

# Monthly

# VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

## Summary Report

## Final Marriage Statistics, 1973



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FROM THE

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

In 1973 the marriage rate declined for the first time in 15 years. The rate was 10.9 per 1,000 population, down 0.9 percent from the 1972 rate of 11.0 per 1,000 population. Because the population grew proportionately more than the number of marriages, the rate decreased even though marriages increased slightly. From 1962 to 1972 the marriage rate increased 29 percent. The number of marriages increased rapidly during the sixties as the large numbers of children born during the forties reached maturity.

There were 2,284,108 marriages performed in 1973. This was 0.1 percent more than the number reported in 1972 and 45 percent more than the number reported in 1962. Provisional data indicate a decline in both the number and the rate for 1974.

The marriage rate for unmarried women aged 15-44 years also declined in 1973, reaching its lowest level of the decade. This rate increased from 138.4 in 1962 to 141.3 in 1972, with only occasional downward fluctuations, then it declined to 137.3 in 1973.

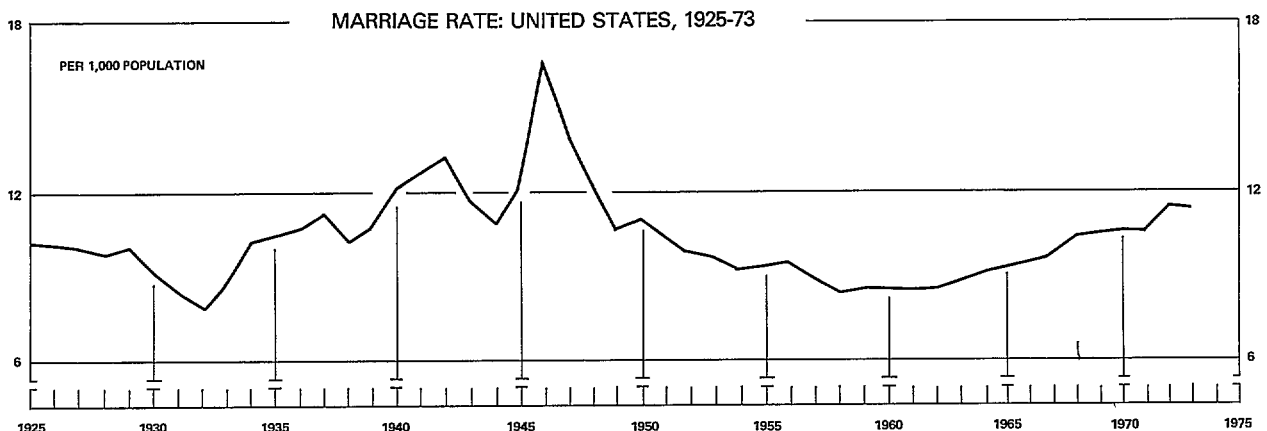
The number of marriages was higher in 1973 than in 1972 in 29 States, lower in 20 States and the District of Columbia, and remained the same in one State. About half the States with fewer marriages lie

along the eastern seaboard. In Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Michigan, and Tennessee the number of marriages increased while the marriage rates declined.

Marriage rates vary with age, sex, and previous marital status. In the marriage-registration area in 1973 the highest first marriage rates are those for brides and for grooms aged 20-24 years, 177.1 and 155.6 per 1,000, respectively. The remarriage rates are much higher, the highest being 394.0 per 1,000 previously divorced women under 25 years of age and

Table 1. MEDIAN AGES OF BRIDE AND GROOM BY PREVIOUS MARITAL STATUS, 1963-73

Year	Median age of bride			Median age of groom		
	Total	First marriage	Remarriage	Total	First marriage	Remarriage
1973-----	21.9	20.6	32.3	24.1	22.5	36.3
1972-----	21.7	20.5	32.8	23.8	22.4	36.5
1971-----	21.7	20.5	32.9	23.7	22.5	36.9
1970-----	21.7	20.6	33.3	23.6	22.5	37.5
1969-----	21.6	20.6	33.8	23.5	22.4	38.2
1968-----	21.5	20.6	33.8	23.6	22.4	39.3
1967-----	21.4	20.5	35.0	23.8	22.6	39.1
1966-----	21.5	20.3	35.2	23.8	22.6	39.2
1965-----	21.4	20.4	35.5	23.6	22.5	39.6
1964-----	21.4	20.4	35.6	23.6	22.4	39.7
1963-----	21.3	20.3	35.6	23.7	22.5	39.8



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431.3 for previously divorced grooms under 25 years of age.

In 1973 the median age at first marriage was 20.6 for brides and 22.5 for grooms, almost unchanged over a decade. In contrast to the consistent median age at first marriage, the median age at remarriage for both bride and groom moved steadily downward over the decade. It dropped 3.3 years for brides to 32.3 years of age and 3.5 years for grooms to 36.3 years younger than that of grooms at first marriage, 3.7 years younger at remarriage after divorce, and 7.2 years younger at remarriage after widowhood.

Table 2. MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGE RATES: UNITED STATES, 1958-73

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

Year	Marriages	Rate per 1,000 <sup>1</sup>		
		Total population	Unmarried women 15 years and over	Unmarried women 15-44 years
1973	2,284,108	10.9	76.0	137.5
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

<sup>1</sup>Data are based on population enumerated as of April 1 for 1960 and 1970 and estimated as of July 1 for all other years.

## 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 presents summary tabulations from the final marriage statistics for 1973. More detailed tabulations for 1973 will be published in *Vital Statistics of the United States, Volume III—Marriage and Divorce*. Prior to the publication of that volume, the National Center for Health Statistics will respond to requests for unpublished data whenever possible.

Table 3. MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGE RATES: UNITED STATES, EACH REGION, DIVISION, AND STATE, 1971-73

[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		
	1973	1972	1971	1973	1972	1971
United States-----	2,284,108	2,282,154	2,190,481	10.9	11.0	10.6
Northeast-----	422,885	425,955	417,971	8.5	8.6	8.4
North Central-----	581,544	577,429	559,217	10.1	10.1	9.8
South-----	823,947	818,405	779,553	12.5	12.6	12.2
West-----	455,732	460,365	453,740	12.5	12.8	12.2
Northeast:						
New England-----	106,426	107,111	104,913	8.8	8.8	8.7
Middle Atlantic-----	316,459	318,844	313,058	8.4	8.5	8.3
North Central:						
East North Central-----	412,324	409,206	396,535	10.1	10.0	9.7
West North Central-----	169,220	168,223	162,682	10.1	10.1	9.8
South:						
South Atlantic-----	398,544	394,392	377,111	12.3	12.4	12.1
East South Central-----	167,174	170,054	162,164	12.6	12.9	12.5
West South Central-----	258,229	253,959	240,278	12.7	12.7	12.2
West:						
Mountain-----	211,738	209,980	193,416	23.1	23.6	22.6
Pacific-----	243,994	250,385	240,324	8.9	9.2	8.9
New England:						
Maine-----	11,925	11,739	11,183	11.6	11.4	11.2
New Hampshire-----	9,557	9,752	9,771	12.1	12.5	12.8
Vermont-----	5,072	5,088	5,000	10.9	11.1	10.9
Massachusetts-----	46,640	48,189	47,535	8.0	8.3	8.3
Rhode Island-----	7,715	7,658	7,589	7.9	8.1	7.9
Connecticut-----	25,517	24,485	23,825	8.3	7.9	7.7
Middle Atlantic:						
New York-----	155,660	161,872	161,864	8.5	8.6	8.8
New Jersey-----	59,723	58,476	56,531	8.1	8.0	7.7
Pennsylvania-----	101,076	98,496	94,663	8.5	8.3	8.0
East North Central:						
Ohio-----	99,524	96,297	95,641	9.3	9.0	8.9
Indiana-----	58,428	61,262	58,076	11.0	11.6	11.0
Illinois-----	119,843	118,592	115,826	10.7	10.5	10.3
Michigan-----	94,486	94,447	92,134	10.4	10.5	10.2
Wisconsin-----	40,043	38,608	34,858	8.8	8.5	7.8
West North Central:						
Minnesota-----	32,971	32,227	31,196	9.5	8.3	8.0
Iowa-----	27,544	26,803	25,819	9.5	9.2	9.1
Missouri-----	51,990	53,372	51,048	10.9	11.2	10.7
North Dakota-----	5,875	5,886	5,648	9.2	9.3	9.0
South Dakota-----	12,291	12,151	11,363	17.9	17.9	17.0
Nebraska-----	13,957	14,106	15,080	9.1	9.2	10.0
Kansas-----	24,592	23,878	22,528	10.8	10.5	10.0
South Atlantic:						
Delaware-----	4,298	4,362	4,481	7.5	7.6	8.0
Maryland-----	48,168	49,324	50,824	11.8	12.3	12.7
District of Columbia-----	5,661	6,292	6,689	7.6	8.4	9.0
Virginia-----	58,431	55,863	52,159	12.1	11.7	11.1
West Virginia-----	18,199	18,270	16,987	10.1	10.2	9.7
North Carolina-----	46,951	48,766	48,971	8.9	9.3	9.5
South Carolina-----	56,876	59,983	58,034	20.9	22.3	22.1
Georgia-----	70,373	68,756	63,860	14.7	14.5	13.7
Florida-----	89,587	82,176	75,108	11.7	11.2	10.7
East South Central:						
Kentucky-----	34,379	35,423	35,984	10.3	10.7	11.0
Tennessee-----	56,285	56,164	50,307	13.6	13.8	12.6
Alabama-----	47,997	49,764	48,276	13.6	14.1	13.9
Mississippi-----	26,513	28,703	27,597	12.5	12.7	12.4
West South Central:						
Arkansas-----	25,202	25,202	24,065	12.4	12.6	12.4
Louisiana-----	39,498	38,981	36,648	10.5	10.4	10.0
Oklahoma-----	41,367	40,767	39,333	15.5	15.5	15.1
Texas-----	152,162	149,009	140,232	12.9	12.8	12.2
Mountain:						
Montana-----	7,751	7,674	7,128	10.8	10.7	10.1
Idaho-----	12,236	12,086	11,356	15.9	16.0	15.5
Wyoming-----	5,506	5,357	4,772	15.6	15.5	14.0
Colorado-----	27,991	27,095	25,839	11.5	11.5	11.3
New Mexico-----	15,178	14,167	14,008	13.7	13.2	13.6
Arizona-----	26,180	23,318	20,865	12.7	11.9	11.3
Utah-----	14,818	13,935	12,037	12.8	12.4	11.0
Nevada-----	102,078	106,348	97,411	186.3	199.5	192.1
Pacific:						
Washington-----	41,385	41,618	40,988	12.1	12.2	11.9
Oregon-----	19,661	19,265	18,100	8.8	8.8	8.4
California-----	169,320	175,924	168,049	8.2	8.6	8.3
Alaska-----	3,872	3,828	3,453	11.7	11.8	11.0
Hawaii-----	9,776	9,750	9,734	11.8	11.9	12.3

<sup>1</sup>Includes marriage licenses issued for some counties.

<sup>2</sup>Marriage licenses issued.

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Table 4. MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGE RATES BY AGE, PREVIOUS MARITAL STATUS, AND COLOR OF BRIDE AND OF GROOM:  
MARRIAGE-REGISTRATION AREA,<sup>1</sup> 1973

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data. Rates per 1,000 population in specified group, estimated as of July 1, 1973. Figures for age not stated are distributed]

Age and previous marital status	Bride					Groom				
	Total		White	All other	Color not stated <sup>3</sup>	Total		White	All other	Color not stated <sup>3</sup>
	Number	Rate <sup>2</sup>				Number	Rate <sup>2</sup>			
<b>ALL MARRIAGES</b>										
Total-----	1,846,501	64.9	1,069,263	155,215	622,023	1,846,501	78.6	1,037,567	156,911	622,023
14-17 years-----	192,577	27.9	123,593	16,740	47,244	32,849	4.5	24,170	2,184	6,495
18-19 years-----	401,186	150.4	245,831	32,769	122,586	233,588	73.7	151,227	19,602	62,759
20-24 years-----	672,771	194.1	376,071	55,544	245,356	769,114	165.0	444,086	64,549	260,679
25-44 years-----	453,701	125.2	244,295	42,069	167,337	635,647	160.3	346,629	55,244	233,775
25-29 years-----	230,710	176.2	121,491	20,832	89,327	340,973	190.6	185,031	28,337	127,575
30-34 years-----	176,124	125.6	57,038	9,756	39,330	144,332	169.6	78,593	13,207	52,542
35-44 years-----	117,867	79.6	63,766	11,421	40,630	150,342	113.5	85,014	13,670	53,658
45-64 years-----	109,859	22.8	63,975	9,263	36,616	142,233	60.8	91,503	12,551	49,224
65 years and over-----	16,407	2.4	10,498	1,025	4,894	33,020	16.6	19,948	2,931	10,091
Median age-----	21.9	...	21.6	22.1	22.4	24.1	...	23.8	24.2	24.6
<b>FIRST MARRIAGES</b>										
Total-----	1,330,863	81.0	742,613	120,983	467,272	1,317,466	66.8	737,193	119,114	461,159
14-17 years-----	187,850	27.2	124,894	16,259	46,709	32,143	4.4	23,634	2,044	6,465
18-19 years-----	393,629	144.8	231,663	31,745	120,121	223,403	72.2	147,321	19,027	62,055
20-24 years-----	573,733	177.1	307,049	48,385	217,602	776,336	155.6	398,464	60,733	247,139
25-44 years-----	174,342	94.8	74,353	22,690	77,239	330,769	109.9	159,260	34,342	136,805
25-29 years-----	121,615	135.7	54,615	13,893	53,022	235,159	153.1	117,960	21,701	95,498
30-34 years-----	31,154	74.5	12,033	4,226	14,276	60,031	93.0	28,636	7,422	26,003
35-44 years-----	21,573	41.1	7,685	3,667	10,021	35,548	41.4	15,024	5,219	15,305
45-64 years-----	11,322	11.3	4,235	1,795	5,292	18,111	15.6	7,403	2,652	8,054
65 years and over-----	792	1.0	432	110	250	1,705	3.6	749	316	640
Median age-----	20.6	...	20.2	20.9	21.1	22.5	...	22.1	22.8	23.0
<b>REMARRIAGES</b>										
Total-----	497,843	40.6	305,121	31,295	151,427	502,993	133.3	310,432	34,721	157,846
14-19 years-----	12,745	*	10,559	352	1,835	1,937	*	1,654	83	180
20-24 years-----	69,219	4201.2	57,916	3,755	24,545	43,676	4293.5	34,102	2,286	12,278
25-44 years-----	276,522	154.3	167,297	19,535	82,350	297,937	111.3	181,909	18,529	96,073
25-29 years-----	103,671	269.1	65,003	6,594	25,014	130,223	333.9	63,276	6,121	31,532
30-34 years-----	73,217	175.6	44,545	4,333	22,533	93,034	339.0	51,160	5,537	26,367
35-44 years-----	65,714	102.2	37,749	7,483	30,497	113,914	244.5	67,479	9,270	39,174
45-64 years-----	97,923	25.7	59,391	7,333	31,157	123,353	104.4	73,636	8,783	39,923
65 years and over-----	15,441	2.5	9,966	903	4,570	31,129	20.6	19,134	2,615	9,377
Median age-----	32.3	...	31.9	35.1	32.6	36.3	...	35.6	38.7	37.1
Previously widowed <sup>5</sup> -----	73,899	9.3	50,723	5,776	17,365	65,266	39.3	43,235	5,856	16,175
14-24 years-----	2,811	*	2,055	235	520	537	*	465	52	20
25-44 years-----	20,182	622.7	12,449	1,989	4,764	10,355	149.9	6,445	1,360	2,530
45-64 years-----	39,668	16.5	26,845	2,912	3,601	32,431	77.3	21,506	2,757	8,218
65 years and over-----	11,618	2.2	8,379	659	2,590	21,913	18.8	14,819	1,697	5,407
Median age-----	52.1	...	52.3	49.9	52.7	59.3	...	59.8	55.4	59.3
Previously Divorced <sup>6</sup> -----	342,374	131.0	235,717	22,966	83,691	335,600	221.3	250,109	26,193	99,310
14-19 years-----	10,810	*	9,562	323	925	1,623	*	1,500	78	50
20-24 years-----	70,355	4294.0	52,450	3,341	14,564	40,625	431.3	31,605	2,122	6,907
25-44 years-----	215,167	177.7	143,873	15,378	55,903	244,222	321.4	165,411	17,193	61,653
45-64 years-----	44,063	46.1	29,539	3,728	11,736	73,804	117.3	49,129	6,155	19,520
65 years and over-----	1,989	8.3	1,233	196	560	5,280	32.0	3,460	640	1,180
Median age-----	30.2	...	29.7	32.9	31.1	33.9	...	33.3	35.6	35.1
Not stated if widowed or divorced <sup>7</sup> -----	71,600	...	18,676	2,553	50,371	72,124	...	17,091	2,672	52,361
NOT STATED IF PREVIOUSLY MARRIED <sup>8</sup> -----	27,790	...	21,528	2,937	3,324	26,036	...	19,942	3,076	3,018

<sup>1</sup>In 1973 the MRA consisted of the District of Columbia and all the States in the Union except 9; Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, and Washington. It covered 80 percent of the marriages registered in the United States. Sampling errors of estimates for the MRA appear in table 5.

<sup>2</sup>Base 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.

<sup>3</sup>Figures include data for California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and parts of Illinois; these areas did not require reporting of race or color.

<sup>4</sup>Rates are shown for ages 14-24 years.

<sup>5</sup>Data exclude remarriages in Michigan, Ohio, and South Carolina.

<sup>6</sup>Rates are shown for ages 14-44 years.

<sup>7</sup>Data include all remarriages in Michigan, Ohio, and South Carolina.

<sup>8</sup>Figures are included in all marriages.

## TECHNICAL NOTES

## Place and Time of Occurrence

Marriages are those performed during the year. Marriages and marriage rates for States and other areas are by place of occurrence. In table 3, however, figures for marriages shown for some States are by place and date the marriage license was issued.

## Sources of Data

Figures in tables 2 and 3 are based on totals reported by States and counties. All other figures in the tables are based on data tabulated from probability samples of records selected in the National Center for Health Statistics from copies of the records sent in by States participating in the marriage-registration area. For 1971, 1972, and 1973, 41 States and the District of Columbia participated.

## Marriage Sample

Records were sampled at different rates designed to give a sample of at least 2,500 records for each State except four, where less than 5,000 marriages were performed. For these States all records were included in the sample. Florida supplied a State-coded tape of its marriage records and 100 percent were used by NCHS. One-half of all records were included from seven States and the District of Columbia, one-fifth from nine States, one-tenth from 13 States, and one-twentieth from seven States. The total sample size was 287,241 marriages. Sampling errors shown in the following table are for frequencies which equal a specified percent of the MRA in 1973.

## Sampling Errors

All statistics for the MRA are estimates based on the systematic sample of marriages described above; therefore,

APPROXIMATE SAMPLING ERRORS OF ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF MARRIAGES SHOWN IN TABLE 4.

Total MRA marriages in 1973	Percent of total MRA marriages in subclass	Sampling error
1,846,500	1 or 99	468
	2 or 98	659
	3 or 97	803
	4 or 96	922
	5 or 95	1,026
	7 or 93	1,201
	10 or 90	1,412
	15 or 85	1,681
	20 or 80	1,895
	25 or 75	2,038
	50	2,555

## How to use the Sampling Error Table

For any estimate of marriage shown in table 4, determine its ratio to total MRA marriages. Then look in the appropriate row on the table for the percentage figures closest to the estimate to determine the sampling error. For example, there were 342,374 marriages to women who had been previously divorced or 18.5 percent of all MRA marriages. Since 18.5 percent is between 15 and 20 percent, the sampling error is between 1,681 and 1,895, or by interpolation, about 1,822 marriages. Chances are about 68 out of 100 that the actual number of marriages to divorcees is between 340,552 and 344,196 ( $342,374 \pm 1,822$ ).

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.

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