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VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Advance Report

Final Marriage Statistics, 1978

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During 1978 there were 2,282,272 marriages performed in the United States. This was an increase of 103,905 over the total for 1977 (2,178,367). Part of this increase was due to the inclusion for the first time of nonlicensed (confidential) marriages registered in California. When the nonlicensed marriages are included in the national total for 1977, the increase from 1977 to 1978 is 71,897 marriages, or 3.3 percent. (See Technical Notes.) Provisional data for 1979 indicate a similar increase between 1978 and 1979.

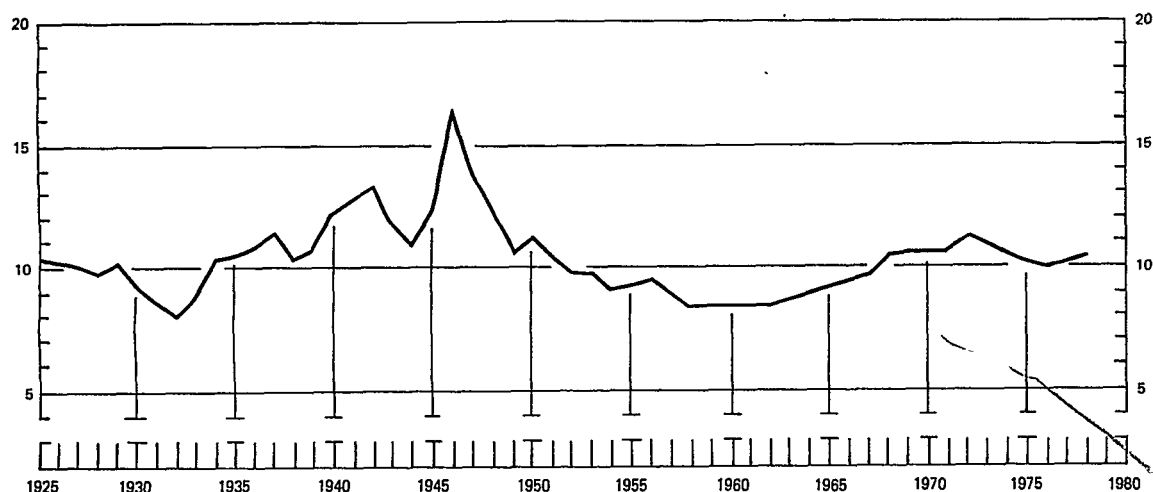
The marriage rate for 1978 was 10.5 per 1,000 population, an increase over the final rate of 10.1 for 1977. The 1977 marriage rate, including nonlicensed California marriages, was

10.2, indicating an increase of 2.9 percent between these comparable rates for 1977 and 1978.

While the marriage rate based on the total population moved upward in 1977 and 1978, the rate for women of marriageable ages continued its long decline. This is because the population of women eligible to marry grew faster than the total population. In 1978 the marriage rate of 64.1 per 1,000 unmarried women aged 15 years and over was slightly lower than the comparable rate for 1977 (64.5, including the nonlicensed California marriages) and 20 percent lower than the peak rate of the past 20 years (80.0 in 1969). Except for 1972, this rate has declined every year since 1969.

MARRIAGE RATE: UNITED STATES, 1925-78

PER 1,000 POPULATION



In 1978 the marriage rates per 1,000 population increased in every region and division of the United States. Rates increased in 33 States and the District of Columbia, declined in only 6 States, and remained the same in 11 States. The usual regional variation occurred, with the highest rate in the West (12.5) and lowest rate in the Northeast Region (7.8).

Marriage rates by age, sex, and previous marital status are based on data from a sample of marriage certificates from the marriage-registration area (MRA), which has included 41 States and the District of Columbia since 1971. In 1977-78 all marriage rates based on data from the MRA exclude data for Iowa, because Iowa did not require reporting of previous marital status in those years. In addition, all statistics based on data for the MRA exclude nonlicensed marriages registered in California, as described in the Technical Notes.

For the MRA in 1978 the first-marriage rate for women was 62.1 per 1,000 single (never-married) women, about 20 percent higher than the rate for single men (51.9 per 1,000). In contrast, the remarriage rate for previously married men was 121.8 per 1,000, about 3 times the rate for previously married women (40.0 per 1,000). The largest sex differential in marriage rates was between previously widowed men and women, with the remarriage rate for widowers (32.7 per 1,000) almost 5 times the rate for widows (7.1 per 1,000). The differential in remarriage rates for previously divorced men and women was considerably smaller, with the rate for men (168.6 per 1,000) only about three-fifths greater than that for women (105.0 per 1,000). Similar differentials have held for the MRA over the last few years.

In the MRA during 1978 there was a continuation of the general decline that has occurred in the marriage rate for each marital status group since the early 1970's or before. Between 1977 and 1978 the first-marriage rate declined by 2 to 6 percent for single men and women in the age groups 14-17 years, 18-19 years, and 20-24 years. Even larger declines (7 to 13 percent) occurred for single women aged 30-34 years, 35-44 years, and 45-64 years; and for single men aged 45-64 years. In 1978, first-marriage rates increased

only for single women aged 25-29 years and for single men aged 30-34 years, and these increases were very small (about 1 percent).

Between 1977 and 1978, declines of 10 percent or more occurred in the remarriage rates of divorced men and women aged 14-24 years. There were more moderate declines for divorced men and women in the age group 25-44 years. For widowed men and women in the MRA, remarriage rates for 1978 showed declines in all three age groups—14-44 years, 45-64 years, and 65 years and over—with the largest declines (over 10 percent) being recorded for the last age group.

Remarriages comprise an increasing proportion of all marriages. In the MRA between 1971 and 1978 the percent of marriages involving previously married brides increased from 24 to 32 percent. A slightly larger increase occurred for men, with the percent of marriages involving previously married grooms increasing from 25 to 34 percent. These figures assume that the marriages for which marriage order was not stated were distributed the same as those for which it was stated.

Recent declines in first marriage rates were accompanied by a rise in the age at first marriage, and this rise continued in 1978. Between 1972 and 1978 the median age at first marriage for single women increased almost a whole year, from 20.5 years to 21.4 years. Over this same period, the increase in median age at first marriage for single men was slightly smaller, rising from 22.4 to 23.2 years.

For previously divorced brides and grooms the median age at remarriage increased slightly in 1978, to 30.5 years for brides and 33.8 years for grooms. The only declines in median age at marriage occurred for previously widowed brides and grooms. For widows the median age at remarriage declined from 53.1 years in 1977 to 52.6 years in 1978, while for widowers the median age declined from 60.1 to 59.7 years.

The statistics for the MRA presented in this report are based on sample data and consequently are subject to sampling variability as well as other sources of error. Further discussion of sampling variability appears in the Technical Notes.

Table 1. MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGE RATES: UNITED STATES, 1958-78

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

Year	Number	Rate per 1,000 ¹ —		
		Total population	Unmarried women 15 years and over	Unmarried women 15-44 years
1978 ²	2,282,272	10.5	64.1	109.1
1977.....	2,178,367	10.1	63.6	109.8
1976.....	2,154,807	10.0	65.2	113.4
1975.....	2,152,662	10.1	66.9	118.5
1974.....	2,229,667	10.5	72.0	128.4
1973.....	2,284,108	10.9	76.0	137.3
1972.....	2,282,154	11.0	77.9	141.3
1971.....	2,190,481	10.6	76.2	138.9
1970.....	2,158,802	10.6	76.5	140.2
1969.....	2,145,000	10.6	80.0	149.1
1968.....	2,069,000	10.4	79.1	147.2
1967.....	1,927,000	9.7	76.4	145.2
1966.....	1,857,000	9.5	75.6	145.1
1965.....	1,800,000	9.3	75.0	144.3
1964.....	1,725,000	9.0	74.6	146.2
1963.....	1,654,000	8.8	73.4	143.3
1962.....	1,577,000	8.5	71.2	138.4
1961.....	1,548,000	8.5	72.2	145.4
1960.....	1,523,000	8.5	73.5	148.0
1959.....	1,494,000	8.5	73.6	149.8
1958.....	1,451,000	8.4	72.0	146.3

¹Data are based on population enumerated as of April 1 for 1960 and 1970 and estimated as of July 1 for all other years.²Data include 37,462 nonlicensed marriages registered in California; see Technical Notes.

Table 2. MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGE RATES: UNITED STATES, EACH REGION, DIVISION, AND STATE, 1976-78

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

Region, division, and State	Number			Rate			Region, division and State	Number			Rate		
	1978	1977	1976	1978	1977	1976		1978	1977	1976	1978	1977	1976
United States.....	¹ 2,282,272	2,178,367	2,154,807	¹ 10.5	10.1	10.0	West North Central:						
Northeast.....	382,201	372,666	374,297	7.8	7.6	7.6	Minnesota.....	33,480	33,038	³ 32,034	8.3	8.3	³ 8.1
North Central.....	562,612	552,000	544,351	9.7	9.5	9.4	Iowa.....	28,030	26,419	25,727	9.6	9.2	9.0
South.....	832,840	805,281	792,837	11.8	11.5	11.5	Missouri.....	52,878	52,100	51,070	10.9	10.9	10.7
West.....	¹ 504,619	448,420	443,322	¹ 12.5	11.4	11.5	North Dakota.....	5,651	5,668	5,650	8.7	8.7	8.8
							South Dakota.....	10,638	10,359	10,781	15.4	15.0	15.7
							Nebraska.....	13,711	13,387	13,431	8.7	8.6	8.6
							Kansas.....	23,975	23,673	23,559	10.2	10.2	10.2
Northeast:							South Atlantic:						
New England.....	99,742	97,317	95,596	8.1	7.9	7.8	Delaware.....	4,322	3,993	3,943	7.4	6.9	6.8
Middle Atlantic.....	282,459	275,349	278,701	7.7	7.4	7.5	Maryland.....	45,029	45,109	44,616	10.9	10.9	10.8
North Central:							District of Columbia..	4,624	4,640	4,611	6.9	6.7	6.6
East North Central.....	394,249	387,356	382,099	9.6	9.4	9.3	Virginia.....	58,967	57,778	56,469	11.4	11.3	11.2
West North Central.....	168,363	164,644	162,252	9.9	9.8	9.7	West Virginia.....	17,275	17,484	17,229	9.3	9.4	9.5
South:							North Carolina.....	43,852	43,490	42,475	7.9	7.9	7.8
South Atlantic.....	390,527	380,790	372,134	11.3	11.1	10.9	South Carolina.....	52,960	51,314	50,698	18.2	17.8	17.8
East South Central.....	² 165,830	² 160,109	159,488	² 11.9	² 11.6	11.7	Georgia.....	68,171	67,388	65,950	13.4	13.3	13.3
West South Central.....	276,483	264,382	261,215	12.5	12.2	12.3	Florida.....	95,327	89,594	86,143	11.0	10.6	10.2
West:							East South Central:						
Mountain.....	234,451	219,457	216,208	22.6	21.9	22.0	Kentucky.....	² 33,301	² 32,245	32,931	² 9.5	² 9.3	9.6
Pacific.....	¹ 270,168	228,963	227,114	¹ 9.0	7.8	7.9	Tennessee.....	57,529	55,327	53,270	13.3	12.9	12.6
							Alabama.....	47,720	45,694	46,515	12.8	12.4	12.7
							Mississippi.....	27,280	26,843	26,772	11.3	11.2	11.4
New England:							West South Central:						
Maine.....	11,658	11,446	11,302	10.7	10.5	10.6	Arkansas.....	25,096	24,028	24,913	11.6	11.2	11.8
New Hampshire.....	9,120	8,902	8,550	10.5	10.5	10.4	Louisiana.....	39,877	38,645	37,999	10.0	9.9	9.9
Vermont.....	4,804	4,774	4,396	9.9	9.9	9.2	Oklahoma.....	43,683	42,133	40,983	15.4	15.0	14.8
Massachusetts.....	42,882	41,947	41,501	7.4	7.3	7.1	Texas.....	167,827	159,576	157,320	12.9	12.4	12.6
Rhode Island.....	7,277	7,114	6,905	7.8	7.6	7.4	Mountain:						
Connecticut.....	24,001	23,134	22,942	7.7	7.4	7.4	Montana.....	8,136	7,547	7,390	10.4	9.9	9.8
Middle Atlantic:							Idaho.....	13,570	13,691	13,104	15.4	16.0	15.8
New York.....	136,784	133,830	136,968	7.7	7.5	7.6	Wyoming.....	6,298	6,012	5,862	14.8	14.8	15.0
New Jersey.....	52,993	50,677	51,291	7.2	6.9	7.0	Colorado.....	31,129	30,063	28,601	11.5	11.5	11.1
Pennsylvania.....	92,682	90,842	90,442	7.9	7.7	7.6	New Mexico ⁴	16,582	16,385	15,616	13.6	13.8	13.4
East North Central:							Arizona.....	27,725	26,955	26,534	11.7	11.7	11.7
Ohio.....	103,754	99,352	96,776	9.7	9.3	9.1	Utah.....	16,365	15,098	14,693	12.4	11.9	12.0
Indiana.....	58,050	56,424	55,699	10.8	10.6	10.5	Nevada.....	114,646	103,706	⁴ 104,408	172.1	163.8	⁴ 171.2
Illinois.....	105,923	108,100	110,847	9.4	9.6	9.9	Pacific:						
Michigan.....	88,333	86,088	82,753	9.6	9.4	9.1	Washington.....	45,210	43,835	41,986	11.9	12.0	11.6
Wisconsin.....	38,189	37,392	36,024	8.2	8.0	7.8	Oregon.....	21,055	20,303	19,182	8.6	8.5	8.2
							California.....	¹ 188,056	149,416	151,284	¹ 8.4	6.8	7.0
							Alaska.....	5,111	5,143	4,893	12.4	12.6	12.8
							Hawaii.....	10,736	10,266	9,769	11.9	11.5	11.0

¹ Figure includes 37,462 nonlicensed marriages registered in California; see Technical Notes.² Data are incomplete.³ Data are estimated.⁴ Marriage licenses issued.

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Table 3. MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGE RATES BY AGE AND PREVIOUS MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN AND MEN: MARRIAGE-REGISTRATION AREA,¹ 1977-78

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

Age and previous marital status	Women				Men			
	Number ²		Rate ³		Number ²		Rate ³	
	1978	1977	1978	1977	1978	1977	1978	1977
ALL MARRIAGES								
Total.....	1,765,945	1,723,845	53.3	53.7	1,765,945	1,723,845	64.9	65.1
14-17 years.....	121,570	130,817	17.7	18.9	19,396	21,164	2.7	2.9
18-19 years.....	303,354	312,969	99.2	103.6	156,480	164,834	45.0	47.6
20-24 years.....	656,599	636,551	136.0	140.1	659,809	654,068	112.2	115.4
25-44 years.....	573,537	530,259	102.3	104.8	764,214	717,432	134.5	138.3
25-29 years.....	298,860	276,064	137.0	139.3	390,797	373,291	146.2	150.8
30-34 years.....	145,218	131,994	103.0	105.4	195,940	181,132	136.9	143.4
35-44 years.....	129,459	122,201	64.2	66.9	177,477	163,009	112.6	112.5
45-64 years.....	95,546	96,489	19.1	19.4	136,950	135,626	50.6	50.8
65 years and over.....	15,339	16,760	2.0	2.2	29,096	30,721	13.2	14.2
FIRST MARRIAGES								
Total.....	1,174,259	1,146,519	62.1	62.7	1,143,644	1,117,626	51.9	52.0
14-17 years.....	117,218	126,022	17.3	18.4	18,999	20,280	2.7	2.8
18-19 years.....	284,399	292,102	95.6	99.6	150,454	158,679	44.3	46.7
20-24 years.....	547,522	524,452	123.0	125.6	592,417	584,790	105.2	107.7
25-44 years.....	216,259	194,511	77.1	78.6	367,491	338,458	91.1	91.9
25-29 years.....	159,564	142,429	106.7	105.7	262,307	244,475	118.5	119.3
30-34 years.....	38,827	34,706	60.0	64.3	73,166	64,759	76.8	76.0
35-44 years.....	17,868	17,376	27.0	29.6	32,018	29,224	37.0	37.3
45-64 years.....	8,025	8,528	7.9	8.6	12,859	13,981	10.3	11.8
65 years and over.....	836	904	1.0	1.0	1,424	1,438	2.5	2.5
REMARRIAGES								
Total.....	547,979	531,823	40.0	40.0	580,568	562,470	121.8	122.4
14-19 years.....	10,484	11,555	321.5	323.5	1,267	1,608	336.3	361.0
20-24 years.....	91,112	92,624	126.8	129.0	48,508	48,572	242.4	253.4
25-44 years.....	346,219	325,616	202.5	209.6	381,785	363,887	284.9	306.6
25-29 years.....	133,067	127,848	139.3	136.2	119,666	119,592	206.5	202.4
30-34 years.....	103,888	94,959	82.3	84.4	119,401	113,113	85.2	82.0
35-44 years.....	109,264	102,809	21.9	22.1	142,718	131,182	16.8	18.5
45-64 years.....	85,924	86,471	2.1	2.4	121,877	119,601		
65 years and over.....	14,240	15,557			27,131	28,802		
Previously widowed ⁴	58,542	61,262	7.1	7.6	53,039	55,886	32.7	35.3
14-24 years.....	1,955	1,951	55.3	57.3	623	512	146.1	159.3
25-44 years.....	16,141	16,557	13.6	14.0	7,996	8,090	64.9	66.3
45-64 years.....	30,273	31,169	1.8	2.1	26,364	27,661	15.6	17.7
65 years and over.....	10,173	11,585			18,056	19,623		

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGE RATES BY AGE AND PREVIOUS MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN AND MEN: MARRIAGE-REGISTRATION AREA,¹ 1977-78—Con.

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

Age and previous marital status	Women				Men			
	Number ²		Rate ³		Number ²		Rate ³	
	1978	1977	1978	1977	1978	1977	1978	1977
REMARRIAGES—Con.								
Previously divorced ⁴	405,619	390,829	105.0	107.3	440,016	422,597	168.6	173.4
14-19 years.....	8,763	9,645	} 313.7	} 347.3	972	1,339	} 307.4	} 347.9
20-24 years.....	74,047	76,489			39,301	39,367		
25-44 years.....	278,035	259,838	134.4	137.3	316,145	302,007	236.6	252.9
45-64 years.....	42,658	42,961	35.6	35.6	78,053	74,372	89.2	85.1
65 years and over.....	2,116	1,896	6.4	6.4	5,545	5,512	20.8	21.9
Not stated if widowed or divorced ⁵ ..	83,818	79,732	...	...	87,513	83,987	...	...
NOT STATED IF PREVIOUSLY MARRIED⁶	43,707	45,503	...	...	41,733	43,749	...	...

¹Data exclude 32,008 nonlicensed marriages registered in California in 1977 and 37,462 registered in 1978. Sampling errors of estimates and a description of the MRA appear in the Technical Notes.

²Figures for first marriages and remarriages exclude data for Iowa; these data are included in Not stated if previously married.

³Base populations exclude persons under 14 years of age. Rates for all marriages are based on the unmarried population; for first marriages, on the never-married population; and for remarriages, on the widowed and divorced populations. All rates exclude data for Iowa.

⁴Data exclude remarriages in Michigan, Ohio, and South Carolina.

⁵Data include all remarriages in Michigan, Ohio, and South Carolina.

⁶Figures are included in all marriages.

**Table 4. MEDIAN AGE OF BRIDE AND GROOM BY PREVIOUS MARITAL STATUS:
MARRIAGE-REGISTRATION AREA,¹ 1963-78**

[Based on sample data. For a description of the Marriage-Registration Area, see Technical Notes]

Year	Median age of bride					Median age of groom				
	Total	First marriage	Remarriage	Previously divorced ²	Previously widowed ²	Total	First marriage	Remarriage	Previously divorced ²	Previously widowed ²
1978 ³	23.2	21.4	31.5	30.5	52.6	25.5	23.2	35.1	33.8	59.7
1977 ³	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

¹ Figures exclude nonlicensed marriages registered in California; see Technical Notes.

² 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.

³ Figures for first marriage, remarriage, previously divorced, and previously widowed exclude data for Iowa.

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. However, for some States shown in table 2, figures are by place and date the marriage license was issued.

Sources of Data

Figures in tables 1 and 2 are based on totals reported by States and counties. All other figures in the tables 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 in by States participating in the marriage-registration area (MRA). In 1977 and 1978 the MRA consisted of the District of Columbia and all except nine States—Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, and Washington. Marriages performed in the MRA included 79 percent of the marriages registered in the United States in 1978.

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 (which ordinarily requires a physician's examination and tests for syphilis and rubella). In March 1972 this section was amended to require county clerks to keep sealed records of these marriages and periodically to report the total number to the California State Department of Health Services. These records may not be opened to inspection without a court order on a showing of good cause.

Since reporting began, nonlicensed marriages have increased rapidly, totaling 2,857 in 1973; 10,555 in 1974; 19,061 in 1975; 30,125 in 1976; 32,008 in 1977; and 37,462 in 1978. NCHS has not included the nonlicensed California marriages in marriage totals or rates for years prior to 1978. However, beginning with final statistics for 1978, these nonlicensed marriages are included in the national and geographic totals and rates.

Table I shows the number of marriages and marriage rates for the United States in 1973-77, including the reported number of nonlicensed California marriages. Similarly, table II shows the number of marriages and the marriage rate for 1973-77, including California nonlicensed marriages, for the West Region, the Pacific Division, and for California.

Table I. MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGE RATES, INCLUDING NONLICENSED CALIFORNIA MARRIAGES: UNITED STATES, 1973-77

[Data refer to marriages occurring within the United States, including nonlicensed marriages registered in California. Rates are based on population estimated as of July 1]

Year	Number	Rate per 1,000—		
		Total population	Unmarried women 15 years and over	Unmarried women 15-44 years
1977.....	2,210,375	10.2	64.5	111.4
1976.....	2,184,932	10.2	66.2	115.0
1975.....	2,171,723	10.2	67.5	119.5
1974.....	2,240,222	10.6	72.4	129.1
1973.....	2,286,965	10.9	76.1	137.5

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

Table II. MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGE RATES, INCLUDING NONLICENSED CALIFORNIA MARRIAGES: WEST REGION, PACIFIC DIVISION, AND CALIFORNIA, 1973-77

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

Area and year	Number	Rate
WEST REGION		
1977.....	480,428	12.2
1976.....	473,447	12.3
1975.....	461,454	12.2
1974.....	460,273	12.4
1973.....	458,589	12.5
PACIFIC DIVISION		
1977.....	260,971	8.9
1976.....	257,239	9.0
1975.....	249,409	8.8
1974.....	246,619	8.9
1973.....	246,851	9.0
CALIFORNIA		
1977.....	181,424	8.3
1976.....	181,409	8.4
1975.....	173,873	8.2
1974.....	171,442	8.2
1973.....	172,177	8.4

State-coded data tapes of all their marriage records through the Cooperative Health Statistics System (CHSS), and 100 percent of these records were used by NCHS. For all other States in the MRA, records were sampled at different rates designed to give a sample of at least 2,500 for each State. All records were included in the sample for Alaska, Delaware, and the District of Columbia, where totals of less than 5,000 marriages had been anticipated, and for New York City. One-half of all records were included from 3 States, one-fifth from 6 States, one-tenth from 10 States, and one-twentieth from 8 States. The

Table III. APPROXIMATE SAMPLING ERRORS OF ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF MARRIAGES SHOWN IN TABLE 3: MARRIAGE-REGISTRATION AREA, 1977-78.

[Based on data excluding nonlicensed marriages registered in California]

Percent of total MRA marriages in subclass	1978 sampling error	1977 sampling error
1 or 99.....	406	401
2 or 98.....	572	565
3 or 97.....	697	688
4 or 96.....	800	790
5 or 95.....	890	879
7 or 93.....	1,042	1,029
10 or 90.....	1,225	1,210
15 or 85.....	1,458	1,440
20 or 80.....	1,634	1,614
25 or 75.....	1,768	1,747
50.....	2,042	2,017

How to use the Sampling Error table

Total numbers of MRA marriages in 1977 and 1978 (excluding nonlicensed California marriages) were 1,723,845 and 1,765,945, respectively. For any estimate of marriage shown in table 3, determine its ratio to total MRA marriages for the corresponding year. Then look in the appropriate row on the table of sampling errors for the percentage figures closest to the estimate to determine the sampling error for that year. For example, in 1978 there were an estimated 405,619 marriages to women who had been previously divorced, or 23.0 percent of all 1978 MRA marriages. Since 23.0 percent is between 20 and 25 percent, the 1978 sampling error is between 1,634 and 1,768, or by interpolation, about 1,714 marriages. Chances are about 68 out of 100 that the actual number of 1978 marriages to divorcees is between 403,905 and 407,333 ($405,619 \pm 1,714$).

total sample size, including records supplied through CHSS, was 678,015 marriages. Sampling errors shown in table III are for frequencies which equal a specified percent of the total MRA marriages for either 1977 or 1978.

Nonlicensed marriages registered in California are not available for inclusion in the MRA marriage sample, because by California law the certificates for these marriages are retained as confidential records in the offices of the county clerks. The 5-percent sample of California mar-

riages for 1977 was drawn from 149,416 licensed marriages, and the 1978 sample was drawn from 150,594 licensed marriages. The corresponding weights for sample records were based on these totals. Since 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. However, if the distribution of California nonlicensed marriages were the same as that of all licensed marriages, estimates shown in table 3 for 1978 would be about 2.1 percent low.

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. A sampling error is a measure of variations that occur by chance between sample estimates and the actual quantity being estimated. Chances are about 68 out of 100 that an estimate would differ from the true value by less than the sampling error, and about 95 out of 100 that the difference would be less than twice the sampling error.

SYMBOLS

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

This report represents summary tabulations from the final marriage statistics for 1978. More detailed tabulations for 1978 will be published in *Vital Statistics of the United States, Volume III—Marriage and Divorce*. Prior to the publication of the volume, the National Center for Health Statistics will respond to requests for unpublished data whenever possible.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service
Office of Health Research, Statistics, and Technology
National Center for Health Statistics
3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, Maryland 20782

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