

# Population Characteristics

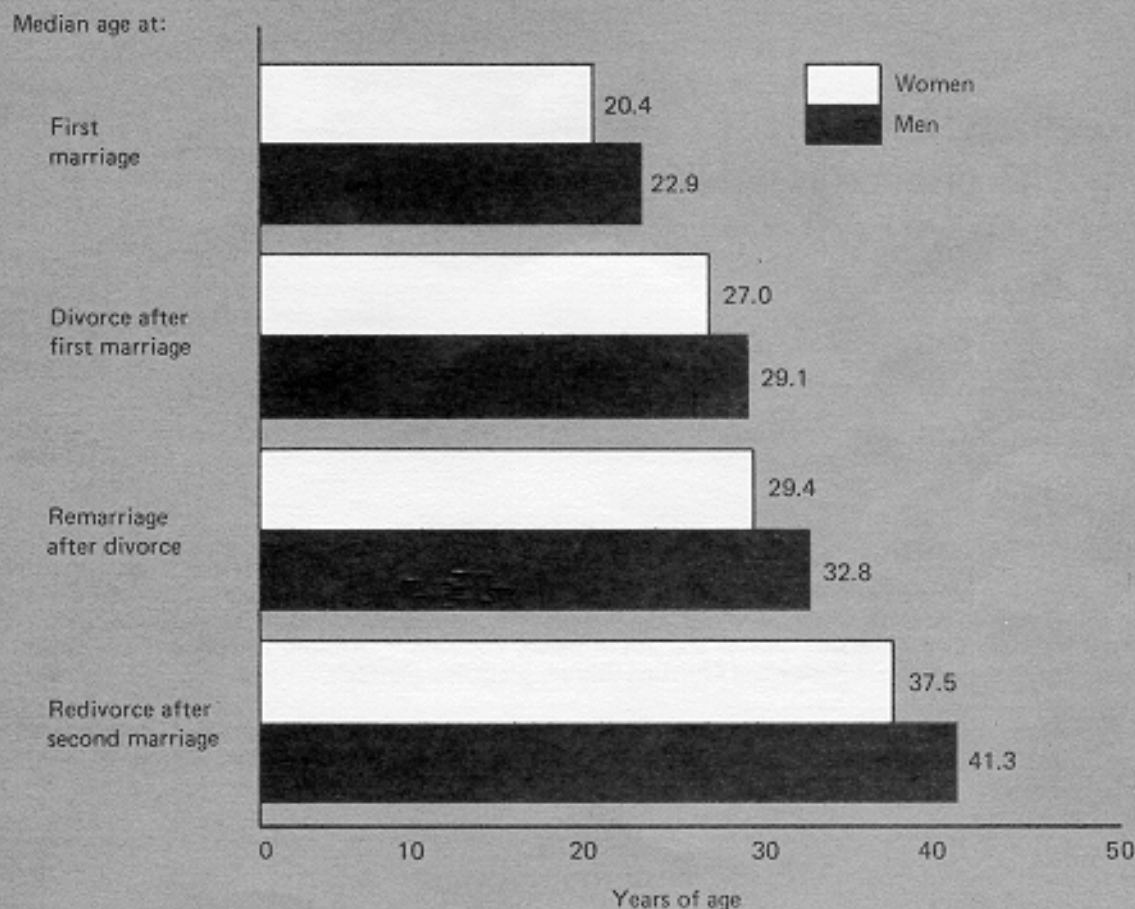
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## Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces in the United States: June 1975

Figure 1. Median Age at Marital Events for Men and Women Born Between 1900 and 1959: June 1975



Source: Table H.





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CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS

**Population Characteristics**

Number, Timing, and Duration of  
Marriages and Divorces  
in the United States:  
June 1975

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# NUMBER, TIMING, AND DURATION OF MARRIAGES AND DIVORCES IN THE UNITED STATES: JUNE 1975

## INTRODUCTION

This report presents results of a study of the marital history of men and women that was conducted in June 1975 by the Bureau of the Census. The analysis covers the number of times adults born since 1900 have married, their ages at marriage and divorce, and the number of years between marriage and divorce and between divorce and remarriage. The June 1975 survey also included questions about the fertility history of women; the first report on this subject has been published.<sup>1</sup> Earlier studies of marital history were made in 1971 and 1967.<sup>2</sup>

Those who use this report are cautioned that the findings for some of the subgroups require careful interpretation. Thus, most of the discussion centers around comparative analyses of data by period of birth, and the findings for the youngest groups are based on persons with somewhat limited marital experience; moreover, those for the oldest groups are based on persons who made most of their changes in marital status several years before the recent upsurge in the divorce rate occurred. Consequently, the results that are featured in the analysis are generally for those persons who are currently in their intermediate years (30 to 60 years of age). Also, since the respondents were often reporting on marital events that had occurred several years earlier, the findings may be affected to some extent by errors of memory. However, the results from successive surveys on retrospective reporting of marital events are sufficiently consistent to support the belief that the reporting is reasonably reliable.

<sup>1</sup>Series P-20, No. 288, "Fertility History and Prospects of American Women: June 1975."

<sup>2</sup>Series P-20, No. 239, "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage by Year of Birth: June 1971"; and Series P-20, No. 223, "Social and Economic Variations in Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage: 1967." Both of these reports are out of print.

The statistics presented in this report are based on sample data and are therefore subject to sampling variability as well as other sources of error. For a further discussion of the sampling variability see the section on "Reliability of the Estimates."

**Table A. Percent Distribution of Persons Born Between 1900 and 1959 by Number of Times Married, Year of Birth, Race, Spanish Origin, and Sex: June 1975**

Race, Spanish origin, and year of birth	Men					Women				
	Total (percent)	Single in 1975	Ever married in 1975: times married			Total (percent)	Single in 1975	Ever married in 1975: times married		
			Once	Twice	3 or more times			Once	Twice	3 or more times
Total born in 1900 to 1959.	100.0	26.1	62.5	9.8	1.5	100.0	20.6	67.0	10.8	1.7
White.....	100.0	25.2	63.7	9.7	1.5	100.0	19.5	68.1	10.7	1.7
Black.....	100.0	33.3	53.2	11.7	1.8	100.0	29.0	57.7	11.8	1.5
Other races.....	100.0	35.3	58.3	6.1	0.3	100.0	23.3	69.4	6.6	0.8
Spanish origin <sup>1</sup> .....	100.0	29.9	61.1	8.2	0.8	100.0	23.5	66.2	9.3	1.0
Born in--										
1955 to 1959.....	100.0	93.9	6.0	0.1	-	100.0	83.9	15.9	0.2	-
1950 to 1954.....	100.0	54.7	43.5	1.7	0.1	100.0	37.6	58.9	3.3	0.2
1945 to 1949.....	100.0	20.0	73.2	6.3	0.5	100.0	12.8	77.8	8.8	0.6
1940 to 1944.....	100.0	9.7	78.6	10.6	1.1	100.0	6.9	80.0	11.7	1.4
1935 to 1939.....	100.0	6.5	77.8	13.9	1.7	100.0	4.5	79.6	13.8	2.1
1930 to 1934.....	100.0	5.0	80.4	12.6	2.0	100.0	4.2	79.4	13.9	2.5
1925 to 1929.....	100.0	5.1	78.9	13.6	2.4	100.0	4.1	78.2	15.4	2.3
1920 to 1924.....	100.0	5.2	77.5	14.6	2.7	100.0	4.2	78.1	15.2	2.5
1915 to 1919.....	100.0	5.4	77.4	14.5	2.7	100.0	4.8	77.0	15.1	3.1
1910 to 1914.....	100.0	4.7	75.0	17.8	2.6	100.0	6.1	74.2	20.7	2.9
1905 to 1909.....	100.0	5.2	74.3	16.9	3.6	100.0	5.9	73.7	17.4	3.0
1900 to 1904.....	100.0	4.7	71.5	20.5	3.2	100.0	7.3	73.8	15.2	3.7

- Represents zero.

<sup>1</sup>Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.

### NUMBER OF MARRIAGES AND DIVORCES

Few persons marry more than twice. About 3 percent of all persons 40 to 75 years old who have ever married have married more than twice, according to the results of the June 1975 survey (table A and table 1). However, according to the National Center for Health Statistics, the divorce rate has more than doubled in the last dozen years, from 2.3 per 1,000 population in 1963 to 4.8 in 1975, and (as will be shown below) the proportion of divorced persons who remarry is quite high. Accordingly, it should not be surprising if the proportion who marry more than twice may also increase correspondingly at the older ages by the time those now in their late twenties reach their sixties.

All but about 4 percent of the women and 5 percent of the men in their middle years have married. This applies to persons born between 1920 and 1934, who were in their forties or early fifties at the survey date in 1975. Of those in their forties who had married, 83 percent had married only once, 15 percent had married twice, and 2 percent three or more times (table 1). At the younger ages, the great majority of the marital dissolutions are by divorce, but as age advances an increasing proportion occur by widowhood.

White adults were more likely than Black adults to have been married only once. Thus, 64 percent of the White men as compared with 53 percent of the Black men born between 1900 and 1959 had been married once (table A). For women, the corresponding proportions married once were 68 percent for Whites and 58 percent for Blacks. The difference is attributable in part to the greater delay in marriage among Blacks. However, a part of the difference is attributable to the larger proportion of Blacks who reported that they had been married more than once.

Persons who were reported as currently married at the time of the survey in 1975 were the least likely to have ever been remarried. Only 15 percent of those born since 1900 who had ever married had been remarried by the survey date (table B). Divorced and separated persons reported a considerably larger proportion of second or subsequent marriages than did married persons (23 percent and 20 percent versus 15 percent, respectively). These findings support the general conclusion that persons (mostly below old age) who had remarried after one marriage had been dissolved were more likely than persons still in their first marriage to have been experiencing serious marital difficulties at (or before) the survey date.

*16th June 1975*

**Table B. Persons Ever Married Born Between 1900 and 1959 by Number of Times Married, Marital Status, and Sex: June 1975**

(Numbers in thousands)

Sex and marital status	Persons born between 1900 and 1959				
	Total	Percent by number of times married			
		Total	Once	Twice	Three or more
Both sexes, ever married.....	112,060	(X)	94,687	15,054	2,318
Percent.....	(X)	100.0	84.5	13.4	2.1
Married.....	97,822	100.0	85.2	12.9	1.8
Not separated.....	94,526	100.0	85.4	12.8	1.8
Separated.....	3,296	100.0	80.2	16.5	3.3
Divorced.....	6,546	100.0	77.1	18.2	4.8
Widowed.....	7,693	100.0	81.3	15.9	2.8
Men, ever married.....	51,453	(X)	43,577	6,841	1,034
Percent.....	(X)	100.0	84.7	13.3	2.0
Married.....	48,011	100.0	85.2	13.0	1.9
Not separated.....	46,863	100.0	85.3	12.9	1.8
Separated.....	1,148	100.0	80.3	16.0	3.8
Divorced.....	2,345	100.0	76.8	18.3	4.9
Widowed.....	1,096	100.0	81.5	16.1	2.5
Women, ever married.....	60,607	(X)	51,110	8,213	1,284
Percent.....	(X)	100.0	84.3	13.6	2.1
Married.....	49,811	100.0	85.3	12.9	1.8
Not separated.....	47,663	100.0	85.6	12.7	1.7
Separated.....	2,148	100.0	80.1	16.8	3.1
Divorced.....	4,201	100.0	77.3	18.1	4.7
Widowed.....	6,597	100.0	81.3	15.9	2.9

X Not applicable.

Older cohort experience indicates that four of every five divorced persons may eventually remarry. Among persons who had reached the age range of 50 to 75 years in 1975, five of every six men and three of every four women whose first marriage ended in divorce had remarried (table C and table 1). Thus, divorce after first marriage is generally not the final marital step but only one of the steps in a transition between first marriage and second marriage, with divorced men being 5 to 10 percentage points more likely than divorced women to eventually remarry.

Widowed persons, age for age, are less likely than divorced persons to remarry. Only one-half of the persons in their early fifties in 1975 had remarried after their first marriage ended in widowhood, as compared with about four-fifths of those of a comparable age whose first marriage had ended in divorce (table C and table 1). The proportion of widowers of this age who had remarried was about 25 percentage points above that of widows (65 versus 40 percent). As a partial consequence, the number of widowers in their early fifties (241,000) was only about one-third as great as the number of widows (774,000). Among persons in their early seventies the number of widowed persons who had remarried (586,000) was not different from the number of divorced persons who had remarried (548,000); however, the proportion of widowed persons in this age group who had remarried (28 percent) was only one-third as great as the proportion of divorced persons of similar age who had remarried (83 percent).

A greater amount of divorce has occurred among the young despite their shorter period of marriage. For instance, women in their late thirties were half again as likely to have been divorced as women in their early seventies even though the younger women had been married (and thus subject to the possibility of divorce) for a far shorter period of time than the older women (about 15 to 20 years, on the average, versus 50 to 55 years). More specifically, 22 percent of the women ever married who were born in 1935 to 1939 were "known to have been divorced" (after their first marriage and/or their latest marriage) as compared with only 13 percent of those born in 1900 to 1904 (table D and table 1).

Most of those who are known to have been divorced report only one divorce. This can be illustrated with data in table D for women ever married in their late thirties (who were born in 1935 to 1939). Of these women, 75 percent were reported as having been married once and never divorced or widowed; 22 percent as having been divorced—20 percent once (after their first or latest marriage but not both) and 2 percent at least twice (after both their first and latest marriages); and the remaining 3 percent as having been widowed but not divorced. Close to nine-tenths of the reported divorces occurred after the first marriage; this finding applies to virtually all of the ethnic groups shown in table D and to all of the periods of birth except the two youngest who were born as recently as the 1950's.

**Table C. Percent Remarried After First Marriage Ended in Divorce or in Widowhood, for Persons Born in Selected Periods Between 1900 and 1944 by Sex: June 1975**

(Numbers in thousands)

Year of birth and sex	Divorced after first marriage				Widowed after first marriage			
	Total		Not remarried	Remarried	Total		Not remarried	Remarried
	Number	Percent			Number	Percent		
<b>BOTH SEXES</b>								
Born in--								
1940 to 1944.....	2,262	100.0	30.9	69.1	167	100.0	42.5	57.5
1930 to 1934.....	2,066	100.0	26.5	73.5	386	100.0	46.4	53.6
1920 to 1924.....	2,034	100.0	21.9	78.1	1,015	100.0	54.5	45.5
1910 to 1914.....	1,393	100.0	16.7	83.3	1,824	100.0	64.1	35.9
1900 to 1904.....	661	100.0	17.1	82.9	2,073	100.0	71.7	28.3
<b>MALE</b>								
Born in--								
1940 to 1944.....	986	100.0	24.9	75.1	25	(B)	(B)	(B)
1930 to 1934.....	924	100.0	21.9	78.1	68	(B)	(B)	(B)
1920 to 1924.....	986	100.0	17.0	83.0	241	100.0	35.3	64.7
1910 to 1914.....	660	100.0	14.4	85.6	429	100.0	35.0	65.0
1900 to 1904.....	289	100.0	10.7	89.3	519	100.0	44.9	55.1
<b>FEMALE</b>								
Born in--								
1940 to 1944.....	1,276	100.0	35.6	64.4	142	100.0	41.5	58.5
1930 to 1934.....	1,142	100.0	30.3	69.7	318	100.0	51.6	48.4
1920 to 1924.....	1,048	100.0	26.5	73.5	774	100.0	60.5	39.5
1910 to 1914.....	733	100.0	18.8	81.2	1,395	100.0	73.0	27.0
1900 to 1904.....	372	100.0	22.0	78.0	1,554	100.0	80.7	19.3

B Base less than 75,000.



**Table D. Percent Distribution of Women Ever Married Who Were Born Between 1900 and 1959 by Whether Known to Have Been Divorced or Widowed, Year of Birth, Number of Times Married, and Race: June 1975**

Race, Spanish origin, and year of birth	Total women ever married (percent)	Never divorced or widowed by 1975	Known to have been divorced				Known to have been widowed but not divorced <sup>3</sup>
			Total	Divorced after--			
				First marriage only <sup>1</sup>	First and latest marriage	Latest marriage only <sup>2</sup>	
Total born in 1900 to 1959.	100.0	70.1	17.4	15.9	1.3	0.3	12.4
White.....	100.0	70.9	16.9	15.4	1.3	0.3	12.2
Black.....	100.0	62.0	22.7	21.1	1.3	0.4	15.3
Other races.....	100.0	78.9	12.2	10.8	1.4	-	9.1
Spanish origin <sup>4</sup> .....	100.0	75.2	16.6	15.6	0.9	0.2	8.1
Born in--							
1955 to 1959.....	100.0	95.6	4.3	4.1	0.2	-	0.1
1950 to 1954.....	100.0	88.0	11.2	10.9	0.3	(Z)	0.7
1945 to 1949.....	100.0	81.8	17.2	16.2	0.9	(Z)	1.1
1940 to 1944.....	100.0	78.0	19.9	18.2	1.7	0.1	2.1
1935 to 1939.....	100.0	75.3	21.5	19.9	1.5	0.1	3.1
1930 to 1934.....	100.0	73.7	20.8	18.7	1.9	0.2	5.5
1925 to 1929.....	100.0	69.9	21.4	18.8	2.2	0.4	8.8
1920 to 1924.....	100.0	68.7	18.6	16.7	1.3	0.6	12.7
1915 to 1919.....	100.0	63.1	17.0	14.8	1.6	0.5	19.8
1910 to 1914.....	100.0	54.0	16.5	14.5	1.3	0.7	29.5
1905 to 1909.....	100.0	44.4	15.4	13.8	1.1	0.5	40.2
1900 to 1904.....	100.0	33.7	13.1	12.2	0.5	0.3	53.1

- Represents zero.

Z Less than 0.05 percent.

<sup>1</sup>Divorced after their first marriage but not after their latest, if ever remarried.

<sup>2</sup>Divorced after their latest marriage but not after their first marriage.

<sup>3</sup>Widowed after their first and/or latest marriage but not divorced after either marriage.

<sup>4</sup>Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.

A few adults report having been both divorced and widowed. For all women born between 1900 and 1959, 2 percent were in this category, but the corresponding proportions increased with age (table 1). Thus, the proportion of women who had been both divorced and widowed was only 1 percent for those in their early forties, whereas it was 5 percent for those in their early seventies. Among women in their early forties, 21 percent had been divorced as compared with 6 percent who had been widowed. By contrast, among those in their late sixties, 40 percent had been widowed whereas 15 percent had been divorced.

### PROPORTION OF MARRIAGES THAT END IN DIVORCE

More divorces occur at young ages. Evidence that an increasing proportion of first marriages end in divorce at a relatively young age is provided by the underscored numbers in table E, which was derived from table 3. The underscored numbers refer to the proportion of persons whose first marriage had ended in divorce by the time they were in their upper twenties. Thus, only 4.5 percent of the married men who were born in 1900 to 1904 had ended their first marriage by 1930 to 1934 when they were about 25 to 34 years old. The corresponding proportions increased steadily to 7.9 percent for those born in 1915 to 1919, to 10.4 percent for those born in 1930 to 1934, and to 13.1 percent for those born in 1945 to 1949.

These data show that about three times as large a proportion of the youngest group as of the oldest group had ended their first marriage before the age of 35 years. For women, the corresponding results for the two youngest groups (13.1 percent and 17.1 percent, respectively) were somewhat higher than those for men; this difference arises because women marry when they are two or three years younger than men, on the average, and therefore have been subject to divorce for a longer number of years than men by the time when they reach their upper twenties.

Likewise, divorces after the second marriage have been occurring at increasingly younger ages (tables F and 4). As the underscored numbers in table F imply, about four times as large a proportion of men in their early forties in 1975 as compared with those of similar age in 1945 had ended their second marriage in redivorce (8.0 percent versus 1.8 percent). For women the contrast appears to be even greater (11.3 percent versus 1.8 percent), but because the data are based on a sample and involve "retrospective" reporting on earlier events, the difference is attributable to sampling variability or to incomplete reporting or misreporting.

One-third of recent first marriages may end in divorce. Additional evidence from the survey in June 1975 that the divorce experience of young adults had already far exceeded that of older adults when they had been of comparable age is presented in the first column of table G. Close to 19 percent of several birth cohorts under 50 years old (born since 1925) had ended their first marriage in divorce by the survey date, as compared with

**Table E. Percent of Persons Ever Married Whose First Marriage Ended in Divorce by Specified Calendar Years, for Persons of Selected Years of Birth by Sex: June 1975**

Year of divorce after first marriage	Men ever married born in--				Women ever married born in--			
	1945 to 1949	1930 to 1934	1915 to 1919	1900 to 1904	1945 to 1949	1930 to 1934	1915 to 1919	1900 to 1904
Percent whose first marriage ended in divorce by--								
Mid-1975.....	<u>13.1</u>	18.4	17.4	13.3	<u>17.1</u>	20.5	16.4	12.8
1970.....	5.1	15.4	16.5	13.0	8.1	17.4	15.9	12.6
1965.....	0.4	11.3	15.3	13.0	1.2	13.9	14.8	12.6
1960 to 1964.....	0.2	<u>10.4</u>	15.1	12.7	0.7	<u>13.1</u>	14.5	12.6
1955 to 1959.....	(X)	6.2	13.6	12.4	(X)	8.2	13.2	12.2
1950 to 1954.....	(X)	1.6	10.6	11.7	(X)	3.6	11.5	11.8
1945 to 1949.....	(X)	0.1	<u>7.9</u>	10.6	(X)	0.5	<u>8.6</u>	11.3
1940 to 1944.....	(X)	(X)	<u>3.9</u>	8.3	(X)	(X)	6.1	10.0
1935 to 1939.....	(X)	(X)	0.7	6.9	(X)	(X)	2.3	8.1
1930 to 1934.....	(X)	(X)	(Z)	<u>4.5</u>	(X)	(X)	0.5	<u>6.5</u>

X Not applicable.

Z Less than 0.05 percent.

**Table F. Percent of Persons Married Twice Whose Second Marriage Ended in Redivorce by Specified Calendar Years, for Persons of Selected Years of Birth by Sex: June 1975**

Year of redivorce after second marriage	Men married twice born in--				Women married twice born in--			
	1945 to 1949	1930 to 1934	1915 to 1919	1900 to 1904	1945 to 1949	1930 to 1934	1915 to 1919	1900 to 1904
Percent whose second marriage ended in redivorce by--								
Mid-1975.....	4.9	<u>8.0</u>	9.2	6.3	8.4	<u>11.3</u>	11.1	4.5
1970.....	0.4	2.4	3.9	4.5	0.3	<u>6.4</u>	9.5	3.6
1965.....	-	0.5	3.2	4.0	-	2.0	6.0	3.6
1960.....	-	0.5	<u>2.8</u>	3.6	-	1.8	<u>5.2</u>	3.6
1955.....	(X)	-	<u>2.5</u>	2.7	(X)	0.3	2.6	3.1
1950.....	(X)	-	1.8	2.7	(X)	0.3	1.0	2.7
1945.....	(X)	-	0.4	<u>1.8</u>	(X)	-	0.2	<u>1.8</u>
1940.....	(X)	(X)	-	0.9	(X)	(X)	-	0.4
1935.....	(X)	(X)	-	-	(X)	(X)	-	-
1930.....	(X)	(X)	-	-	(X)	(X)	-	-

- Represents zero.

X Not applicable.

only 13 percent for the oldest group (persons in their early seventies). Moreover, the young adults will surely increase considerably their proportion of first marriages that end in divorce by the time they reach their seventies.

Consequently, a projection technique was used to estimate the proportion of first marriages of young adults that may end in divorce by the time when these persons reach old age. The results are given in the second column of table G. These results were derived from tables E and 3 by using the survey findings on added divorce experience between calendar year 1969 and

calendar year 1974 for successively older 5-year birth cohorts to estimate the approximate amount of successive 5-year increments in divorce that the younger groups may experience by the time they reach their early seventies.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> For a fuller statement of this projection method, see Paul C. Glick and Arthur J. Norton, "Perspectives on the Recent Upturn in Divorce and Remarriage," *Demography*, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 301-14, especially the appendix.

**Table G. Percent of Ever-married Persons Whose First Marriage May Eventually End in Divorce and Whose Second Marriage May Eventually End in Redivorce, by Year of Birth and Sex: June 1975**

Year of birth and sex	Percent of ever-married persons whose first marriage--		Percent of persons married twice whose second marriage--	
	Had ended in divorce by 1975	May eventually end in divorce <sup>1</sup>	Had ended in redivorce by 1975	May eventually end in redivorce <sup>1</sup>
<b>MEN</b>				
1945 to 1949.....	13	34	5	35
1940 to 1944.....	17	31	6	32
1935 to 1939.....	20	29	5	28
1930 to 1934.....	18	24	8	24
1925 to 1929.....	18	22	7	20
1920 to 1924.....	18	20	9	18
1915 to 1919.....	17	18	9	13
1910 to 1914.....	17	17	7	9
1905 to 1909.....	15	15	7	8
1900 to 1904.....	13	13	6	6
<b>WOMEN</b>				
1945 to 1949.....	17	38	8	44
1940 to 1944.....	20	34	12	40
1935 to 1939.....	21	31	10	31
1930 to 1934.....	21	26	11	26
1925 to 1929.....	21	24	14	23
1920 to 1924.....	18	20	8	15
1915 to 1919.....	16	17	11	16
1910 to 1914.....	16	16	10	12
1905 to 1909.....	15	15	9	9
1900 to 1904.....	13	13	5	5

<sup>1</sup>If their future divorce experience is similar to that of persons in older age groups between 1969 and 1974.

The projections imply that about one-third of the married persons between 25 and 35 years old in 1975 may eventually end their first marriage in divorce, including those who have already done so. This level is between two and three times as high as the estimated 13 percent for persons in their early seventies, very few more of whom will end their first marriage in divorce after 1975. The large difference between these two levels of divorce is one of the measures of the increasing propensity for more young adults to legally terminate their first marriage through a divorce proceeding.

A word of caution is in order regarding the interpretation of these findings. They are based on the stated assumption about future increments of divorce, which in turn were based on sample data that are subject to sampling variability and to errors of reporting. However, the close consistency observed between the same types of results from the 1975 and 1971 surveys provides a basis for accepting the projected general levels of eventual divorce after first marriage as reasonable prospects for persons now about 30 years old.

A higher proportion of recent second marriages may end in redivorce. Although, as the third column of table G shows, no more than about 10 percent of the second marriages for men in any given cohort and 15 percent of the second marriages among women in any given cohort for those in their thirties to sixties had already ended in redivorce by the survey date in June 1975,

surely a much larger proportion of those in the younger part of this age range will eventually become redivorced. The approximate level to which the proportion is likely to rise was estimated by the same type of projection technique as that described in the preceding section. The results appear in the final column of table G.

The projections imply that about four-tenths of the persons in their late twenties and early thirties who had entered their second marriage (after their first marriage had ended in divorce) may expect eventually to have their second marriage also end in divorce, including those who have already done so. This level is several times as high as the estimated level for persons now in their sixties or early seventies.

The anticipated large increase may reflect, among other things, the growing proportion of adults who have been through the experience of divorce once at a relatively early age; these persons have more remaining years in which to experience divorce for a second time than those who are one or more decades older. Moreover, as suggested above, many (but by no means all) of those who have been divorced once evidently resist becoming divorced for a second time by a lesser amount than persons of similar age in their first marriage resist becoming divorced for the first time. Perhaps persons who become divorced at a relatively young age tend to have personal and social characteristics that are somewhat different from those of persons who never become divorced.

The foregoing discussion of the proportions of persons whose marriages may end in divorce is based on a "cohort" or lifetime analysis. However, the projected proportions are somewhat smaller than others that were prepared a few years ago at the Bureau of the Census on the basis of a different methodology and different source material.<sup>4</sup> The earlier estimates were based on "period" data on the number of divorces reported in vital statistics for the

year 1970 classified by duration of marriage, and on estimates of first marriages and remarriages based on a combination of census data and vital statistics. Those estimates showed that 37.0 percent of first marriages may end in divorce and that 58.5 percent of the remarriages may end in divorce if the 1970 level of divorce should continue for a lifetime. Demographers usually prefer the use of the cohort approach rather than the period approach in making estimates such as those presented here, but the required data for the application of the cohort method have not been available until recently. However, even the cohort method seems likely to show in the next few years that the lifetime chances of redivorce will approach closer to one-half of the twice-married persons.

<sup>4</sup>Paul C. Glick, "Dissolution of Marriage by Divorce and Its Demographic Consequences," *International Population Conference, Liege 1973*, Vol. 2, pp. 69-79, 1973. See especially table 5.

**Table H. Age at First Marriage, First Divorce, Remarriage After First Divorce, and Redivorce After Second Marriage, for Persons Born Between 1900 and 1959 by Sex: June 1975**

(Numbers in thousands)

Age at vital event	Men				Women			
	First marriage	Divorce after first marriage	Remarriage after divorce	Redivorce after second marriage	First marriage	Divorce after first marriage	Remarriage after divorce	Redivorce after second marriage
Total <sup>1</sup> .....	51,453	8,282	5,579	375	60,607	10,395	6,116	614
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
14 to 19 years.....	13.5	2.9	0.7	0.5	38.9	9.1	3.2	1.3
14 to 17 years.....	3.1	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	14.5	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
18 years.....	3.7	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	11.3	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
19 years.....	6.8	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	13.1	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
20 to 24 years.....	50.9	21.6	10.7	3.5	44.1	29.0	20.7	3.6
20 years.....	9.4	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	12.3	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
21 years.....	11.0	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	10.8	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
22 years.....	11.5	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	9.1	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
23 years.....	10.3	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	6.9	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
24 years.....	8.7	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	5.0	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
25 to 29 years.....	24.2	27.4	24.6	9.9	11.7	23.9	26.6	17.4
30 to 34 years.....	7.1	18.8	21.0	11.7	3.2	15.1	18.8	15.0
35 to 39 years.....	2.5	12.8	17.7	18.4	1.2	10.6	13.1	21.0
40 to 44 years.....	1.0	8.0	10.9	16.3	0.5	6.1	8.9	18.4
45 to 49 years.....	0.4	4.9	7.1	11.7	0.2	3.7	4.7	12.1
50 to 75 years.....	0.3	3.5	7.3	28.3	0.2	2.4	4.0	11.2
50 to 54 years.....	( <sup>2</sup> )	2.0	4.4	13.3	( <sup>2</sup> )	1.6	2.3	5.0
55 to 75 years.....	( <sup>2</sup> )	1.4	2.9	14.9	( <sup>2</sup> )	0.9	1.7	6.2
55 to 59 years.....	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	1.7	9.3	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	0.9	3.1
60 to 75 years.....	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	1.2	5.6	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	0.8	3.1
60 to 64 years...	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	4.3	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	1.5
65 to 75 years...	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	1.3	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	1.6
Median age....(years)..	22.9	29.1	32.8	41.3	20.4	27.0	29.4	37.5

<sup>1</sup>The bases used in computing the percent distributions are as follows:

Age at marriage (for the first time): persons who ever married (born in 1900 to 1959).

Age at divorce (after first marriage): persons whose first marriage ended in divorce.

Age at remarriage (second marriage): persons who remarried after their first marriage ended in divorce.

Age at redivorce (divorce after second marriage): persons married twice whose second marriage, as well as their first marriage, ended in divorce.

<sup>2</sup>This detail was not tabulated.

## AGES AT MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE, AND REDIVORCE

Most typical ages at first marriage are 20 to 23 years for men and 18 to 21 for women. More men under 75 years old in 1975 had entered first marriage while they were 20, 21, 22, or 23 years of age than during any other 4-year span of successive years. For women the corresponding 4-year span included ages 18, 19, 20, and 21 years, according to table H (which was based on table 2). About 42 percent of the men reported that they had been married for the first time between the "modal" or "most typical" ages of 20 and 23 years, whereas 48 percent of the women had married between 18 and 21. Thus, women have tended to concentrate more of their first marriages within a narrow range of ages than have men. This tendency is apparent from a comparison of the distribution of ages at first marriage for men and women in figure 1.

Table H covers persons who have been entering marriage for the last half century or longer. During most of that period an increasing proportion of persons have been marrying at a relatively young age, particularly men, as will be shown in later tables. However, this table summarizes the survey findings on age distributions at the time of four key marital events for all adults under 75 years old at the survey date.

Most typical ages at divorce after first marriage are 25 to 29 for men and 20 to 24 for women. More men have ended their first marriage in divorce while they were in their upper twenties, and more women while they were in their lower twenties, than in any other 5-year span of ages (table H). About 28 percent of the men and women who became divorced after first marriage did so during these ages. About 50 percent of men and 53 percent of women whose first marriage ended in divorce were in their twenties when this occurred.

Most typical ages at remarriage after first divorce are 25 to 34 for men and 20 to 34 for women. The years during which the most remarriages have occurred, following the ending of the first marriage in divorce, have been ages 25 to 34 for men and 20 to 34 for women, according to table H. More than one-half of all such remarriages occurred during this age range for persons under 75 years old in 1975. These modal periods are based on data that were tabulated by 5-year age groups, not single years of age.

Most typical ages at redivorce after second marriage are 35 to 44 for both men and women. Only about one-third of the relatively few redivorces that were reported in the survey occurred within this 10-year span (table H). More than one-half of the redivorces occurred while the men were 35 to 54 years old and the women were 25 to 44 years old. Thus, there is a tendency for the later marital events to occur typically among men who are of an increasing number of years older than women who experience the same type of event.

The age gap between brides and grooms is narrowing. The trend over the 20th century has been toward a diminishing difference between the ages of brides and grooms at marriage. Tables 1 and 2 show that men who were born in 1900 to 1904 had a median age at first marriage that was about 4 years older than the corresponding age of women (25.5 years versus 21.4 years). Among those born 30 years later, in 1930 to 1934, this difference was about 3 years (23.1 for men and 20.3 for women). Furthermore, among those born in 1945 to 1949, the difference was only about 2 years (22.1 versus 20.3). However, since most of the persons who were born in 1945 to 1949 were still in their upper twenties at the survey date in 1975, many of those who were still single (particularly men) will enter their first marriage some time after 1975. Nonetheless the current trend is still in the direction of a narrowing gap between the ages of men and women at first marriage.

More young women are delaying their marriages. During the last 15 years, more and more women under 30 years of age in the United States have been postponing their entrance into marriage. This pattern is apparent in table 1 from the smaller proportions of women who had married by a given age among those in the youngest group (those born in 1945 to 1949) than among those in the next older group shown in the table (those born in 1930 to 1934). Thus, only 87 percent of the women who were in their upper twenties in 1975 had entered marriage as compared with 92 percent of those who were in their upper twenties in 1960. When persons in the latter group had reached their early forties 15 years later, in 1975, an additional 4 percent, or a total of 96 percent, had married. However, if only 4 more percent of those in their upper twenties in 1975 become married during the next 15 years when they, in turn, will be in their early forties, then a total of only 91 percent of them will have ever married. If this should occur, those now in their late twenties would have the smallest proportion who eventually marry of any group in a third of a century. However, there is a reasonable likelihood that enough late marriages will occur among women now in their late twenties to increase to 93 or 94 percent the proportion of them who eventually marry.

There is, of course, another prospect, namely, that the difference between the marriage pattern of those in their late twenties now and those of similar age in 1960 is partly or even largely one of the timing of marriage. According to this alternative, much of the difference in ultimate marriage would be made up in the form of late marriages by those who are currently approaching 30 years of age; Census Bureau staff members are assuming that about half of the difference will disappear because of postponed marriages that will occur.

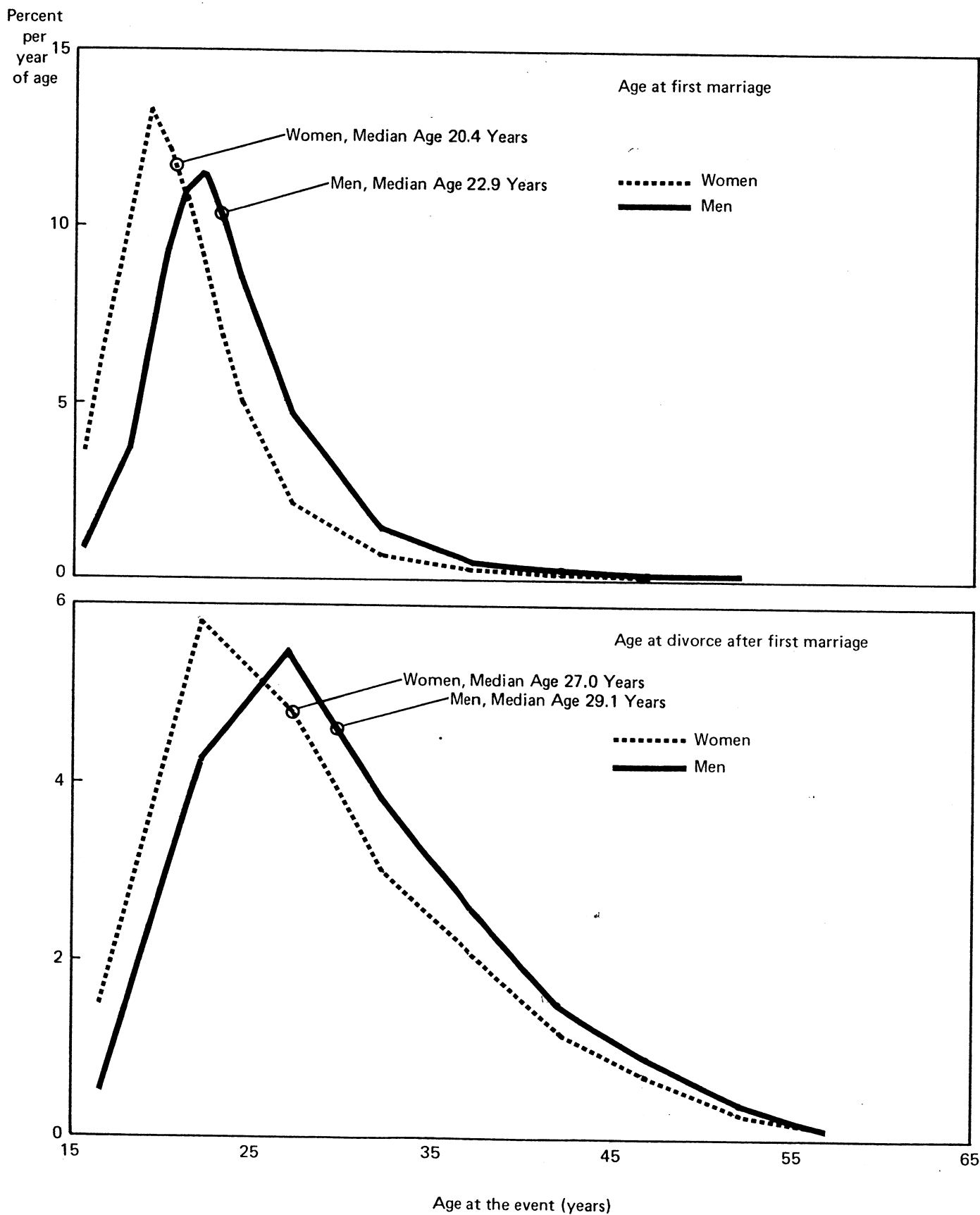
Fewer young men are delaying their marriages. By contrast with the young women, men in their late teens and early twenties considered as a whole have been continuing the longtime trend toward marriage at a relatively young age. This finding is apparent from a comparison of the data for men in the first two columns of table 1. The contrast between the patterns for men and women is partially, if not largely, a consequence of the "marriage squeeze" that developed in the 1960's and continued into the 1970's because women born during the upturn of the birth rate in the late 1940's and early 1950's were reaching their maximum period for entering first marriage 2 to 3 years before men who were born in the same year. Thus, in recent years there has been an excess of women in the main ages for marriage. Because of this marriage squeeze, some 5 to 10 percent more women were in the age range 18 to 24 years than men in the range 20 to 26 years throughout the 15 years between 1960 and 1975. But the situation is changing. Because of the sharp decline in the birth rate during the last 15 years, a reverse form of the marriage squeeze will develop by 1985 and last for 10 or more years, during which time there is likely to be up to about 5 percent more men than women in the ages when first marriages are usually most frequent.

Age at first marriage varies little by ethnic group. The 1975 survey did not show any substantial differences by race or by Spanish origin in the median age at first marriage for all birth cohorts as a whole (table J). Nor was there a consistent pattern of the differences among the ethnic groups in the medians within the several birth cohorts.

At the same time, the level of the median ages at first marriage shown in table J differs somewhat from the corresponding level shown in the annual survey reports. The medians in the present report were based on a direct question on the date of first marriage as compared with the date of birth, whereas the medians in the annual survey reports are computed from distributions of marital status by age.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 287, "Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1975," table B.

Figure 2. Ages of Men and Women at First Marriage and at Divorce After First Marriage, for Persons Under 75 Years Old in 1975



Source: Table H.

**Table I. Percent of Persons Who Entered Their First Marriage by Specified Age, for Persons of Selected Years of Birth by Sex: June 1975**

Age at first marriage	Men born in--				Women born in--			
	1945 to 1949	1930 to 1934	1915 to 1919	1900 to 1904	1945 to 1949	1930 to 1934	1915 to 1919	1900 to 1904
Cumulative percent of persons who entered their first marriage by age--								
14 to 17 years.....	1.7	2.2	2.3	2.1	10.3	14.5	11.3	12.3
18 years.....	4.7	5.5	3.9	3.5	20.6	25.4	18.9	20.9
19 years.....	12.3	11.5	6.7	7.8	33.5	38.4	27.9	30.0
20 years.....	21.7	20.8	12.1	12.1	45.8	50.3	37.5	39.4
21 years.....	32.7	30.6	19.7	17.9	57.0	61.3	45.8	47.6
22 years.....	44.8	41.3	28.8	26.5	67.4	70.0	55.2	54.6
23 years.....	56.0	51.8	37.9	34.0	74.7	77.2	63.1	60.8
24 years.....	64.3	61.0	46.2	41.8	79.3	81.5	69.3	66.4
25 to 29 years.....	80.0	84.2	76.3	71.0	87.2	91.7	86.1	82.4
30 to 34 years.....	(X)	91.3	87.3	84.1	(X)	94.4	91.1	87.7
35 to 39 years.....	(X)	94.1	91.6	89.4	(X)	95.4	93.3	90.4
40 to 44 years.....	(X)	95.0	93.2	92.1	(X)	95.8	94.3	91.5
45 to 49 years.....	(X)	(X)	94.1	93.3	(X)	(X)	94.6	91.9
50 to 75 years.....	(X)	(X)	94.6	95.3	(X)	(X)	95.2	92.7
Median age at first marriage.....(years)..	22.1	23.1	24.7	25.5	20.3	20.3	21.7	21.4

X Not applicable.

**Table J. Median Age at First Marriage for Persons Born Between 1900 and 1959 by Year of Birth, Sex, Race, and Spanish Origin: June 1975**

Year of birth	Median age at first marriage (years)							
	Men				Women			
	Total	White	Black	Spanish origin <sup>1</sup>	Total	White	Black	Spanish origin <sup>1</sup>
1900 to 1959.....	22.9	22.9	22.8	22.7	20.4	20.4	20.0	20.4
1955 to 1959.....	18.1	18.2	(B)	(B)	17.7	17.7	17.3	17.6
1950 to 1954.....	20.5	20.5	20.6	20.5	19.5	19.5	19.1	19.6
1945 to 1949.....	22.1	22.1	22.0	22.2	20.3	20.3	20.4	20.7
1940 to 1944.....	22.5	22.4	23.2	23.2	20.2	20.2	20.2	20.3
1935 to 1939.....	22.6	22.5	23.5	23.2	20.0	20.0	19.5	20.4
1930 to 1934.....	23.1	23.0	23.8	23.7	20.3	20.3	20.3	21.2
1925 to 1929.....	23.3	23.2	23.2	23.6	20.7	20.7	20.7	21.8
1920 to 1924.....	23.9	23.9	24.1	24.0	21.2	21.2	21.1	20.9
1915 to 1919.....	24.7	24.7	24.3	23.9	21.7	21.8	20.5	22.0
1910 to 1914.....	25.2	25.3	23.7	24.5	21.8	21.9	20.7	22.7
1905 to 1909.....	25.1	25.2	23.5	(B)	21.4	21.5	20.0	20.8
1900 to 1904.....	25.5	25.4	26.3	(B)	21.4	21.4	20.2	(B)

B Base less than 75,000.

<sup>1</sup>Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.

More first marriages are ending in divorce before the age of 30 years. Three to four times as large a proportion of first marriages have ended in divorce among those now in their late twenties as among those of similar age 45 years ago. Specifically, tables K and 2 show that 13 percent of the married men born in 1945 to 1949 reported that they had ended their first marriage in divorce by the time they were in the age range 25 to 29 years; by contrast only 3 percent of those born in 1900 to 1904 reported that they were divorced by the time they were 25 to 29 years of age. For women, the corresponding numbers are 17 percent of those born in 1945 to 1949 as compared with 5 percent of those born in 1900 to 1904. About half of the 45-year increase occurred during the last 15 years.

The median age at divorce after first marriage has declined. Half of the married men born in 1900 to 1904 who became divorced after their marriage did so by the age of 37 years (table K). The corresponding age for men born 30 years later, in 1930 to 1934, was 6 years younger, 31 years. Among women, there was some evidence of a decline in median age at divorce (from 33 years to 29 years). However, it should be understood that the divorce experience of the younger cohort is much less complete; consequently, the indicated decline in age at first divorce is probably somewhat greater than the amount that will be observed for these birth cohorts after another decade or two.

Table L shows that the median ages at divorce after first marriage do not differ very much between Black married persons and White married persons for all birth cohorts combined. For Black women, the median age at divorce after first marriage appears to be slightly lower than that for White women.

Divorced persons are remarrying at younger ages. Just as an increasing proportion of married persons are ending their first marriage in divorce at relatively young ages, so also are an increasing proportion of divorced persons remarrying at relatively young ages. Thus, tables M and 2 show that the proportion of divorced persons who had remarried by their early thirties was twice as large among those in their early forties in 1975 (born in 1930 to 1934) as among those in their early seventies in 1975 (36 percent versus 16 percent for men and 36 versus 19 percent

for women). Similarly, there has been an increase among those who had remarried in their late twenties; for this group, the proportion who had remarried after divorce also doubled during the last 15 years (from 20 to 58 percent for men and from 23 to 55 percent for women).

Consequently, the median age at remarriage has dropped sharply. Because of the incomplete remarriage experience of the younger cohorts and because of the continuing increments of divorce (particularly among men) above 45 years of age, some caution is needed in the interpretation of the apparently large change in the median age at remarriage shown in table M. As these increments are added during future years, the difference shown between the two oldest cohorts in the median age at remarriage among once-divorced men (a difference which should be qualified as being statistically significant only at the 1.6 sigma level) may narrow somewhat by the time those born in 1915 to 1919 have become as old as those born in 1900 to 1904. However, most of the difference is likely to persist. The corresponding drop among women is from 41 years to 35 years and is also subject to narrowing over the next 15 years. The two youngest cohorts are likely to show further declines in the median age at remarriage as they reach the ages of those in the oldest cohorts.

Half of the redivorces have occurred by age 41 for men and 38 for women. This generalization is based on data in table L for the combined totals for all adults covered in the study. Tables N and 4 present the first statistics published by the Bureau of the Census on the cumulative proportion of twice-married persons whose second marriage ended in redivorce (divorce after the second as well as the first marriage) by a given age. Although the proportions of persons who were reported as having been redivorced are relatively small (and possibly underreported) as compared with those shown in table K for persons who were divorced once, the pattern of increase in the proportions redivorced by a given age for women is most impressive. For example, 11.2 percent of the remarried women born in 1930 to 1944 reported that they had been redivorced by the age of 45 to 49 years as compared with only 4.1 percent for those who had been of the same age 30 years earlier.

**Table K. Percent of Persons Ever Married Whose First Marriage Ended in Divorce by Specified Age, for Persons of Selected Years of Birth by Sex: June 1975**

Age at divorce after first marriage	Men ever married born in--				Women ever married born in--			
	1945 to 1949	1930 to 1934	1915 to 1919	1900 to 1904	1945 to 1949	1930 to 1934	1915 to 1919	1900 to 1904
Cumulative percent of persons whose first marriage ended in divorce by age--								
14 to 19 years.....	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.2	1.5	1.3	1.2	0.5
20 to 24 years.....	6.8	3.1	1.5	1.2	10.4	5.6	3.8	2.9
25 to 29 years.....	13.0	8.2	5.5	3.1	17.0	10.6	7.1	5.2
30 to 34 years.....	13.1	12.2	9.0	5.8	17.1	14.5	10.4	7.0
35 to 39 years.....	(X)	16.0	11.8	7.6	(X)	18.2	12.3	9.2
40 to 44 years.....	(X)	18.4	14.2	9.5	(X)	20.5	13.9	10.5
45 to 49 years.....	(X)	18.4	15.8	11.3	(X)	20.6	15.2	11.6
50 to 54 years.....	(X)	(X)	16.8	12.2	(X)	(X)	16.1	12.2
55 to 75 years.....	(X)	(X)	17.4	13.3	(X)	(X)	16.4	12.8
Median age at divorce.....	24.3	30.7	34.0	36.8	23.5	29.2	31.2	32.8

X Not applicable.



**Table L. Median Age at Divorce, Remarriage, and Redivorce for Persons Born Between 1900 and 1959  
by Year of Birth, Sex, and Race: June 1975**

Year of birth	Median age at divorce after first marriage (years)						Median age at remarriage after first marriage ended in divorce		Median age at redivorce for persons married twice	
	Men			Women			Men	Women	Men	Women
	Total	White	Black	Total	White	Black				
1900 to 1959...	29.1	29.2	28.9	27.0	27.0	26.4	32.8	29.4	41.3	37.5
1955 to 1959.....	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
1950 to 1954.....	21.7	21.7	(B)	21.4	21.4	(B)	22.0	21.9	(B)	(B)
1945 to 1949.....	24.3	24.4	23.6	23.5	23.5	23.4	25.9	25.1	(B)	(B)
1940 to 1944.....	26.4	26.4	26.7	25.5	25.4	26.2	28.5	26.7	(B)	30.5
1935 to 1939.....	29.0	28.9	29.4	27.4	27.5	26.8	31.5	29.8	(B)	(B)
1930 to 1934.....	30.7	30.6	31.4	29.2	29.4	28.5	33.7	31.8	(B)	37.9
1925 to 1929.....	31.8	32.3	29.2	29.9	30.2	28.3	36.1	31.9	(B)	41.1
1920 to 1924.....	32.2	32.2	31.0	29.4	29.9	26.6	36.5	32.5	(B)	(B)
1915 to 1919.....	34.0	34.1	33.8	31.2	31.4	29.9	38.0	35.3	(B)	(B)
1910 to 1914.....	35.5	35.9	(B)	31.2	31.7	27.9	39.6	34.9	(B)	(B)
1905 to 1909.....	34.6	35.0	32.2	32.4	33.1	27.3	38.8	38.2	(B)	(B)
1900 to 1904.....	36.8	36.6	(B)	32.8	33.3	(B)	44.1	40.6	(B)	(B)

B Base less than 75,000.

**Table M. Percent of Persons Who Remarried by Specified Age After Their First Marriage Ended in Divorce,  
for Persons of Selected Years of Birth by Sex: June 1975**

Age at second marriage after first marriage ended in divorce	Men divorced after first marriage born in--				Women divorced after first marriage born in--			
	1945 to 1949	1930 to 1934	1915 to 1919	1900 to 1904	1945 to 1949	1930 to 1934	1915 to 1919	1900 to 1904
Cumulative percent of persons who entered second marriage by age--								
14 to 19 years.....	0.4	-	-	-	2.3	1.6	1.1	0.8
20 to 24 years.....	18.6	3.9	1.8	0.7	24.3	9.7	5.1	3.2
25 to 29 years.....	57.9	20.0	9.6	6.9	55.3	22.9	16.7	11.0
30 to 34 years.....	58.7	36.4	25.0	15.9	56.1	36.4	28.5	18.5
35 to 39 years.....	(X)	55.2	39.6	29.8	(X)	49.2	37.9	28.0
40 to 44 years.....	(X)	67.2	48.5	39.4	(X)	57.8	47.4	38.4
45 to 49 years.....	(X)	67.4	56.3	52.2	(X)	57.8	53.5	46.5
50 to 54 years.....	(X)	(X)	66.0	61.9	(X)	(X)	58.5	53.8
55 to 59 years.....	(X)	(X)	70.8	65.1	(X)	(X)	60.0	55.9
60 to 65 years.....	(X)	(X)	70.8	77.2	(X)	(X)	60.0	60.0
Median age at remarriage.....	25.9	33.7	38.0	44.1	25.1	31.8	35.3	40.6

- Represents zero.

X Not applicable.

**Table N. Percent of Persons Married Twice Whose Second Marriage Ended in Redivorce by Specified Age, by Year of Birth and Sex: June 1975**

Age at redivorce after second marriage	Men married twice born in--				Women married twice born in--			
	1945 to 1959	1930 to 1944	1915 to 1929	1900 to 1914	1945 to 1959	1930 to 1944	1915 to 1929	1900 to 1914
Cumulative percent of persons whose second marriage ended in redivorce by age--								
14 to 19 years.....	(B)	-	-	(B)	(Z)	0.2	-	-
20 to 24 years.....	(B)	0.1	0.3	(B)	2.2	0.4	-	-
25 to 29 years.....	(B)	0.9	0.3	(B)	7.1	2.6	0.5	-
30 to 34 years.....	(B)	2.6	0.7	(B)	7.4	6.4	0.8	0.3
35 to 39 years.....	(X)	4.8	1.8	(B)	(X)	9.8	3.1	1.5
40 to 44 years.....	(X)	6.0	3.3	(B)	(X)	11.2	6.8	2.8
45 to 49 years.....	(X)	6.1	5.0	(B)	(X)	11.2	10.0	4.1
50 to 54 years.....	(X)	(X)	7.0	(B)	(X)	(X)	10.8	5.5
55 to 59 years.....	(X)	(X)	8.1	(B)	(X)	(X)	11.3	6.5
60 to 64 years.....	(X)	(X)	8.2	(B)	(X)	(X)	11.3	7.3
65 to 75 years.....	(X)	(X)	(X)	(B)	(X)	(X)	(X)	8.2
Median age at redivorce.....	(B)	35.6	46.7	(B)	26.2	33.4	42.9	49.7

- Represents zero.

B Base less than 75,000.

X Not applicable.

Z Less than 0.05 percent.

The median age at redivorce for twice-married women born in 1900 to 1914 was 50 years. The corresponding median for the next younger group was 43 years. There is only some evidence of a difference between these medians because they are based on relatively small numbers of sample cases, but they probably indicate correctly the existence of a pattern of more redivorce at earlier ages.

### INTERVALS BETWEEN MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE, AND REDIVORCE

Most typical interval is 2 or 3 years from marriage to divorce. The data shown in table O (based on table 5) give some evidence that more persons 25 to 75 years old in 1975 had ended their first marriage in divorce after they had been married at least 2 years but before they had been married 4 years than during any other 2-year period. These persons are shown as having been in their first marriage 2 or 3 years before they became divorced. However, only about 18 percent of the divorces reported by men occurred within 2 or 3 years after first marriage and about 16 percent of those reported by women.

About one-half of the divorces after first marriage occurred between 1 year and 7 years after marriage for both men (53 percent) and women (49 percent), according to the June 1975 study. About the same proportion of men and women, 15 percent of the men and 16 percent of the women, obtained a divorce 10 to 14 years after first marriage, these findings imply that only about 3 or 4 percent became divorced in their 10th year as compared with about 5 percent in their 9th year.

In other words, after the peak years for divorce have been passed, the proportion of divorces that occur after successive durations of marriage gradually diminish. Thus, there is no evidence from the 1975 survey (or any other known source) that implies an increase in divorce "after the children have grown up." That phase of the life cycle of the family is reached at quite varied lengths of time after marriage.

Close to one-half of remarriages occur in 3 years after divorce. Among persons 25 to 75 years old in 1975 whose first marriage had ended in divorce, close to one-half of those who remarried did so within three years after the divorce. A diminishing proportion of persons remarried at successively longer periods of time than 2 years after the first marriage had ended in divorce.

Likewise, the first 3 years after the second marriage (following divorce) were the "modal" or "most typical" intervals between remarriage and redivorce. About one-third of all redivoces after second marriage occurred after less than 1 year, 1 year, or 2 years. Again, a diminishing proportion of persons became redivorced at successively longer periods of time than 2 years after second marriage.

Seven years is the median interval between marriage and divorce. For all married persons 25 to 75 years old as a whole, the median interval between first marriage and divorce after first marriage was about 7 years for both men and women, according to the findings from the 1975 survey reported in table Q. Approximately the same median length of the interval between marriage and divorce has been reported for several years in the annual volumes of vital statistics published by the National Center for Health Statistics on the basis of national divorce records without any distinction

between first divorces and other divorces. By the time the divorce experience for those born in 1940 to 1949 has been completed, their median age at first divorce will surely rise from their current levels (table P) to levels considerably closer to 7 years.

The differences by ethnic groups shown in table Q are very small for all birth cohorts as a whole but imply that the older cohorts of Black persons ended their first marriage in divorce somewhat sooner than white persons of corresponding birth cohorts.

Three years is the median interval between divorce and remarriage. Again, the direction of change in the interval between

divorce after first marriage and entry into second marriage (for those who remarry) has been toward a shorter average number of years. Tables R and 5 show that the oldest cohort had a median interval of about 6 years for men and 7 years for women (not a statistically significant difference) between divorce and remarriage, but the same source also shows that this interval for both sexes combined had gone down to 4 years for those 20 years younger. However, a very large proportion of remarriages among all persons under 75 were reported by persons who were born during the more recent decades when the age at remarriage has been falling; therefore, the overall median interval between first divorce and remarriage is relatively short, namely, 3 years for both men and women, according to table S. Black persons reported longer intervals between divorce and remarriage than did White persons.

**Table O. Interval Between First Marriage and Divorce, Between Divorce After First Marriage and Second Marriage, and Between Second Marriage and Redivorce, for Persons Born Between 1900 and 1949 by Sex: June 1975**

(Numbers in thousands)

Number of years in the interval	Both sexes: years between--			Men: years between--			Women: years between--		
	First marriage and divorce	Divorce and second marriage	Second marriage and redivorce	First marriage and divorce	Divorce and second marriage	Second marriage and redivorce	First marriage and divorce	Divorce and second marriage	Second marriage and redivorce
Total <sup>1</sup> .....	17,619	11,230	965	7,947	5,433	370	9,672	5,797	595
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 5 years.....	36.9	66.5	48.6	38.3	67.6	50.0	35.7	65.4	47.7
Less than 1 year.....	4.9	16.4	9.8	4.9	16.5	9.7	5.0	16.2	9.9
1 year.....	7.5	17.4	14.3	7.7	17.2	13.2	7.2	17.6	15.0
2 years.....	8.8	14.1	10.5	9.2	14.7	12.2	8.3	13.5	9.4
3 years.....	8.4	10.8	7.4	9.2	11.0	8.4	7.7	10.7	6.7
4 years.....	7.4	7.8	6.6	7.3	8.3	6.5	7.4	7.4	6.7
5 to 9 years.....	28.4	21.3	25.0	29.2	21.6	27.8	27.6	21.0	23.2
5 years.....	7.1	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	7.5	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	6.8	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
6 years.....	6.1	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	6.2	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	6.0	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
7 years.....	5.7	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	5.9	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	5.5	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
8 years.....	4.7	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	4.9	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	4.5	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
9 years.....	4.8	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	4.9	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	4.8	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
10 to 14 years.....	15.4	8.0	14.4	14.8	7.3	13.0	15.8	8.7	15.3
15 to 61 years.....	19.4	4.2	12.3	17.6	3.4	9.2	20.9	4.9	14.3
15 to 19 years.....	9.2	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	8.9	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	9.5	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
20 to 24 years.....	5.9	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	5.1	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	6.6	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
25 to 29 years.....	2.7	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	2.1	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	3.1	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
30 to 34 years.....	1.0	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	1.0	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	1.0	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
35 to 39 years.....	0.4	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	0.3	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	0.4	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
40 to 61 years.....	0.2	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	0.1	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	0.2	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
Median interval.....(years)..	7.0	3.2	5.3	6.7	3.1	5.0	7.3	3.2	5.5

<sup>1</sup>The bases used in computing the percent distributions are as follows:

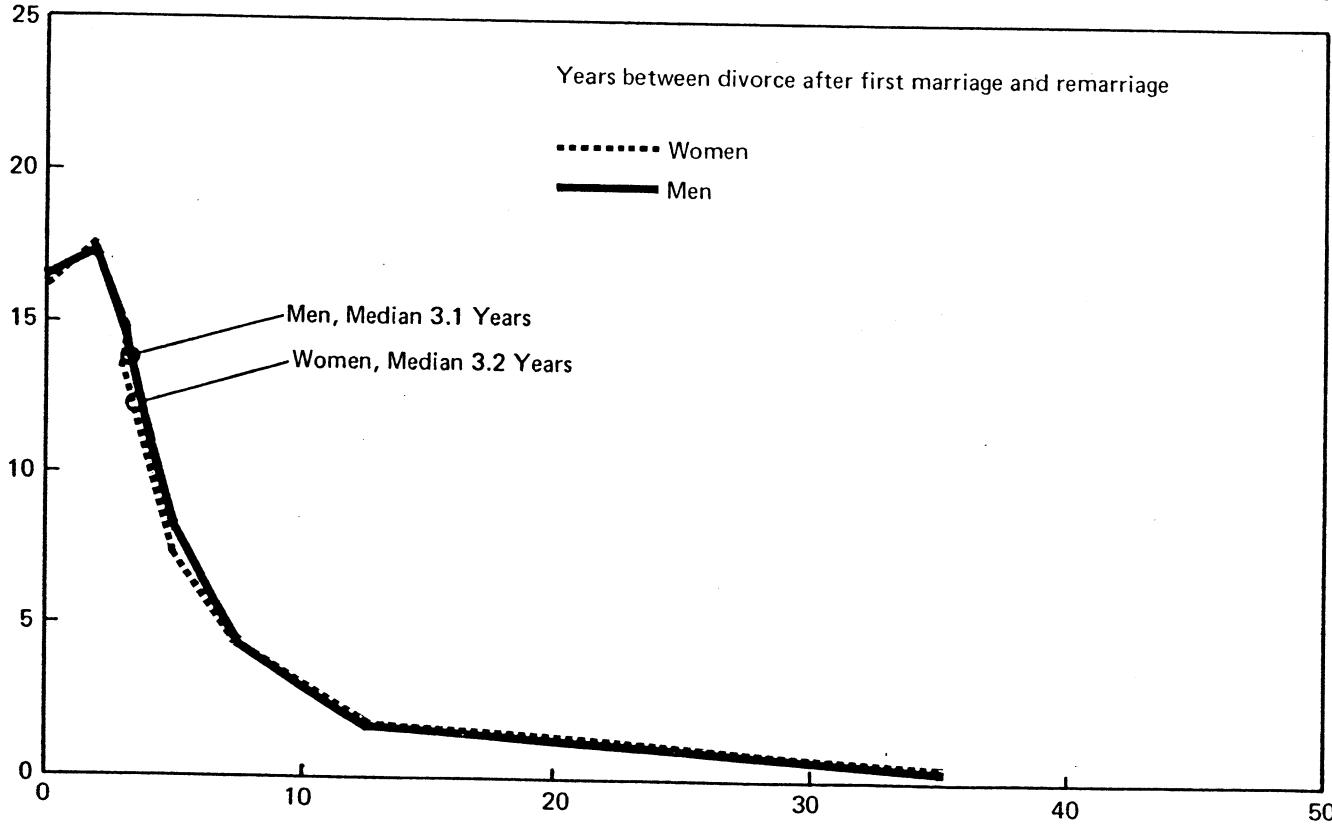
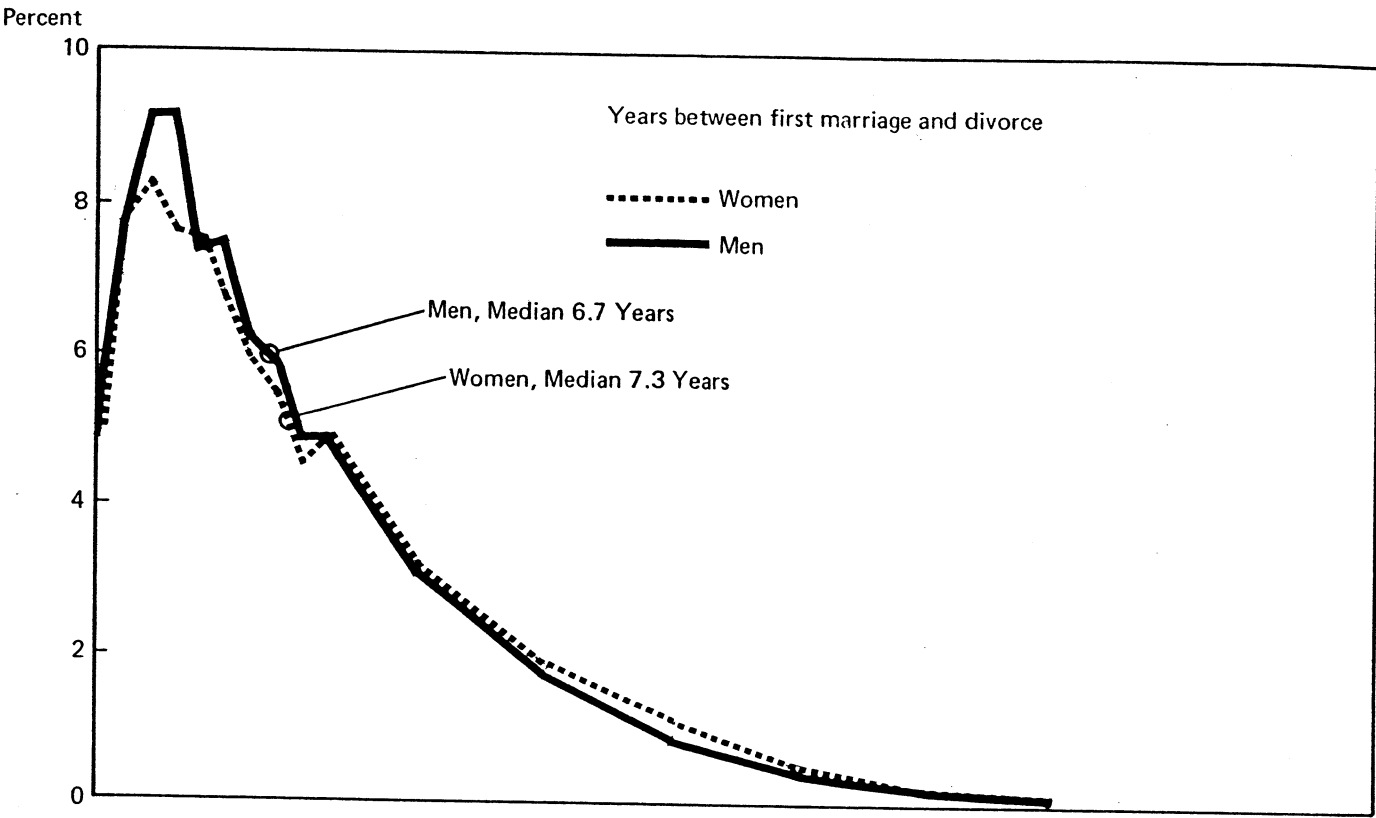
Interval between first marriage and end of first marriage in divorce: persons whose first marriage ended in divorce.

Interval between divorce after first marriage and second marriage: persons who remarried after their first marriage ended in divorce.

Interval between second marriage and redivorce: persons married twice whose second marriage, as well as their first marriage, ended in divorce.

<sup>2</sup>This detail was not tabulated.

Figure 3. Intervals Between First Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage For Men and Women Under 75 Years Old in 1975



Source: Table O.

Interval between marital events (years)

**Table P. Percent of Persons Ever Married Whose First Marriage Ended in Divorce After a Specified Number of Years, for Persons of Selected Years of Birth by Sex: June 1975**

Interval between first marriage and divorce	Men ever married born in--			Women ever married born in--		
	1940 to 1949	1920 to 1929	1900 to 1909	1940 to 1949	1920 to 1929	1900 to 1909
Cumulative percent of persons whose first marriage ended in divorce after--						
Less than 1 year.....	1.2	0.7	0.5	1.0	1.0	0.6
1 year.....	3.3	1.8	1.3	2.9	2.3	1.2
2 years.....	5.6	3.3	2.2	5.4	3.6	1.8
3 years.....	7.8	4.8	3.1	7.5	4.9	2.6
4 years.....	9.6	5.9	3.8	9.5	6.1	3.4
5 years.....	11.4	6.8	4.6	11.1	7.3	4.1
6 years.....	12.3	7.9	5.0	12.8	8.3	4.7
7 years.....	13.2	8.9	5.7	14.2	9.3	5.3
8 years.....	13.7	9.8	6.5	15.3	9.9	5.9
9 years.....	14.1	10.8	7.3	16.2	10.6	6.5
10 to 14 years.....	14.8	13.8	9.9	18.2	13.6	9.0
15 to 19 years.....	14.9	16.0	11.3	18.4	15.7	10.8
20 to 24 years.....	14.9	17.5	12.6	18.4	18.0	12.3
25 to 29 years.....	(X)	18.1	13.4	(X)	19.3	13.2
30 to 34 years.....	(X)	18.2	13.9	(X)	19.5	13.6
35 to 39 years.....	(X)	18.2	14.1	(X)	19.5	13.8
40 years or more.....	(X)	(X)	14.2	(X)	(X)	14.0
Median interval.....(years)..	3.8	8.2	9.8	4.9	8.7	11.0

X. Not applicable.

**Table Q. Median Interval Between First Marriage and End of First Marriage in Divorce For Persons Born Between 1900 and 1949 by Year of Birth, Sex, Race, and Spanish Origin: June 1975**

Year of birth	Median interval between first marriage and end of first marriage in divorce (years)							
	Men				Women			
	Total	White	Black	Spanish origin <sup>1</sup>	Total	White	Black	Spanish origin <sup>1</sup>
1900 to 1949.....	6.7	6.9	6.1	6.5	7.3	7.4	6.6	6.9
1940 to 1949.....	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.6	4.9	4.8	5.4	4.5
1930 to 1939.....	7.0	7.1	6.5	7.4	8.0	8.1	7.7	7.3
1920 to 1929.....	8.2	8.5	6.7	(B)	8.7	9.2	6.6	8.5
1910 to 1919.....	9.8	10.2	8.3	(B)	9.8	10.3	7.4	(B)
1900 to 1909.....	9.8	10.5	6.6	(B)	11.0	11.5	7.8	(B)

B Base less than 75,000.

<sup>1</sup>Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.

Since 3 years is the average length of time between divorce and remarriage, it is noteworthy that the trend toward earlier marriage and earlier divorce has been associated over a 40-year period with an approximate doubling of the proportion of divorced persons who entered remarriage within 3 years, according to table R. Thus, only 28 percent of the divorced men born in 1900 to 1909 reported that they had remarried within 3 years, whereas 52 percent of those born in 1940 to 1949 remarried within 3 years. For women, the comparable increase was from 21 percent to 46 percent.

Redivorce occurs after fewer years of marriage than first divorce. Although persons whose first marriage ended in divorce had a median interval of 7 years between marriage and divorce (table Q), persons whose second marriage ended in a second divorce had a somewhat shorter median interval between second marriage and redivorce (table S). Thus, as shown earlier in table O, for men the median interval from second marriage to redivorce was 5.0 years, and for women it was about the same, 5.5 years.

These findings are consistent with the proposition that persons in second marriages tend to have a somewhat greater propensity to eventual divorce than those in first marriages as well as a somewhat shorter period of marriage the second time than the first time.

Table T presents further detail on how soon twice-married persons have ended their marriage in redivorce, for those who have done so. Although changes over time in the recorded proportion of redivorges that had occurred after a given number of years of remarriage were somewhat erratic (perhaps because of the small number of redivorced persons reported in the sample), the observed changes tend to conform to those shown in other tables, in the sense that successive marital events have been occurring after shorter intervals during recent decades than during earlier decades.

**Table R. Percent of Persons Who Remarried a Specified Number of Years After Their First Marriage Ended in Divorce, For Persons of Selected Years of Birth by Sex: June 1975**

Interval between divorce after first marriage and remarriage	Total divorced after first marriage born in--			Men divorced after first marriage born in--			Women divorced after first marriage born in--		
	1940 to 1949	1920 to 1929	1900 to 1909	1940 to 1949	1920 to 1929	1900 to 1909	1940 to 1949	1920 to 1929	1900 to 1909
Cumulative percent of persons who entered second marriage after--									
Less than 1 year.....	16.5	8.4	5.6	17.8	8.9	6.0	15.6	8.0	5.2
1 year.....	30.9	18.0	12.2	32.7	19.0	12.8	29.5	17.1	11.7
2 years.....	41.6	26.9	18.3	44.0	29.4	21.1	40.0	24.7	16.1
3 years.....	48.8	34.1	24.2	52.2	37.4	27.9	46.4	31.2	21.3
4 years.....	53.3	39.3	28.9	57.0	43.3	32.9	50.6	35.9	25.8
5 to 9 years.....	59.6	55.6	46.0	63.6	60.9	51.2	56.7	51.0	41.9
10 to 14 years.....	59.8	62.0	56.7	63.9	67.1	62.2	56.8	57.6	52.4
15 years or more.....	59.9	64.8	66.6	63.9	69.2	71.2	57.0	61.0	62.9
Median interval.....(years)..	1.9	3.8	6.3	1.9	3.6	5.7	1.9	3.9	6.8

**Table S. Median Interval Between Divorce After First Marriage and Start of Second Marriage, for Persons Born Between 1900 and 1949 by Year of Birth, Sex, and Race: June 1975**

Year of birth	Median interval between divorce after first marriage and start of second marriage								
	Both sexes			Men			Women		
	Total	White	Black	Total	White	Black	Total	White	Black
1900 to 1949.....	3.2	3.0	5.0	3.1	3.0	4.5	3.2	3.0	5.7
1940 to 1949.....	1.9	1.9	2.7	1.9	1.9	2.9	1.9	1.9	2.7
1930 to 1939.....	2.9	2.7	4.9	2.8	2.6	4.8	3.0	2.8	5.0
1920 to 1929.....	3.8	3.6	4.9	3.6	3.5	4.6	3.9	3.7	5.6
1910 to 1919.....	4.7	4.4	6.9	4.4	4.3	5.0	5.3	4.6	7.6
1900 to 1909.....	6.3	5.9	8.6	5.7	5.3	8.6	6.8	6.4	8.7

**Table T. Percent of Persons Married Twice Whose Second Marriage Ended in Redivorce After a Specified Number of Years, for Persons of Selected Years of Birth by Sex: June 1975**

Interval between second marriage and redivorce	Men married twice born in--			Women married twice born in--		
	1930 to 1949	1920 to 1929	1900 to 1919	1930 to 1949	1920 to 1929	1900 to 1919
Cumulative percent of persons whose second marriage ended in redivorce after--						
Less than 1 year.....	0.6	0.9	0.5	1.3	0.4	0.9
1 year.....	2.0	1.7	0.8	3.4	1.4	2.1
2 years.....	2.9	2.3	1.7	4.5	2.0	3.1
3 years.....	3.6	2.7	2.2	5.5	2.4	3.6
4 years.....	4.1	3.2	2.5	6.3	3.0	4.0
5 to 9 years.....	5.5	6.0	4.4	8.5	6.2	6.1
10 to 14 years.....	5.7	7.1	6.1	9.7	8.8	7.3
15 years or more.....	5.9	7.7	7.5	10.4	11.2	9.5
Median interval..... (years) ..	3.1	6.2	8.3	3.7	9.1	6.5

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

One of the basic demographic changes documented above is the increasing proportion of persons, especially women, who have been delaying entry into marriage. This development has occurred since 1960 while 5 to 10 percent more women than men were in the main ages for first marriage and while the outlook of young adults was being affected by several other social and economic changes: Millions of young men had their education and early employment interrupted by service in the Vietnam Conflict; millions of additional persons, and especially more women, were continuing their education at the college level; the birth rate was falling sharply as more women, both single and married, were active in the labor market; but all too many of those born during the high-birth-rate years after World War II were having difficulty finding jobs during the last few years. Just as the impact of many of these changing social and economic conditions may be expected to subside over the next few years, so also should the excess of women of the main ages for marriage be gradually disappearing.

Another basic demographic change documented above is a general tendency for the average length of time between marital events to become shorter. Evidently social pressures are deterring fewer and fewer couples from obtaining a divorce and establishing new families with different marital partners. The most recent survey still shows that about four of every five persons of middle age whose first marriage ended in divorce have eventually remarried. Perhaps even more of them would remarry if they "met the right person," although presumably some would "never try again." On the one hand, as the intervals between nuptial events become shorter, more adults are experiencing successive marital

transitions before they become "too old to remarry." On the other hand, there is some evidence of a recent decline in the remarriage rate for divorced and widowed persons under 55 years old.<sup>6</sup>

Students of demographic changes that affect marital behavior will be watching to see whether a trend will develop for more of those who have been postponing marriage to be marrying late rather than never. They will also be watching to see whether the slackening of the increase in the divorce rate that has begun will develop into a decline or at least a general stabilization of the level of divorce and remarriage.

### RELATED REPORTS

Data for earlier years on "marital history" were presented in *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 239, "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage by Year of Birth: June 1971." Two other reports, based on marital history questions asked in the 1967 Survey of Economic Opportunity, were published as Series P-23, No. 32, "Probabilities of Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage," and Series P-20, No. 223, "Social and Economic Variations in Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage: 1967."

<sup>6</sup> Arthur J. Norton and Paul C. Glick, "Marital Instability: Past, Present, and Future," *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 1976, table 1 and figure 1; also, Hugh Carter and Paul C. Glick, *Marriage and Divorce: A Social and Economic Study*, revised edition, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976, table 13.7 and figure 13.1.