

# hchs MONTHLY VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Final Data From the National Center for Health Statistics

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## Advance Report of Final Divorce Statistics, 1980

The national divorce rate declined in 1980 for the first time since 1962. The 1980 rate was 5.2 per 1,000 population, down from a national record of 5.3 in 1979. Since 1962, when the divorce rate was 2.2, the rate rose

every year except 1966, 1977, and 1980 (figure 1). The divorce rate increased most rapidly during the late sixties and early seventies and more slowly as the decade ended, reaching the record high of 5.3 in 1979 (table 1).

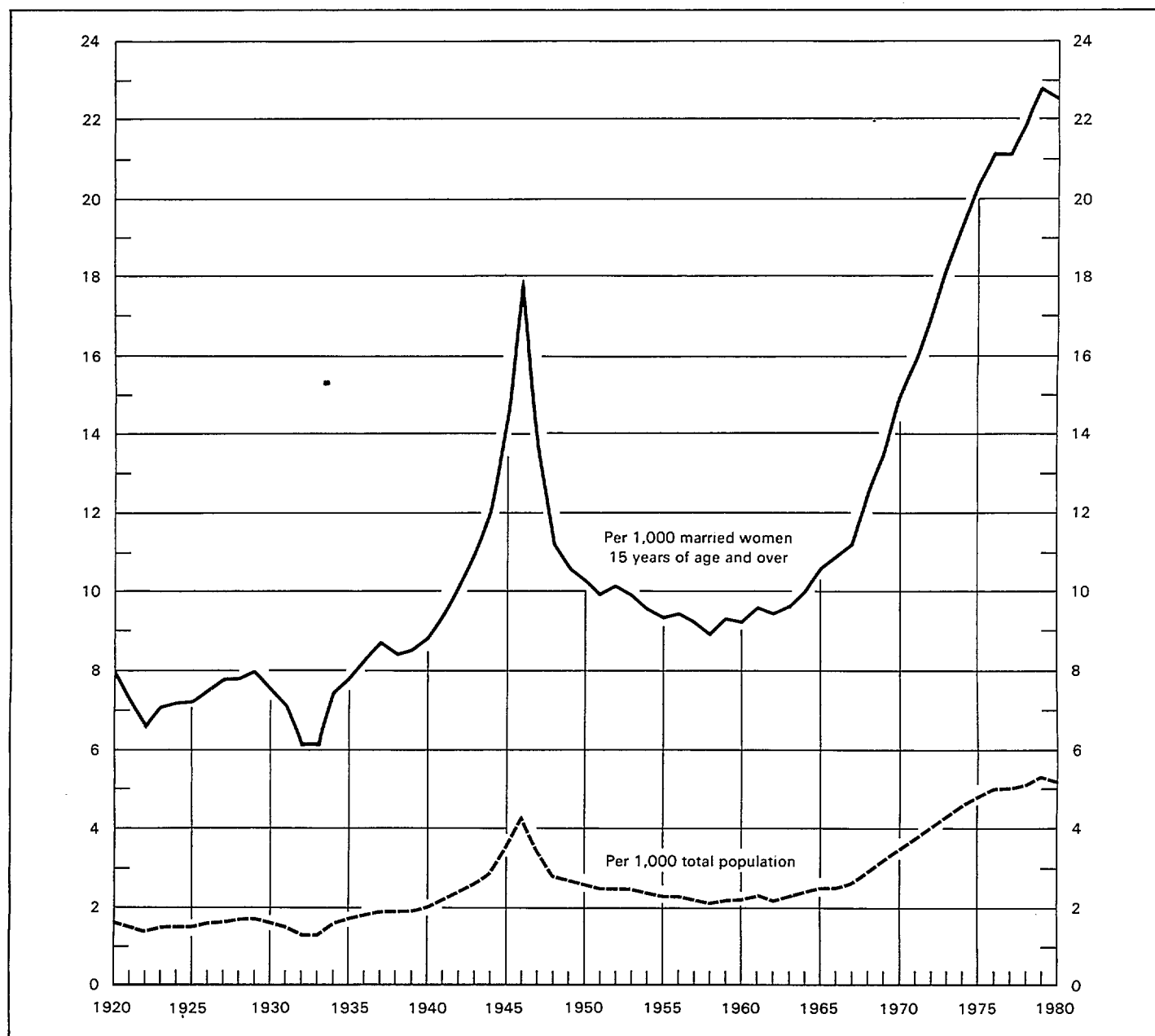


Figure 1. Divorce rates: United States, 1920-80

According to provisional data, the dip in 1980 has been followed by fluctuations with a return to 5.3 in 1981 and a drop to 5.1 in 1982.

Divorce rates for 1980 are based on the population enumerated in the 1980 census. Rates for 1971–79 in tables 1, 2, and 3 have been revised to be consistent with the 1980 rates based on the 1980 census. The 1980 census enumerated about 5.5 million more persons than the number previously estimated for that year, and populations for the preceding intercensal years were also underestimated, but not as much. Recomputation of previously published rates for the 1970's using revised populations permits meaningful comparisons from the 1970's through 1980. Rates for 1971–79 have been recomputed for all categories shown for which revised populations are available. Rates by marital status could not be recomputed because population estimates were not available for the intercensal years.

The number of divorces set a new national record in 1980, rising from 1,181,000 in 1979 to 1,189,000. This

was the 18th consecutive annual increase. In 1962, 413,000 couples divorced, about one-third as many as in 1980 (table 1 and figure 2).

The increase in divorces between 1979 and 1980 was not nationwide; divorces rose in the South and West Regions, but decreased in the North Central and Northeast Regions (table 2). Between 1970 and 1980 the national total of divorces increased 68 percent. Divorces also increased during the decade in all regions of the Nation, but the increases were much greater in some regions than in others. The number of divorces rose 102 percent in the Northeast Region, 86 percent in the South, 57 percent in the North Central, and 41 percent in the West Region. The amount of change from 1970 to 1980 varied even more widely among States than among regions. The number of divorces increased in every State and the District of Columbia, but the increases for States with complete reporting ranged from a low of 18 percent in California to a high of 157 percent in New Jersey.

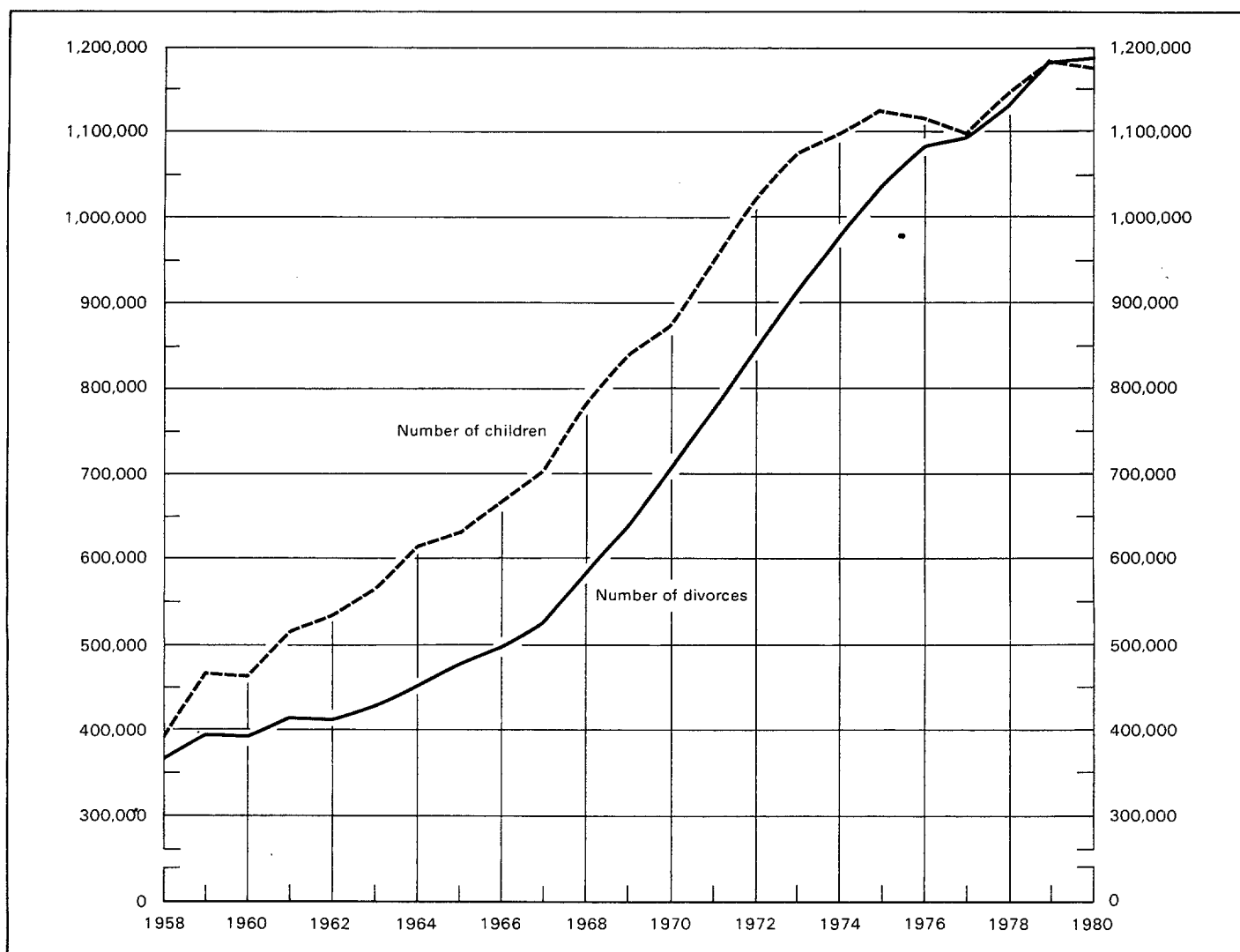


Figure 2. Divorces and children involved: United States, 1958–80

While the national divorce rate dipped from 5.3 in 1979 to 5.2 in 1980, divorce rates did not decline for all States. Rates decreased in 17 States and the District of Columbia, remained unchanged in 6, and increased in 27 States.

During the 1970's divorce rates increased generally; except for California and Nevada, 1980 rates were higher than 1970 rates for every State and the District of Columbia. Rates in 1970 ranged from 1.4 per 1,000 population (New York) to 7.1 (Arizona), excluding Nevada where the rate was 18.7. By 1980 the divorce rates had risen considerably and had more than doubled in seven States (Connecticut, North Dakota, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and Vermont) and in the District of Columbia. Again excluding Nevada, the divorce rates in 1980 ranged from 3.0 (Pennsylvania) to 9.2 (Alaska). The rate for Nevada was 17.3. The 10 areas with the highest divorce rates in 1980 were Nevada, Alaska, Wyoming, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arizona, the District of Columbia, Florida, Indiana, and Idaho.

The information shown below about the characteristics of divorces and divorcing spouses is available only from States that participate in the divorce-registration area (DRA). During 1979-80 the DRA comprised 30 States. The number of divorces granted in participating States in 1980 represented 49 percent of the national total. In 1970 the DRA comprised 28 States, which accounted for 61 percent of the national total number of divorces granted.

## Children involved in divorce

In 1980 the estimated number of children involved in divorce was 1,174,000, a decrease of 7,000 from the total for 1979. Between 1950 and 1979 the annual number of children involved in divorces almost quadrupled, rising from 299,000 in 1950 to 1,181,000 in 1979 (table 3 and figure 2). These national estimates of children involved in divorces are based on data from the divorce-registration area.

During the first half of the 1950-79 period the average number of children per divorce generally rose, peaking in 1964 with 1.36 children per decree; then the average generally declined, dipping to 0.98 in 1980, lower than it had been since 1956. This decline in the average number of children per decree occurred even though the total number of children continued to rise. Although the number of divorcing couples and the number of children involved were increasing, a larger proportion of the couples had fewer or no children. Data from States participating in the DRA in 1980 show that 44 percent of the divorces involved no children, 26 percent involved one child, 20 percent involved two children, and 10 percent involved three children or more (table 4). In 1970, when families were bigger, 40 per-

cent of the divorces involved no children and 17 percent involved three children or more.

In 1980 there were 17.3 children involved in divorces per 1,000 children under 18 years of age. The 1980 rate was 6 percent below the 1979 rate of 18.4, which had been a record high for the Nation.

## Duration

The median duration of marriage for couples divorcing in the DRA was 6.8 years in 1980, the same as in 1979, and nearly the same as in 1970. The median duration varied by State, ranging from 4.8 years in Wyoming to 8.9 years in Massachusetts for divorces granted in 1980. For 1970 the range was a little wider, from 4.6 in Idaho and Wyoming to 9.3 in New York (table 5).

The median duration was 6.8 years in 1980 for the DRA as a whole. Of divorcing couples, 4 percent had been married less than a year; 34 percent, 1-4 years; 28 percent, 5-9 years; 15 percent, 10-14 years; and 19 percent had been married 15 years or more (table 6).

In 1970 the median duration was 6.7 years, and the percent distribution was very similar to that of 1980: 5 percent of divorcing couples had been married less than a year; 34 percent, 1-4 years; 25 percent, 5-9 years; 14 percent, 10-14 years; and 22 percent, 15 years or more. The data show divorces have increased not only at all durations, but also in roughly the same proportions.

## Median age of divorcing spouses

The median age of husbands divorcing in the DRA was 32.7 in 1980 and 32.9 in 1970. The median age of divorcing wives was 30.3 in 1980 and 29.8 in 1970. Thus, in 1980 divorcing husbands were slightly younger than those divorcing in 1970, but divorcing wives were older. Consequently, the difference between median ages of divorcing men and women narrowed from 3.1 in 1970 to 2.4 years in 1980.

## Rates for married women

The 1980 divorce rate per 1,000 married women in the population was 22.6, a drop from 22.8 in 1979, which was the highest ever observed. The decline in this rate in 1980 was the first decline since 1962 when the rate was 9.4 per 1,000 married women (figure 1 and table 6). Unlike the rates in tables 1, 2, and 3, the 1971-79 rates for married women shown in table 6 have not been recomputed because revised populations by marital status are not available. These unrevised rates are probably higher than revised rates would be, and this may be the cause of the drop in the rate from 1979 to 1980.

Table 1. Divorces and annulments and rates: United States, 1950-80

[Data refer only to events occurring within the United States. Alaska included beginning 1959 and Hawaii beginning 1960. Rates are based on population enumerated as of April 1 for census years and estimated as of July 1 for all other years]

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Rate</i> |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1980        | 1,189,000     | 5.2         |
| 1979        | 1,181,000     | 5.3         |
| 1978        | 1,130,000     | 5.1         |
| 1977        | 1,091,000     | 5.0         |
| 1976        | 1,083,000     | 5.0         |
| 1975        | 1,036,000     | 4.8         |
| 1974        | 977,000       | 4.6         |
| 1973        | 915,000       | 4.3         |
| 1972        | 845,000       | 4.0         |
| 1971        | 773,000       | 3.7         |
| 1970        | 708,000       | 3.5         |
| 1969        | 639,000       | 3.2         |
| 1968        | 584,000       | 2.9         |
| 1967        | 523,000       | 2.6         |
| 1966        | 499,000       | 2.5         |
| 1965        | 479,000       | 2.5         |
| 1964        | 450,000       | 2.4         |
| 1963        | 428,000       | 2.3         |
| 1962        | 413,000       | 2.2         |
| 1961        | 414,000       | 2.3         |
| 1960        | 393,000       | 2.2         |
| 1959        | 395,000       | 2.2         |
| 1958        | 368,000       | 2.1         |
| 1957        | 381,000       | 2.2         |
| 1956        | 382,000       | 2.3         |
| 1955        | 377,000       | 2.3         |
| 1954        | 379,000       | 2.4         |
| 1953        | 390,000       | 2.5         |
| 1952        | 392,000       | 2.5         |
| 1951        | 381,000       | 2.5         |
| 1950        | 385,000       | 2.6         |

NOTE: Rates for 1971-79 have been revised; see text.

### Symbols

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

Table 2. Divorces and divorce rates: United States, each region, division, and State, 1970, 1979, and 1980

[Data are counts of decrees granted (including reported annulments and dissolutions of marriage), supplied by States except as noted. Figures for the divorce-registration States differ slightly from those based on sample data shown in table 4. Rates per 1,000 population in each area. Population enumerated as of April 1 for 1970 and 1980 and estimated as of July 1 for 1979]

| Region, division, and State           | Number              |                     |                      | Rate             |                  |                  |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                       | 1980                | 1979                | 1970                 | 1980             | 1979             | 1970             |
| United States .....                   | 1,189,000           | 1,181,000           | 708,000              | 5.2              | 5.3              | 3.5              |
| Northeast .....                       | 174,000             | 177,000             | 86,000               | 3.5              | 3.6              | 1.8              |
| North Central .....                   | 292,000             | 293,000             | <sup>1</sup> 186,000 | 5.0              | 5.0              | <sup>1</sup> 3.3 |
| South .....                           | 449,000             | 439,000             | <sup>1</sup> 242,000 | 6.0              | 5.9              | <sup>1</sup> 3.9 |
| West .....                            | 274,000             | 272,000             | 194,000              | 6.3              | 6.4              | 5.6              |
| Northeast:                            |                     |                     |                      |                  |                  |                  |
| New England .....                     | 49,049              | 48,985              | 25,807               | 4.0              | 4.0              | 2.2              |
| Middle Atlantic .....                 | 124,690             | 127,768             | 59,860               | 3.4              | 3.5              | 1.6              |
| North Central:                        |                     |                     |                      |                  |                  |                  |
| East North Central .....              | 212,405             | 214,741             | <sup>2</sup> 129,828 | 5.1              | 5.2              | *                |
| West North Central .....              | 79,625              | 77,792              | 48,169               | 4.6              | 4.6              | 3.0              |
| South:                                |                     |                     |                      |                  |                  |                  |
| South Atlantic .....                  | 206,344             | 202,430             | 106,103              | 5.6              | 5.5              | 3.5              |
| East South Central .....              | <sup>2</sup> 87,528 | <sup>2</sup> 85,913 | 50,607               | <sup>2</sup> 6.0 | <sup>2</sup> 5.9 | 4.0              |
| West South Central <sup>2</sup> ..... | 155,025             | 150,705             | 82,747               | 6.5              | 6.5              | *                |
| West:                                 |                     |                     |                      |                  |                  |                  |
| Mountain .....                        | 86,088              | 80,905              | <sup>2</sup> 48,995  | 7.6              | 7.3              | <sup>2</sup> 5.9 |
| Pacific .....                         | 187,900             | 190,838             | 144,696              | 5.9              | 6.1              | 5.5              |
| New England:                          |                     |                     |                      |                  |                  |                  |
| Maine .....                           | 6,205               | 6,170               | 3,853                | 5.5              | 5.5              | 3.9              |
| New Hampshire .....                   | 5,254               | 5,245               | 2,433                | 5.7              | 5.8              | 3.3              |
| Vermont .....                         | 2,623               | 2,292               | 1,028                | 5.1              | 4.5              | 2.3              |
| Massachusetts .....                   | 17,873              | 17,524              | 10,994               | 3.1              | 3.0              | 1.9              |
| Rhode Island .....                    | 3,606               | 3,610               | 1,687                | 3.8              | 3.8              | 1.8              |
| Connecticut .....                     | 13,488              | 14,144              | 5,812                | 4.3              | 4.6              | 1.9              |
| Middle Atlantic:                      |                     |                     |                      |                  |                  |                  |
| New York .....                        | 61,972              | 64,420              | 26,404               | 3.5              | 3.7              | 1.4              |
| New Jersey .....                      | 27,796              | 23,540              | 10,834               | 3.8              | 3.2              | 1.5              |
| Pennsylvania .....                    | 34,922              | 39,808              | 22,622               | 2.9              | 3.4              | 1.9              |
| East North Central:                   |                     |                     |                      |                  |                  |                  |
| Ohio .....                            | 58,809              | 59,548              | 39,302               | 5.4              | 5.5              | 3.7              |
| Indiana <sup>3</sup> .....            | 40,006              | 41,777              | 15,153               | 7.3              | 7.6              | *                |
| Illinois .....                        | 50,997              | 52,133              | 36,450               | 4.5              | 4.6              | 3.3              |
| Michigan .....                        | 45,047              | 44,109              | 29,993               | 4.9              | 4.8              | 3.4              |
| Wisconsin .....                       | 17,546              | 17,174              | 8,930                | 3.7              | 3.7              | 2.0              |
| West North Central:                   |                     |                     |                      |                  |                  |                  |
| Minnesota .....                       | 15,371              | 14,853              | 8,290                | 3.8              | 3.7              | 2.2              |
| Iowa .....                            | 11,854              | 11,426              | 7,188                | 4.1              | 3.9              | 2.5              |
| Missouri .....                        | 27,595              | 27,719              | 17,852               | 5.6              | 5.7              | 3.8              |
| North Dakota .....                    | 2,142               | 2,094               | 985                  | 3.3              | 3.2              | 1.6              |
| South Dakota .....                    | 2,811               | 2,665               | 1,357                | 4.1              | 3.9              | 2.0              |
| Nebraska .....                        | 6,442               | 6,286               | 3,712                | 4.1              | 4.0              | 2.5              |
| Kansas .....                          | 13,410              | 12,749              | 8,785                | 5.7              | 5.4              | 3.9              |
| South Atlantic:                       |                     |                     |                      |                  |                  |                  |
| Delaware .....                        | 2,313               | 3,110               | 1,732                | 3.9              | 5.2              | 3.2              |
| Maryland .....                        | 17,494              | 16,927              | 9,252                | 4.1              | 4.0              | 2.4              |
| District of Columbia .....            | 4,682               | 4,488               | 2,268                | 7.3              | 6.8              | 3.0              |
| Virginia .....                        | 23,615              | 23,555              | 11,879               | 4.4              | 4.4              | 2.6              |
| West Virginia .....                   | 10,273              | 10,046              | 5,584                | 5.3              | 5.2              | 3.2              |
| North Carolina .....                  | 28,050              | 27,445              | 13,702               | 4.8              | 4.7              | 2.7              |
| South Carolina .....                  | 13,595              | 13,747              | 5,829                | 4.4              | 4.5              | 2.3              |
| Georgia .....                         | 34,743              | 33,405              | 18,649               | 6.4              | 6.2              | 4.1              |
| Florida .....                         | 71,579              | 69,707              | <sup>*</sup> 37,208  | 7.3              | 7.4              | 5.5              |
| East South Central:                   |                     |                     |                      |                  |                  |                  |
| Kentucky .....                        | <sup>2</sup> 16,731 | <sup>2</sup> 16,016 | 10,664               | <sup>2</sup> 4.6 | <sup>2</sup> 4.4 | 3.3              |
| Tennessee .....                       | 30,206              | 29,716              | 16,623               | 6.6              | 6.6              | 4.2              |
| Alabama .....                         | 26,745              | 26,549              | 15,109               | 6.9              | 6.9              | 4.4              |
| Mississippi .....                     | 13,846              | 13,632              | 8,211                | 5.5              | 5.4              | 3.7              |

See footnotes and note at end of table.

Table 2. Divorces and divorce rates: United States, each region, division, and State, 1970, 1979, and 1980—Con.

[Data are counts of decrees granted (including reported annulments and dissolutions of marriage), supplied by States except as noted. Figures for the divorce-registration States differ slightly from those based on sample data shown in table 4. Rates per 1,000 population in each area. Population enumerated as of April 1 for 1970 and 1980 and estimated as of July 1 for 1979]

| Region, division, and State | Number  |                     |                     | Rate |                  |                  |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------------------|---------------------|------|------------------|------------------|
|                             | 1980    | 1979                | 1970                | 1980 | 1979             | 1970             |
| West South Central:         |         |                     |                     |      |                  |                  |
| Arkansas <sup>2</sup>       | 15,882  | <sup>4</sup> 20,313 | 9,310               | 6.9  | <sup>4</sup> 9.0 | 4.8              |
| Louisiana <sup>2</sup>      | 18,108  | 15,170              | 5,065               | 4.3  | 3.7              | *                |
| Oklahoma                    | 24,226  | 22,823              | 16,842              | 8.0  | 7.7              | 6.6              |
| Texas                       | 96,809  | 92,399              | 51,530              | 6.8  | 6.7              | 4.6              |
| Mountain:                   |         |                     |                     |      |                  |                  |
| Montana                     | 4,940   | 5,107               | 3,047               | 6.3  | 6.5              | 4.4              |
| Idaho                       | 6,596   | 6,449               | 3,612               | 7.0  | 6.9              | 5.1              |
| Wyoming                     | 4,003   | 3,510               | 1,797               | 8.5  | 7.8              | 5.4              |
| Colorado                    | 18,571  | 16,498              | 10,400              | 6.4  | 5.8              | 4.7              |
| New Mexico                  | 10,426  | 9,978               | <sup>2</sup> 4,375  | 8.0  | 7.8              | <sup>2</sup> 4.3 |
| Arizona                     | 19,908  | 19,982              | <sup>3</sup> 12,714 | 7.3  | 7.6              | <sup>3</sup> 7.2 |
| Utah                        | 7,802   | 7,594               | 3,912               | 5.3  | 5.4              | 3.7              |
| Nevada                      | 13,842  | 11,787              | 9,138               | 17.3 | 15.4             | 18.7             |
| Pacific:                    |         |                     |                     |      |                  |                  |
| Washington                  | 28,642  | 27,030              | 17,887              | 6.9  | 6.7              | 5.2              |
| Oregon                      | 17,762  | 17,584              | 9,583               | 6.7  | 6.8              | 4.6              |
| California                  | 133,541 | 137,683             | 112,942             | 5.6  | 5.9              | 5.7              |
| Alaska                      | 3,517   | 3,486               | 1,695               | 8.8  | 8.7              | 5.6              |
| Hawaii                      | 4,438   | 5,055               | 2,589               | 4.6  | 5.3              | 3.4              |

<sup>1</sup> Figure includes estimates.

<sup>2</sup> Data are incomplete.

<sup>3</sup> Data include divorce petitions filed for some counties.

<sup>4</sup> Revised data have been received in NCHS; see Technical notes.

NOTE: Rates for 1979 have been revised; see text.

**Table 3. Estimated number of children involved in divorces and annulments, average number of children per decree, and rate per 1,000 children under 18 years of age: United States, 1950-80**

[Refers only to events occurring within the United States. For 1960-80, estimated from frequencies based on sample data; for all other years, estimated from total counts. For estimating method see Technical notes. Rates per 1,000 children under 18 years of age. Population enumerated as of April 1 for census years and estimated as of July 1 for all other years]

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Estimated<br/>number of<br/>children<br/>involved</i> | <i>Average<br/>number of<br/>children<br/>per decree</i> | <i>Rate per<br/>1,000 children<br/>under 18<br/>years of age</i> |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1980.....   | 1,174,000                                                | 0.98                                                     | 17.3                                                             |
| 1979.....   | 1,181,000                                                | 1.00                                                     | 18.4                                                             |
| 1978.....   | 1,147,000                                                | 1.01                                                     | 17.7                                                             |
| 1977.....   | 1,095,000                                                | 1.00                                                     | 16.7                                                             |
| 1976.....   | 1,117,000                                                | 1.03                                                     | 16.9                                                             |
| 1975.....   | 1,123,000                                                | 1.08                                                     | 16.7                                                             |
| 1974.....   | 1,099,000                                                | 1.12                                                     | 16.2                                                             |
| 1973.....   | 1,079,000                                                | 1.17                                                     | 15.7                                                             |
| 1972.....   | 1,021,000                                                | 1.20                                                     | 14.7                                                             |
| 1971.....   | 946,000                                                  | 1.22                                                     | 13.6                                                             |
| 1970.....   | 870,000                                                  | 1.22                                                     | 12.5                                                             |
| 1969.....   | 840,000                                                  | 1.31                                                     | 11.9                                                             |
| 1968.....   | 784,000                                                  | 1.34                                                     | 11.1                                                             |
| 1967.....   | 701,000                                                  | 1.34                                                     | 9.9                                                              |
| 1966.....   | 669,000                                                  | 1.34                                                     | 9.5                                                              |
| 1965.....   | 630,000                                                  | 1.32                                                     | 8.9                                                              |
| 1964.....   | 613,000                                                  | 1.36                                                     | 8.7                                                              |
| 1963.....   | 562,000                                                  | 1.31                                                     | 8.2                                                              |
| 1962.....   | 532,000                                                  | 1.29                                                     | 7.9                                                              |
| 1961.....   | 516,000                                                  | 1.25                                                     | 7.8                                                              |
| 1960.....   | 463,000                                                  | 1.18                                                     | 7.2                                                              |
| 1959.....   | 468,000                                                  | 1.18                                                     | 7.5                                                              |
| 1958.....   | 398,000                                                  | 1.08                                                     | 6.5                                                              |
| 1957.....   | 379,000                                                  | 0.99                                                     | 6.4                                                              |
| 1956.....   | 361,000                                                  | 0.95                                                     | 6.3                                                              |
| 1955.....   | 347,000                                                  | 0.92                                                     | 6.3                                                              |
| 1954.....   | 341,000                                                  | 0.90                                                     | 6.4                                                              |
| 1953.....   | 330,000                                                  | 0.85                                                     | 6.4                                                              |
| 1952.....   | 318,000                                                  | 0.81                                                     | 6.2                                                              |
| 1951.....   | 304,000                                                  | 0.80                                                     | 6.1                                                              |
| 1950.....   | 299,000                                                  | 0.78                                                     | 6.3                                                              |

NOTE: Rates for 1971-79 have been revised; see text.

Table 4. Divorces and annulments by number of children reported: Divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1980

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

| Area                           | All<br>divorces<br>and<br>annulments | Number of children reported |         |         |        |        |              |               |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------------|---------------|
|                                |                                      | None                        | 1       | 2       | 3      | 4      | 5 or<br>more | Not<br>stated |
| Divorce-registration area..... | 586,644                              | 253,477                     | 147,659 | 114,434 | 39,486 | 11,251 | 4,131        | 16,206        |
| Alabama.....                   | 26,800                               | 11,400                      | 6,270   | 4,070   | 1,430  | 350    | 170          | 3,110         |
| Alaska.....                    | 3,533                                | 1,263                       | 771     | 632     | 225    | 52     | 33           | 557           |
| Connecticut.....               | 13,128                               | 5,582                       | 3,266   | 2,932   | 950    | 236    | 76           | 86            |
| Georgia.....                   | 34,750                               | 17,300                      | 8,710   | 5,790   | 1,810  | 420    | 220          | 500           |
| Hawaii.....                    | 4,436                                | 1,970                       | 1,074   | 856     | 352    | 120    | 60           | 4             |
| Idaho <sup>1</sup> .....       | 6,598                                | 2,910                       | 1,574   | 1,304   | 524    | 118    | 70           | 98            |
| Illinois.....                  | 50,991                               | 22,420                      | 12,823  | 9,948   | 3,703  | 1,127  | 471          | 499           |
| Iowa.....                      | 11,846                               | 4,616                       | 2,984   | 2,834   | 1,026  | 260    | 100          | 26            |
| Kansas.....                    | 13,715                               | 6,330                       | 3,380   | 2,750   | 920    | 225    | 90           | 20            |
| Kentucky.....                  | 17,020                               | 7,245                       | 4,820   | 3,095   | 1,055  | 305    | 80           | 420           |
| Maryland.....                  | 17,500                               | 7,735                       | 4,730   | 3,340   | 970    | 185    | 85           | 455           |
| Massachusetts.....             | 17,810                               | 7,175                       | 4,375   | 3,975   | 1,515  | 415    | 235          | 120           |
| Michigan.....                  | 44,690                               | 18,750                      | 10,400  | 9,710   | 3,230  | 1,050  | 320          | 1,230         |
| Missouri.....                  | 27,595                               | 12,844                      | 7,226   | 5,065   | 1,748  | 469    | 197          | 46            |
| Montana.....                   | 4,954                                | 2,236                       | 1,164   | 1,030   | 370    | 102    | 28           | 24            |
| Nebraska.....                  | 6,468                                | 2,447                       | 1,677   | 1,528   | 562    | 169    | 83           | 2             |
| New Hampshire.....             | 5,246                                | 2,137                       | 1,318   | 1,234   | 400    | 114    | 37           | 6             |
| New York.....                  | 61,892                               | 28,756                      | 14,737  | 11,717  | 4,190  | 1,240  | 421          | 831           |
| Ohio.....                      | 58,860                               | 25,600                      | 15,300  | 11,960  | 4,200  | 1,360  | 320          | 120           |
| Oregon.....                    | 17,915                               | 6,995                       | 4,455   | 3,315   | 1,035  | 250    | 60           | 1,805         |
| Pennsylvania.....              | 35,060                               | 11,150                      | 8,880   | 6,890   | 2,390  | 650    | 200          | 4,900         |
| Rhode Island.....              | 3,593                                | 1,372                       | 919     | 808     | 286    | 78     | 35           | 95            |
| South Carolina.....            | 13,595                               | 6,111                       | 3,780   | 2,542   | 847    | 205    | 79           | 31            |
| South Dakota.....              | 2,811                                | 1,108                       | 773     | 609     | 198    | 66     | 31           | 26            |
| Tennessee.....                 | 30,200                               | 14,870                      | 7,370   | 5,070   | 1,620  | 340    | 80           | 350           |
| Utah.....                      | 7,798                                | 2,972                       | 1,856   | 1,566   | 612    | 300    | 136          | 356           |
| Vermont.....                   | 2,630                                | 989                         | 628     | 669     | 226    | 75     | 40           | 3             |
| Virginia.....                  | 23,563                               | 10,656                      | 6,355   | 4,316   | 1,268  | 395    | 124          | 449           |
| Wisconsin.....                 | 17,640                               | 6,775                       | 4,535   | 4,080   | 1,525  | 485    | 225          | 15            |
| Wyoming.....                   | 4,007                                | 1,763                       | 1,009   | 799     | 299    | 90     | 25           | 22            |

<sup>1</sup>This State asks for number of children affected by decree.

Table 5. Median duration of marriage prior to divorce or annulment: Divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1970, 1979, and 1980

[Based on sample data. Medians computed on data by single years, excluding duration of marriage not stated. The divorce-registration area included 28 States in 1970, and 30 States in 1979 and 1980]

| Area                                | Median duration<br>of marriage |      |      | Area                     | Median duration<br>of marriage |      |      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|
|                                     | 1980                           | 1979 | 1970 |                          | 1980                           | 1979 | 1970 |
| Divorce-registration area . . . . . | 6.8                            | 6.8  | 6.7  | Montana . . . . .        | 5.7                            | 5.3  | 5.1  |
| Alabama . . . . .                   | 4.9                            | 5.3  | 5.3  | Nebraska . . . . .       | 6.7                            | 6.3  | 6.0  |
| Alaska . . . . .                    | 5.3                            | 5.2  | 5.4  | New Hampshire . . . . .  | 7.4                            | 7.1  | ---  |
| California . . . . .                | ---                            | ---  | 6.8  | New York . . . . .       | 8.4                            | 8.3  | 9.3  |
| Connecticut . . . . .               | 8.4                            | 8.5  | 8.6  | Ohio . . . . .           | 6.1                            | 6.2  | 6.3  |
| Georgia . . . . .                   | 5.4                            | 5.7  | 5.4  | Oregon . . . . .         | 6.1                            | 6.2  | 5.9  |
| Hawaii . . . . .                    | 6.2                            | 6.0  | 7.2  | Pennsylvania . . . . .   | 8.3                            | 7.9  | 8.1  |
| Idaho . . . . .                     | 5.1                            | 5.0  | 4.6  | Rhode Island . . . . .   | 8.1                            | 8.5  | 9.2  |
| Illinois . . . . .                  | 6.5                            | 6.5  | 6.6  | South Carolina . . . . . | 7.1                            | 7.3  | ---  |
| Iowa . . . . .                      | 6.2                            | 6.0  | 5.6  | South Dakota . . . . .   | 5.8                            | 5.9  | 5.9  |
| Kansas . . . . .                    | 5.2                            | 4.9  | 5.1  | Tennessee . . . . .      | 5.4                            | 5.8  | 5.6  |
| Kentucky . . . . .                  | 6.0                            | 5.7  | 5.7  | Utah . . . . .           | 5.0                            | 4.8  | 5.3  |
| Maryland . . . . .                  | 8.8                            | 8.4  | 8.8  | Vermont . . . . .        | 8.4                            | 7.9  | 8.3  |
| Massachusetts . . . . .             | 8.9                            | 8.9  | ---  | Virginia . . . . .       | 8.2                            | 8.2  | 7.7  |
| Michigan . . . . .                  | 6.9                            | 7.1  | 7.0  | Wisconsin . . . . .      | 7.4                            | 7.0  | 7.9  |
| Missouri . . . . .                  | 5.8                            | 5.8  | 5.4  | Wyoming . . . . .        | 4.8                            | 4.8  | 4.6  |

Table 6. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments by duration of marriage and median age of husband and wife at time of decree: Divorce-registration area, 1970 and 1980

[Based on sample data]

| Characteristic             | Year  |       |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|
|                            | 1980  | 1970  |
| Duration of marriage       |       |       |
| Total . . . . .            | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Under 1 year . . . . .     | 4.4   | 4.8   |
| 1-4 years . . . . .        | 33.7  | 34.1  |
| 5-9 years . . . . .        | 27.8  | 25.3  |
| 10-14 years . . . . .      | 14.8  | 13.8  |
| 15 years or more . . . . . | 19.3  | 21.9  |
| Median age at decree       |       |       |
| Husband . . . . .          | 32.7  | 32.9  |
| Wife . . . . .             | 30.3  | 29.8  |

Table 7. Divorce rates per 1,000 married women 15 years of age and over: United States, 1950-80

[Data refer only to events occurring within the United States. Alaska included beginning 1959 and Hawaii beginning 1960. Rates are based on populations enumerated as of April 1 for census years and estimated as of July 1 for all other years. Population estimates were not available to revise rates for 1971-79]

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Rate per 1,000<br/>married women</i> | <i>Year</i> | <i>Rate per 1,000<br/>married women</i> |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1980 .....  | 22.6                                    | 1964 .....  | 10.0                                    |
| 1979 .....  | 22.8                                    | 1963 .....  | 9.6                                     |
| 1978 .....  | 21.9                                    | 1962 .....  | 9.4                                     |
| 1977 .....  | 21.1                                    | 1961 .....  | 9.6                                     |
| 1976 .....  | 21.1                                    | 1960 .....  | 9.2                                     |
| 1975 .....  | 20.3                                    | 1959 .....  | 9.3                                     |
| 1974 .....  | 19.3                                    | 1958 .....  | 8.9                                     |
| 1973 .....  | 18.2                                    | 1957 .....  | 9.2                                     |
| 1972 .....  | 17.0                                    | 1956 .....  | 9.4                                     |
| 1971 .....  | 15.8                                    | 1955 .....  | 9.3                                     |
| 1970 .....  | 14.9                                    | 1954 .....  | 9.5                                     |
| 1969 .....  | 13.4                                    | 1953 .....  | 9.9                                     |
| 1968 .....  | 12.5                                    | 1952 .....  | 10.1                                    |
| 1967 .....  | 11.2                                    | 1951 .....  | 9.9                                     |
| 1966 .....  | 10.9                                    | 1950 .....  | 10.3                                    |
| 1965 .....  | 10.6                                    |             |                                         |

## Technical notes

### Place and time of occurrence

Divorces, including absolute divorces, annulments, and dissolutions of marriage, are shown in all tables by State where decree was granted, which is also the State of legal residence of the petitioner. The time of divorce is based on the date the decree was granted.

### Sources of data

**Nationwide counts.**—Figures in tables 1, 2, and 3 are based on totals of divorce decrees granted (unless otherwise noted), supplied by States and counties to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) annually. In July 1981 the Division of Health Statistics in Arkansas provided revised statistics for 1975–79. Statistics previously submitted and published for 1971–79 erroneously included dismissals and legal separations. The corrected number for 1979 for Arkansas is 15,501 and the corrected rate based on revised population is 6.8 per 1,000 population. Data for 1975–79 have not been revised to reflect corrected numbers for Arkansas.

**Data based on sample.**—Information about the characteristics of divorces and divorcing spouses are available only from States that participate in the divorce-registration area (DRA). Figures in tables 3–6 are based on data tabulated from State-coded data tapes and from probability samples of divorce records selected and coded in NCHS from copies of the records sent in by States participating in the DRA. In 1970, 28 States participated in the DRA; from 1971 to 1977, 29 States participated; in 1978, 28 States (California ceased to participate that year); and in 1979–80, with the addition of Massachusetts and New Hampshire in 1979, 30 States participated. Divorces in States comprising the DRA accounted for 49 percent of the national total in 1980.

### Divorce sample

Sample data used to estimate the 1980 frequencies in table 4 and the frequencies used to compute data shown in tables 5 and 6 were selected by using five different sampling rates, including 5, 10, 20, 50, or 100 percent of the divorces granted in a State. Samples were selected only from the States that participated in the DRA. Eight States—Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia—supplied State-coded data tapes of all their divorce records through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program, and 100 percent of these records were used by NCHS. In all other States, sampling rates depended on the size of the annual divorce total for each State.

Sampling error of estimated frequency expressed as percentage of area total: Divorce-registration area, 1970, 1979, and 1980 and each registration State, 1980

[Figures for Alaska, Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, and Wyoming have no sampling errors in 1980 because all records were tabulated]

| Area and year              | Sampling error of estimated frequency expressed as percentage of area total |          |          |     |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|-----|
|                            | 1 or 99                                                                     | 10 or 90 | 25 or 75 | 50  |
| Divorce-registration area: |                                                                             |          |          |     |
| 1980 (30 States) . . . . . | 176                                                                         | 529      | 764      | 882 |
| 1979 (30 States) . . . . . | 176                                                                         | 531      | 767      | 885 |
| 1970 (28 States) . . . . . | 171                                                                         | 517      | 746      | 861 |
| Registration States, 1980: |                                                                             |          |          |     |
| Alabama . . . . .          | 49                                                                          | 147      | 212      | 245 |
| Alaska . . . . .           | ...                                                                         | ...      | ...      | ... |
| Connecticut . . . . .      | 12                                                                          | 36       | 52       | 60  |
| Georgia . . . . .          | 56                                                                          | 168      | 242      | 280 |
| Hawaii . . . . .           | 7                                                                           | 20       | 29       | 33  |
| Idaho . . . . .            | 8                                                                           | 24       | 35       | 41  |
| Illinois . . . . .         | ...                                                                         | ...      | ...      | ... |
| Iowa . . . . .             | 11                                                                          | 33       | 47       | 54  |
| Kansas . . . . .           | 23                                                                          | 69       | 99       | 114 |
| Kentucky . . . . .         | 25                                                                          | 77       | 111      | 128 |
| Maryland . . . . .         | 26                                                                          | 79       | 115      | 132 |
| Massachusetts . . . . .    | 27                                                                          | 80       | 116      | 134 |
| Michigan . . . . .         | 64                                                                          | 192      | 277      | 320 |
| Missouri . . . . .         | ...                                                                         | ...      | ...      | ... |
| Montana . . . . .          | 7                                                                           | 21       | 30       | 35  |
| Nebraska . . . . .         | ...                                                                         | ...      | ...      | ... |
| New Hampshire . . . . .    | ...                                                                         | ...      | ...      | ... |
| New York . . . . .         | ...                                                                         | ...      | ...      | ... |
| Ohio . . . . .             | 105                                                                         | 317      | 458      | 528 |
| Oregon . . . . .           | 26                                                                          | 80       | 115      | 133 |
| Pennsylvania . . . . .     | 56                                                                          | 168      | 242      | 280 |
| Rhode Island . . . . .     | ...                                                                         | ...      | ...      | ... |
| South Carolina . . . . .   | ...                                                                         | ...      | ...      | ... |
| South Dakota . . . . .     | ...                                                                         | ...      | ...      | ... |
| Tennessee . . . . .        | 52                                                                          | 156      | 226      | 261 |
| Utah . . . . .             | 9                                                                           | 27       | 38       | 44  |
| Vermont . . . . .          | ...                                                                         | ...      | ...      | ... |
| Virginia . . . . .         | ...                                                                         | ...      | ...      | ... |
| Wisconsin . . . . .        | 26                                                                          | 79       | 114      | 132 |
| Wyoming . . . . .          | ...                                                                         | ...      | ...      | ... |

**How to use the sampling error table.** The total number of divorces in the DRA in 1980 is 586,644. For any estimate of divorces shown in table 4, determine the percentage of total DRA divorces. Then look in the appropriate row on the table of sampling errors for the percent figure closest to that of the estimate to determine the sampling error. For example, in 1980 there were an estimated 39,486 divorces to couples with 3 children, or 6.7 percent of all DRA divorces. Since 6.7 percent is between 1 and 10 percent, the 1980 sampling error is between 176 and 529 or by interpolation, about 400 divorces. Chances are about 68 out of 100 that the actual number of divorcing couples with 3 children is between 39,086 and 39,886 (39,486  $\pm$  400).

Alaska, New Hampshire, South Dakota, and Wyoming were the only States coded in NCHS with a 100-percent sampling rate.

Sampling errors are given in the table for the estimates which constitute 1, 10, 25, 50, 75, 90, and 99 percent of the annual divorce totals. These sampling errors are given for the DRA and each registration State

for 1980 data and only for the DRA for 1970 and 1979 data.

Figures in table 4 were estimated on the assumption that the average number of children per decree was the same nationally as in reporting States. The average

was based on reporting States in 1950–59, a nationwide sample in 1960, 16 States in 1961–69, and all registration States thereafter. This average was multiplied by the national divorce total to estimate the national total number of children involved in divorce.

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This report represents summary tabulations from the final divorce statistics for 1980. More detailed tabulations for 1980 will be published in *Vital Statistics of the United States, Volume III—Marriage and Divorce*. Prior to the publication of that volume, the National Center for Health Statistics will respond to requests for unpublished data whenever possible.

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Public Health Service  
National Center for Health Statistics  
3700 East-West Highway  
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