7.6	7.7	7.9	8.0	8.6
Wyoming	4.6	4.3	4.7	4.8	4.5	4.7	4.9	4.6	4.9	5.0

¹Excludes Wayne County.

Table 3. Median duration of marriage at time of decree: Divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1958-77—Con.

[Figures for 1958-59 are based on complete counts; figures for 1960-77 are based on sample data]

State	Year decree granted									
	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958
Divorce-registration area	7.1	7.1	7.2	7.4	7.5	7.3	7.1	7.2	7.0	6.4
Alabama	6.2	5.8	6.6	6.9	7.5	7.1	7.3	7.3	7.6	7.4
Alaska	5.8	6.4	6.0	6.0	6.8	6.2	6.3	6.2	6.0	...
California .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Connecticut .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Georgia	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.4	6.3	5.9	6.6	6.3	6.1	5.9
Hawaii	7.0	5.8	5.8	6.7	7.2	7.0	6.3	6.3	...	...
Idaho	5.3	5.0	5.1	5.1	5.0	5.6	4.7	4.8	4.2	4.6
Illinois .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Iowa	6.3	6.3	5.9	6.0	6.1	6.2	5.5	5.7	5.4	5.6
Kansas	5.9	6.0	5.9	6.3	6.5	5.9	6.5	5.8	6.3	...
Kentucky .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Maryland	9.9	9.6	9.2	9.8	10.3	9.4	9.4	9.0	---	...
Michigan	7.8	7.7	7.9	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.6	...	...	...
Missouri	6.0	5.8	5.8	6.1	6.9	6.1	6.6	...	...	...
Montana	5.5	6.0	5.8	5.6	5.9	5.9	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.4
Nebraska	6.9	6.3	6.3	6.5	6.7	6.1	6.5	6.3	6.0	5.9
New York .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ohio	7.1	7.5	7.8	7.7	7.7	7.7	...	...	...	...
Oregon	5.9	6.3	5.9	6.6	5.8	6.5	6.4	5.9	6.0	5.9
Pennsylvania	9.0	8.4	8.9	8.6	8.7	9.6	8.6	9.2	9.1	---
Rhode Island	8.9	9.3	9.1	9.0	9.0	...	...	...	...	...
South Carolina .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
South Dakota	7.0	6.8	6.3	6.9	6.3	6.6	6.3	6.3	6.2	5.9
Tennessee	5.8	6.0	6.1	6.6	6.6	6.4	6.1	6.3	6.1	5.7
Utah	5.6	5.5	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.5	5.2	4.7	5.4	5.4
Vermont .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Virginia	8.8	8.8	9.0	8.9	9.2	8.6	8.6	8.3	8.7	8.5
Wisconsin	8.1	8.5	8.2	8.3	8.1	7.2	8.4	8.2	7.4	---
Wyoming	5.5	6.1	5.5	5.1	5.3	5.3	4.8	5.4	5.1	5.4

Table 4. Median duration of marriage at time of decree: United States and selected foreign countries, 1948, 1956, 1966, and 1974

[Medians for foreign countries were computed from data published in the *Demographic Yearbook* of the United Nations, 1958 and 1976]

Country	Year decree granted			
	1974 ¹	1966	1956 ²	1948 ³
	Median duration (in years)			
United States ⁴	6.5	7.1	6.5	6.4
Australia ⁵	12.2	14.0	11.7	10.8
Austria	6.6	5.8	7.5	8.1
Belgium ⁵	11.1	12.0	11.1	12.7
Bulgaria	4.4	3.8	---	---
Czechoslovakia	7.4	7.9	8.1	8.2
Denmark	7.9	8.2	⁵ 8.4	⁵ 8.2
Egypt (U.A.R.)	2.2	2.2	2.4	1.9
El Salvador	9.1	8.3	6.6	---
England and Wales ⁵	11.4	11.4	11.9	10.7
Finland	9.0	9.3	8.7	⁵ 8.0
France	9.3	⁵ 11.1	9.6	⁵ 11.3
German Democratic Republic	7.0	5.8	---	---
Germany, Federal Republic of	8.2	7.4	8.1	⁵ 8.3
Greece	7.3	7.2	---	---
Hungary	7.2	7.7	6.9	⁵ 8.8
Israel	5.5	6.1	5.0	3.9
Japan	4.9	4.4	4.5	3.6
Jordan	2.8	3.8	⁵ 4.2	---
Mexico	⁵ 6.0	⁵ 8.2	⁵ 7.8	6.0
Netherlands	10.0	9.3	9.1	9.5
New Zealand ⁵	11.8	14.5	12.3	10.1
Norway	9.1	9.2	9.2	9.7
Poland	8.7	9.1	3.5	---
Portugal ⁵	10.7	14.2	16.8	13.6
Romania	8.5	4.9	---	---
Scotland	9.7	⁵ 10.3	⁵ 11.5	9.5
South Africa, white	8.4	8.9	8.3	7.9
Sweden	⁵ 10.7	9.7	9.7	8.1
Switzerland	8.6	9.1	8.8	8.7
Tunisia	3.3	3.3	---	---
Turkey ⁵	6.2	6.8	6.5	6.8
Uruguay ⁵	11.9	12.4	12.1	12.2
U.S.S.R. ⁵	7.5	7.7	---	---
Ukraine ⁵	7.5	⁵ 8.1	---	---
Venezuela	⁵ 9.0	9.2	⁵ 7.5	⁵ 8.2
Yugoslavia	⁵ 6.2	6.5	⁵ 5.8	⁵ 5.7

¹The medians for France, South Africa, Tunisia, and Turkey were computed from 1972 data. The medians for Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, England and Wales, and Mexico were computed from 1973 data. The medians for New Zealand and Poland were computed from 1975 data.

²The median for Poland was computed from 1953 data. The median for Venezuela was computed from 1954 data. The medians for Egypt, France, and Turkey were computed from 1955 data. The median for Jordan was computed from 1957 data.

³The medians for Czechoslovakia, Denmark, and England and Wales were computed from 1950 data. The medians for Israel and Uruguay were computed from 1951 data.

⁴The 1948 median is for a total of 10 reporting States; the 1956 median is for a total of 23 reporting States; and the 1966 and 1974 medians are for the divorce-registration area.

⁵Computed from grouped data.

Table 5. Percent distribution of divorces, by duration of marriage at time of separation: Total reporting States and selected States, 1977

[Based on sample data. Date of separation was reported by 20 States in 1977. States where reporting was less than 75 percent complete are not shown separately]

State	All divorces	Duration of marriage at time of separation							
		Less than 6 months	6-11 months	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years
Total reporting States	100.0	7.4	5.8	11.4	10.2	8.9	7.2	6.0	5.3
Alaska	100.0	9.9	8.1	13.4	10.6	10.0	7.7	5.6	5.2
California	100.0	8.4	5.6	11.5	10.1	8.8	6.9	5.9	5.3
Connecticut	100.0	4.2	4.4	8.9	9.0	8.5	6.9	5.8	5.3
Hawaii	100.0	7.5	7.0	11.9	10.8	9.1	7.6	7.1	6.0
Idaho	100.0	9.1	6.8	12.7	10.7	8.7	8.2	6.4	5.4
Illinois.....	100.0	8.1	6.5	12.1	10.7	9.0	7.6	5.9	5.2
Iowa.....	100.0	6.1	5.8	12.4	11.0	9.4	7.2	5.3	5.2
Kansas.....	100.0	8.1	7.7	12.4	10.3	8.5	7.4	6.6	5.0
Missouri.....	100.0	9.0	7.1	12.3	10.6	8.9	7.2	5.8	4.9
Nebraska.....	100.0	5.8	5.7	11.3	10.1	9.4	7.4	5.9	5.5
New York.....	100.0	5.4	5.1	10.3	9.9	8.9	7.6	6.2	5.3
Tennessee.....	100.0	9.1	7.4	12.8	10.2	8.8	7.1	4.9	5.3
Vermont.....	100.0	4.6	3.8	9.9	10.1	8.1	7.9	7.1	5.0
Virginia.....	100.0	5.5	5.2	10.4	9.7	9.0	7.2	6.4	5.8
Wisconsin.....	100.0	3.9	4.5	9.1	11.1	10.0	7.5	6.4	5.8

Table 5. Percent distribution of divorces, by duration of marriage at time of separation: Total reporting States and selected States, 1977-Con.

[Based on sample data. Date of separation was reported by 20 States in 1977. States where reporting was less than 75 percent complete are not shown separately]

State	All divorces	Duration of marriage at time of separation							
		7 years	8 years	9 years	10-14 years	15-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years	30 years or more
Total reporting States.....	100.0	4.6	3.7	3.1	11.1	6.9	4.2	2.4	1.6
Alaska	100.0	4.5	3.4	2.4	8.9	4.6	3.3	1.5	0.8
California	100.0	4.6	3.8	3.2	10.9	6.8	4.0	2.4	1.7
Connecticut.....	100.0	5.1	4.2	4.0	13.2	9.2	6.5	3.1	1.9
Hawaii	100.0	3.9	3.7	3.3	10.8	5.8	2.6	1.7	1.1
Idaho.....	100.0	4.6	3.7	3.1	9.3	6.0	2.5	1.6	1.4
Illinois.....	100.0	4.4	3.6	2.9	10.4	6.3	4.0	2.1	1.3
Iowa.....	100.0	4.1	3.9	2.9	11.6	6.7	4.4	2.4	1.5
Kansas.....	100.0	4.6	3.5	2.7	9.4	6.5	3.4	2.2	1.7
Missouri.....	100.0	4.1	3.7	2.7	9.6	6.2	4.3	2.1	1.5
Nebraska.....	100.0	4.2	4.3	3.3	11.1	6.8	4.8	2.7	1.4
New York.....	100.0	4.7	3.8	3.5	12.2	7.7	5.0	2.8	1.4
Tennessee.....	100.0	4.2	2.8	2.5	11.1	6.0	3.8	2.4	1.4
Vermont.....	100.0	5.4	4.0	3.6	11.7	9.1	4.6	3.1	1.9
Virginia.....	100.0	4.6	3.6	3.3	12.6	7.8	4.9	2.6	1.4
Wisconsin.....	100.0	5.1	3.8	3.3	12.1	8.8	4.1	2.5	1.9

Table 6. Percent distribution of divorces, by duration of separation at time of decree: Total reporting States and selected States, 1977

[Based on sample data. Duration of separation was reported by 20 States in 1977. States where reporting was less than 75 percent complete are not shown separately]

State	All divorces	Duration of separation at time of decree								
		Less than 6 months	6-11 months	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15 years or more
Total reporting States.....	100.0	20.3	26.3	29.2	10.1	4.8	2.6	4.7	1.2	0.9
Alaska	100.0	45.7	23.9	17.1	6.3	2.8	1.6	2.1	0.3	0.3
California	100.0	1.2	32.2	35.7	13.2	6.4	3.3	5.8	1.4	0.8
Connecticut.....	100.0	15.8	34.6	27.7	9.8	4.1	2.0	4.1	1.1	0.7
Hawaii	100.0	42.4	22.4	17.7	8.1	3.7	1.7	2.9	0.5	0.5
Idaho.....	100.0	62.2	19.1	12.3	3.1	1.4	0.4	1.0	0.2	0.2
Illinois.....	100.0	38.1	22.4	19.2	7.2	3.7	2.3	4.7	1.3	1.1
Iowa.....	100.0	37.7	33.6	18.9	5.1	1.9	0.9	1.3	0.3	0.3
Kansas.....	100.0	58.5	23.6	11.1	2.8	1.4	0.5	1.5	0.5	0.1
Missouri.....	100.0	47.6	24.3	15.3	5.2	2.4	1.6	2.5	0.6	0.6
Nebraska.....	100.0	44.7	30.7	14.9	4.4	1.7	0.9	1.8	0.5	0.4
New York.....	100.0	14.3	14.6	31.6	14.5	7.5	4.8	8.7	2.3	1.9
Tennessee.....	100.0	51.0	22.1	15.6	4.0	2.4	1.3	2.3	0.6	0.8
Vermont.....	100.0	1.1	21.3	50.4	17.7	5.0	1.8	2.1	0.5	0.1
Virginia.....	100.0	1.0	1.1	66.1	14.8	6.4	3.2	5.3	1.2	0.9
Wisconsin.....	100.0	13.5	42.4	29.2	7.8	2.9	1.6	1.6	0.3	0.6

Table 7. Median duration of marriage at time of decree, by number of this marriage of husband and of wife: Divorce-registration area and selected States, 1977

[Based on sample data. Duration of marriage by marriage order was reported by 28 States in 1977. States where reporting was less than 75 percent complete are not shown separately]

State	All divorces	Husband—number of this marriage			Wife—number of this marriage		
		First	Second	Third or more	First	Second	Third or more
	Median duration (in years)						
Divorce-registration area	6.6	7.5	4.8	3.5	7.4	4.9	3.4
Alaska	5.0	5.7	3.9	3.5	5.7	4.1	3.1
California	7.0	7.9	5.6	4.3	7.8	5.7	4.7
Connecticut	8.3	8.8	6.3	4.6	8.8	6.2	4.2
Georgia	5.3	6.5	3.5	2.5	6.5	3.7	2.4
Hawaii	5.7	6.3	4.2	4.3	6.2	4.4	2.9
Idaho	5.0	5.8	4.0	3.1	5.8	4.1	2.7
Illinois	6.2	7.0	4.4	3.2	6.9	4.6	2.9
Iowa	5.8	6.5	4.6	3.9	6.4	4.8	3.4
Kansas	5.2	6.0	4.0	2.5	6.0	3.7	2.2
Kentucky	5.6	6.4	3.9	3.8	6.4	4.3	2.9
Maryland	8.4	8.9	6.5	5.6	8.7	7.1	5.8
Missouri	5.5	6.5	4.2	2.9	6.4	4.3	2.8
Montana	5.1	5.8	4.1	2.5	5.7	4.5	2.4
New York	8.1	8.6	5.9	5.1	8.6	5.9	4.5
Oregon	6.0	7.0	4.7	3.7	6.8	5.0	3.4
Pennsylvania	7.7	8.1	6.0	4.4	8.1	6.1	3.9
Rhode Island	8.2	8.5	6.3	4.9	8.4	6.4	5.6
South Carolina	6.8	7.5	4.6	3.2	7.5	5.0	3.2
Tennessee	5.3	6.5	3.6	2.8	6.5	3.3	2.9
Utah	4.8	5.7	3.6	2.5	5.8	3.5	2.3
Vermont	7.8	8.4	5.5	4.7	8.4	5.2	4.0
Virginia	7.8	8.4	6.0	4.7	8.3	6.2	4.6
Wisconsin	7.0	7.4	5.5	4.0	7.4	5.5	4.1

Table 8. Percent distribution of divorces by number of this marriage of husband and wife, according to the duration of marriage at time of decree: Divorce-registration area, 1977

[Based on sample data. Figures exclude data for Nebraska]

Duration of marriage at time of decree	All divorces	Husband—number of this marriage				Wife—number of this marriage			
		First marriage	Remarriage			First marriage	Remarriage		
			Total ¹	Second marriage	Third marriage or more		Total ¹	Second marriage	Third marriage or more
All divorces.....	100.0	74.9	25.1	19.1	5.7	75.2	24.8	18.7	5.9
Less than 1 year.....	100.0	44.3	55.7	36.1	19.2	43.0	57.0	36.0	20.5
1 year	100.0	57.7	42.3	29.7	12.5	57.9	42.1	28.8	13.2
2 years	100.0	67.3	32.7	23.8	8.6	67.6	32.4	23.2	9.0
3 years	100.0	70.9	29.1	22.3	6.6	72.6	27.4	20.4	6.8
4 years	100.0	73.1	26.9	21.0	5.6	74.2	25.8	20.3	5.3
5 years	100.0	74.4	25.6	19.8	5.6	75.4	24.6	18.5	5.7
6 years	100.0	75.0	25.0	19.9	4.8	76.5	23.5	18.3	5.0
7 years	100.0	77.6	22.4	18.0	4.2	78.1	21.9	17.4	4.4
8 years	100.0	78.4	21.6	17.6	3.7	78.0	22.0	18.1	3.6
9 years	100.0	81.2	18.8	15.5	3.2	80.7	19.3	15.7	3.4
10-14 years	100.0	81.6	18.4	15.0	3.2	80.8	19.2	15.6	3.4
15-19 years	100.0	84.7	15.3	12.1	2.9	85.4	14.6	12.0	2.3
20-24 years	100.0	86.9	13.1	10.6	2.4	87.1	12.9	10.8	1.9
25-29 years	100.0	90.0	10.0	9.0	0.9	89.0	11.0	9.1	1.6
30-34 years	100.0	90.2	9.8	9.1	0.5	88.6	11.4	10.7	0.4
35 years or more.....	100.0	93.8	6.2	5.5	0.3	93.1	6.9	6.1	0.4

¹Includes number of remarriages not stated.

Table 9. Median duration of marriage at time of decree, by number of children under 18 years of age: Divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1977

[Medians were computed from grouped data and may differ slightly from those computed from ungrouped data]

State	All divorces	Number of children under 18 years of age			
		None	1	2	3 or more
		Median duration (in years)			
Divorce-registration area	7.0	4.2	6.7	10.1	14.2
Alabama.....	4.9	2.7	5.4	9.4	13.9
Alaska.....	5.0	3.4	5.0	8.8	12.5
California.....	7.4	4.7	7.7	10.8	14.6
Connecticut.....	8.6	5.0	7.7	11.4	14.4
Georgia.....	5.4	3.3	5.8	10.6	13.5
Hawaii.....	6.0	3.7	6.0	8.6	11.4
Idaho ¹	5.0	3.0	4.6	8.4	12.4
Illinois.....	6.5	3.9	6.0	9.5	13.9
Iowa.....	6.2	3.6	4.8	9.2	13.2
Kansas.....	5.2	2.9	4.7	8.7	12.4
Kentucky.....	5.8	3.2	5.9	9.2	14.3
Maryland.....	8.7	6.1	8.2	11.8	15.0
Michigan.....	7.3	4.1	6.7	9.8	14.2
Missouri.....	5.7	3.4	5.5	9.4	14.3
Montana.....	5.1	3.0	4.6	8.6	12.8
Nebraska ¹	6.4	3.7	5.3	9.3	14.2
New York.....	8.5	5.6	8.0	11.5	14.7
Ohio.....	6.3	3.6	5.5	9.3	14.1
Oregon.....	6.4	4.1	5.8	9.9	14.0
Pennsylvania.....	8.1	4.7	7.3	10.6	14.6
Rhode Island.....	8.5	5.0	7.3	10.7	15.7
South Carolina.....	7.2	4.5	6.9	10.4	13.9
South Dakota.....	6.2	3.6	4.7	8.9	13.7
Tennessee.....	5.3	3.2	6.0	9.5	13.4
Utah.....	4.8	2.7	4.3	8.1	12.4
Vermont.....	8.1	4.8	7.5	10.0	16.0
Virginia.....	8.2	5.1	7.9	11.6	15.7
Wisconsin.....	7.4	4.5	6.4	9.5	14.9
Wyoming.....	4.6	2.8	4.4	8.4	12.4

¹Data are for number of children affected by decree.

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APPENDIX

TECHNICAL NOTES

Data used in this report for 1960-77 were taken mainly from the *Vital Statistics of the United States*, Volume III—*Marriage and Divorce*⁵ and from unpublished divorce worktables for these and other years. Some information was taken from earlier annual issues of the *Vital Statistics of the United States* and from official vital statistics publications for the following States: Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, and Vermont. International comparisons are based on the 1958 and 1976 issues of the *Demographic Yearbook* of the United Nations.^{1,2}

Duration of marriage at divorce is calculated from both the date of decree and recorded on each divorce certificate. Both dates are required on the divorce certificates of all States that participate in the divorce-registration area (DRA). Criteria for participation in the DRA are (1) a Statewide central file of divorce certificates; (2) a statistical report form conforming closely to the U.S. Standard Certificate of Divorce or Annulment, as recommended by the U.S. Public Health Service; (3) regular reporting to the State by all courts that grant divorces; and (4) satisfactory tests for completeness and accuracy of registration and reporting.

Because the date of decree is always known from court records and the date of marriage is often necessary in court proceedings, information on duration of marriage is now over 99 percent complete for the DRA. This figure represents a higher level of completeness than for information on any other routinely pub-

lished item of divorce statistics, and the percent of completeness has been increasing (table I).

The approximate date of separation is reported by a limited number of States. By using this date, three variables of demographic importance may be calculated: (1) the duration of marriage to separation, (2) the age of the husband and wife at separation, and (3) the duration of separation to decree. For other variables used in this report, detailed divorce statistics were obtained from certificates obtained from the 29 States that participated in the DRA during 1971-77. The percent of completeness of reporting for the duration of mar-

Table I. Percent completeness of reporting of duration of marriage: Divorce-registration area, 1960-77

Year decree granted	Number of States in the DRA	Percent with duration of marriage reported
1977	29	99.2
1976	29	99.2
1975	29	99.1
1974	29	99.0
1973	29	99.0
1972	29	98.9
1971	29	98.6
1970	28	98.2
1969	28	97.3
1968	26	96.0
1967	22	97.4
1966	22	97.6
1965	22	97.4
1964	22	96.1
1963	22	97.1
1962	21	97.6
1961	20	96.8
1960	18	95.6

NOTE: A list of references follows the text.

riage at decree and for other variables is given in table II for the entire DRA and for each participating State in 1977.

Each State that participates in the DRA sends microfilms of all divorce certificates for decrees granted during a calendar year to NCHS. The term "divorce" as used here covers decrees of absolute divorce, of annulment, and of marriage dissolution; the last type of decree replaced absolute divorce in many States in recent years. Microfilms of divorce certificates are sampled and divorce statistics are estimated from this sample. An exception to this procedure occurs for those States that provide

precoded data for all divorces granted. In 1977 there were 8 such States: Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia. For the remaining States in the DRA, the microfilms are sampled at rates of one-half, one-fifth, one-tenth, or one-twentieth, depending on the number of divorces granted. States with small numbers of divorces have all of their divorces included in the sample. Sampling rates for all States participating in the DRA in 1970 and 1977 are shown in table III.

All detailed divorce statistics are estimated from sample data both for the DRA and for

Table II. Percent completeness of reporting of duration of marriage and other selected variables: Divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1977

[The divorce-registration area included 29 States in 1977]

State	Duration of marriage to divorce	Duration of marriage to separation	Duration of separation to divorce	Age at separation		Number of this marriage		Age at marriage		Children under 18 years
				Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	
	Percent									
Divorce-registration area.....	99.2	60.3	60.5	52.0	51.6	81.9	82.0	84.0	83.4	97.8
Total reporting States.....	99.2	89.4	89.8	80.3	79.2	82.7	82.8	84.0	83.4	97.8
Alabama.....	99.1	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	68.4	68.7	66.4	66.5	97.7
Alaska.....	99.4	87.9	88.1	85.4	84.8	97.0	97.1	96.2	95.4	99.2
California.....	99.2	96.5	96.9	95.1	93.9	95.7	95.6	97.4	96.1	95.2
Connecticut.....	99.3	89.8	90.0	88.6	88.0	99.3	98.8	97.3	96.8	98.3
Georgia.....	98.5	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	90.1	90.2	89.5	88.8	99.0
Hawaii.....	99.9	97.4	97.5	96.7	96.4	99.9	99.9	99.1	98.4	99.9
Idaho.....	98.8	84.8	82.6	- - -	- - -	96.7	96.4	95.6	94.6	99.2
Illinois.....	99.4	90.6	91.0	86.2	85.4	91.8	91.7	96.8	96.4	98.7
Iowa.....	99.1	85.6	86.1	(¹)	(¹)	98.8	98.9	96.9	96.8	97.7
Kansas.....	99.5	93.9	94.3	93.4	93.1	99.8	99.7	98.6	98.3	100.0
Kentucky.....	98.7	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	83.7	83.3	95.3	94.3	96.9
Maryland.....	99.5	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	98.1	98.5	99.6	99.3	97.9
Michigan.....	99.3	69.8	70.2	17.4	17.7	12.0	12.5	25.6	25.9	94.9
Missouri.....	99.4	96.1	96.4	93.1	92.7	94.1	94.1	96.1	95.4	99.6
Montana.....	99.5	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	98.1	97.6	99.4	99.3	99.0
Nebraska.....	99.8	97.7	97.8	5.1	5.0	(¹)	(¹)	97.2	97.1	100.0
New York.....	99.0	90.1	90.6	81.9	81.0	95.5	95.1	88.9	87.7	98.1
Ohio.....	99.5	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	40.9	41.2	36.4	36.7	99.8
Oregon.....	99.5	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	88.4	92.7	98.5	97.9	98.7
Pennsylvania.....	99.4	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	82.4	82.4	85.3	85.0	97.5
Rhode Island.....	99.6	57.1	57.3	56.8	56.3	95.9	95.8	99.2	99.2	97.5
South Carolina.....	99.2	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	99.7	99.8	99.2	98.3	99.9
South Dakota.....	99.3	24.8	25.1	11.1	11.4	45.2	45.3	15.2	15.2	99.7
Tennessee.....	97.9	80.9	81.9	80.4	79.5	97.8	97.9	96.9	95.5	99.4
Utah.....	97.9	70.7	70.8	67.1	67.3	82.1	82.2	90.5	90.1	96.3
Vermont.....	99.8	98.0	98.1	97.7	97.0	99.9	99.8	99.4	98.7	99.1
Virginia.....	99.6	98.0	98.2	95.7	94.8	99.5	99.4	99.0	98.5	99.7
Wisconsin.....	99.6	94.9	95.0	94.0	93.9	99.9	99.8	98.8	98.8	99.9
Wyoming.....	99.5	62.6	62.7	58.2	57.6	61.8	62.0	65.9	65.1	99.3

¹Not reportable.

Table III. Divorce sampling rate, number of sample records, and estimated total: Divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1970 and 1977

State	1977			1970		
	Divorce sampling rate	Number of sample records	Estimated total	Divorce sampling rate	Number of sample records	Estimated total
Divorce-registration area .....	...	245,251	656,339	...	80,630	429,498
Alabama	0.10	2,383	23,830	0.10	1,507	15,070
Alaska	1.00	3,579	3,579	1.00	1,694	1,694
California	0.05	6,568	131,360	0.10	11,112	111,120
Connecticut	0.50	6,187	12,374	0.50	2,910	5,820
Georgia	0.10	3,095	30,950	0.20	3,728	18,640
Hawaii	0.50	2,301	4,602	1.00	2,585	2,585
Idaho	0.50	3,007	6,014	0.50	1,776	3,552
Illinois ¹	1.00	48,980	48,980	0.10	3,644	36,440
Iowa	0.50	5,445	10,890	0.50	3,539	7,078
Kansas	0.20	2,532	12,660	0.50	4,340	8,680
Kentucky	0.20	3,126	15,630	0.20	2,138	10,690
Maryland	0.20	3,307	16,535	0.20	1,845	9,225
Michigan	0.10	4,287	42,870	0.10	2,994	29,940
Missouri ¹	1.00	25,328	25,328	0.20	3,569	17,845
Montana	0.50	2,415	4,830	1.00	3,060	3,060
Nebraska ¹	1.00	6,126	6,126	0.50	1,848	3,696
New York ¹	1.00	55,802	55,802	0.10	2,640	26,400
Ohio	0.05	2,869	57,380	0.10	3,937	39,370
Oregon	0.20	3,277	16,385	0.20	1,914	9,570
Pennsylvania	0.10	3,792	37,920	0.10	2,259	22,590
Rhode Island ¹	1.00	3,420	3,420	1.00	1,693	1,693
South Carolina ¹	1.00	10,718	10,718	...	...	...
South Dakota	1.00	2,436	2,436	1.00	1,358	1,358
Tennessee	0.10	2,751	27,510	0.20	3,310	16,550
Utah	0.50	3,462	6,924	0.50	1,814	3,628
Vermont ¹	1.00	2,132	2,132	1.00	1,027	1,027
Virginia ¹	1.00	21,464	21,464	0.20	2,402	12,010
Wisconsin	0.20	2,922	14,610	0.50	4,180	8,360
Wyoming	0.50	1,540	3,080	1.00	1,807	1,807

¹For 1977, computer tapes containing precoded data for all divorces were supplied by this State through the Cooperative Health Statistics System.

each State except where all certificates are in the sample. Estimates based on sample data are subject to sampling error, as shown in table IV for 1970 and 1977.

To determine if the difference between 2 percents is statistically significant, the percents and their corresponding sampling errors should be converted into proportions (i.e., divided by 100), and the difference between the propor-

tions divided by the square root of the sum of the squares of their sampling errors:

$$\frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{S_{P_1}^2 + S_{P_2}^2}}$$

If this quotient is greater than 2 (or less than -2), the probability that the difference between

Table IV. Sampling error of estimated percents: Divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1970 and 1977

State	1977					1970				
	Estimated total	Estimated percent				Estimated total	Estimated percent			
		1 or 99	10 or 90	25 or 75	50		1 or 99	10 or 90	25 or 75	50
Divorce-registration area ...	656,339	0.04	0.11	0.15	0.18	429,498	0.04	0.12	0.17	0.20
Alabama	23,830	0.19	0.58	0.84	0.97	15,070	0.25	0.74	1.06	1.22
Alaska	¹ 3,579	...	...	...	...	¹ 1,694	...	...	...	...
California	131,360	0.12	0.36	0.52	0.60	111,120	0.09	0.27	0.39	0.45
Connecticut	12,374	0.09	0.27	0.39	0.44	5,820	0.14	0.40	0.57	0.65
Georgia	30,950	0.17	0.51	0.74	0.85	18,640	0.14	0.44	0.63	0.73
Hawaii	4,602	0.15	0.43	0.63	0.74	¹ 2,585	...	...	...	...
Idaho	6,014	0.13	0.38	0.57	0.65	3,552	0.17	0.51	0.73	0.84
Illinois ²	¹ 48,980	...	...	...	...	36,440	0.16	0.47	0.68	0.78
Iowa	10,890	0.09	0.28	0.41	0.48	7,078	0.11	0.37	0.52	0.61
Kansas	12,660	0.17	0.53	0.77	0.88	8,680	0.10	0.32	0.47	0.54
Kentucky	15,630	0.16	0.48	0.69	0.80	10,690	0.20	0.58	0.83	0.96
Maryland	16,535	0.16	0.47	0.68	0.78	9,225	0.21	0.63	0.90	1.04
Michigan	42,870	0.14	0.44	0.63	0.73	29,940	0.17	0.52	0.75	0.87
Missouri ²	¹ 25,328	...	...	...	...	17,845	0.15	0.45	0.65	0.75
Montana	4,830	0.14	0.41	0.60	0.70	¹ 3,060	...	...	...	...
Nebraska ²	¹ 6,126	...	...	...	...	3,696	0.16	0.49	0.70	0.84
New York ²	¹ 55,802	...	...	...	...	26,400	0.19	0.55	0.80	0.92
Ohio	57,380	0.18	0.55	0.79	0.91	39,370	0.15	0.45	0.66	0.75
Oregon	16,385	0.15	0.47	0.68	0.78	9,570	0.20	0.62	0.89	1.02
Pennsylvania	37,920	0.15	0.46	0.67	0.77	22,590	0.20	0.60	0.86	1.00
Rhode Island ²	¹ 3,420	...	...	...	...	¹ 1,693	...	...	...	...
South Carolina ²	¹ 10,718	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
South Dakota	¹ 2,436	...	...	...	...	¹ 1,358	...	...	...	...
Tennessee	27,510	0.18	0.54	0.78	0.90	16,550	0.16	0.47	0.68	0.78
Utah	6,924	0.12	0.36	0.52	0.61	3,628	0.17	0.52	0.77	0.88
Vermont ²	¹ 2,132	...	...	...	...	¹ 1,027	...	...	...	...
Virginia ²	¹ 21,464	...	...	...	...	12,010	0.18	0.54	0.78	0.91
Wisconsin	14,610	0.16	0.50	0.72	0.83	8,360	0.12	0.35	0.50	0.59
Wyoming	3,080	0.16	0.55	0.78	0.91	¹ 1,807	...	...	...	...

¹All records were used in the sample for this State in this year.

²For 1977, computer tapes containing precoded data for all divorces were supplied by this State through the Cooperative Health Statistics System.

the two proportions is due to chance is less than 1 in 20.

Percentiles, medians, quartiles, and percent distributions, as shown in this report, are computed by omitting cases with information that was not stated. Median duration for the DRA and each reporting State has been published in the *Vital Statistics of the United States, Volume III—Marriage and Divorce*.⁵ The median dura-

tions of marriage were generally computed from ungrouped data, but most medians of duration tabulated by other variables were computed from grouped data. Medians computed from ungrouped and from grouped data are not comparable.

Population data for married women by duration of 1970 current marriage, which were used as denominators for duration-specific rates (text table C), were obtained from a U.S. Bureau of the Census publication showing the ever-married population tabulated by the number of

NOTE: A list of references follows the text.

years since the first marriage.⁶ Statistics were used for women (rather than for men) because divorce rates per 1,000 married women are computed routinely and it is desirable to compute duration-specific rates by using comparable population bases. For persons married once,

years since first marriage are identical with years of current marriage. Thus for married women who were married once, population bases could be obtained directly from the Census publication. Numerators for the duration-specific rates (national divorce data by duration) were estimated by applying the percent distribution by duration computed for the DRA to the 1970 national divorce total.

NOTE: A list of references follows the text.

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