

**VITAL and HEALTH STATISTICS**  
DATA FROM THE NATIONAL VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEM

# Divorce Statistics Analysis

## United States - 1963

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An analysis of national divorce data for 1963 and of the likelihood of divorce for various categories of the population, with special discussion of family dissolution due to death, of migratory divorces, and of multiple legal grounds for decree.

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Washington, D. C.

October 1967

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
John W. Gardner  
Secretary

Public Health Service  
William H. Stewart  
Surgeon General



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### 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 is an analytical study of the 1963 divorce and annulment statistics for the United States. Detailed data on divorces and annulments classified by demographic and legal variables are limited to the 22 States that participated in 1963 in the divorce-registration area (DRA).*

*The divorce rate for the United States is higher than that for any other nation that reports this information to the Statistical Office of the United Nations.*

*The divorce rate was below the national average in 25 States, most of which are located on the Atlantic Coast and in the northern part of the North Central Region. It is estimated that only about 1 divorce in 20 is granted annually to persons who move to another State temporarily for the sole purpose of getting divorced.*

*Data received from 22 States participating in the divorce-registration area indicate that young persons and persons who were remarried have an above-average likelihood of divorce. It was also estimated that the likelihood of divorce declines with increasing duration of marriage.*

*The median duration of marriage at time of decree was 7.5 years in 1963. There are indications that the duration has increased slightly during the 1954-63 decade.*

*Couples divorced in the United States reported an estimated 583,000 children under 18 years of age. This represents 1.36 children per decree, or 8.5 per 1,000 children in the Nation. The number of children increased much more rapidly than the number of decrees: in 1953 there were only 0.85 children per decree.*

*The great majority of divorce decrees were granted on grounds of cruelty, desertion, nonsupport, and indignities. About 20,000 decrees were granted on two grounds or more—the most widely used combination was cruelty and nonsupport.*

# DIVORCE STATISTICS ANALYSIS

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## INTRODUCTION

### Family Formation and Dissolution

During the year 1963, 428,000 divorces and annulments were granted in the United States (2.3 per 1,000 total population, or 9.6 per 1,000 married women 15 years of age and over). Because some families were disrupted by the death of one spouse, these figures represent only a part of all family dissolutions that took place

during the year. The total number of all family dissolutions due to death was 850,112 in 1963—597,814 by the death of the husband and 252,298 by the death of the wife (table A). Thus out of a total of 1,278,112 family dissolutions that occurred in 1963, 46.8 percent were due to the death of the husband, 33.5 percent to a judicial decree, and 19.7 percent to the death of the wife.

As shown in figure 1, the total number of family dissolutions during 1963 (1,278,112) was smaller than that of new families established

Table A. Family formation and dissolution: United States, 1940, 1949-51, and 1959-63

[Data refer only to events occurring within the United States. Data on international migration are not included. Deaths of married persons include numbers published in sources listed in the appendix that have been adjusted by distributing proportionally the deaths of persons with marital status not stated]

Year of occurrence	Marriages	Family dissolution				Divorces and annulments	Net increase in married couples
		Total	Deaths of married persons				
			All deaths	Husbands	Wives		
1963-----	1,654,000	1,278,112	850,112	597,814	252,298	428,000	375,888
1962-----	1,577,000	1,235,099	822,099	576,277	245,822	413,000	341,901
1961-----	1,548,000	1,210,533	796,533	559,038	237,495	414,000	337,467
1960-----	1,523,000	1,190,769	797,769	558,801	238,968	393,000	332,231
1959-----	1,494,000	1,164,218	769,218	536,671	232,547	395,000	329,782
1951-----	1,594,694	1,066,800	685,800	464,105	221,695	381,000	527,894
1950-----	1,667,231	1,058,615	673,471	453,656	219,815	385,144	608,616
1949-----	1,579,798	1,059,987	662,987	443,573	219,414	397,000	519,811
1940-----	1,595,879	900,465	636,465	406,240	230,225	264,000	695,414



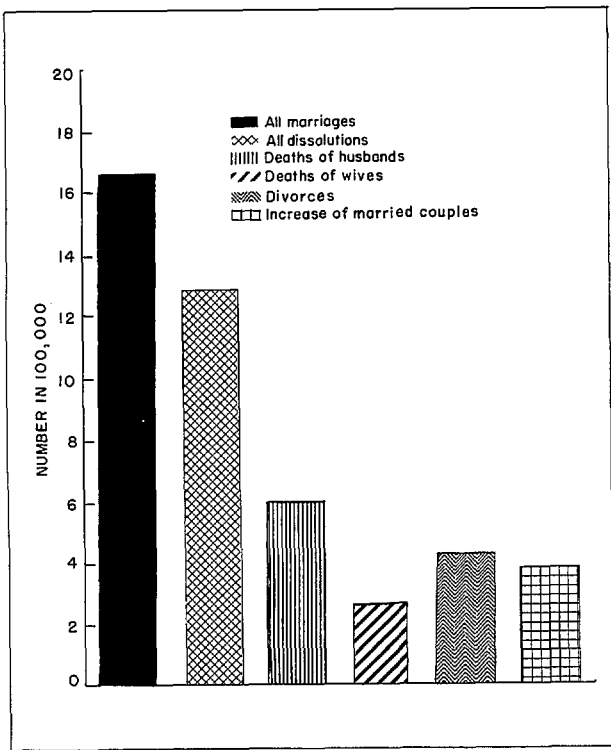


Figure 1. Family formation and dissolution.

during the same period of time (1,654,000). This represents an increase of 375,888 in the total number of married couples. These figures are limited to family formation and dissolution that occurred within the United States and do not include couples that migrated to the United States; hence, the total increase in married couples was larger than 375,888.

Data in table 1 indicate a tendency of marriage dissolutions to grow and for the net increase of married couples to decline. In 1940 the net increase in the number of married couples amounted to 43.6 percent of all marriages performed during the year; by 1950 it was 36.5, and by 1960 it was only 21.8 (about one-half of the percentage observed for 1940). Inasmuch as data on deaths of married persons are not available for 1941-48, deaths of married men in World War II and the tremendous increases and subsequent declines of marriages and divorces during the postwar years are not included in the comparison shown in table 1, and therefore this table does not give a complete picture of the trend during the 1940's.

A more realistic view is shown by comparisons of data for 1949-51 with those for 1961-63. During the intervening period, because of the increasing proportion of older people, there was an increase in marriage disruptions, with a higher rate due to deaths than to divorce. Between the two 3-year periods, the net increase of married couples declined 36.3 percent while the total number of marriages performed changed little.

### The Marriage-Divorce Ratio

The ratio of current divorces to current marriages, approximately one divorce granted per four marriages performed, is often interpreted to mean that one couple in four will eventually get divorced. This interpretation is misleading for several reasons, and the same can be said about ratios of other types of family dissolution to current marriages.

The overwhelming majority of divorces and deaths that took place in 1963 occurred to persons married not during that year but during various past years. Therefore, the number of dissolutions should not be compared with the number of couples married during the year but with the total population at risk—namely, to the total population of married couples. The number of family dissolutions depends on the composition of the married population by age, by duration of marriage, and by other characteristics. Divorces occur mostly to young persons after a short period of married life and, on the other hand, deaths occur mostly to much older persons after many years of marriage. The composition of the population married during the year is quite different from that of the total married population, and the former cannot be used for the purpose of making probability statements about the latter.

Another argument against the use of ratios for forecasting the population to be divorced is based on the fact that the number of marriages is larger than the number of marriage dissolutions, as shown in the preceding section. If the ratio of divorces to marriages performed during the same year (0.26 in 1963) were interpreted to mean that 26 percent of all married couples would eventually divorce, the ratio of deaths of married persons to marriages (0.51) would be

interpreted to mean that 51 percent of all married unions would eventually be dissolved by death. The sum of the two percentages (77) would then be the proportion of unions that would be disrupted either by death or divorce. Thus, the consistent use of ratios in probability statements would not account for 23 percent of all couples.

### Measures of Family Formation and Dissolution

A set of comparable rates, all based on the same population and presenting a much clearer picture of the incidence of family formation and dissolution than rates computed using different populations, are shown in table B. Inasmuch as

Table B. Rates of family formation and dissolution per 1,000 married men and women: United States, 1963

[Data refer only to events occurring within the United States]

Type of rate	Men	Women
	Rate per 1,000 mar- ried persons	
Marriage rate—rate of gross increase of married population-----	38.0	37.3
Total dissolution rate-----	29.2	28.6
Death rate of married population-----	19.4	19.0
Of husbands-----	13.6	13.3
Of wives-----	5.8	5.7
Divorce rate-----	9.8	9.6
Rate of growth of the married population-----	8.8	8.6

accurate data are not available for the population at risk—the population of all married couples—the estimated numbers of married men and of married women were used as approximations.<sup>1</sup> (National divorce rates per 1,000 married women 15 years and over, which have been computed routinely, are shown in table C for the years 1920 through 1963.)

## TOTALS AND RATES

### The National Divorce Trend

The national divorce total of 428,000 for 1963 was the highest annual number ever observed, except for the years 1945-47 when the post-World War II divorce peak occurred. The 1963 total represents an increase of 3.6 percent over the figure for 1962 and an increase of 8.9 percent over that for 1960. The 1963 divorce rate of 2.3 per 1,000 population was much lower than that for the early postwar years, when the maximum rate of 4.3 was observed in 1946. The 1963 rate is close to the levels observed since 1955.

The trend of the divorce rate since 1867, the first year for which this rate was computed, showed a long-term increase that lasted 80 years, reaching a record peak in 1946. During this period, the rate increased from 0.3 to 4.3 per 1,000 total population. The trend was accelerated by wars and reversed by economic depressions. During the 44 years shown in table C and figure 2, the rate first declined from the slight post-World War I peak, then resumed its upward trend (which was interrupted by the great depression), and almost doubled during the war and early postwar years—from 2.2 in 1941 to 4.3 in 1946. It declined rapidly afterwards, going back to 2.2 in 1957; since then it has remained approximately at the same level. At the present moment it is too early to say whether the slight increases of the rate found in 1961 and 1963 indicate the beginning of a new period of growth, but the provisional estimates of the national divorce totals for 1964 and 1965 (445,000 and 481,000, respectively, or 2.3 and 2.5 per 1,000 population) suggest that the upward trend may have resumed.

The crude divorce rate, computed for the total population, depends in part on the proportion of married persons in the population, as married persons only are subject to the risk of divorce. Therefore the divorce rate per 1,000 married women is a more refined measure of the incidence of divorce (table 3). The divorce rate per 1,000 married women was 9.6 in 1963—slightly higher than the 1962 rate of 9.4, equal to the 1961 rate, and higher than the rates for

Table C. Estimated number of divorces and annulments and rates, with percent changes from preceding year: United States, 1920-63

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

Year	Number	Percent change in number	Rate per 1,000 total population <sup>1</sup>	Percent change in rate	Rate per 1,000 married female population 15+ years <sup>2</sup>	Percent change in rate
1963-----	428,000	+3.6	2.3	+4.5	9.6	+2.1
1962-----	413,000	-0.2	2.2	-4.3	9.4	-2.1
1961-----	414,000	+5.3	2.3	+4.5	9.6	+4.3
1960-----	393,000	-0.5	2.2	-	9.2	-1.1
1959-----	395,000	+7.3	2.2	+4.8	9.3	+4.5
1958-----	368,000	-3.4	2.1	-4.5	8.9	-3.3
1957-----	381,000	-0.3	2.2	-4.3	9.2	-2.1
1956-----	382,000	+1.3	2.3	-	9.4	+1.1
1955-----	377,000	-0.5	2.3	-4.2	9.3	-2.1
1954-----	379,000	-2.8	2.4	-4.0	9.5	-4.0
1953-----	390,000	-0.5	2.5	-	9.9	-2.0
1952-----	392,000	+2.9	2.5	-	10.1	+2.0
1951-----	381,000	-1.1	2.5	-3.8	9.9	-3.9
1950-----	385,144	-3.0	2.6	-3.7	10.3	-2.8
1949-----	397,000	-2.7	2.7	-3.6	10.6	-5.4
1948-----	408,000	-15.5	2.8	-17.6	11.2	-17.6
1947-----	483,000	-20.8	3.4	-20.9	13.6	-24.0
1946-----	610,000	+25.8	4.3	+22.9	17.9	+24.3
1945-----	485,000	+21.3	3.5	+20.7	14.4	+20.0
1944-----	400,000	+11.4	2.9	+11.5	12.0	+9.1
1943-----	359,000	+11.8	2.6	+8.3	11.0	+8.9
1942-----	321,000	+9.6	2.4	+9.1	10.1	+7.4
1941-----	293,000	+11.0	2.2	+10.0	9.4	+6.8
1940-----	264,000	+5.2	2.0	+5.3	8.8	+3.5
1939-----	251,000	+2.9	1.9	-	8.5	+1.2
1938-----	244,000	-2.0	1.9	-	8.4	-3.4
1937-----	249,000	+5.5	1.9	+5.6	8.7	+4.8
1936-----	236,000	+8.3	1.8	+5.9	8.3	+6.4
1935-----	218,000	+6.9	1.7	+6.3	7.8	+4.0
1934-----	204,000	+23.6	1.6	+23.1	7.5	+23.0
1933-----	165,000	+0.6	1.3	-	6.1	-
1932-----	164,241	-12.6	1.3	-13.3	6.1	-14.1
1931-----	188,003	-4.1	1.5	-6.2	7.1	-5.3
1930-----	195,961	-4.8	1.6	-5.9	7.5	-6.2
1929-----	205,876	+2.8	1.7	-	8.0	+2.6
1928-----	200,176	+2.0	1.7	+6.3	7.8	-
1927-----	196,292	+6.3	1.6	-	7.8	+4.0
1926-----	184,678	+5.3	1.6	+6.7	7.5	+4.2
1925-----	175,449	+2.6	1.5	-	7.2	-
1924-----	170,952	+3.5	1.5	-	7.2	+1.4
1923-----	165,096	+10.9	1.5	+7.1	7.1	+7.6
1922-----	148,815	-6.7	1.4	-6.7	6.6	-8.3
1921-----	159,580	-6.4	1.5	-6.2	7.2	-10.0
1920-----	170,505	+20.5	1.6	+23.1	8.0	---

<sup>1</sup>Population enumerated as of April 1 for 1940, 1950, and 1960 and estimated as of July 1 for all other years; includes Armed Forces abroad for 1941-46.

<sup>2</sup>Population enumerated as of January 1 for 1920 and as of April 1 for 1930, 1940, 1950, and 1960 and estimated as of July 1 for all other years.

**DIVORCE RATES: UNITED STATES, 1920-63**

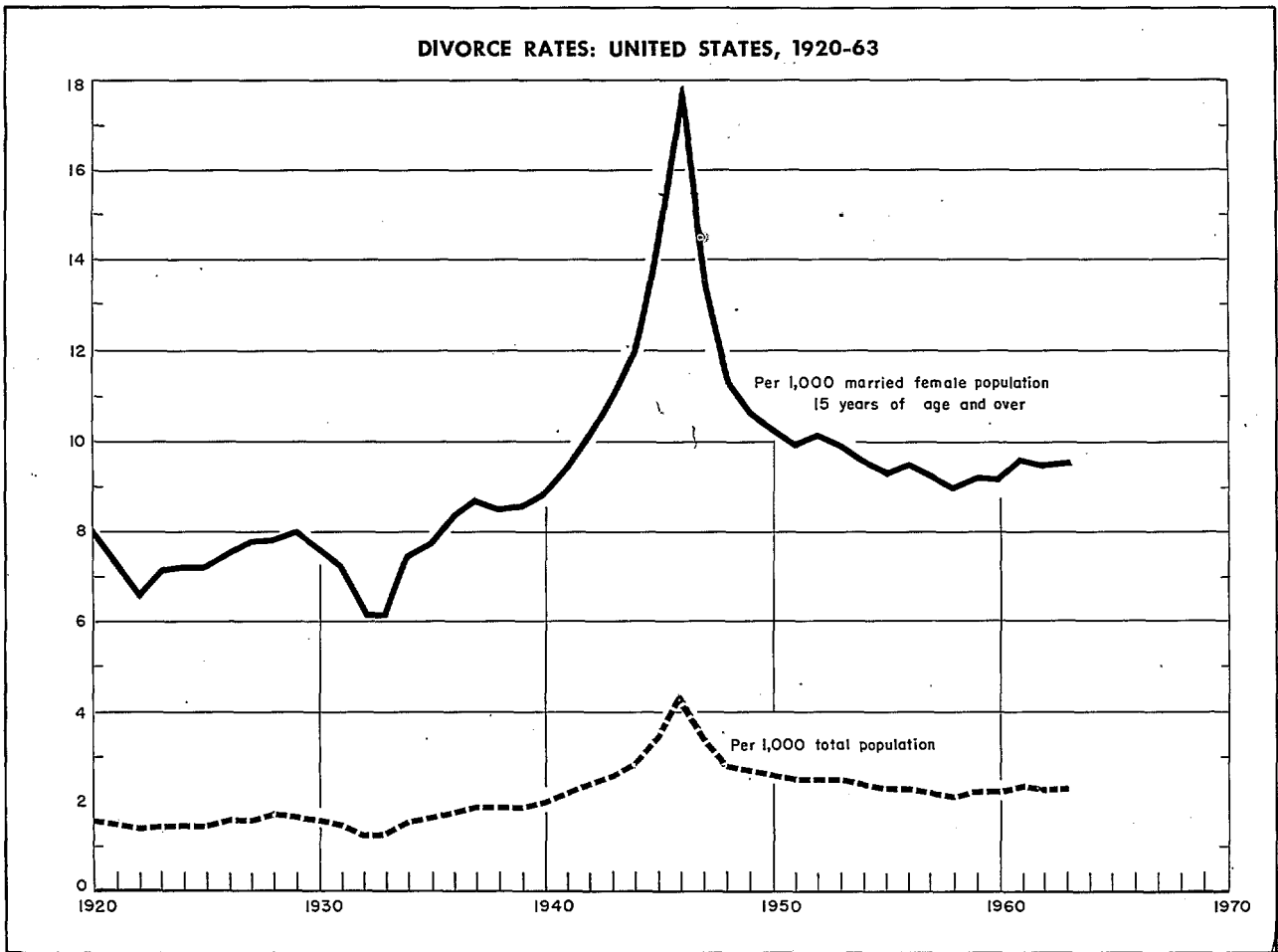


Figure 2. Divorce rates: United States, 1920-63.

all years from 1954 to 1960. These differences indicate that the increase in the number of divorces was partially due to reasons other than the growth of the married population. This statement can also be illustrated by ratios of the population to divorce: in 1963 a divorce was granted to 1 of every 104 married women, in 1962 to 1 of every 106, and in 1960 to 1 of every 109.

Inasmuch as the number of persons divorced is twice the number of divorces granted, 856,000 persons were divorced in 1963. In addition, 583,000 children of divorced couples were involved in divorce cases. This brings the total number of persons involved in divorce to 1,439,000. The involvement rate was 7.6 per 1,000 population. Analogous figures for other years are shown in table D.

Table D. Number of husbands, wives, and children involved in divorce and rates per 1,000 total population, with percent change from preceding year: United States, 1953-63

Year	Total involved	Percent change	Rate
1963-----	1,439,000	+5.6	7.6
1962-----	1,363,000	+2.6	7.3
1961-----	1,329,000	+6.4	7.3
1960-----	1,249,000	-0.7	7.0
1959-----	1,258,000	+10.9	7.1
1958-----	1,134,000	-0.6	6.5
1957-----	1,141,000	+1.4	6.7
1956-----	1,125,000	+2.2	6.7
1955-----	1,101,000	+0.2	6.7
1954-----	1,099,000	-1.0	6.8
1953-----	1,110,000	---	7.0

## International Comparisons

Almost all countries report their annual divorce totals and rates to the Statistical Office of the United Nations, and these data are published annually in the *Demographic Yearbook*. Twelve countries and dependencies whose laws do not provide legal means for the dissolution of legitimate marriages are Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Santa Lucia, and Spain. Some annulments may have been granted in these countries, but they were not reported.

Table E shows the official divorce rates for other selected countries. These were listed according to the level of their latest divorce rate. In 1963 the United States had the highest crude rate among the reporting sovereign countries, but in 1960 and earlier years the rate for the United Arab Republic (Egypt) was highest. Three minor political areas not listed in the table reported higher rates than did the United States. One of them is the Virgin Islands, with a rate of 4.3. The remaining two areas were East Berlin, with a rate of 3.0, and Zanzibar and Pemba, with its latest reported rate of 4.4 for 1957.

Table E. Divorce rates per 1,000 population: United States and selected foreign countries, 1930-63

[Based on the Demographic Yearbook of the United Nations, 1958, 1961, 1964, and 1965]

Country	1963	1960	1955	1950	1945	1940	1935	1930
United States-----	2.27	2.18	2.29	2.55	3.66	2.00	1.71	1.59
United Arab Republic (Egypt) <sup>1</sup> -----	<sup>2</sup> 2.11	2.50	2.39	2.95	3.45	2.44	2.80	---
Romania-----	1.92	2.01	1.80	1.47	0.89	0.59	0.50	0.38
Hungary-----	1.82	1.66	1.63	1.21	0.22	0.50	0.63	0.64
Denmark-----	1.38	1.46	1.53	1.61	1.45	0.91	0.81	0.65
East Germany <sup>3</sup> -----	1.33	1.34	1.35	2.47	---	0.75	0.75	0.63
U.S.S.R.-----	1.3	1.3	---	---	---	---	---	---
Czechoslovakia-----	1.22	1.12	1.05	1.06	0.71	0.61	0.50	0.40
Austria-----	1.14	1.13	1.29	1.52	0.67	0.93	0.11	0.10
Sweden-----	1.12	1.20	1.21	1.14	0.97	0.55	0.44	0.36
West Germany <sup>3</sup> -----	0.84	0.83	0.85	1.57	---	0.75	0.75	0.63
Switzerland-----	0.82	0.87	0.89	0.90	0.84	0.73	0.73	0.67
Japan-----	0.73	0.74	0.85	1.01	---	0.67	0.70	0.79
Australia-----	0.68	0.65	0.73	0.90	0.97	0.46	0.36	0.28
England and Wales----	0.67	0.51	0.59	0.69	0.36	0.18	0.10	0.09
France-----	0.63	0.66	0.67	0.85	0.62	0.28	0.51	0.49
Belgium-----	0.56	0.50	0.50	0.59	0.38	0.22	0.31	0.31
Mexico-----	0.50	0.43	0.41	0.31	0.43	0.22	0.24	0.10
Netherlands-----	0.49	0.49	0.51	0.64	0.50	0.33	0.35	0.36
Scotland-----	0.42	0.35	0.40	0.42	0.43	0.15	0.10	0.10
Canada <sup>4</sup> -----	0.41	0.39	0.38	0.39	0.42	0.21	0.13	0.08
Venezuela-----	0.25	0.25	0.18	0.14	0.15	0.09	0.04	0.01

<sup>1</sup>Beginning with 1955, data include revocable divorces among the Moslem population, which approximate legal separations.

<sup>2</sup>Provisional.

<sup>3</sup>Rates for 1930, 1935, and 1940 refer to Germany as a whole.

<sup>4</sup>Prior to 1950 excludes Newfoundland.

All countries except Egypt and Japan, the only countries with a non-Western cultural background, experienced a considerable increase in the divorce rate during the 34-year period 1930-63. Although rates for the United States were highest for all years shown in table 5 (except for some rates for Egypt), the relative increase was smaller than that for most other countries. The ratio between the divorce rate for 1963 and that for 1930 may be used to measure this increase. This ratio was 1.4 for the United States. Smaller ratios were found only for France, Switzerland, West Germany, and the Netherlands, where they were 1.3 or 1.4, and for Japan (0.9) and Egypt (0.8). In the remaining countries, the increase was larger than that for the United States—the largest ratios were 25.0 for Venezuela, 11.4 for Austria, 7.4 for England and Wales, 5.1 in both Canada and Romania, and 5.0 for Mexico. From the available data, it is impossible to estimate how much of the change is due to a higher incidence of divorces and how much to improved registration practices in some of the reporting countries. Changes in crude rates may also reflect differences in age structure and marital status of the population.

Most of the reporting countries experienced a sharp increase of the divorce rate during or immediately after World War II. Afterwards, the rate declined in the United States and several other countries but continued to grow in others. This postwar growth was particularly pronounced in Hungary and Romania.

It is difficult to find an explanation for the differences in the divorce rates among various countries, except that most Communist countries have comparatively high rates. The usual explanations, such as differences in religion or in urbanization, do not seem to apply. It is particularly interesting to compare the United States and Canada, because Canada has always had one of the lowest rates listed in the *Demographic Yearbook* despite geographic proximity and cultural similarity. On the other hand, the Canadian rate grew much more rapidly than the American rate. In 1930 the ratio between the two rates was 19.9, but by 1963 it had declined to 5.5.

## Divorces by Region, Division, and State

Variation in the incidence of divorce was more pronounced within the United States than among the other countries. In 1963 the rate for the United States (2.3 per 1,000 population) was about nine times as high as the lowest rate (0.25 for Venezuela), but in the same year the rate for Nevada was 62 times as high as that for New York (table 1). The differences between the States were due in part to variations in the permissiveness of the divorce laws and to the concentration of migratory divorces (those granted to persons who came to the State solely for the purpose of obtaining a divorce decree rapidly). However, comparatively high divorce rates were also found in States where few if any migratory divorces occurred. It was observed before the beginning of this century that the divorce rate tended to increase from East to West;<sup>2</sup> this generalization still holds. In 1963 the divorce rate was 0.9 for the Northeast, 2.2 for the North Central, 2.8 for the South, and 3.6 for the West. The rate for the West was approximately four times as high as that for the Northeast.

Rates were available for eight of the nine geographic divisions (the rate for the West South Central Division could not be computed because of incomplete reporting by Louisiana). As shown in table 1, the lowest rate was for the Middle Atlantic Division; the highest rates were for the Mountain and Pacific Divisions.

One-half of the States had divorce rates below the national average of 2.3 per 1,000 total population. The other half had rates higher than or equal to that average (fig. 3). Low divorce rates were found in two groups of geographically contiguous States. One group of 15 States and the District of Columbia, which included the entire Northeast Region, was on the Atlantic Coast and reached from Maine through South Carolina. The second group included eight States in the northern part of the North Central Region. In addition to these two groups of States, Hawaii and Louisiana also had low divorce rates. (Though the State rate for Louisiana was not available, data from 42 reporting parishes indicated that it was low.)

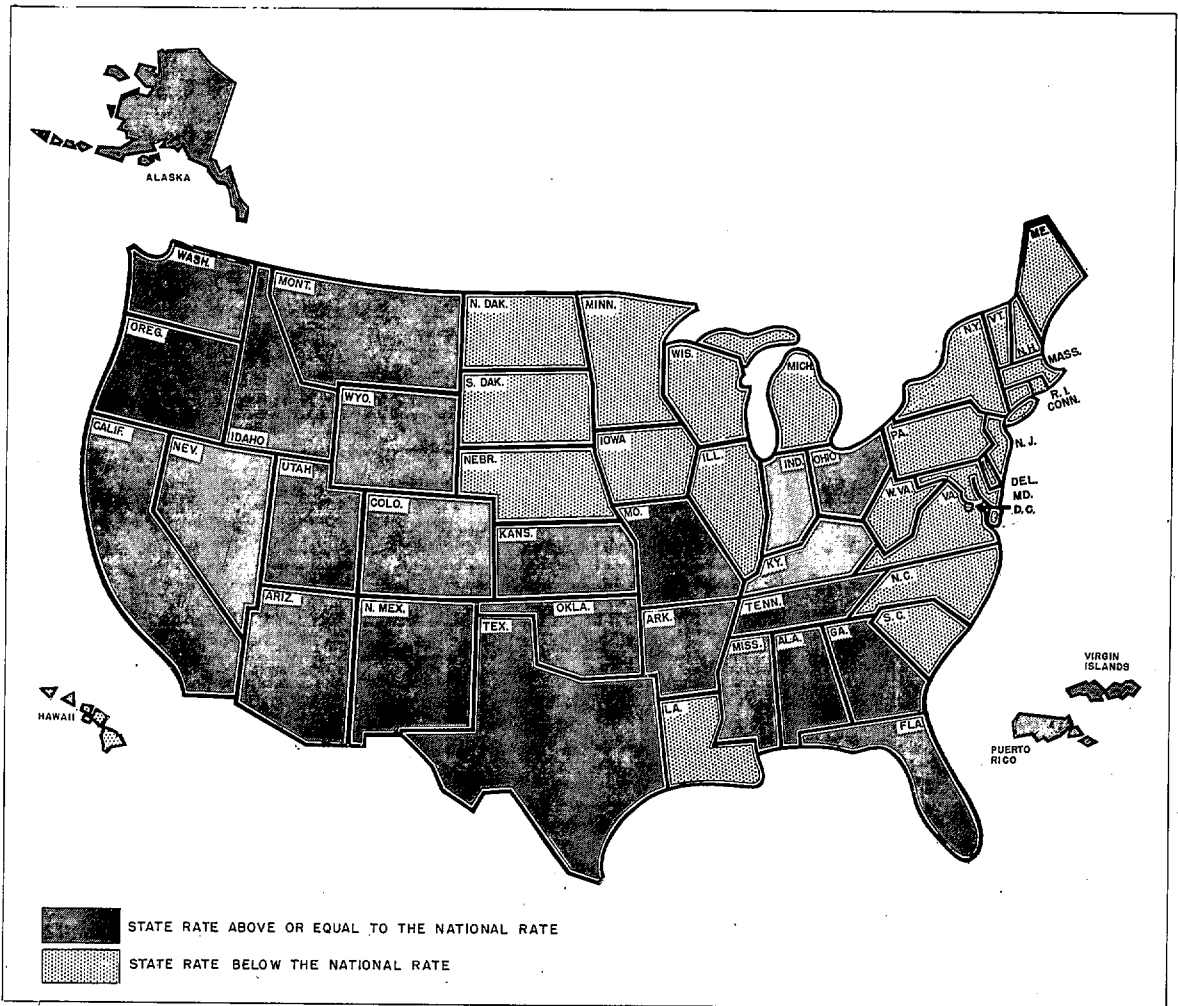


Figure 3. Divorce rates per 1,000 population: each State, 1963.

The 24 States with divorce rates higher than the national average (and Kentucky with a rate identical to the average) covered the remaining part of the country between the Appalachians and the Pacific and included all continental States of the West Region. Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands also had above average rates. The highest divorce rates were found in Nevada (24.9), Arizona (5.6), and Oklahoma (4.8), and the lowest in New York (0.4), New Jersey (0.8), and South Carolina (1.0).

The comparison of 1963 data with those for 1962 indicates that 37 State totals increased, 12 declined, and one did not change (Colorado's). These changes were generally small. The divorce rate per 1,000 population did not change in 17 States and the District of Columbia, increased

in 24, and declined in 8. (This comparison could not be made for Louisiana.) A change of only one decimal point was involved in 18 increases and 6 declines, hence it can be said that in 42 of the 50 States the divorce rate either did not change at all or changed very little. The divorce rate showed pronounced changes in only three States: an increase of 0.4 decimal points in Arizona and of 0.5 in Idaho, and a decline of 2.0 points in Nevada.

### Migratory Divorces

Migratory divorces are divorce decrees obtained outside the usual State of residence of the parties in places where divorce laws are particularly permissive and/or judges interpret these

laws to the advantage of the seekers of speedy divorce. Such places are often referred to as "divorce mills." Typically, the plaintiff moves to a divorce-mill State for the minimum period of time required to establish legal residence and to come under the jurisdiction of courts of that State, then leaves as soon as the decree is rendered, and, presumably, returns to his or her earlier State of residence.

Migratory divorces should be distinguished from divorces of migrants, i.e., divorces of people who migrate and obtain a decree in their new place of permanent residence. In the case of migratory divorce, the residence established in the divorce-mill State is a legal fiction necessary for taking advantage of the permissive divorce laws, while in the case of divorcing migrants, the plaintiffs honestly intend to live indefinitely in their new State of residence.

Migratory divorces should also be distinguished from those obtained outside the county of usual residence of the plaintiff but in his State of residence. Some persons may wish to be divorced where they are not known or may have other reasons for filing the divorce petition in another county. Such moves may result in the concentration of divorces in particular counties. These divorces are not considered migratory as long as the plaintiff does not cross a State line in order to obtain the decree.

The opinion is often expressed that low divorce rates in many Eastern States with strict divorce laws are due to large numbers of Easterners obtaining divorces in divorce mills and that variations among State rates would be much less pronounced if rates were computed by usual residence rather than by place of occurrence. In order to explore such possibilities, estimates of the numbers of migratory divorces have been prepared.

These estimates were based on variations among county divorce rates in States where the existence of divorce mills seemed likely. These States are characterized by permissive legal grounds for divorce, by short periods required to establish legal residence, and by the availability of various services useful to the divorce seekers. County rates were computed for States that possessed these characteristics, and one entire State and 26 counties in four other States

were identified as probable divorce mills. Then divorces of the permanent residents of these areas were estimated and subtracted from the totals. The method of estimation is described in the appendix. Because the method is based on divorce rates by counties, estimates were prepared only for 1960, a year for which county population figures were available from the census enumeration.

Altogether, 19,000 migratory divorces were estimated to have occurred in the United States in 1960. This is 4.8 percent of the national divorce total, or 0.1 per 1,000 population (table F). Even if it were assumed that migratory divorces are underestimated by 100 percent, their number would be less than 10 percent of the national total. However, there is no reason to believe that they have been substantially underestimated, particularly in view of the inclusion of several marginal counties among the presumptive divorce mills. Some migratory divorces are granted to Americans in Mexico and in other foreign countries. These were not included in the estimate.

The comparative insignificance of the number of migratory divorces granted in the United States in 1960 can best be visualized when compared with divorces occurring in States from which, presumably, large numbers of divorce seekers come. If it is assumed that all migratory divorces that were granted in 1960 were exclusively to residents of New York, then the crude resident divorce rate for that State would have increased to 1.6 and still would have been considerably below the national rate of 2.2. Since many migratory divorces were granted to residents of States other than New York, the resident divorce rate for that State had to be much lower than 1.6. On the other hand, if it is assumed that all migratory divorces granted in Nevada were obtained exclusively by residents of California, then the resident rate for that State would have been 3.6 as compared with the observed rate of 3.1. Hence, the resident divorce rate for California, though above 3.1, was considerably below 3.6.

These figures indicate that the incidence of migratory divorce in 1960 was not as large as it is widely believed to be. Migratory divorces may have declined since 1960, as the State authorities and the Bar Association of Alabama took action



Table F. Total, resident, and migratory divorces and rates: United States and five selected States, 1960

[Rates are per 1,000 total population in area. For estimating methods, see appendix]

Area	Population	All divorces		Estimated resident divorce		Estimated migratory divorce	
		Number	Rate	Number	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Number	Rate
United States-----	179,323,175	393,000	2.2	374,000	2.1	19,000	0.1
Percentages-----	...	100.0	...	95.2	...	4.8	...
Total-----	1,338,740	23,307	17.4	4,082	3.0	19,225	14.4
Alabama, 8 counties----	255,124	9,122	35.8	689	2.7	8,433	33.1
Arkansas, 8 counties---	472,303	2,533	5.4	1,275	2.7	1,258	2.7
Florida, 7 counties----	259,869	2,532	9.7	936	3.6	1,596	6.1
Idaho, 3 counties-----	66,166	665	10.1	212	3.2	453	6.9
Nevada, the State-----	285,278	8,455	29.6	970	3.4	7,485	26.2

<sup>1</sup>Estimated rates for resident divorces are rates for combined counties outside the divorce-mill areas for Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, and Idaho, and rate for the West Region for Nevada.

against unconstitutional granting of migratory divorce in that State. Following this action, the total number of divorces granted in Alabama declined from 17,320 in 1960 to 12,566 in 1963, a decline of 4,754 (or 27.4 percent), and the annual divorce rate declined from 5.3 to 3.7. However, it should be pointed out that the number of divorces in other States with divorce mills increased during the same period, but no information is available as to whether the increases were largely among migratory divorces.

#### Annulments

Divorce statistics shown in this report refer to absolute divorces and to annulments and exclude various limited matrimonial decrees such as divorces from bed and board, limited divorces, legal separations, decrees of separate maintenance, and others. The national total for 1963 included 12,701 reported annulments, which was 3.0 percent of the absolute divorces and annulments combined. These figures were incomplete because Idaho, Massachusetts, and Missouri failed to report divorces and annulments separately. The number of annulments granted in

these three States is usually small: it was 229 in 1962 and 204 in 1961. In addition, for a small number of decrees reported by other States, it was not stated whether they were absolute divorces or whether they were annulments.

The number of annulments granted in most States was small—0 in Vermont, less than 100 in 31 States and the District of Columbia, and between 100 and 1,000 in 13 States. California and New York were the only two States that reported more than 1,000 annulments.

The 1963 annulment total for California was 6,134 as compared with 5,984 in 1962 and 5,643 in 1961. The figure for 1963 represented 10.9 percent of all divorces and annulments granted in the State and almost one-half of all annulments reported in the United States. For New York 2,284 annulments were estimated, 36.2 percent of the combined annual total of divorces and annulments for that State and 18.0 percent of the national annulment total. The annulment figures reported for past years from New York were 2,331 in 1962 and 2,310 in 1961. As in prior years, about two-thirds of all annulments reported for 1963 were granted in California and New York.

## DETAILED DIVORCE STATISTICS

Annual divorce and annulment totals were received from all States, even though some figures were incomplete or estimated, but detailed statistical information was limited to the 22 States included in the divorce-registration area (DRA). The present report includes for the first time detailed divorce statistics from Rhode Island, which was added to the DRA as of January 1963.

Criteria for admitting States to the DRA and methods of collecting and preparing detailed divorce statistics are described in the appendix. The participating States are listed in tables I, II, and IV of the appendix.

The detailed statistics include the information about the following variables:

- Age of husband and wife at time of decree
- Age of divorced spouses at time of marriage
- Race of husband and wife
- Number of this marriage of husband and wife
- Resident status of the defendant husband or wife
- Place of marriage of the divorced couple
- Duration of marriage at time of decree
- Month of marriage of the divorced couple
- Children of divorced couples
- Legal grounds for decree
- Plaintiff
- Party to whom the decree was granted

### AGE AT DECREE

#### Reporting of Age

Despite the importance of data on age, the reporting of this item was very incomplete. Information on age of the parties to divorce, their dates of birth, or both, is required from all registration States, but these items are often left blank on the certificates. For the entire DRA age was reported in 54 percent of cases, and only six States had a satisfactory level of completeness: Hawaii, Iowa, Missouri, Rhode Island,

Tennessee, and Wisconsin. All of these States reported age on 93 percent or more of their divorce certificates. At the opposite extreme, four States reported age on less than 10 percent of the certificates.

#### Distribution of Age at Decree

The percent distribution of divorces and annulments by age of husband and of wife at time of decree was prepared only for the six States that reported this item with a high degree of completeness (table 2). The data indicate that at time of divorce the modal 5-year age group was 25-29 years for husbands and 20-24 years for wives. These modal values held for all of these States except Hawaii, where the peak age group was 30-34 years for husbands. In general, approximately one-half of all divorces were granted to men and women between the ages of 20 and 35.

In the six States combined, teenagers represented 2.0 percent of the divorced husbands and 7.7 of the divorced wives; however, among the States the figures varied from 0.2 and 2.8 percent in Rhode Island to 2.5 and 9.2 percent in Missouri.

When the peak divorce age was passed, the percentages declined gradually and fairly consistently (fig. 4). The oldest age group shown in table 2 (65 years and over) included 2.2 percent of husbands and 0.9 of wives in the six States.

The median age at decree in all registration States combined was 34.8 years for husbands and 31.3 years for wives as compared with 34.5 and 31.0 years, respectively, in 1962. For individual States the 1963 medians varied between a minimum of 31.5 and 26.4 years in Wyoming and a maximum of 37.0 and 33.5 years in Ohio (table G). From 1962 to 1963 the median age of husbands increased in 8 States and declined in 13; for wives it increased in 10 States and declined in 10; and in 1 State the median did not change.

#### Likelihood of Divorce by Age

Age-specific divorce rates computed for four selected States from 1960-61 data indicated that for the total population the likelihood of divorce declined with increasing age.<sup>3</sup> These rates could

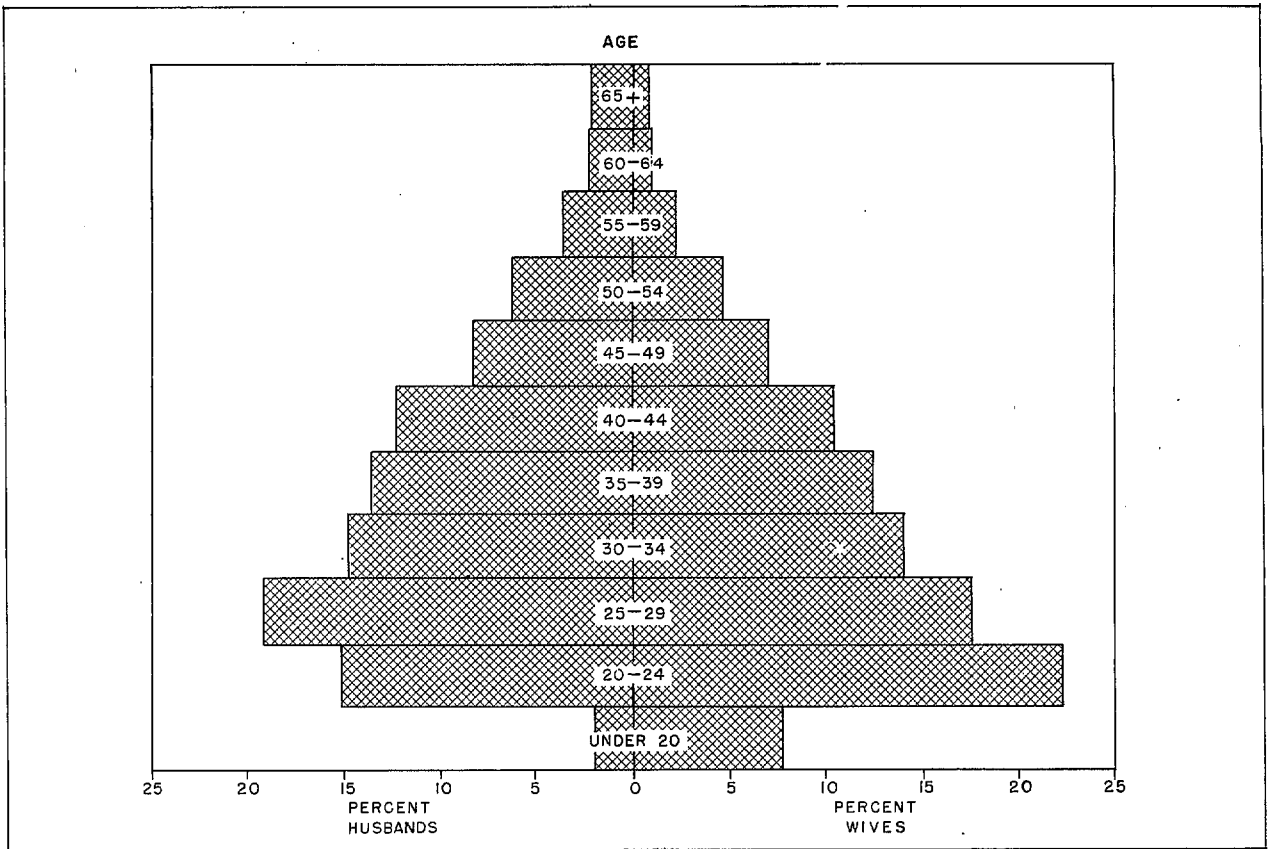


Figure 4. Percent of divorces and annulments, by age of husband and of wife at time of decree: total of six selected States, 1963.

not be computed for 1963 because population data by sex, age, and marital status were not available for individual States. Hence a different method had to be used for obtaining an indication of the association between age and likelihood of divorce. Median ages of all married men and women in the United States were computed for the years 1959 through 1963 from data estimated by the Bureau of the Census.<sup>4</sup> Medians for the United States must fall within the range between the lowest and highest State medians. Although not all States belong to the DRA, the States included are widely distributed throughout the Nation, and it can be expected that median age for the United States would fall within the range of medians for the registration States. Hence if the median ages of all married persons in the United States differ markedly from the median ages of persons who divorce in the registration States, then it can be assumed that the age distribution

of those who divorce is different from that of the total population and that the likelihood of divorce is higher for some age groups than for others.

Median ages for the total married population were compared with the highest and the lowest medians for States reporting age at decree for each year from 1959 through 1963 (table H). These comparisons show that in spite of changes in the number of States reporting age the highest State medians for divorced persons were considerably below the median ages of the total married population. This was true for both husbands and wives for each year included in the comparison. These data indicate that the likelihood of divorce for younger couples is higher than for older couples. This finding supports the pattern shown by the age-specific divorce rates for 1960-61.

Table G. Median ages of divorced husband and wife at time of decree and at time of marriage: divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data. Computed on totals excluding figures for age not stated]

Area	Median age of husband		Median age of wife		Percent of cases of age of husband not stated at time of decree
	At time of decree	At time of marriage	At time of decree	At time of marriage	
Divorce-registration area--	34.8	23.9	31.3	20.6	46.2
Alabama-----	35.5	24.5	31.3	22.1	98.1
Alaska-----	35.6	27.6	30.2	23.3	71.9
Georgia-----	33.0	23.4	29.8	19.9	62.0
Hawaii-----	35.8	25.3	32.6	22.5	2.9
Idaho-----	32.4	24.2	28.6	21.2	25.7
Iowa-----	33.0	23.7	29.8	20.1	0.3
Kansas-----	33.5	24.1	30.1	20.9	26.3
Maryland-----	36.4	23.5	33.0	19.7	52.0
Michigan-----	32.5	22.8	33.2	21.2	98.1
Missouri-----	34.9	24.0	31.1	20.2	3.7
Montana-----	35.1	25.0	30.9	21.7	27.3
Nebraska-----	33.6	23.9	29.8	20.4	48.6
Ohio-----	37.0	24.4	33.5	21.5	68.2
Oregon-----	35.3	24.9	31.5	21.6	26.8
Pennsylvania-----	35.5	23.4	32.3	20.6	17.5
Rhode Island-----	35.0	23.6	32.7	20.9	6.1
South Dakota-----	32.3	24.0	28.1	20.5	91.0
Tennessee-----	34.2	23.6	30.1	19.9	3.3
Utah-----	31.6	23.5	28.6	19.8	30.7
Virginia-----	34.9	23.6	31.8	20.4	30.7
Wisconsin-----	35.4	24.0	32.2	20.9	0.6
Wyoming-----	31.5	23.3	26.4	19.7	93.1

## AGE AT MARRIAGE OF DIVORCED SPOUSES

### Definition and Reporting

Ages of the divorced spouses at marriage are not reported in any registration State, but they can be computed from the data available on divorce records.

Age at marriage is computed by subtracting month and year of birth from month and year of marriage or by subtracting duration of marriage from age at decree. Since date of marriage and

duration of marriage were available for almost all divorces, the completeness of reporting of age at marriage was only slightly lower than that of age at decree—for husbands it was 53.4 and 53.8 percent, respectively, and for wives it was 53.2 and 53.9 percent, respectively. The completeness of age at marriage was satisfactory (over 85 percent) in the same six States that reported age at decree with a high level of completeness: Hawaii, Iowa, Missouri, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. The percent distribution of divorces by age at marriage was computed only for these six States (table J).

Table H. Median ages of all married persons in the United States and range of median ages at decree in registration States 1959-63

Median age	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959 <sup>1</sup>
<u>Husband</u>					
Total population-----	44.7	44.6	44.6	44.2	44.1
At decree:					
Highest age-----	37.0	40.0	35.9	36.7	35.9
Lowest age-----	31.5	31.8	31.9	27.5	32.0
<u>Wife</u>					
Total population-----	41.4	41.3	41.1	40.9	40.6
At decree:					
Highest age-----	33.5	34.7	33.4	33.5	32.5
Lowest age-----	26.4	28.3	26.7	23.6	29.0

<sup>1</sup>For 1959, age at decree was reported by only 12 registration States.

Table J. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments, by age of divorced husbands and wives at marriage: six selected States, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data. States included in this table reported age at marriage with a level of completeness of 85 percent or more]

Area	All divorces and annulments	Age at marriage						
		Under 20 years	20-24 years	25-29 years	30-34 years	35-39 years	40-44 years	45 years and over
<u>Husband</u>		Percent distribution						
Total, 6 States---	100.0	19.4	39.6	16.4	8.3	5.5	3.8	6.8
Hawaii-----	100.0	11.3	37.4	22.4	11.5	7.5	3.7	6.3
Iowa-----	100.0	20.6	39.7	18.1	8.0	3.5	3.8	6.3
Missouri-----	100.0	19.5	38.6	15.0	8.2	6.5	4.2	8.1
Rhode Island-----	100.0	15.3	47.9	17.0	8.5	4.4	2.8	4.1
Tennessee-----	100.0	22.9	37.5	15.4	8.3	5.7	3.9	6.2
Wisconsin-----	100.0	14.2	45.3	18.3	8.1	4.7	3.3	6.3
<u>Wife</u>								
Total, 6 States---	100.0	48.3	24.7	10.1	5.4	4.2	3.0	4.3
Hawaii-----	100.0	33.8	32.6	13.8	8.4	5.1	3.1	3.2
Iowa-----	100.0	49.6	25.9	8.8	4.9	3.6	2.9	4.4
Missouri-----	100.0	49.2	21.2	10.6	5.7	5.1	3.3	4.9
Rhode Island-----	100.0	44.5	30.7	10.8	6.5	2.8	2.3	2.4
Tennessee-----	100.0	50.9	24.1	9.4	5.0	3.8	3.1	3.6
Wisconsin-----	100.0	45.0	29.2	10.5	5.1	3.5	2.1	4.6

## Distribution of Age at Marriage

Almost one-half of the wives divorced in the six States were married in their teens, and a further 25 percent at ages 20-24. Thus only one out of every four divorced wives was married when 25 years of age or older. For divorced husbands the modal age group at marriage was 20-24 years; this age group included about 40 percent of the husbands, while one in four divorced husbands were married when 30 years of age or older.

There was comparatively little variation among States in the distribution of divorces by age at marriage. The greatest variation occurred among the proportions of divorced spouses in Hawaii and Tennessee who had married in their teens. The proportion of divorced husbands who had married when they were less than 20 years of age was almost twice as high for Tennessee (22.9 percent) as for Hawaii (11.3).

Although the contrast was not quite as great for divorced wives, a significantly larger proportion had also married in their teens in Tennessee than in Hawaii (50.9 percent as compared with 33.8). These lower proportions of teenage marriages in Hawaii along with the slightly higher proportions of divorced spouses who had married somewhat later (25-39 years for husbands and 20-39 years for wives) indicate that age at marriage for divorced spouses in Hawaii may be slightly higher than in the continental States shown in table J.

For all registration States combined, the median age at marriage of divorced spouses was 23.9 for husbands and 20.6 for wives (table G); these medians differed very little from comparable 1962 figures (24.0 and 20.7). For individual registration States, the median ages of husbands ranged from 22.8 in Michigan to 27.6 in Alaska, and those of wives ranged from 19.7 in Maryland and Wyoming to 23.3 in Alaska.

Between 1962 and 1963 the median ages at marriage of divorced persons increased both for husbands and for wives; in 7 States the medians declined in 14 States for husbands and in 12 States for wives; in 2 States the median age of wives remained unchanged.

## Likelihood of Divorce by Age at Marriage

Divorce rates by age at marriage cannot be computed because of the lack of population bases. Therefore, another method had to be used to investigate the association between age at marriage and the likelihood of divorce. This was done by comparing the proportion of married persons marrying when under 20 years of age with the proportion of divorced persons who were married when under 20. Such comparisons are shown in table K for the years 1957-63 for a uniform group of 15 States.

The percentage of teenage marriages was higher among persons who divorced than among those who married. This is true for both sexes and for all years included in table K. Since persons who married while under 20 years of age are overrepresented among the divorced, the likelihood that teenage marriages will end in divorce is greater than for marriages occurring at older ages. This statement must be qualified in two respects.

Only about one-half of the persons divorced in 1963 were married during the years 1957-63, and their distribution by age at marriage may not be representative of the total married population. Because percentages of teenagers among per-

Table K. Percentages of brides and grooms and of divorced husbands and wives married under age 20: total of 15 selected States, 1957-63

[By place of occurrence. The following States are included: Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, and Wyoming]

Year	Marriages		Divorces	
	Grooms	Brides	Husbands	Wives
1963---	14.1	38.6	19.7	47.4
1962---	15.3	40.5	18.9	47.4
1961---	14.3	40.4	20.0	47.8
1960---	14.0	40.3	16.4	46.0
1959---	13.2	39.1	...	...
1958---	12.9	39.0	...	...
1957---	12.0	37.8	...	...

sons married during 1957-62 increased consistently each year and because data indicate that teenage marriages have been increasing at least since 1951, the persons married in their teens would probably be even more overrepresented among the divorced if data for earlier years were available.

Information on age at marriage was not stated on a very large proportion of divorce records received from most of the 15 States included in the comparison. For 1963, age at marriage was not stated in 47 percent of the divorces, and the percentages of teenage marriages among the divorced are correct only if it is assumed that among those whose age was not stated the proportion of persons married in their teens was similar to that of persons for whom age was given.

## RACE OF HUSBAND AND OF WIFE

### Distribution of Divorces by Race

Information about race of divorced husbands and wives was reported in about 56 percent of all divorces in the divorce-registration area. In one State (Ohio) this information was not required; in the remaining 21 States the reporting was 66 percent complete—varying in levels of completeness for individual States between 9 and 99 percent. The level of completeness for the eight States shown in table 3 (Hawaii, Iowa, Missouri, Montana, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin) was above 85 percent.

In all registration States combined, 89.5 percent of divorced husbands were white, 9.3 percent were Negro, and 1.1 percent belonged to other races: American Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, Eskimo, and so forth. These percentages were similar for the divorced wives. In all States except Hawaii, many more divorces were granted to white persons than to persons of all other races combined. In Hawaii, however, the largest group was the nonwhite group, excluding Negroes.

The percentages of divorces granted to members of the three major racial groups varied considerably among the States, reflecting in part the racial distribution of the State population. For the States listed in table 3, the percentage for white persons varied between 42 for divorced

wives in Hawaii and 97 for both husbands and wives in Iowa. The percentage for Negroes varied between 1 percent for wives in Hawaii and Montana and 21 percent for both husbands and wives in Virginia. For other races the percentages for husbands were 0 in Missouri and Tennessee and 58 for wives in Hawaii.

### The Likelihood of Divorce by Race

The likelihood of divorce varies among racial groups of the same State and among groups of the same race in different States. Divorce rates for white and nonwhite persons, computed for the eight States listed in table 3, show both types of variation.<sup>5</sup> Separate rates for Negroes and for other nonwhite persons could not be computed because of the lack of population data. In Hawaii, where very few of the nonwhite persons are Negroes, the rates for white persons were considerably higher than for nonwhite; this difference was particularly pronounced for men (3.5 and 1.7 per 1,000). In Montana, where fewer divorces were granted to Negroes than to other nonwhite persons, the rate was nearly the same for both color groups (2.7 and 2.8). In the remaining six States, where almost all nonwhite persons divorced in 1963 were Negroes, pronounced differences could be observed between the Southern and the Northern States. In Tennessee the rates for white persons were higher than those for nonwhite (2.8 as compared with 2.3); in Virginia rates were the same for both groups (1.9); and in Missouri—which is often considered to be a border State, partially Southern and partially Northern—the rates for white persons were slightly lower than those for nonwhite (2.7 and 3.1). On the other hand, the rates for Negroes in the three Northern States were much higher than those for white; the largest differences were found in Iowa, where the Negro rate was three times as high as the white rate (1.8 for white; 5.5 for nonwhite men, and 5.7 for nonwhite women). These figures suggest that factors other than race affect the likelihood of divorce for racial groups. There seems to be a particularly pronounced difference between Negroes living in the Northern cities and those living in the South. These differences may be due to migration and urbanization.

The divorce rate does not necessarily reflect with accuracy the total marriage disruption (divorce and informal separation combined). The 1960 census showed a very high prevalence of separation among nonwhite persons in Iowa, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin. For the total nonwhite population 14 years of age and over in the United States, the percentage was 5.4 for men and 8.4 for women. The comparable percentages for the white population were 1.0 for men and 1.3 for women.<sup>6</sup> Similar differences are found in most States. However, some of the difference between the two color groups is probably due to inaccurate reporting of marital status.

### Interracial Divorces

Out of the 85,152 divorces for which race of both husband and wife was reported, 75,873 (89.1 percent) were granted to white couples and 8,694 (10.2 percent) to nonwhite; the latter figure includes divorces granted to couples where the husband and wife belonged to different nonwhite races. In the remaining 585 divorces, one spouse was white and the other nonwhite—in 355 cases the husband was white and the wife nonwhite, while in 230 the reverse was true (table L). The difference between these two

figures is numerically small and could be easily dismissed as insignificant, except that for all years for which data on interracial divorces are available the couples where the husband was white and the wife nonwhite were more numerous than those where the husband was nonwhite and the wife white. For the years 1960, 1961, and 1963 combined, 1,728 divorces of racially mixed couples were reported, and 1,024 such couples (59.3 percent) had a white husband and a nonwhite wife. During the same 3 years, however, there were more marriages between nonwhite husbands and white wives than between white men and nonwhite women. This seems to suggest that the likelihood of divorce is greater when the husband is white and the wife nonwhite than when the husband is nonwhite and the wife white.

Most interracial divorces (338 out of 585) were granted in Hawaii, 48 in Alaska, and 199 in 14 reporting States; information on race was not collected in Ohio and no interracial divorces were reported from five States: Alabama, Georgia, Michigan, Oregon, and Wyoming. Despite the difference in the racial composition of the nonwhite group, more racially mixed couples with white husbands than with nonwhite husbands were divorced. This was true in Hawaii, Alaska, and in the remaining registration States combined.

Table L. Number of divorces and annulments, by color of husband and of wife: divorce-registration area, Hawaii, and other registration States combined, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data]

Color	Divorce-registration area		Hawaii		Other States	
	Number	Percent <sup>1</sup>	Number	Percent <sup>1</sup>	Number	Percent <sup>1</sup>
Total-----	152,594	100.0	1,514	100.0	151,080	100.0
Husband and wife white-----	75,873	89.1	493	33.4	75,380	90.1
Husband and wife nonwhite----	8,694	10.2	643	43.6	8,051	9.6
Husband white, wife nonwhite--	355	0.4	209	14.2	146	0.2
Husband nonwhite, wife white-	230	0.3	129	8.8	101	0.1
Color not stated for either or both-----	67,442	...	40	...	67,402	...

<sup>1</sup>Excludes the category "color not stated for either or both spouses."



## NUMBER OF THIS MARRIAGE OF HUSBAND AND OF WIFE

### 1963 Data

Information about the number of times divorced husbands and wives were previously married was tabulated for all registration States. This is the first such tabulation since the divorce sample was initiated in 1960. For the years 1960-62, only marriage order was tabulated—i.e., the classification of the divorced spouses by whether they were married once or more than once. The larger sample selected for 1963 permitted the subclassification of persons married more than once into those married twice and those married three times or more.

The number of this marriage is one of the least completely reported items of statistical information. For the divorce-registration area it was not stated for 47 percent of all decrees. Two registration States, Nebraska and Virginia, did not have this item on their divorce report form, and in the remaining registration States the reporting was 57 percent complete. Only for the six States shown in table 4 was this item available for at least 85 percent of all records.

For the divorce-registration area 74.4 percent of all husbands and 73.0 percent of all wives for whom the information was available were married once; two marriages were reported by 19.6 percent of husbands and 20.5 of wives; and three marriages or more by 6.0 percent of husbands and 6.4 percent of wives. Data for the six States with a satisfactory level of reporting (table 4) indicate that for a given State there is comparatively little difference between the distributions of husbands and wives by number of this marriage. However, differences among States are rather pronounced—the percentage of husbands married once varied between 83.1 in Rhode Island and 68.9 in Tennessee, of those married twice between 23.5 percent in Tennessee and 14.0 in Rhode Island, and of those married three times or more between 8.7 in Iowa and 3.0 in Rhode Island. For wives, the percentages are similar but the range is narrower.

## Likelihood of Divorce by Marriage Order

Divorce rates by marriage order could not be computed because population bases were not available. The method used to determine the relative likelihood of divorce among persons married once and persons married more than once is to compare the distributions of divorces by marriage order of husband and wife with similar distributions of marriages performed. If a pattern could be found indicating that one of the two marriage-order categories is consistently higher among persons who were divorced than among those who were married, it would then indicate that persons belonging to this category have a higher likelihood of divorce than those belonging to the other. Percentage distributions by marriage order were prepared for a group of nine States for which data were available (Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Utah) for as many years as data could be obtained. Although divorce data for the nine States include many cases with marriage order not stated, the percentage distribution for 1963 is similar to that for the total of the six States shown in table 4 and falls well within the range of variation among States found in that table.

Data shown in table M indicate that the proportion of remarried persons was higher among those who divorced during the years than among those who married. This generalization is true for the years shown. More than one-half of persons divorced during 1963, both in the nine States and in the total DRA, were married during the 8 years 1956-63. Thus it seems that remarried persons, the majority of whom had been previously divorced at least once, were more likely to divorce again than those who were married for the first time. However, the difference between the rates for the two marriage-order categories seemed to decline as the percentage of remarriages slowly increased from 1956 to 1963. Although it is not known how representative the nine States are, it should be noted that they are widely distributed from East to West and that all four regions and seven of the nine geographic divisions are represented by at least one State.

Table M. Percent distribution of marriages and of divorces, by marriage order of husband and wife according to year of event: total of nine selected States for specified years

[By place of occurrence. Data from the following States are included: Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Utah. Figures for 1960-63 based on samples; those for earlier years based on total counts]

Year of event	Total	Husband		Wife	
		Married once	Married more than once	Married once	Married more than once
<u>Divorces</u>		Percent distribution			
1963-----	100.0	74.1	25.9	73.2	26.8
1962-----	100.0	72.5	27.5	71.4	28.6
1961-----	100.0	73.2	26.8	72.4	27.6
<u>Marriages</u>					
1963-----	100.0	78.6	21.4	78.3	21.7
1962-----	100.0	78.7	21.3	79.1	20.9
1961-----	100.0	78.4	21.6	79.1	20.9
1960-----	100.0	79.3	20.7	78.7	21.3
1959-----	100.0	79.3	20.7	78.6	21.4
1958-----	100.0	79.8	20.2	79.2	20.8
1957-----	100.0	80.4	19.6	79.7	20.3
1956-----	100.0	80.2	19.8	79.4	20.6

Data in table M are supported by a set of ratios computed for Hawaii, Iowa, Tennessee, and Wisconsin for the years 1960-61.<sup>7</sup> These were ratios of divorces of first-married persons to the population married once and living with their spouses and of divorces of the remarried to the population of persons who were remarried, irrespective of their current marital status. Though the method of computation used tends to understate the differences between marriage-order groups, the divorce ratios for first marriages were less than one-half of the ratios for remarriages: 6.2 and 17.3 per 1,000 for husbands and 6.2 and 15.5 for wives. Similar relationships were found between the ratios of each of the included States.<sup>7</sup>

All the available data indicate that the likelihood of divorce is higher among persons who remarry than among those who marry for the first time in spite of the comparatively older age of the remarried persons. Hence, there is reason to believe that the difference between the likelihood of divorce of the two marriage-order categories

would be more pronounced if age at decree were held constant.

## RESIDENT STATUS OF THE DEFENDANT

The legal residence of the plaintiff is always in the State where the divorce case is tried, although his usual residence may be in a different State. This is why only data on the residence of the defendant were tabulated. This item was reported in a much higher proportion of cases than age, race, and number of this marriage. Even though residence is not reported in one State (Kansas), the level of completeness for the DRA was 76.4 percent. When Kansas is excluded, the level of completeness increases to 79.2 percent.

Since the level of completeness was 85 percent or more in 12 States, the percent distribution of divorced husbands and wives by resident status was computed for these 12 States (table N).

In the 12 States combined the percent of defendant husbands (86.0) living in the State where the decree was granted is higher than that of defendant wives (75.8) (table N). Similar differences were found in each of the 12 States, with the largest difference (15.5 percentage points) for Hawaii and the smallest for Maryland (3.1 points). The proportion of defendants residing outside the region is higher for defendant wives than for defendant husbands. In some States the difference is minimal, but in others the percentage for wives is more than double that for husbands.

The difference between the places of residence of the two parties to divorce is due to the postseparation mobility of either or both spouses. As none of the States listed in table N seems to possess a divorce mill, the data show the effects of bona fide migration—migration with the intention to settle in the new place of residence.

In a typical divorce case the wife is the plaintiff and the husband the defendant; this

happens in about three out of every four divorces. In the comparatively few cases where the wife was the defendant, the postseparation mobility tended to cover longer distances than in the typical cases—not only was the proportion of defendants living in the same State smaller (8.5 percent) but the proportion living in a different region was almost twice as large (16.1 percent). The cause of this difference cannot be ascertained from the available data.

## PLACE AND MONTH OF MARRIAGE OF DIVORCED COUPLES

### Place of Marriage

The place of marriage of the divorced couple was reported by most States with a high level of completeness—90 percent for the divorce-registration area as a whole.

Table N. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments, by resident status of defendant husband and wife: 12 selected States, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data. States included in this table reported residence with a level of completeness of 85 percent or more]

Area	Defendant husband				Defendant wife			
	Total	Resident of—		Not resident of any State in region	Total	Resident of—		Not resident of any State in region
		State where decree granted	Other State, same region			State where decree granted	Other State, same region	
Percent distribution								
Total, 12 States----	100.0	86.0	5.4	8.5	100.0	75.8	8.1	16.1
Hawaii-----	100.0	84.6	7.0	8.4	100.0	69.1	12.4	18.5
Iowa-----	100.0	86.3	6.8	6.9	100.0	75.7	9.1	15.3
Maryland-----	100.0	74.5	13.2	12.4	100.0	71.4	13.4	15.2
Missouri-----	100.0	88.8	4.0	7.2	100.0	78.0	7.7	14.3
Montana-----	100.0	86.6	8.2	5.2	100.0	72.9	16.0	11.1
Nebraska-----	100.0	90.8	2.6	6.7	100.0	78.3	7.4	14.3
Ohio-----	100.0	87.1	3.3	9.6	100.0	75.3	3.4	21.2
Pennsylvania--	100.0	83.4	6.0	10.6	100.0	78.5	7.6	13.9
Rhode Island--	100.0	76.2	11.2	12.6	100.0	67.4	17.0	15.6
South Dakota--	100.0	86.5	4.5	8.9	100.0	72.3	7.8	19.9
Tennessee-----	100.0	87.4	6.4	6.2	100.0	74.7	12.3	12.9
Wisconsin-----	100.0	90.2	4.8	4.9	100.0	79.2	8.0	12.8

Table O. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments, by place where marriage was performed: divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data]

State where decree was granted	All divorces and annulments	Place where marriage was performed		
		In same State	In other State, same region	Not in region
Percent distribution				
DRA-----	100.0	60.3	21.9	17.8
Alabama-----	100.0	58.8	34.9	6.3
Alaska-----	100.0	43.9	26.5	29.6
Georgia-----	100.0	75.3	20.3	4.4
Hawaii-----	100.0	66.9	12.0	21.1
Idaho-----	100.0	51.3	36.1	12.6
Iowa-----	100.0	61.5	27.9	10.5
Kansas-----	100.0	56.2	12.6	31.2
Maryland-----	100.0	67.5	21.2	11.3
Michigan-----	100.0	70.5	13.5	16.0
Missouri-----	100.0	64.7	13.0	22.3
Montana-----	100.0	63.7	22.5	13.8
Nebraska-----	100.0	60.4	21.9	17.7
Ohio-----	100.0	58.1	13.5	28.4
Oregon-----	100.0	38.8	51.1	10.1
Pennsylvania-----	100.0	65.3	6.0	28.6
Rhode Island-----	100.0	63.1	23.1	13.8
South Dakota-----	100.0	57.0	23.5	19.5
Tennessee-----	100.0	48.3	46.2	5.5
Utah-----	100.0	48.7	40.7	10.6
Virginia-----	100.0	54.8	34.4	10.8
Wisconsin-----	100.0	61.0	27.9	11.2
Wyoming-----	100.0	47.7	27.5	24.8

For the registration States combined, 60 percent of the couples divorced in 1963 were married in the same State where they were divorced, 22 percent in a different State of the region where they were divorced, and 18 percent outside this region, including those married abroad. Data for individual States are shown in table O. Because of sampling variability, it was not possible to tabulate divorces by State where the couple was married, only by the place of marriage in relation to the divorce State.

There are several reasons for the difference between the State of marriage and the State of

divorce. The most prevalent reasons are the following: (1) a couple is married in their State of residence and later migrates to a different State where divorce occurs; (2) the couple is married in the home of the bride's parents, which is located in a different State than that where they intend to reside, and they are divorced in their own State of residence; (3) the marriage is performed in a "marriage mill" outside of their own State; (4) the divorce is granted in a "divorce mill" outside the State of usual residence of the couple, and (5) any combination of two or more factors listed above.

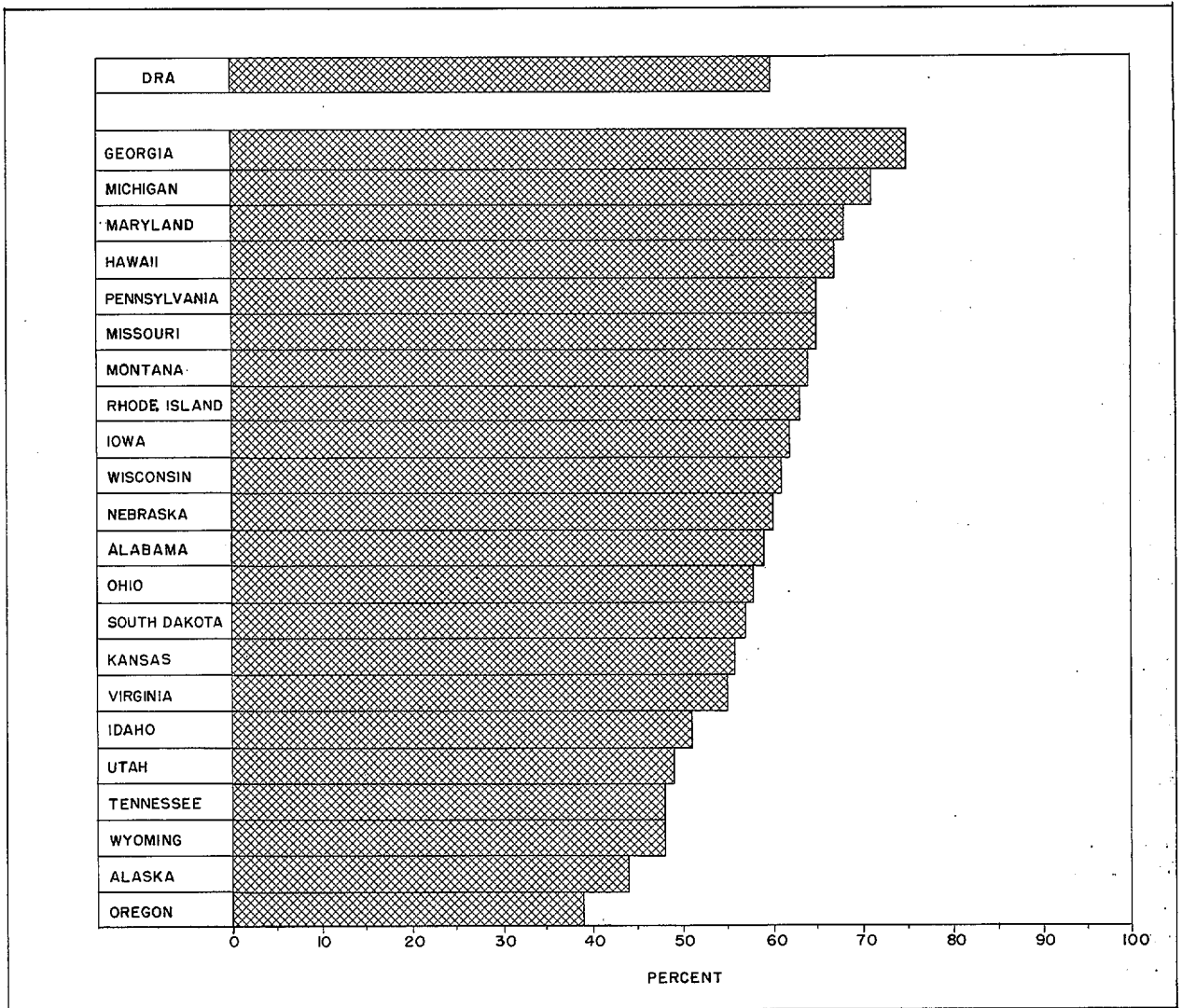


Figure 5. Percent of divorced couples married in State where divorced: divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1963.

The proportion of divorced couples who were both married and divorced in the same State varied depending on the region: it was considerably higher in the Northeast and North Central than in the South and West (fig. 5). All reporting States can be divided into two equal groups, using 60 percent as the dividing criterion—table O indicates that in 11 States the proportion of couples married in the divorce State is above 60 percent and in 11 States below 60 percent. In 7 of the 10 Northeastern and North Central States, however, this proportion is over 60, but only in 4 of 12 Southern and Western States is this true.

The distribution of couples married outside the divorce State depends on the location of this State with respect to the lines dividing the four regions. States located on such lines, particularly if a larger proportion of the State lines coincides with lines dividing the regions, tend to have comparatively many divorced couples married outside of the region and comparatively few married in different States of the same region. This is true for the States where the proportion of divorced couples married out of the region is 20 or more (Kansas, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Wyoming). Alaska and Hawaii also be-

long in this group because the concept of region has little meaning in these States.

### Month When Marriage Was Performed

Marriages have a distinct pattern of seasonal distribution, with a concentration in June and comparatively small numbers performed during the first 3 months of the year. In 1963 the number of marriages performed in January (96,326 for the whole United States) as well as that performed in March (101,585) represented less than one-half of the number performed in June (206,357); similar variations were found in earlier years. The question arises whether the likelihood of divorce varies depending on the month when the marriage took place.

The date of the marriage of the divorced couple is asked on the divorce record in all registration States, and the month of marriage is reported with a high degree of completeness. In 1963 this information was available on 97 percent of records received from all registration States combined. The distribution of 1963 divorces by month when marriage was performed can be compared with the distribution of marriages by month of occurrence for 1963 and earlier years. The distributions of both divorces and marriages by month the couples were married were prepared for the 22 States that were included in the DRA in 1963 (fig. 6). Comparisons of distributions for couples divorced in 1963 with those for couples married in the years 1959 through 1963 are shown in table P.

The percentages indicate that the seasonal variation of marriages of divorced couples is less pronounced than the seasonal variation of all marriages performed. The proportion of divorced couples married in months of a high incidence of marriages (June and August) is lower than the proportion of all couples married during these months; this is true for all years of marriage shown in the table. On the other hand, the proportion of couples married during the months when comparatively few marriages are performed (January, February, and March) is higher for persons divorced in 1963 than for persons married in any of the 5 years 1959-63. For the remaining 7 months the proportion of marriages of divorced couples falls within the range of variation in the

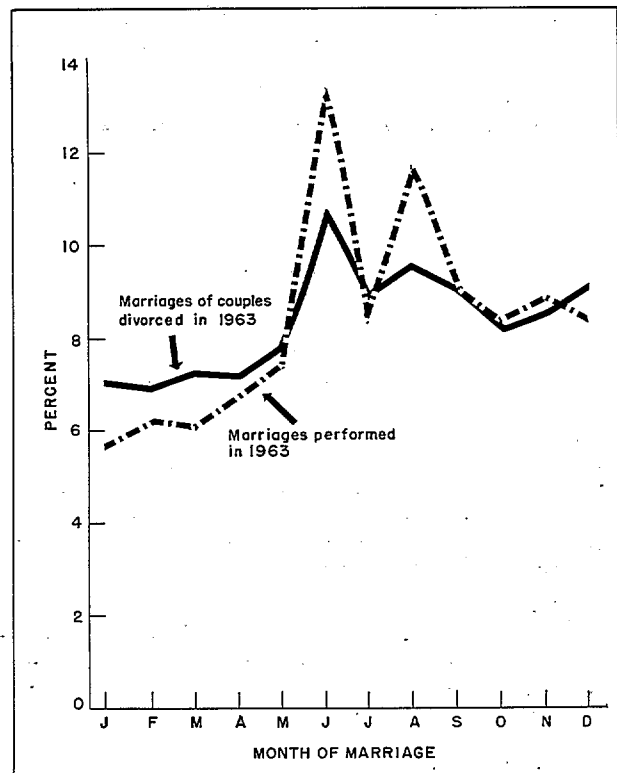


Figure 6. Percent of divorces and annulments by month couple married and of marriages by month of occurrence: divorce-registration area, 1963

proportion of all couples married during each of these months in various years.

These data seem to indicate that couples who follow the fashion of getting married during the peak marriage months are slightly less likely to be divorced than other couples, while couples who marry when comparatively few marriages occur have an above-average likelihood of divorce. These differences may be due to the seasonal variation of certain groups of marriages with a comparatively high likelihood of divorce. For example, marriage data for the years 1960 through 1963 indicate that percentages of remarriages occurring in January, February, and March were higher and of those occurring in June lower than comparable percentages of all marriages. It has been shown that the likelihood of divorce seems to be high for remarriages. The same may apply to elopements, forced marriages, and so forth. The pattern of the distribution of divorces by month of marriage is similar in all registration

Table P. Percent distribution of divorces (1963) by month couple married and of marriages (1959-63) by month of occurrence: total of 22 registration States

[By place of occurrence. Figures for 1960-63 based on samples; those for earlier years based on total counts]

Month of marriage	Divorced couples 1963	Marriages				
		1963	1962	1961	1960	1959
Total-----		Percent distribution				
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
January-----	7.1	5.6	5.7	5.9	6.3	6.4
February-----	6.9	6.2	6.2	6.0	6.5	6.1
March-----	7.3	6.0	6.7	5.7	5.3	5.7
April-----	7.1	6.8	6.5	7.6	7.5	7.1
May-----	7.7	7.4	7.5	7.2	7.9	8.3
June-----	10.8	13.4	13.7	12.5	12.4	13.3
July-----	8.8	8.3	8.5	9.4	9.8	8.6
August-----	9.6	11.7	10.3	10.2	10.0	11.1
September-----	9.0	9.0	10.2	10.5	9.6	9.3
October-----	8.1	8.3	8.0	8.2	8.8	8.7
November-----	8.5	8.9	7.9	7.9	7.7	7.7
December-----	9.1	8.3	8.8	9.0	8.2	7.8

States, but the percentages for a given month vary greatly. Thus the percentage of divorced couples who were married in January varied from 5.7 in Nebraska to 8.3 in Georgia; those married in February from 5.7 in Ohio to 8.3 in Hawaii, South Dakota, and Wyoming; for June the range was between 9.4 percent in Alaska and 12.0 in Michigan and Utah. Similar variations can be observed for other months.

## DURATION OF MARRIAGE

### Reporting and Definition

The duration of marriage at time of decree was computed by subtracting month and year of marriage from month and year of divorce. When only the year of marriage was given on the divorce record, it was assumed that the marriage occurred at the midpoint of the year. Information about the time of marriage is required in all registration States and is almost always reported. For the DRA information about duration of marriage was available for 97.1 percent of

divorces granted in 1963, and this percentage was below 85 in two States only.

The time that elapses between marriage and divorce comprises three distinct periods: (1) the period between marriage and final separation of the couple (there may have been earlier separations followed by reconciliations, but the important date is that when husband and wife ceased for the last time to live in the same household); (2) the time between separation and filing the petition for divorce, and (3) the time between filing the petition and the decree. The family functions as a social unit only during the first period, and, therefore, the date of the last separation is of great interest for the study of family disruption. At present, this information is collected in only a few States, but for the combined years 1887 through 1906, statistics on the duration of marriage to separation and on the duration of separation to divorce are available for the entire continental United States as well as for each State and territory.<sup>8</sup>

The duration of the second period, that between the separation and the filing of the divorce

petition, depends partly on the decision of the parties to start divorce proceedings and partly on laws that specify the time that must elapse in order for a certain legal ground for divorce to arise, e.g., desertion, voluntary separation, or insanity. The duration of the third period depends almost exclusively on laws. Thus it can be seen that the three periods into which the duration of marriage to decree is divided have different characteristics, and their length is caused by different factors. All of these factors affect the duration of marriage to decree.

### Distribution of Divorces by Duration of Marriage

Data for the divorce-registration area indicated that the modal number of divorces occurred when the marriage had lasted more than 1 year but less than 2 years. Almost the same proportion of divorces took place when the marriage had lasted between 1 and 3 years, 8.6 and 8.4 percent, respectively (table 5). The number of divorces declined consistently with each additional year of duration (fig. 7); and when the marriage had lasted 9 years (the last single year of duration for which data are available) the proportion had declined to 3.7 percent.

The modal year of duration for individual States was 1 year in 13 States, 2 years in 5 States, 3 years in 1 State, 4 years in 1 State, 6 years in 1 State, and 1 State had no single modal year of duration.

The group of divorces that had a very short duration, less than 1 year, included 5.2 percent of all decrees granted in the DRA. As this duration included the time the case was pending in court, the divorced couples had an extremely short period of married life before separation. The percentages of divorces after less than 1 year of married life showed very marked variation from State to State—from 0.4 percent in Virginia to 10.5 in Idaho. The regional factor is pronounced: all registration States in the Northeast Region, in the northeastern part of the South Region, and in the East North Central Division of the North Central Region had low proportions of divorces granted within less than 1 year—the highest percent being 4.3 in Ohio—while States in the remaining part of the country (including the West, the remainder of the North Central Region,

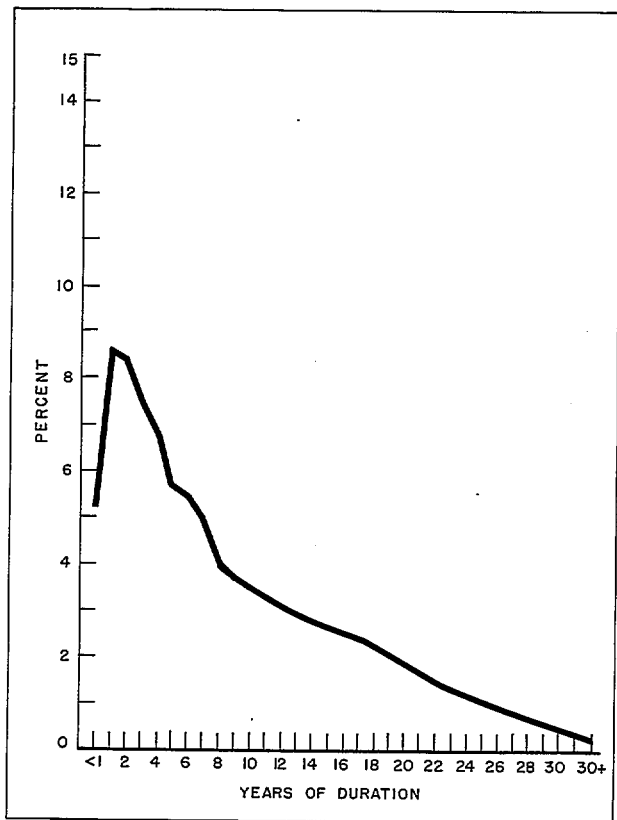


Figure 7. Percent of divorces and annulments, by duration of marriage to time of decree:divorce-registration area, 1963.

and the remainder of the South) had much higher percentages—the lowest being 6.0 percent in Hawaii. Thus all seven States in the first area had percentages lower than that for the DRA, and all States in the second area had higher percentages.

At the other extreme, 3.0 percent of divorced couples had a duration of marriage of 30 years or more, and this percentage ranged from 1.2 in Alaska to 4.9 in Alabama. Altogether 6.5 percent of the divorced couples had reached their silver wedding anniversary. Many of the States that had very low percentages of divorces after marriages with durations of less than 1 year had comparatively high percentages of those divorces after marriages with durations of 25 years or more and vice versa; the range was between 3.6 in Utah and 8.9 in Virginia. The regional distribution was also pronounced, with high percentages found in the Northeast and in the South (between 6.3 and



8.9 percent), median percentages in the North Central (between 5.1 and 6.7), and low percentages in the West (between 3.8 and 5.2).

### Median Duration

The median duration of marriage at divorce was 7.5 years for the registration States combined; the figures for individual States ranged from 5.0 in Idaho to 10.3 in Maryland. The regional distribution of the median was the same as the distribution of divorces after marriages with less than 1 year of duration: States in the Northeast Region, East North Central States of the North Central Region, and the States in the northeast part of the South Region had medians above the DRA average, while all other States had medians lower than or identical with that average. In the two States with the highest medians (Maryland and Virginia) the comparatively long duration of marriage may be partly due to the legal grounds used for most divorce decrees—voluntary separation in Maryland and desertion in Virginia—because the time prescribed by law must elapse for these legal grounds to arise, and, hence, the duration of marriage after separation necessarily includes a minimum period. However, this consideration does not hold for most States with high medians of duration, where the great majority of decrees are granted on the ground of cruelty (Michigan, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin) or indignities (Pennsylvania).

Table Q shows the median and quartile duration of marriage for all registration States—i.e., the number of years since marriage when 25, 50, and 75 percent of divorces took place. In the DRA 25 percent of the divorces were granted after marriage durations of 3.4 years or less, 50 percent after 7.5 years or less, and 75 percent after 14.9 years or less. In the remaining 25 percent of the cases, marriage had lasted more than 14.9 years. The interquartile range, embracing 50 percent of all marriages lasting longer than the first quartile but shorter than the third, covered an interval of 11.5 years—from 3.4 to 14.9 years of duration. As the number of divorces declined with each added year of duration, the time interval between marriage and the first quartile was the shortest (3.4 years), the interval between the first quartile and the median was longer (4.1

Table Q. Median and quartile duration of marriage to decree: divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data]

State	Duration of marriage		
	First quartile	Median	Third quartile
DRA-----	3.4	7.5	14.9
Alabama-----	3.1	7.5	15.5
Alaska-----	2.8	6.8	12.9
Georgia-----	2.6	6.3	13.8
Hawaii-----	3.5	7.2	13.8
Idaho-----	2.1	5.0	11.7
Iowa-----	2.8	6.1	13.5
Kansas-----	2.7	6.5	13.9
Maryland-----	5.7	10.3	17.3
Michigan-----	4.0	8.0	15.6
Missouri-----	2.7	6.9	14.2
Montana-----	2.6	5.9	12.9
Nebraska-----	2.9	6.7	14.0
Ohio-----	3.7	7.7	14.8
Oregon-----	2.6	5.8	13.2
Pennsylvania-----	4.2	8.7	16.6
Rhode Island-----	4.6	9.0	16.6
South Dakota-----	2.8	6.3	14.1
Tennessee-----	2.6	6.6	14.4
Utah-----	2.2	5.1	11.5
Virginia-----	4.5	9.2	16.8
Wisconsin-----	4.0	8.1	15.5
Wyoming-----	2.2	5.3	12.6

years), that between the median and the third quartile still longer (7.4 years), and that between the third quartile and the divorce with the longest duration was longer than the other three intervals combined. In 3.0 percent of cases marriages had lasted more than 30 years; therefore, the length of the fourth interval was more than 15.1 years.

The quartiles of duration for individual States varied considerably: the first quartiles from 2.1 to 5.7 years and the third quartiles from 11.5 to 17.3. As a rule, the higher the median, the higher are the two quartiles likely to be. However, this association is not perfect, as it is shown in figure 8, where States are listed according to the magni-

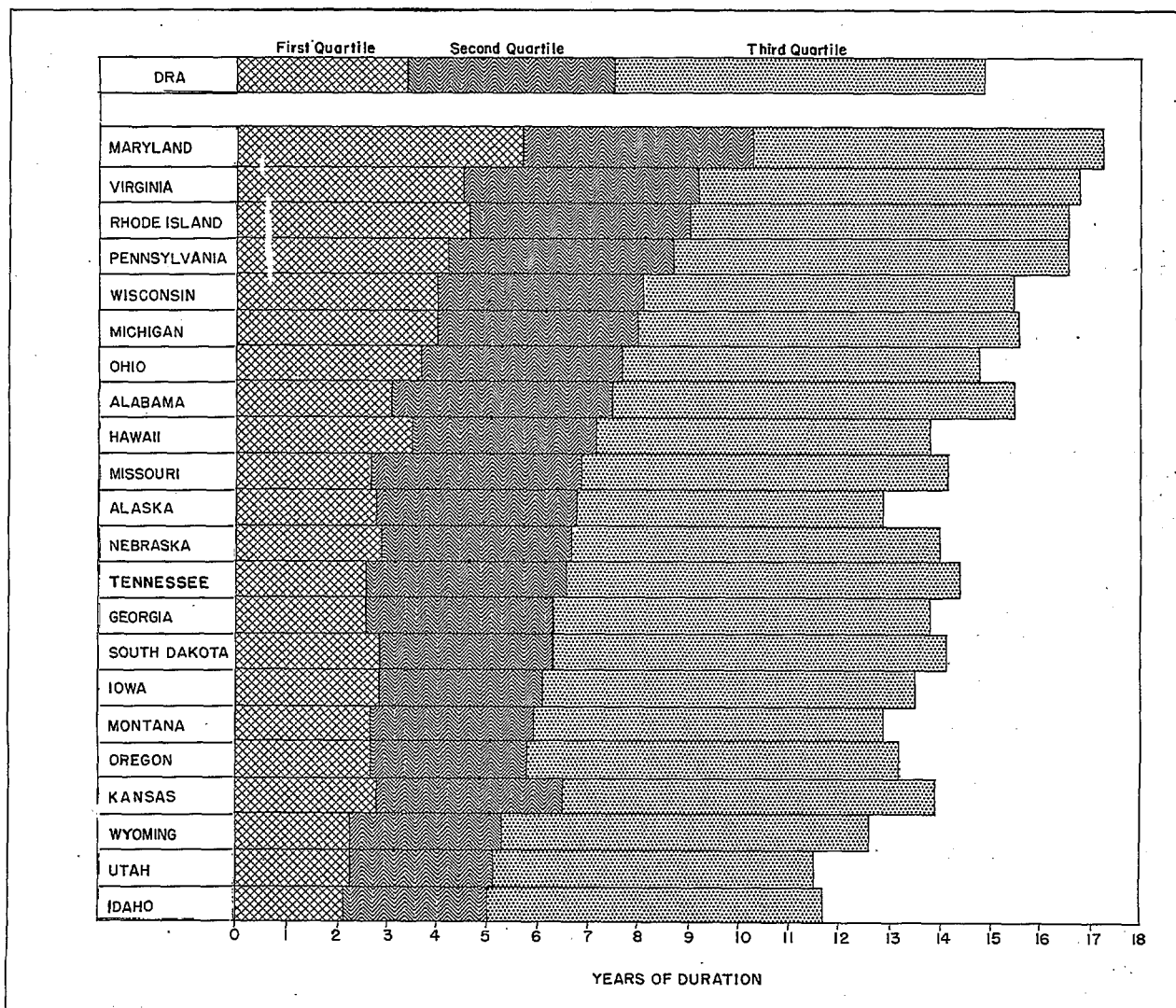


Figure 8. Medians and quartiles of duration of marriage to time of decree: divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1963.

tude of the median. The interquartile range varied less than medians and quartiles: the shortest range was 9.3 years observed for Utah, and the longest was 12.4 years for Pennsylvania.

The median duration of marriage at decree depends in part on the distribution of divorces by marriage order of husband and of wife. Though data for 1963 are not available, information collected for earlier years indicates that the duration is longer for first marriages than for remarriages for all age categories. In 1959 for the 10 reporting States combined, the median duration

of first marriages was 7.7 years for husbands and 7.8 for wives, while for remarriages this duration was 4.6 for both. In 1958 these values were, respectively, 6.4, 6.6, 4.3, and 4.2 for six reporting States.<sup>9</sup>

#### Trend in the Duration of Marriage

Tables R and S show the changes in the median duration of marriage during the decade 1954-63. In table R the available annual medians are given for all registration States. From these medians

Table R. Median duration of marriage to decree: each registration State, 1954-63

[By place of occurrence. Figures for 1960-63 based on sample data; those for 1954-59 based on total counts]

Area	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954
	Median duration in years									
Alabama-----	7.5	7.1	7.3	7.3	7.6	7.4	<sup>1</sup> 7.1	6.7	6.5	6.3
Alaska-----	6.8	6.2	6.3	6.2	6.0	---	---	---	---	---
Georgia-----	6.3	5.9	6.6	6.3	6.1	5.9	<sup>1</sup> 6.1	<sup>1</sup> 6.0	<sup>1</sup> 5.6	<sup>1</sup> 6.7
Hawaii-----	7.2	7.0	6.3	6.3	---	---	---	---	---	---
Idaho-----	5.0	5.6	4.7	4.8	4.2	4.6	4.7	4.2	4.2	4.7
Iowa-----	6.1	6.2	5.5	5.7	5.4	5.6	5.3	5.1	5.0	5.0
Kansas-----	6.5	5.9	6.5	5.8	6.3	---	6.2	6.1	5.7	5.7
Maryland-----	10.3	9.4	9.4	9.0	---	---	---	---	---	---
Michigan-----	8.0	8.0	7.6	---	---	---	7.5	7.4	<sup>1</sup> 7.2	<sup>1</sup> 7.1
Missouri-----	6.9	6.1	6.6	---	---	---	<sup>1</sup> 6.1	<sup>1</sup> 5.9	<sup>1</sup> 5.9	<sup>1</sup> 5.9
Montana-----	5.9	5.9	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.4	5.2	5.1	4.8	5.1
Nebraska-----	6.7	6.1	6.5	6.3	6.0	5.9	6.1	<sup>2</sup> 6.0	5.6	5.5
Ohio-----	7.7	7.7	---	---	---	---	6.7	6.5	6.4	6.4
Oregon-----	5.8	6.5	6.4	5.9	6.0	5.9	5.7	5.6	5.1	5.1
Pennsylvania-----	8.7	9.6	8.6	9.2	9.1	---	---	---	---	---
Rhode Island-----	9.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
South Dakota-----	6.3	6.6	6.3	6.3	6.2	5.9	5.9	5.1	5.7	5.7
Tennessee-----	6.6	6.4	6.1	6.3	6.1	<sup>1</sup> 5.7	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.5
Utah-----	5.1	5.5	5.2	4.7	5.4	5.4	5.0	---	---	---
Virginia-----	9.2	8.6	8.6	8.3	8.7	8.5	8.5	8.1	7.9	7.7
Wisconsin-----	8.1	7.2	8.4	8.2	7.4	---	---	---	---	---
Wyoming-----	5.3	5.3	4.8	5.4	5.1	5.4	5.0	<sup>1</sup> 5.4	4.7	<sup>1</sup> 5.1

<sup>1</sup>Data incomplete.<sup>2</sup>Data include 16 decrees of separate maintenance.

it can be seen that there is a slight tendency for the duration to increase. Comparisons between a given median and a median for the immediately preceding year indicate that out of 144 such pairs of medians, 84 (58.3 percent) represented an increase; 38 (26.4 percent) a decline, and 22 (15.3 percent) were the same. This pattern could be even better observed when 3-year moving averages of the medians were computed for each State. In this manner, minor fluctuations disappeared and the underlying pattern stood out more distinctly. There were 95 possible comparisons, of these averages; of these, 67 showed an increase, 21 a decline, and 7 showed no observable change.

Eleven of the States listed in table R have reported data on duration of marriage for each year of the decade 1954-63. In 1963 a total of

61,947 divorces were granted in these 11 States combined. Medians and quartiles of duration of marriage were computed for each year of the decade for this group of States (table S). These figures also indicate that there was a comparatively small but constant increase in the duration at decree. The first quartile changed very little if at all. During the decade, the 25 percent of couples that had the shortest duration were divorced within 3 years or less after marriage. The median, or second quartile, increased slightly—from 6.1 in 1954 and 5.9 in 1955 to 6.7 in 1962 and 6.8 in 1963; the range between the median and the first quartile increased from 3.4 years in 1954 to 3.9 in 1963. Thus the second 25 percent of divorced couples covered a slightly wider time interval in 1963 than a decade earlier. The largest

Table S. Median and quartile duration of marriage to decree: total of 11 selected States, 1954-63

[The following States are included and reported duration of marriage for each year: Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wyoming]

Year decree granted	Duration of marriage			Inter-quartile range
	First quartile	Median	Third quartile	
1963-----	2.9	6.8	14.4	11.5
1962-----	3.0	6.7	14.0	11.0
1961-----	3.0	6.6	13.6	10.6
1960-----	2.9	6.7	13.3	10.4
1959-----	2.9	6.6	13.4	10.5
1958-----	2.8	6.5	13.2	10.4
1957-----	2.8	6.3	13.0	10.2
1956-----	2.7	6.1	12.5	9.8
1955-----	2.6	5.9	11.8	9.2
1954-----	2.7	6.1	11.8	9.1

increase occurred in the third quartile which grew from 11.8 years of duration to 14.4 years, and the range between the median and the third quartile increased from 5.7 years to 7.6 years (fig. 9). The interquartile range between the first and the third quartiles increased from 9.1 years to 11.5. Finally, changes occurred to the 25 percent of couples with the longest duration of marriage. In 1954 this group included all couples with more than 11.8 years of duration, but in 1963 only those with more than 14.4 years were included in this category.

#### Likelihood of Divorce by Duration of Marriage

Duration-specific divorce rates cannot be computed because national divorce data by duration of marriage are available only for 1960 and for some of the years prior to 1933. Data on the total married population classified by duration of marriage are available only for 1948 and, with some qualifications, for 1952.<sup>10</sup>

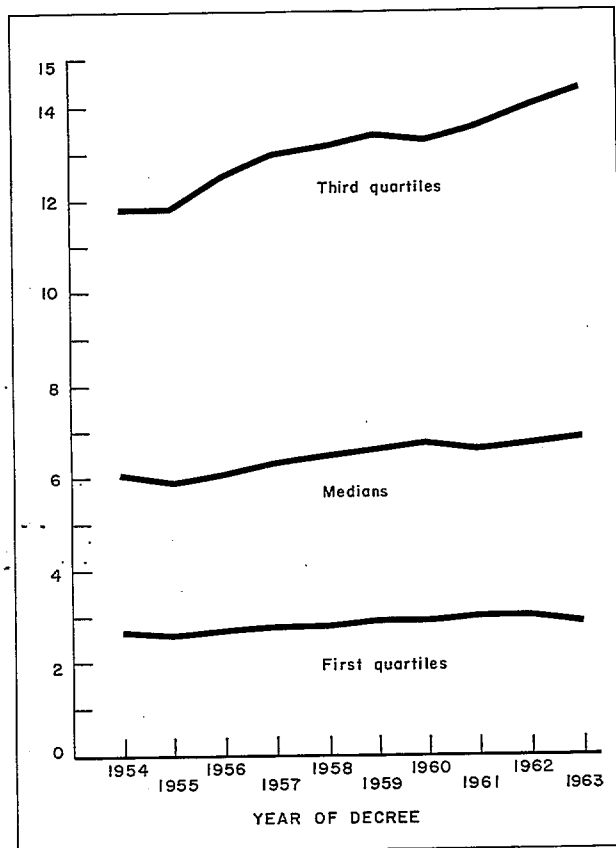


Figure 9. Trend of the median and quartile duration of marriage at decree: total of 11 States, 1954-63.

Although exact values could not be computed, a matrix of approximations of duration-specific rates was prepared in order to reveal the existing interrelationships (table 6). Methods for computing the approximations are discussed in the appendix.

In table 6 the rows refer to the divorce year shown in the stub. For all years included in the computations, the rates are highest 1 or 2 years after marriage, reaching in a few cases more than 25 divorces per 1,000 couples. Afterwards the rates decline, and a rate for a longer duration of marriage is, almost without exception, lower than that for the adjacent shorter duration. Also the rates can be classified according to the time the couple was married. They refer not to calendar years but to 12-month periods from July 1 of one

year to June 30 of the subsequent year, both years shown in the stub of the table. Divorces of couples married during the same 12-month period take place during various calendar years. For example, for the group married in 1952-53, the divorce rate for couples married less than 1 year is found in the row for decrees granted in 1953, that for couples married for 1 year in the row for 1954 divorces, and so forth. Thus, upward slanting diagonals comprise rates for the same marriage cohort. These rates present the same pattern as rates arranged by year of decree: with very few exceptions they are highest after 1 or 2 years of marriage and decline with increasing duration. Rates for a duration of less than 1 year are always lower than those for 1 year of duration, but the two rates are not quite comparable, as couples that divorced within 1 year after marriage had a very short period of time to quarrel, separate, decide to file a divorce petition, and wait for the decree to be granted.

The findings based on the approximations of the divorce rates by duration of marriage closely correspond to the available information about the likelihood of divorce by age of husband and of wife—the longer the duration and the older the age, the lower the likelihood of divorce.

## CHILDREN INVOLVED IN DIVORCE CASES

### Number of Children Involved

It is estimated that the couples divorced in the United States during 1963 had a total of 583,000 children, or 1.36 children per divorce, and that 8.5 children were involved in divorce per 1,000 children under 18 in the Nation. Estimates of the number of children of divorced couples are available for 11 years, beginning with 1953. At that time, 330,000 children were involved in divorce cases, or 0.85 per divorce, and the involvement rate was 6.4 (table T).

Between 1953 and 1963, the number of divorce decrees granted annually increased by 9.7 percent, but the number of children involved increased by 76.7 percent; from 1962 to 1963 these increases were 3.6 and 8.6 percent, respectively. The trends in the numbers of decrees and of children are shown in figure 10.

Some factors that contributed to the growth of the number of children involved in divorce cases are shown in table U. The proportion of divorces with children involved increased in the reporting States from 45.5 to 61.6 percent, while the number

Table T. Estimated number of children involved in divorces and annulments: United States, 1953-63

[Refers only to events occurring within the United States. Figures for 1960-63 estimated from frequencies based on sample; those for other years estimating from total counts. For method of estimating, see appendix.]

Year	All divorces and annulments	Estimated number of children involved	Average number of children per decree	Rate per 1,000 children under 18
1963-----	428,000	583,000	1.36	8.5
1962-----	413,000	537,000	1.30	8.0
1961-----	414,000	501,000	1.21	7.6
1960-----	393,000	463,000	1.18	7.2
1959-----	395,000	468,000	1.18	7.5
1958-----	368,000	398,000	1.08	6.5
1957-----	381,000	379,000	0.99	6.4
1956-----	382,000	361,000	0.95	6.3
1955-----	377,000	347,000	0.92	6.3
1954-----	379,000	341,000	0.90	6.4
1953-----	390,000	330,000	0.85	6.4

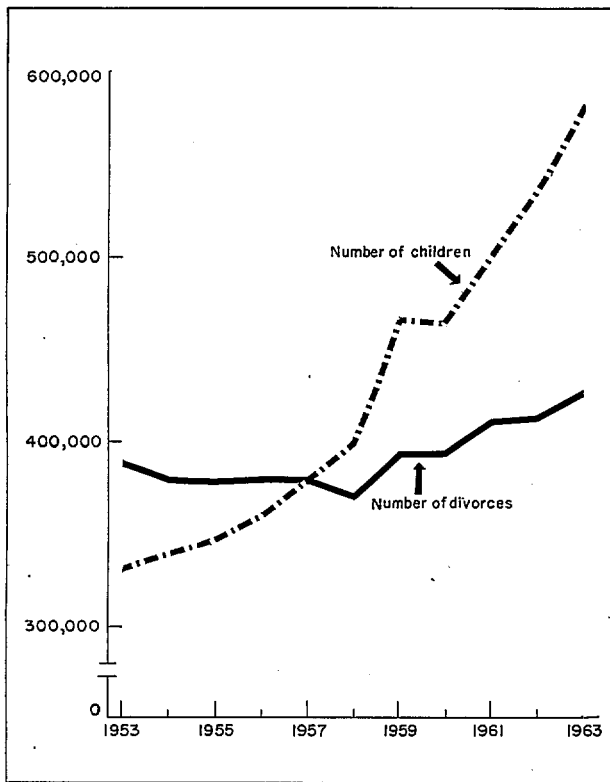


Figure 10. Number of divorces and number of children reported in divorce and annulment cases: United States, 1953-63.

Table U. Proportion of divorces and annulments with children involved: total reporting States, 1953-63

[Figures for 1960-63 based on sample data; those for 1953-59 based on total counts]

Year	Number of reporting States	Percent of decrees with children involved	Ratio of children per decree with children
1963-----	22	61.6	2.16
1962-----	21	60.2	2.14
1961-----	20	60.3	2.06
1960-----	50	56.7	2.08
1959-----	16	59.1	2.00
1958-----	12	55.1	1.96
1957-----	23	50.9	1.95
1956-----	22	48.9	1.93
1955-----	22	48.1	1.92
1954-----	22	47.8	1.88
1953-----	22	45.5	1.86

of children per divorce with children involved increased from 1.86 to 2.16. The increase in the proportion of divorced couples reporting children (or, conversely, the decline in the proportion of childless couples in divorce courts) was 35.4 percent, while the increase of the ratio of children per divorce with children was 16.1 percent. This indicates that the decline in the proportion of couples who reported no children contributed most to the increase in the number of children involved in divorce.

In the registration States combined, 202,800 children were involved in divorce cases during 1963, yielding a child-divorce ratio of 1.33, approximately the same as was estimated for the entire Nation. Data for the DRA and for each registration State are shown in table V. The number of children involved is by and large associated with the number of decrees granted, but some variation can be observed, e.g., the highest mean number of children per decree was 1.85 in Hawaii and the lowest, 1.15 in Tennessee. On the average, then, two couples divorced in Hawaii reported more children than three couples divorced in Tennessee (3.70 and 3.45).

Children's involvement rates for the registration States were computed for the first time from 1963 data (table V). In the DRA 7.8 children per 1,000 children under 18 were reported in divorce cases; for the individual States this rate varied from 5.0 per 1,000 (in Wisconsin) to 13.6 (in Wyoming).

There are two measures of the impact of the divorce upon children: the mean number of children per divorce and the involvement rate per 1,000 population under 18 years of age. No association can be observed between these measures because high rates are found in States with low averages (e.g., 11.6 and 1.24 in Oregon); some States with low rates have high averages (e.g., 5.0 and 1.59 in Wisconsin), others have low averages (e.g., 6.0 and 1.18 in Virginia).

#### Distribution of Divorces

##### by Number of Children Reported

Almost two-thirds of all couples divorced in 1963 reported children, and only 38.4 percent had no children under 18 (table W). The latter included

Table V. Number of children involved in divorces and annulments: divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Refers to children under 18 years of age except as noted. Estimated from frequencies based on sample. For method of estimating, see appendix ]

Area	All divorces and annulments	Estimated number of children involved	Average number or children per decree	Rate per 1,000 children under 18
Divorce-registration area-----	152,594	202,800	1.33	7.8
Alabama-----	12,410	16,400	1.32	12.4
Alaska <sup>1</sup> -----	929	1,200	1.29	11.5
Georgia-----	10,605	13,000	1.23	7.9
Hawaii <sup>2</sup> -----	1,514	2,800	1.85	10.3
Idaho <sup>3</sup> -----	2,702	3,500	1.30	12.8
Iowa-----	4,992	7,800	1.56	7.8
Kansas <sup>4</sup> -----	5,428	7,900	1.46	9.9
Maryland-----	6,230	7,600	1.22	6.1
Michigan-----	17,450	22,600	1.30	7.3
Missouri-----	12,030	14,400	1.20	9.5
Montana-----	1,915	2,600	1.36	9.5
Nebraska <sup>3</sup> -----	2,444	3,200	1.31	6.0
Ohio-----	23,740	31,600	1.33	8.5
Oregon-----	6,215	7,700	1.24	11.6
Pennsylvania-----	14,770	22,200	1.50	5.7
Rhode Island-----	1,054	1,600	1.52	5.3
South Dakota-----	957	1,400	1.46	5.1
Tennessee <sup>5</sup> -----	10,235	11,800	1.15	8.6
Utah-----	2,658	4,400	1.66	10.5
Virginia <sup>6</sup> -----	8,110	9,600	1.18	6.0
Wisconsin-----	4,844	7,700	1.59	5.0
Wyoming-----	1,362	1,800	1.32	13.6

<sup>1</sup>Number of children under 21 affected.

<sup>2</sup>Number of minor children.

<sup>3</sup>Number of children affected by decree.

<sup>4</sup>Number of children.

<sup>5</sup>Number of children under 18 of this marriage.

<sup>6</sup>Number of minor children affected.

couples that had no children because they were only recently married, couples to whom no children have been born irrespective of the length of marriage, and couples that had been married for many years and had grownup children. Because of the composite character of the childless group, there are many factors that may have affected its decline during the last decade. The proportion of couples reporting no children varied considerably

among the States, from less than one-fourth (24.5 percent in Rhode Island) to almost one-half (45.2 percent in Missouri). In no State did the divorces of childless couples comprise more than one-half of all divorces. In 1956 and earlier years, however, in the reporting States combined this proportion was more than 50 percent. This indicates a rapid decline of the proportion of childless divorced couples.

Table W. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments, by number of children reported: divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data. Refers to children under 18 years of age except as noted. Computed on totals excluding figures of number of children not stated]

Area	Number of children reported							
	Total	None	1	2	3	4	5	6+
Divorce-registration area-----	100.0	38.4	23.9	18.7	10.7	5.0	2.0	1.4
Alabama-----	100.0	37.0	26.3	17.8	10.6	5.1	1.8	1.3
Alaska <sup>1</sup> -----	100.0	41.8	20.3	18.8	10.1	5.4	2.5	1.1
Georgia-----	100.0	38.4	26.5	19.6	9.4	3.7	1.6	0.9
Hawaii <sup>2</sup> -----	100.0	28.6	20.6	20.8	13.3	8.5	4.5	3.6
Idaho <sup>3</sup> -----	100.0	39.2	23.7	17.7	11.5	3.8	2.4	1.6
Iowa-----	100.0	33.2	23.5	18.8	12.6	6.8	3.0	2.2
Kansas <sup>4</sup> -----	100.0	36.4	22.6	18.8	12.0	5.9	2.4	1.9
Maryland-----	100.0	38.5	24.8	21.3	9.7	4.1	1.1	0.6
Michigan-----	100.0	40.0	21.0	19.7	11.9	4.7	1.6	1.0
Missouri-----	100.0	45.2	21.2	15.9	9.7	5.0	1.7	1.3
Montana-----	100.0	38.7	22.9	18.7	10.2	5.1	3.1	1.4
Nebraska <sup>3</sup> -----	100.0	40.4	22.0	17.5	11.7	4.7	2.1	1.7
Ohio-----	100.0	39.3	23.0	18.7	9.9	5.4	2.2	1.5
Oregon-----	100.0	41.2	22.6	18.3	10.0	5.4	1.7	0.8
Pennsylvania-----	100.0	26.5	31.7	20.4	13.3	5.0	1.4	1.7
Rhode Island-----	100.0	24.5	33.3	23.7	10.4	4.6	2.6	0.9
South Dakota-----	100.0	36.1	21.3	22.2	9.9	5.7	2.1	2.6
Tennessee <sup>5</sup> -----	100.0	43.8	24.7	15.7	8.9	3.8	1.5	1.5
Utah-----	100.0	30.7	24.4	18.4	13.2	7.0	3.7	2.5
Virginia <sup>6</sup> -----	100.0	42.2	23.4	18.5	9.2	4.0	2.1	0.7
Wisconsin-----	100.0	33.2	22.7	19.7	12.2	5.9	3.2	3.0
Wyoming-----	100.0	39.6	22.6	20.0	9.9	5.3	1.3	1.4

<sup>1</sup>Number of children under 21 affected.

<sup>2</sup>Number of minor children.

<sup>3</sup>Number of children affected by decree.

<sup>4</sup>Number of children.

<sup>5</sup>Number of children under 18 of this marriage.

<sup>6</sup>Number of minor children affected.

Among divorced couples who reported children, the modal number was one child in all registration States, except Hawaii and South Dakota, where it was two children. The proportion of divorces with higher numbers of children declined considerably with each additional child, until it reached 2 percent for couples with five children (fig. 11). The remaining group (with six children or more) included 1.4 percent of the total divorces, varying from 0.6 percent in Maryland to 3.6 percent in Hawaii. The 1,967 couples included in that

category had the following numbers of children:

1,207 couples had 6 children  
 416 couples had 7 children  
 191 couples had 8 children  
 92 couples had 9 children  
 24 couples had 10 children  
 14 couples had 11 children  
 20 couples had 12 children  
 1 couple had 13 children  
 1 couple had 14 children  
 1 couple had 18 children



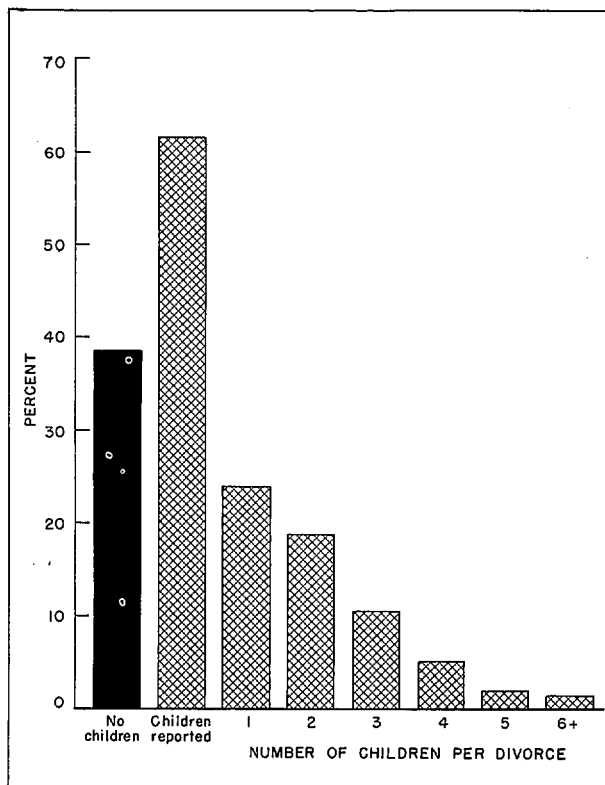


Figure II. Percent of divorces and annulments, by number of children reported: divorce-registration area, 1963.

### Number of Children Reported and Duration of Marriage

The number of children reported depends in part on the duration of marriage of the divorced couple. If the duration is very short, the couple usually does not have many children; if the duration is very long, all or some children tend to be over 18 years of age and not included in these statistics.

The relationship between number of children and duration is not perfect. Children from earlier marriages, when living with the couple, and adopted children are reported in most States together with children born to the divorced couple. Therefore, a small percentage of couples divorced less than 1 year after marriage reported three children or more (table X). On the other hand, some couples remain childless throughout their married life, and one in four reported no children in the marriage-duration category where the proportion of the childless was the lowest (10 through 14 years).

Table X also indicates that there is no linear association between duration and number of children reported. The percentage of divorces with no children reported declined from 84.8 when the duration is less than a year to 24.4 when the du-

Table X. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments, by number of children reported according to duration of marriage: divorce-registration area, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data]

Duration of marriage	All divorces and annulments	Number of children reported			
		None	1	2	3+
		Percent distribution			
Total-----	100.0	38.4	23.9	18.7	19.0
Under 1 year-----	100.0	84.8	11.2	1.7	2.3
1-2 years-----	100.0	57.5	34.6	6.3	1.5
3-4 years-----	100.0	38.5	35.5	20.5	5.5
5-9 years-----	100.0	28.7	22.0	25.9	23.5
10-14 years-----	100.0	24.4	15.9	23.2	36.5
15 years and over-----	100.0	34.5	19.2	19.5	26.8

ration is 10-14 years, but then it increased to 34.5 in the group with the longest duration. Divorces with one child increased from a minimum of 11.2 percent for those married less than a year to 35.5 percent, then declined to 15.9 percent when marriages had lasted 10-14 years, and increased again in the category with the longest duration. Divorces with two and with three children or more increased from very low percentages when the duration was short to a high point of 25.9 and 36.5 percent, respectively, and declined afterwards.

## LEGAL GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE

### Reporting and Tabulation

Legal grounds for which divorce degrees were granted are in all cases known, or easily ascertainable, to the clerks of court in charge of the divorce records. Still, in a small percentage of cases legal grounds are not stated. For the DRA this item was 96.9 percent complete, but for two States the level of completeness was below 85 percent. In four States (Hawaii, Kansas, Ohio, and Rhode Island) the completeness was 100 percent.

Typically, a divorce decree is granted on one legal ground, but occasionally two grounds or more

are mentioned. For 1963 data legal grounds were tabulated with more detail than for any earlier year. First, a provisional list of 29 specific grounds was prepared and all legal grounds mentioned on the records were tabulated. For 1962 and preceding years only four legal grounds were used—adultery, cruelty (including indignities), desertion (including abandonment), and nonsupport—while all remaining decrees were grouped under "other grounds;" only one ground per decree was coded.

The provisional detailed tabulation of legal grounds was examined and consolidated into 11 categories—10 specific grounds, each mentioned on at least 900 divorce decrees, and the "other" category. In three cases related grounds were combined: bigamy and fraud; desertion and abandonment; failure to provide, gross neglect, neglect of duty, and nonsupport. About 13 percent of the decrees were granted on two grounds or more, thus making the number of legal grounds larger than the number of decrees (table Y).

The difference between the two figures is small in most States, but in two (Kansas and Ohio) it is pronounced. This is due to a very large number of decrees granted on a particular combination of grounds: in Kansas 3,230 decrees and in Ohio 8,360 decrees were granted for cruelty and gross neglect.

Table Y. Decrees and legal grounds: divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data]

State	Decrees	Legal grounds	Ratio	State	Decrees	Legal grounds	Ratio
DRA-----	152,594	172,810	1.13	Montana-----	1,915	1,926	1.01
Alabama-----	12,410	12,540	1.01	Nebraska-----	2,444	2,718	1.11
Alaska-----	929	977	1.05	Ohio-----	23,740	32,920	1.39
Georgia-----	10,605	10,785	1.02	Oregon-----	6,215	6,300	1.01
Hawaii-----	1,514	1,542	1.02	Pennsylvania---	14,770	16,320	1.10
Idaho-----	2,702	2,774	1.03	Rhode Island----	1,054	1,120	1.06
Iowa-----	4,992	5,090	1.02	South Dakota----	957	1,014	1.06
Kansas-----	5,428	8,874	1.63	Tennessee-----	10,235	11,660	1.14
Maryland-----	6,230	6,470	1.04	Utah-----	2,658	2,704	1.02
Michigan-----	17,450	18,900	1.08	Virginia-----	8,110	9,100	1.12
Missouri-----	12,030	12,600	1.05	Wisconsin-----	4,844	4,972	1.03
				Wyoming-----	1,362	1,504	1.10

## Legal Grounds and True Causes

Legal grounds for decree must be distinguished from the true causes of family disruption. In divorce cases the selection of the legal grounds depends on the laws of the State where the case is tried. The legal ground may or may not correspond to the true reason for the divorce. Grounds that are easy to prove in court proceedings and least unpleasant to make public are very often used. This is the case of cruelty, particularly in States where mental cruelty is sufficient for obtaining divorce, and of indignities in the few States where this ground exists.

The true cause of marital discord that leads to divorce is not given on the divorce records. Research in the field of causes of family disruption was conducted by several investigators,<sup>11,12</sup> and their findings show that the causes of disruption are often very different from the legal grounds alleged in court. According to the authors, adultery and drunkenness are among the major causes of family disruption.

## Distribution of Divorces by Legal Grounds

The 10 legal grounds listed in table 7 cover more than 99 percent of decrees granted in the DRA, and in only one State is this percentage less than 95. About three-fourths of all divorces in the registration States were granted on three legal grounds: desertion or abandonment, neglect or nonsupport, and cruelty. In many States, one particular ground was reported on 90 percent or more of divorce decrees. This is the case of cruelty in Idaho, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, Oregon, Utah, and Wisconsin; of incompatibility in Alaska; of desertion in Virginia; and of indignities in Wyoming. Small numbers of divorces were granted on all remaining grounds. On the ground of adultery, a sizable proportion of divorces (16 percent) was granted in one State only (Maryland). For bigamy and fraud the highest percentage was 6.4 in Montana; for conviction of crime, 2.1 percent in Iowa; for drunkenness, 2.5 percent in Georgia. There are three grounds for which divorces cannot be obtained in most States but which are mentioned in a high percentage of cases of a few States: separation was mentioned in 43 percent of divorces granted in Maryland, incompatibility in 96 percent

of decrees from Alaska, and indignities in over 80 percent of decrees granted in Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Wyoming.

## Multiple Legal Grounds

Most decrees are granted on one legal ground, but in a small proportion of cases two or three grounds are alleged. Almost 90 percent of decrees with more than one ground were granted in 6 of the 22 registration States: Kansas, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Virginia. The combinations of grounds that are most widely used are shown in table Z.

The figures in table Z were prepared irrespective of the order in which the grounds were mentioned; thus, "nonsupport and cruelty" was added to "cruelty and nonsupport." Both nonsupport and desertion include related grounds called by different names, as discussed in the section "Reporting and Tabulation." Cruelty is not among legal grounds of divorce listed in the laws of Virginia, but courts use this term to designate certain types of desertion.

Grounds included in the four most widely used combinations are in most cases very broad and unspecific. One may wonder what does "cruelty and indignities" mean as compared with "cruelty" and with "indignities" taken separately or what "cruelty" adds to the grounds of nonsupport and of desertion. On the other hand, the combination of desertion with nonsupport may indicate that the deserting spouse is often unwilling to support the deserted family.

## Legal Grounds and Duration of Marriage

There is an association between the duration of marriage at divorce and the ground for which the decree was granted. This is due in part to periods of time prescribed by law as necessary for some legal grounds to arise. A given number of months or years must elapse for desertion, nonsupport, and several other causes to become legal grounds for divorce as defined by the statutes. In part, the differences in median duration also may be due to different types of marital strain occurring in various phases of married life.

Table Z. Multiple legal grounds of divorce: divorce-registration area and selected States, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data]

Area	All multiple grounds	Cruelty and non-support	Desertion and non-support	Desertion and cruelty	Cruelty and indignities	Other
DRA-----	20,216	13,160	1,494	1,250	1,138	3,174
Kansas-----	3,446	3,230	102	54	-	60
Michigan-----	1,450	980	40	320	-	110
Ohio-----	9,180	8,360	580	-	-	240
Pennsylvania-----	1,550	-	-	20	1,010	520
Tennessee-----	1,425	235	700	335	-	155
Virginia-----	990	15	5	1260	-	720
Other-----	2,175	350	67	261	128	1,369

<sup>1</sup>Cruelty is not a legal ground provided by the statutes of Virginia, but the courts designate by this term certain types of desertion.

For 1963 data on legal grounds were not tabulated by duration of marriage, but unpublished statistics for 1961 may serve to illustrate differences in duration for different grounds (table AA). Median duration of marriage for couples divorced on selected legal grounds may be compared with medians for all divorces, irrespective of the legal grounds. As medians for individual legal-ground categories were computed from grouped data, the State medians were, for the sake of comparability, recomputed using the same grouped data and may differ slightly from medians published elsewhere, which were computed from data by single years of duration.

Table AA indicates that, as a rule, the median duration of marriage is comparatively short when the decree is granted for adultery, cruelty, and "other grounds," and comparatively long when desertion or drunkenness are alleged. No clear-cut pattern could be detected for divorces granted for nonsupport and related grounds.

Because of the small number of divorces granted on the ground of adultery, median duration could be computed for five States only. All five medians were considerably below the respective State averages.

When cruelty or indignities were the grounds for decree, the median duration of marriage was shorter than the corresponding State medians in 13 out of 17 cases. However, in most cases (12 out of 17) the difference between the two medians was quite small, 0.2 points or less, and this was true irrespective of the direction of this difference. The similarity of the two medians is associated with the high percentage of divorces granted on the ground of cruelty or indignities in the majority of the reporting States.

The ground of desertion, including abandonment, was associated with medians that were higher, often much higher, than the State averages. This was true in 17 out of 19 States, and the largest difference between the two medians was over 10 years (in Iowa). The two States with exceptionally low medians for desertion (Kansas and Montana) had unexpectedly high medians for divorces granted for cruelty.

When divorces were granted on the ground of drunkenness, median duration of marriage at time of decree was much higher than the comparable State medians. However, the number of divorces granted for drunkenness was small in most States,

and median duration could be computed for two States only (Alabama and Georgia).

There is a great deal of variation in the median duration of marriage when divorces were granted for nonsupport or related grounds: six out of eight such medians were lower than the State averages and two were higher.

In most States the median duration of marriage was quite short when decrees were granted on grounds other than those already discussed. In Michigan and Montana it was less than 1 year. This may be due to the inclusion in this category of annulments and of divorces granted for causes that arose before marriage. In two States a high proportion of decrees granted on "other grounds" were rendered for a specific individual ground, important in the given States but not found in many other States: incompatibility in Alaska (711 decrees out of 843 granted for "other grounds") and

a period of voluntary separation in Maryland (540 out of 1,000). Because of the popularity of incompatibility as a legal ground, the median duration of marriage in Alaska for the "other-grounds" category was very similar to the overall median for the State. In Maryland the median for the "other-grounds" category was very high (11.1 years), which cannot be explained by the legal requirements for decrees granted for voluntary separation, as separation becomes a legal ground after a duration of only 18 months.

## THE PLAINTIFF AND PARTY TO WHOM DECREE GRANTED

The two related items of information who was the plaintiff in the divorce suit and to whom the decree was granted are reported with a high degree of completeness by all registration States

Table AA. Median duration of marriage, by legal ground of divorce: each registration State, 1961

[3y place of occurrence. Based on sample data.]

State	All decrees	Adultery	Cruelty	Desertion	Drunk-ness	Non-support	Other
Alabama-----	7.5	4.0	6.4	9.3	9.0	*	1.4
Alaska-----	6.6	*	*	*	-	*	6.5
Georgia-----	6.9	*	6.0	9.8	15.0	*	4.5
Hawaii-----	6.6	*	6.4	11.5	-	16.3	14.7
Idaho-----	4.7	*	4.7	16.3	*	*	15.7
Iowa-----	5.6	*	5.5	15+	*	*	3.8
Kansas-----	6.8	*	7.0	5.0	*	6.9	14.0
Maryland-----	9.6	7.2	*	9.8	-	-	11.1
Michigan-----	8.2	*	8.1	15+	*	8.1	0.9
Missouri-----	6.7	*	6.5	8.5	*	5.4	5.0
Montana-----	5.2	*	6.0	5.2	-	*	0.8
Nebraska-----	6.9	*	7.3	9.8	*	5.1	11.9
Oregon-----	6.5	*	6.5	12.5	*	*	2.4
Pennsylvania-----	8.7	7.5	7.8	12.9	-	-	7.5
South Dakota-----	6.6	*	6.5	19.4	*	*	*
Tennessee-----	6.3	4.0	5.8	8.0	-	10.4	*
Utah-----	5.3	*	5.5	11.5	*	14.5	4.6
Virginia <sup>2</sup> -----	8.8	6.7	*	8.9	-	-	8.6
Wisconsin-----	8.6	-	8.4	9.6	*	16.3	10.4
Wyoming-----	4.8	*	4.7	18.9	*	*	*

<sup>1</sup>Less than 100 cases.

<sup>2</sup>Cruelty is not a legal ground provided by the statutes of Virginia, but the courts designate by this term certain types of desertion.

except Nebraska, where information on the party to whom the decree was granted is not collected on the divorce records. The question concerning the plaintiff was filled out on 97.9 percent of all divorce records from the registration States combined. The comparable percentage for the party to whom the decree was granted was 95.4, and, when data from Nebraska are omitted, this percentage increased to 96.9.

In the overwhelming majority of the divorce cases the plaintiff is the wife. Even in cases where the true reason for divorce arose because of the wife's fault, she is often permitted to file the application for divorce. In almost three-fourths of divorce cases in 1963, the plaintiff was the wife (table AB).

The number of divorce cases where the plaintiff was neither husband nor wife is very small: in 1963 there were 14 such cases in the entire DRA, about 1 per 10,000 divorces. Here the plaintiff usually is a parent or guardian who files the petition for an annulment of marriage of minors.

There is no indication of association between the plaintiff and the duration of marriage since median durations of marriage are practically identical for plaintiff husbands and plaintiff wives, 7.80 and 7.86 years, respectively.

In 93.2 percent of cases the decrees were granted to the plaintiffs. Of the remaining decrees some were granted to husband and wife together; they constitute 2.8 percent of the total, and the

Table AB. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments, by plaintiff according to party to whom decree was granted: divorce-registration area, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data]

Plaintiff	Party to whom decree granted			
	Total	Husband	Wife	Husband and wife
Total-	100.0	25.6	71.7	2.8
Husband---	28.0	24.3	2.8	0.8
Wife-----	72.0	1.2	68.9	1.9

great majority of these divorces occurred in Alabama and Georgia. The remaining 4.0 percent were granted to the defendants (table AB).

In 86.9 percent of divorces initiated by the husband the decree was granted to the husband, while for wives the comparable percentage is 95.6. In 10.1 of divorce cases where the husband is the plaintiff, the decree is granted to the wife, and in 1.7 percent of cases where the wife is the plaintiff, decrees are granted to the husband. Thus, plaintiff husbands are six times more likely than wives to lose the case and to have the decrees awarded to their spouses.

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Population bases given in table 1 of U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Family Status, March 1964 and 1963," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 135, Washington, D.C., Apr. 1965.

<sup>2</sup>Willcox, Walter F.: *The Divorce Problem*. New York. Columbia University, 1897. pp. 37-38 and 47.

<sup>3</sup>National Center for Health Statistics: Divorce statistics analysis. *Vital and Health Statistics*. PHS Pub. No. 1000-Series 21-No. 7. Public Health Service. Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, Dec. 1965.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census: *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, Nos. 96, 105, 114, 122, and 135.

<sup>5</sup>Because estimates of State populations by color were not prepared by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, population bases were taken from the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, *Statistical Bulletin*, Vol. 46, Apr. 1965.

<sup>6</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census: *U.S. Census of Population, 1960*. Vol. I, *Characteristics of the Population*, Part 1. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963. table 176.

<sup>7</sup>National Center for Health Statistics: Op cit., pp. 15-16.

<sup>8</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census: *Marriage and Divorce, 1867-1906*, Part II. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1908. tables 11 and 12.

<sup>9</sup>Table 2-AC in National Office of Vital Statistics, *Vital Statistics of the United States*, Vol. I. for 1958 and 1959, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960 and 1961.

<sup>10</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census: *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, Nos. 23 and 150.

<sup>11</sup>Harnsworth, H. C., and Minnis, M. S.: Nonstatutory causes of divorce: the lawyer's point of view. *Marriage and Family Living* XVII(4):316:21.

<sup>12</sup>Thomas, J. L.: Catholic family disorganization. *Contributions to Urban Sociology*. Chicago. The University of Chicago Press, 1964. pp. 527-40.

<sup>13</sup>National Office of Vital Statistics: Mortality from selected causes by marital status: United States, 1949-51. *Vital Statistics-Special Reports*, Vol. 39, No. 7. Public Health Service. Washington, D.C., May 1956.

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Table 1. Number and rate of divorces and annulments: United States and each region, division, and State, 1959-63

[By place of occurrence. Data are counts of decrees granted supplied by States except as noted. Rates per 1,000 population in each area, enumerated as of April 1 for 1960 and estimated as of July 1 for all other years.]

Region, division, and State	Number					Rate				
	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959
United States <sup>1,2</sup>	428,000	413,000	414,000	393,000	395,000	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.2
Regions:										
Northeast-----	41,000	40,000	38,000	<sup>3</sup> 39,000	39,000	0.9	0.9	0.8	<sup>3</sup> 0.9	0.9
North Central <sup>2</sup> -----	114,000	110,000	114,000	106,000	<sup>2</sup> 108,000	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.1
South-----	161,000	<sup>2</sup> 155,000	<sup>2</sup> 160,000	<sup>2</sup> 152,000	<sup>2</sup> 153,000	2.8	<sup>2</sup> 2.7	<sup>2</sup> 2.8	<sup>2</sup> 2.8	<sup>2</sup> 2.8
West <sup>1</sup> -----	<sup>2</sup> 112,000	<sup>2</sup> 108,000	<sup>2</sup> 102,000	<sup>3</sup> 96,000	<sup>2</sup> 95,000	<sup>2</sup> 3.6	<sup>2</sup> 3.6	<sup>2</sup> 3.5	<sup>3</sup> 3.4	<sup>2</sup> 3.4
Northeast:										
New England-----	14,421	14,156	13,349	<sup>3</sup> 12,842	12,917	1.3	1.3	1.3	<sup>3</sup> 1.2	1.2
Middle Atlantic-----	26,215	26,190	25,124	26,255	26,028	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8
North Central:										
East North Central---	<sup>2</sup> 82,038	<sup>2</sup> 79,566	<sup>2</sup> 84,162	<sup>2</sup> 77,639	<sup>3</sup> 74,408	<sup>2</sup> 2.2	<sup>2</sup> 2.2	<sup>2</sup> 2.3	<sup>2</sup> 2.1	*
West North Central---	31,801	30,533	<sup>3</sup> 29,647	<sup>3</sup> 28,533	28,755	2.0	2.0	<sup>3</sup> 1.9	<sup>3</sup> 1.9	1.9
South:										
South Atlantic-----	63,429	60,802	59,264	55,526	<sup>3</sup> 55,237	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.1	<sup>3</sup> 2.2
East South Central---	35,502	34,532	<sup>3</sup> 39,718	<sup>3</sup> 39,138	<sup>3</sup> 36,176	2.8	2.8	<sup>3</sup> 3.3	*	*
West South Central---	60,907	<sup>2</sup> 58,411	<sup>3</sup> 57,659	<sup>3</sup> 55,000	<sup>2</sup> 58,039	*	*	*	*	*
West:										
Mountain-----	<sup>2</sup> 37,059	<sup>2</sup> 35,851	<sup>2</sup> 32,402	<sup>3</sup> 28,846	<sup>2</sup> 31,275	<sup>2</sup> 4.9	<sup>2</sup> 4.8	<sup>2</sup> 4.5	<sup>3</sup> 4.2	*
Pacific <sup>1</sup> -----	<sup>2</sup> 74,851	<sup>2</sup> 72,289	<sup>3</sup> 69,494	66,395	63,601	<sup>2</sup> 3.2	<sup>2</sup> 3.2	<sup>3</sup> 3.2	3.1	3.1
New England:										
Maine-----	2,207	2,092	2,027	2,168	1,977	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.1
New Hampshire-----	1,373	1,363	1,126	1,119	1,049	2.1	2.2	1.9	1.8	1.8
Vermont-----	501	452	487	463	487	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.3
Massachusetts-----	6,066	6,312	5,836	<sup>3</sup> 5,592	5,458	1.1	1.2	1.1	<sup>3</sup> 1.1	1.1
Rhode Island-----	1,055	921	1,040	954	1,049	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.1	1.2
Connecticut-----	3,219	3,016	2,833	2,546	2,897	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1
Middle Atlantic:										
New York-----	6,312	6,555	6,394	7,235	7,691	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5
New Jersey-----	5,114	5,319	5,124	4,591	4,446	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7
Pennsylvania-----	14,789	14,316	13,606	14,429	13,891	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.2
East North Central:										
Ohio-----	23,731	23,268	22,429	22,960	22,655	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.3
Indiana-----	<sup>2</sup> 15,145	<sup>2</sup> 15,431	<sup>2</sup> 15,241	<sup>2</sup> 12,794	<sup>3</sup> 8,228	<sup>2</sup> 3.2	<sup>2</sup> 3.3	<sup>3</sup> 3.2	<sup>2</sup> 2.7	*
Illinois-----	20,765	18,820	25,973	21,809	<sup>3</sup> 22,700	2.0	1.9	2.6	2.2	<sup>3</sup> 2.3
Michigan-----	17,479	17,500	16,219	16,416	16,168	2.2	2.2	2.0	2.1	2.1
Wisconsin-----	4,918	4,547	4,300	3,660	4,657	1.2	1.1	1.1	0.9	1.2

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Number and rate of divorces and annulments: United States and each region, division, and State, 1959-63—Con.

[By place of occurrence. Data are counts of decrees granted supplied by States except as noted. Rates per 1,000 population in each area, enumerated as of April 1 for 1960 and estimated as of July 1 for all other years.]

Region, division, and State	Number					Rate				
	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959
<b>West North Central:</b>										
Minnesota-----	4,636	4,536	4,227	4,139	3,820	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.1
Iowa-----	5,003	4,739	4,777	4,559	4,594	1.8	1.7	<sup>3</sup> 1.7	<sup>3</sup> 1.7	1.7
Missouri-----	12,652	12,069	<sup>3</sup> 11,633	<sup>3</sup> 11,484	11,824	2.9	2.8	<sup>3</sup> 2.7	<sup>3</sup> 2.7	2.8
North Dakota-----	689	631	633	596	590	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.0
South Dakota-----	953	871	854	794	763	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1
Nebraska-----	2,436	2,357	2,373	2,151	2,201	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.6
Kansas-----	5,432	5,330	5,150	4,810	4,963	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.3
<b>South Atlantic:</b>										
Delaware-----	621	555	593	693	617	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.6	1.4
Maryland-----	<sup>4</sup> 6,402	6,022	5,296	5,140	5,319	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.7
District of Columbia-----	1,214	1,174	1,140	1,142	1,230	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6
Virginia-----	8,101	7,674	7,559	7,368	7,111	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.8
West Virginia-----	3,769	3,814	3,837	3,574	<sup>3</sup> 3,398	2.1	2.1	2.1	1.9	<sup>3</sup> 1.8
North Carolina-----	7,308	6,863	6,440	6,047	6,369	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.4
South Carolina-----	2,535	2,681	3,178	3,068	3,034	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.3
Georgia-----	10,569	9,841	9,539	8,940	8,609	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.2
Florida-----	22,910	22,178	21,682	19,554	19,550	4.1	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.1
<b>East South Central:</b>										
Kentucky-----	7,139	7,243	<sup>3</sup> 7,467	<sup>3</sup> 7,528	<sup>3</sup> 6,888	2.3	2.3	<sup>3</sup> 2.4	*	*
Tennessee-----	10,345	9,522	9,323	9,053	9,205	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.6
Alabama-----	12,566	12,300	17,715	17,320	14,975	3.7	3.7	5.3	5.3	4.7
Mississippi-----	5,452	5,467	5,213	5,237	5,108	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4
<b>West South Central:</b>										
Arkansas-----	6,483	6,283	<sup>3</sup> 5,872	<sup>3</sup> 5,377	<sup>3</sup> 5,617	3.4	3.4	<sup>3</sup> 3.3	*	<sup>3</sup> 3.2
Louisiana-----	<sup>3</sup> 3,415	<sup>3</sup> 4,016	<sup>3</sup> 5,142	<sup>3</sup> 4,142	<sup>3</sup> 3,666	*	*	*	*	*
Oklahoma-----	11,790	<sup>2</sup> 11,194	<sup>2</sup> 11,305	10,749	<sup>2</sup> 13,133	4.8	<sup>2</sup> 4.6	<sup>2</sup> 4.7	4.6	<sup>2</sup> 5.7
Texas-----	39,219	36,918	<sup>3</sup> 35,340	34,732	35,623	3.8	3.6	<sup>3</sup> 3.6	3.6	3.8
<b>Mountain:</b>										
Montana-----	1,909	1,932	2,034	2,006	2,062	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.1
Idaho-----	<sup>5</sup> 2,798	2,547	2,685	2,592	2,652	4.1	3.6	3.9	3.9	4.0
Wyoming-----	1,359	1,344	1,307	1,308	1,220	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.8
Colorado-----	<sup>2</sup> 6,700	<sup>2</sup> 6,700	<sup>2</sup> 5,600	4,728	<sup>2</sup> 5,900	<sup>2</sup> 3.5	<sup>2</sup> 3.5	<sup>2</sup> 3.0	2.7	<sup>2</sup> 3.5
New Mexico-----	<sup>3</sup> 3,470	3,645	<sup>3</sup> 3,220	<sup>3</sup> 2,811	<sup>3</sup> 2,093	<sup>3</sup> 3.5	3.7	<sup>3</sup> 3.3	<sup>3</sup> 3.0	*
Arizona-----	8,482	7,788	6,973	4,780	<sup>2</sup> 6,503	5.6	5.2	4.9	3.7	<sup>2</sup> 5.2
Utah-----	2,659	2,480	2,360	2,166	1,336	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.4	1.5
Nevada-----	9,682	9,415	8,223	8,455	9,509	24.9	26.9	25.9	29.6	34.1
<b>Pacific:</b>										
Washington-----	<sup>2</sup> 9,953	<sup>2</sup> 9,829	<sup>3</sup> 9,355	9,341	9,341	<sup>2</sup> 3.4	<sup>2</sup> 3.3	<sup>3</sup> 3.2	3.3	3.3
Oregon-----	6,180	6,074	6,023	5,720	6,009	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.2	3.4
California-----	56,274	54,011	51,644	49,276	47,572	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.1
Alaska-----	929	904	916	788	679	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.5	3.0
Hawaii-----	1,515	1,471	1,556	1,270	1,378	2.2	2.1	2.4	2.0	2.2

<sup>1</sup>Hawaii included beginning 1960.

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

<sup>3</sup>Data are incomplete.

<sup>4</sup>Includes 102 decrees of limited divorce.

<sup>5</sup>Includes 101 decrees granted in 1962.

Table 2. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments, by age of husband and of wife at time of decree: six selected States, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data. States included in this table reported age at decree with a level of completeness of 85 percent or more]

State	All divorces and annulments	Age at time of decree										
		Under 20 years	20-24 years	25-29 years	30-34 years	35-39 years	40-44 years	45-49 years	50-54 years	55-59 years	60-64 years	65+ years
<b>Husband</b>												
Total, 6 States--	100.0	2.0	15.2	19.2	14.9	13.6	12.3	8.3	6.3	3.6	2.3	2.2
Hawaii-----	100.0	0.7	10.7	17.4	18.6	16.3	14.1	10.2	5.5	3.3	1.7	1.4
Iowa-----	100.0	2.0	18.3	20.5	15.3	12.6	11.2	7.6	5.8	3.3	1.3	2.0
Missouri-----	100.0	2.5	14.6	18.9	14.2	12.9	13.0	7.7	6.9	3.6	2.9	2.7
Rhode Island-----	100.0	0.2	12.5	21.4	15.8	15.1	11.0	9.8	6.7	3.2	2.2	2.1
Tennessee-----	100.0	2.5	16.8	18.9	14.1	13.8	11.9	8.3	5.6	3.7	2.2	2.2
Wisconsin-----	100.0	0.6	12.3	19.4	16.6	14.5	12.3	9.6	6.9	4.2	2.1	1.7
<b>Wife</b>												
Total, 6 States--	100.0	7.7	22.2	17.5	14.0	12.4	10.4	7.0	4.6	2.2	1.0	0.9
Hawaii-----	100.0	3.5	18.8	18.6	17.7	16.1	11.5	7.5	3.6	2.0	0.4	0.2
Iowa-----	100.0	8.1	24.6	17.9	14.0	11.9	9.4	7.0	3.9	1.6	0.7	1.0
Missouri-----	100.0	9.2	20.8	17.0	13.8	11.1	11.1	6.6	5.4	2.3	1.2	1.3
Rhode Island-----	100.0	2.8	20.6	19.5	13.5	14.2	12.0	8.1	5.0	1.4	1.4	1.6
Tennessee-----	100.0	8.7	23.9	17.1	13.7	12.5	9.5	6.9	4.2	2.2	1.1	0.5
Wisconsin-----	100.0	3.7	21.4	18.8	14.1	14.0	10.8	8.1	4.6	2.7	1.1	0.7

Table 3. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments, by race of husband and of wife: eight selected States, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data. States included in this table reported race with a level of completeness of 85 percent or more]

State	Husband				Wife			
	All races	White	Negro	Other	All races	White	Negro	Other
Total, 8 States-----	100.0	87.2	10.9	1.9	100.0	87.0	10.8	2.2
Hawaii-----	100.0	47.7	1.0	51.3	100.0	41.9	0.5	57.7
Iowa-----	100.0	96.8	3.1	0.1	100.0	96.7	2.9	0.3
Missouri-----	100.0	89.5	10.5	-	100.0	89.3	10.7	-
Montana-----	100.0	95.7	1.1	3.2	100.0	95.9	0.8	3.3
Rhode Island-----	100.0	95.0	4.8	0.2	100.0	95.4	4.5	0.1
Tennessee-----	100.0	86.5	13.5	-	100.0	86.5	13.5	0.0
Virginia-----	100.0	79.3	20.6	0.1	100.0	79.4	20.6	0.1
Wisconsin-----	100.0	94.2	5.4	0.4	100.0	94.2	5.1	0.7

Table 4. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments, by number of this marriage of husband and of wife: six selected States, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data. States included in this table reported the number of this marriage with a level of completeness of 85 percent or more. Percent distributions exclude cases with previous marital status not reported]

State	Husband					Wife				
	All marriages	First marriage	Remarriages			All marriages	First marriage	Remarriages		
			Total	2d	3d or more			Total	2d	3d or more
Total, 6 States-----	100.0	72.8	27.2	20.1	7.0	100.0	72.4	27.6	21.2	6.3
Hawaii-----	100.0	75.6	24.4	19.3	5.2	100.0	71.6	28.4	20.6	7.8
Iowa-----	100.0	69.3	30.7	22.0	8.7	100.0	69.4	30.6	22.2	8.3
Missouri-----	100.0	74.3	25.7	17.9	7.8	100.0	73.8	26.2	19.4	6.7
Rhode Island-----	100.0	83.1	16.9	14.0	3.0	100.0	80.8	19.2	16.0	3.2
Tennessee-----	100.0	68.9	31.1	23.5	7.4	100.0	69.6	30.4	24.4	6.0
Wisconsin-----	100.0	78.3	21.7	17.8	3.9	100.0	76.8	23.2	19.1	4.1

Table 5. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments by duration of marriage to time of decree; divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data. Computed on totals excluding figures for duration of marriage not stated]

Area	Total	Duration of marriage					
		Under 1 year	1-4 years				
			Total	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years
		Percent distribution					
Divorce-registration area-----	100.0	5.2	31.2	8.6	8.4	7.5	6.8
Alabama-----	100.0	6.6	29.8	8.5	9.1	6.7	5.5
Alaska-----	100.0	7.5	33.5	10.5	8.8	8.7	5.6
Georgia-----	100.0	8.3	35.0	10.7	10.0	7.8	6.7
Hawaii-----	100.0	6.0	31.4	8.4	6.9	7.8	8.3
Idaho-----	100.0	10.5	39.8	13.9	9.8	8.9	7.2
Iowa-----	100.0	6.8	37.1	10.1	9.7	9.9	7.4
Kansas-----	100.0	8.6	33.5	10.7	8.4	7.8	6.4
Maryland-----	100.0	1.0	19.6	1.9	5.4	6.4	6.0
Michigan-----	100.0	3.2	29.8	7.6	7.6	6.9	7.6
Missouri-----	100.0	7.9	33.2	11.4	8.2	6.5	7.1
Montana-----	100.0	6.9	37.3	12.2	9.9	8.2	7.0
Nebraska-----	100.0	6.8	34.7	10.7	8.7	8.0	7.3
Ohio-----	100.0	4.3	29.8	7.4	8.1	7.1	7.2
Oregon-----	100.0	7.7	37.6	11.7	10.2	9.4	6.3
Pennsylvania-----	100.0	1.8	28.3	6.2	7.8	7.6	6.7
Rhode Island-----	100.0	0.5	27.8	4.8	6.9	7.8	8.2
South Dakota-----	100.0	8.4	33.5	7.9	11.3	7.9	6.4
Tennessee-----	100.0	8.4	33.1	10.5	9.7	7.7	5.1
Utah-----	100.0	9.5	39.7	13.0	11.5	7.7	7.6
Virginia-----	100.0	0.4	27.5	6.6	6.0	8.6	6.4
Wisconsin-----	100.0	2.4	30.5	7.1	7.9	7.6	7.8
Wyoming-----	100.0	9.9	38.9	12.5	11.5	9.2	5.6

Table 5. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments by duration of marriage to time of decree; divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1963—Con.

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data. Computed on totals excluding figures for duration of marriage not stated]

Duration of marriage										
Total	5-9 years					10-14 years	15-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years	30 years and over
	5 years	6 years	7 years	8 years	9 years					
Percent distribution										
23.9	5.7	5.5	5.0	4.0	3.7	14.9	11.5	6.8	3.5	3.0
23.3	5.5	5.8	5.0	3.9	3.0	14.2	11.9	7.3	2.0	4.9
25.0	4.5	5.7	6.0	5.1	3.7	15.8	10.3	4.1	2.6	1.2
21.7	5.3	5.1	4.3	3.4	3.5	13.1	9.7	5.9	3.5	2.8
25.0	6.4	5.6	4.1	5.3	3.7	16.9	9.7	6.7	2.3	2.0
20.9	5.2	4.5	5.1	2.9	3.3	11.5	8.5	4.2	2.6	2.0
22.2	5.6	6.0	4.9	3.1	2.7	12.8	10.1	5.3	3.7	1.9
22.9	5.5	5.2	4.6	3.9	3.6	12.9	9.9	7.2	2.4	2.7
28.2	6.7	7.7	4.8	4.4	4.6	19.3	14.9	9.7	4.0	3.2
25.8	6.4	5.8	4.8	4.7	4.0	15.0	12.1	7.6	3.7	3.0
21.9	4.5	5.2	5.5	3.6	3.1	14.3	10.2	5.9	3.3	3.2
22.4	6.7	3.8	6.1	3.1	2.7	14.7	9.3	5.0	2.8	1.6
22.1	5.0	5.3	4.3	3.4	4.2	14.4	10.5	6.0	3.0	2.5
25.0	6.3	5.8	5.2	4.0	3.8	16.7	11.3	6.8	3.7	2.4
21.3	5.6	5.4	3.9	3.3	3.1	13.2	10.1	5.0	3.0	2.2
24.7	5.8	5.8	5.4	4.3	3.5	15.7	14.4	7.3	4.3	3.4
25.8	5.4	6.0	5.2	5.2	4.0	16.6	13.7	8.1	4.3	3.2
22.9	7.0	4.1	4.6	3.5	3.7	12.4	11.8	6.3	2.6	2.1
22.1	5.6	4.7	4.4	3.7	3.6	13.1	10.4	6.1	3.4	3.4
22.4	5.8	3.9	5.7	4.2	2.8	11.6	8.3	4.8	2.3	1.3
26.6	5.4	4.9	5.7	5.1	5.4	15.9	12.6	8.1	4.9	4.0
24.8	5.6	6.5	4.7	3.8	4.2	16.1	11.9	8.0	4.1	2.3
20.1	4.3	5.0	3.5	3.5	3.9	11.8	9.3	5.2	2.7	2.1

Table 6. Approximations of divorce rates, by duration of marriage: United States, 1953-63

[Rates computed per 1,000 estimated couples with a given length of marriage. Rows represent data by year of divorce, upward slanted diagonals by duration of marriage. Figures for 1953-59 based on complete counts; those for 1960-63 on sample data]

Year of decree and of marriage	Duration of marriage									
	Under 1 year	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years	7 years	8 years	9 years
Divorce 1963 Marriage 1962-63-----	13.9	23.9	24.9	23.4	21.9	19.1	17.7	16.6	14.2	13.3
Divorce 1962 Marriage 1961-62-----	13.4	23.9	24.3	22.9	20.8	21.1	15.9	16.4	15.0	12.7
Divorce 1961 Marriage 1960-61-----	15.3	26.7	23.5	23.6	21.5	18.6	18.3	16.3	12.9	
Divorce 1960 Marriage 1959-60-----	16.3	21.9	22.8	21.4	20.6	19.3	15.5	14.8		
Divorce 1959 Marriage 1958-59-----	15.8	22.6	24.1	22.8	20.9	18.1	15.9			
Divorce 1958 Marriage 1957-58-----	19.1	22.6	25.0	21.9	18.1	16.1				
Divorce 1957 Marriage 1956-57-----	14.9	24.4	24.7	22.0	19.2					
Divorce 1956 Marriage 1955-56-----	15.7	25.3	25.2	21.6						
Divorce 1955 Marriage 1954-55-----	15.9	24.9	25.2							
Divorce 1954 Marriage 1953-54-----	16.2	24.8								
Divorce 1953 Marriage 1952-53-----	17.3									

Table 7. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments, by legal grounds for decree: divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data. About 13 percent of divorces were granted on two grounds or more; therefore percents add up to more than 100.0]

Area	Legal grounds (see Note below)											
	All divorces and annulments	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
	Percent distribution											
DRA-----	100.0	1.6	0.7	0.7	0.6	17.8	18.7	53.7	2.6	0.7	15.8	0.8
Alabama-----	100.0	3.8	0.4	0.1	2.4	37.8	0.6	54.9	0.4	-	-	0.6
Alaska-----	100.0	0.2	0.4	-	0.1	3.1	0.2	2.3	2.6	95.5	0.4	0.1
Georgia-----	100.0	0.3	0.3	0.9	2.5	17.6	0.4	79.5	0.1	0.2	-	0.2
Hawaii-----	100.0	0.4	1.3	0.3	-	7.9	5.2	84.4	0.9	-	-	1.4
Idaho-----	100.0	0.2	0.9	0.7	0.6	3.7	1.2	92.4	2.0	-	-	1.3
Iowa-----	100.0	0.8	0.6	2.1	1.0	4.5	0.2	92.0	-	0.0	-	0.8
Kansas-----	100.0	0.3	0.8	0.4	0.7	6.3	79.9	74.4	-	0.0	-	0.6
Maryland-----	100.0	16.4	0.7	0.7	-	40.5	-	0.3	43.3	-	-	2.0
Michigan-----	100.0	0.1	1.1	0.1	0.3	4.6	6.4	95.4	-	-	-	0.4
Missouri-----	100.0	0.3	0.3	0.7	1.1	7.7	1.9	2.5	0.2	0.6	87.3	2.2
Montana-----	100.0	0.2	6.4	0.7	0.2	6.3	1.2	85.3	-	-	-	0.3
Nebraska-----	100.0	0.7	2.0	0.3	1.9	4.3	6.9	92.5	-	0.1	0.2	2.5
Ohio-----	100.0	0.6	0.2	1.2	0.1	7.0	84.8	44.7	-	-	-	0.2
Oregon-----	100.0	0.5	0.9	1.0	0.2	7.1	0.2	90.8	-	-	0.2	0.5
Pennsylvania-----	100.0	0.6	0.4	0.4	-	18.5	-	8.2	-	-	82.7	0.1
Rhode Island-----	100.0	0.3	0.4	-	0.8	7.3	17.8	64.8	6.0	-	-	8.9
South Dakota-----	100.0	0.1	1.9	0.7	1.1	8.2	3.9	88.7	0.1	0.1	-	1.2
Tennessee-----	100.0	1.1	0.2	0.8	0.5	23.5	10.7	76.9	-	0.0	-	0.2
Utah-----	100.0	0.1	1.6	0.6	0.4	2.8	3.6	91.3	-	0.6	-	1.8
Virginia-----	100.0	3.6	0.8	1.6	-	91.8	0.1	4.0	9.6	-	-	0.6
Wisconsin-----	100.0	0.7	2.4	0.3	0.0	3.5	1.7	90.5	2.1	-	-	1.4
Wyoming-----	100.0	0.2	0.2	1.0	0.5	3.4	1.9	6.8	3.8	0.1	92.0	0.5

<sup>1</sup>Cruelty is not a legal ground provided by the statutes of Virginia, but the courts designate by this term certain types of desertion.

- NOTE: (1) Adultery (5) Desertion or abandonment (9) Incompatibility  
 (2) Bigamy or fraud (6) Neglect or nonsupport (10) Indignities  
 (3) Conviction of crime (7) Cruelty (11) Other  
 (4) Drunkenness (8) Separation or absence



## APPENDIX

### SOURCES AND QUALITY OF DATA

#### Sources of Data

The analysis of the 1963 divorce statistics is based on frequencies published in *Vital Statistics of the United States, 1963*, Volume III, Section 2. Data for earlier years used for comparison were taken from appropriate annual issues of *Vital Statistics of the United States*. Mortality data by marital status used in table A of this report are from the same publications, except for 1962 and 1963 figures, which are provisional and were published in the *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, Volume 11, Number 13 and Volume 12, Number 13.

A comparable analysis of divorce statistics for 1962 was published in *Vital and Health Statistics*, Series 21, Number 7, and analyses for earlier years in *Vital Statistics of the United States*, Volume III, for 1960 and 1961 and Volume I for 1959 and preceding years.

Two methods have been used for collecting final divorce statistics since 1960; most of these statistics

were estimated by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) from samples of transcripts of divorce and annulment records received from a limited number of States that belong to the divorce-registration area, but the annual divorce totals shown in table 1 were provided for all States by State and local officials with the qualifications described in the footnotes to that table.

In order to promote regular, timely, and complete reporting, a divorce-registration area comparable to the registration areas developed for the collection of natality, marriage, and mortality statistics was established in 1958. The DRA is made up of States and independent areas which meet the following criteria:

1. They have established central files of divorce records.
2. They have adopted a statistical report form that includes the required items of information on the Standard Record of Divorce or Annulment (fig. 1).

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (State) OF VITAL STATISTICS (Division)		FORM APPROVED BUREAU NO. 60-2547
<b>STANDARD RECORD OF DIVORCE OR ANNULMENT</b>		STATE FILE NO. _____
<input type="checkbox"/> DIVORCE OR <input type="checkbox"/> ANNULMENT		LOCAL FILE NO. _____
COUNTY _____		
<b>HUSBAND</b>		
1. NAME a. (First) _____ b. (Middle) _____ c. (Last) _____		2. DATE (Month) (Day) (Year) OF BIRTH _____
3. USUAL RESIDENCE a. (City) _____ b. (County) _____ c. (State) _____		4. PLACE (State or foreign country) OF BIRTH _____
5. NUMBER OF THIS MARRIAGE _____	6. RACE OR COLOR WHITE <input type="checkbox"/> NEGRO <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER <input type="checkbox"/> (specify) _____	7a. USUAL OCCUPATION _____
		7b. KIND OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY _____
<b>WIFE</b>		
8. MAIDEN NAME a. (First) _____ b. (Middle) _____ c. (Last) _____		9. DATE (Month) (Day) (Year) OF BIRTH _____
10. USUAL RESIDENCE a. (City) _____ b. (County) _____ c. (State) _____		11. PLACE (State or foreign country) OF BIRTH _____
12. NUMBER OF THIS MARRIAGE _____	13. COLOR OR RACE WHITE <input type="checkbox"/> NEGRO <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER <input type="checkbox"/> (specify) _____	14a. USUAL OCCUPATION _____
		14b. KIND OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY _____
15. PLACE OF THIS MARRIAGE a. (County) _____ b. (State or foreign country) _____		18. DATE OF (Month) (Day) (Year) MARRIAGE _____
17. NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER 18 _____	16. PLAINTIFF HUSBAND <input type="checkbox"/> WIFE <input type="checkbox"/>	19. DECREE GRANTED TO HUSBAND <input type="checkbox"/> WIFE <input type="checkbox"/>
20. LEGAL GROUNDS FOR DECREE _____		DATE OF RECORDING (Month) (Day) (Year) _____
I hereby certify that the above (Month) (Day) (Year) persons were divorced on:		
SIGNATURE OF COURT OFFICIAL _____		TITLE OF COURT OFFICIAL _____

Figure 1. Standard Record of Divorce or Annulment

3. They maintain a registration system based on regular and timely reporting by all local areas.
4. They have agreed to carry out tests of divorce registration completeness and accuracy in cooperation with NCHS.

By 1963, 22 States and the Virgin Islands were participating in the DRA (fig. II). As Rhode Island was included in the DRA as of January 1, 1963, DRA data for 1963 cover a slightly larger area than those for earlier years.

In 1960 a nationwide probability sample program was initiated for collecting divorce statistics; they had been compiled for earlier years from predesigned tables submitted by the States. The 1960 program was continued for 1961, 1962, and 1963, but it was limited to States in the DRA. Hence, national and regional statistics based on data from samples of records are not available for 1963, except for the national total number of children involved in divorce cases, which has been estimated by methods explained below. All other data are limited to the registration area and the individual registration States. Virgin Islands is excluded from the analysis; data for this area are published in Section 3, Volume III, *Vital Statistics of the United States, 1963*.

Variables shown in the 1963 tabulations appear on the divorce or annulment record forms of all registration States with the following exceptions: Kansas secured no data on residence of husband and wife; Ohio, on race or color; Nebraska, on the party to whom decree was granted; and Nebraska and Virginia, on the number of times parties to the divorce had been married. The remaining variables required on all records were date and place where the decree was granted, age or date of birth of husband and of wife, date and place of marriage (date of marriage was used for computing duration of marriage to time of decree), number of children involved, legal grounds for the decree, and which party was the plaintiff. Several additional items of information are found on the divorce forms of a number of States.

In 1963 total counts of divorces and annulments were received from State officials of the 50 States and the District of Columbia (table 1); data for some counties of Kentucky and of New Mexico and for some parishes of Louisiana were obtained from surveys of local officials conducted by NCHS. In 10 States which did not maintain central files of divorce records (Arizona, Colorado, Indiana, Minnesota, Nevada, New

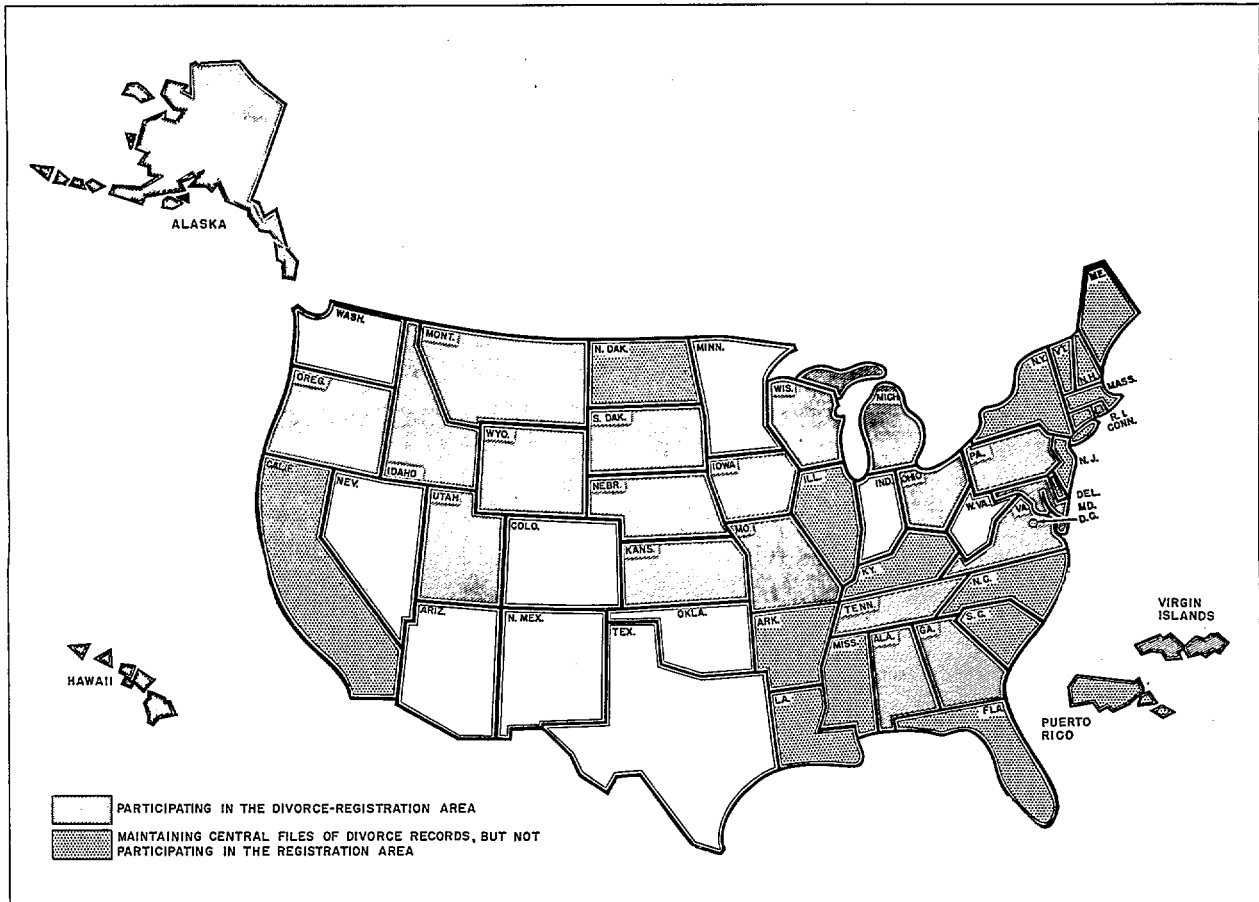


Figure II. The divorce-registration area and other States maintaining central files of divorce and annulment records: United States, 1963.

Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Washington, and West Virginia), State officials conducted special surveys to obtain county totals. The annual divorce and annulment totals thus obtained cover 3,082 counties or equivalent local areas of the United States; no totals were obtained for 33 counties.

The total number of divorces and annulments granted in the United States in 1963 was prepared from the State totals; estimates for the nonreporting parishes of Louisiana were included in the national figure. These estimates were based on the assumption that the divorce rate in the nonreporting areas of the State was identical with that for the reporting areas of the State.

#### Data on Family Dissolution by Death

The number of family dissolutions due to death may be slightly smaller than the number of deaths of persons reported as married, since, in cases of simultaneous deaths of both spouses, both may be incorrectly reported as married. Only the spouse who dies first should be reported as married and the other as widowed, but in cases of traffic accidents, fires, and so forth, it may be impossible to determine who died first. If the number of deaths of married persons is inflated, the error is probably small. Data for the years 1949-51<sup>3</sup> indicate that during this 3-year period, 11,251 married women died in motor vehicle accidents. Even if all these women would have been erroneously reported as married, the error would be only 0.6 percent of all deaths of married persons occurring during those years (1,999,384). National data on deaths of married persons used in this report were tabulated only for a limited number of years: 1940, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, and 1963; figures for 1962 and 1963 are based on provisional data. In addition, there is some information about a group of States for the combined years 1924-28, but these data were not used here. As information about dissolutions by death are obtained from mortality statistics, all available demographic information refers to the spouse who died, and the characteristics of the widowed spouse are unknown.

#### Sample Design

The probability sample from which detailed divorce statistics were estimated was limited to the 22 States included in the DRA (fig. II). The sample was drawn from the records of all decrees of absolute divorce, of annulments granted during the year in 21 registration States, and decrees that became final during the year in Utah. In States where interlocutory divorce decrees are granted, decrees granted during the latter part of 1962 became final in 1963, and decrees which had been granted late in 1963 became final in 1964. It is possible that some interlocutory decrees never became final because of death or reconciliation, but it is believed

that the number of such cases is very small. In most cases such decrees become final automatically after the lapse of a certain period of time.

Information about the structure of the samples is shown in table I. The divorce sample was designed to yield estimates of divorces classified by various characteristics for the DRA and for each State in the registration area. Five different sampling rates were designated in 1963 for the States in the divorce-registration area—all records, 1/2, 1/5, 1/10, and 1/20. While each State's records were sampled independently, that is, with a randomly selected number designating the first record to be selected in each State, in computing sampling errors each group of States with a uniform sampling rate was treated as a stratum. Sampling errors computed using these five groups as strata are likely to be somewhat larger than those that might have been computed using each State as a stratum; hence the former very probably have an extra safety margin as estimates of variation in any statistic based on sample data.

The sampling rates were changed in 1963 in order to secure samples of at least 1,000 records from each registration State. All divorce records were included in the sample in States that had an annual divorce total of less than 2,000 decrees. Samples for the years 1960, 1961, and 1962 were selected using rates that yielded samples of at least 400 records. The increased sample of 1963 made possible more detailed tabulations of divorce data, which could not be made for earlier years because of sampling variability.

#### Estimating Procedures

Before data were tabulated and statistics estimated, adjustments were made in order to reconcile totals estimated from samples received with pretabulated counts for each reporting area if the difference was 1.5 percent or more of the annual area total.

Frequency distributions were estimated in two steps:

1. Each sample case was assigned a weight that was the reciprocal of the probability with which the case was selected. Thus if a divorce record was selected from a State with a probability of 1/10, each item on that record carried a weight of 10, whereas if 100 percent of the records were processed from a State, each item on each record carried a weight of 1. The sampling rates, indicating the probability with which divorce records of every State were selected, are shown in table I.
2. Frequencies were estimated by summing the inflated number of cases. Thus each frequency distribution is a sum of the weighted sample cases included.

Table I. Divorce sampling rates and sample size: divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1963

[By place of occurrence]

Area and stratum	Number of primary sampling units	Sampling rate	Number of sample records	Estimated number of events
Divorce-registration area-----	22	...	34,397	152,594
Stratum 1-----	6	All records	7,731	7,731
Alaska-----	1	All records	929	929
Hawaii-----	1	All records	1,514	1,514
Montana-----	1	All records	1,915	1,915
Rhode Island-----	1	All records	1,054	1,054
South Dakota-----	1	All records	957	957
Wyoming-----	1	All records	1,362	1,362
Stratum 2-----	6	1/2	11,534	23,068
Idaho-----	1	1/2	1,351	2,702
Iowa-----	1	1/2	2,496	4,992
Kansas-----	1	1/2	2,714	5,428
Nebraska-----	1	1/2	1,222	2,444
Utah-----	1	1/2	1,329	2,658
Wisconsin-----	1	1/2	2,422	4,844
Stratum 3-----	5	1/5	8,279	41,395
Georgia-----	1	1/5	2,121	10,605
Maryland-----	1	1/5	1,246	6,230
Oregon-----	1	1/5	1,243	6,215
Tennessee-----	1	1/5	2,047	10,235
Virginia-----	1	1/5	1,622	8,110
Stratum 4-----	4	1/10	5,666	56,660
Alabama-----	1	1/10	1,241	12,410
Michigan-----	1	1/10	1,745	17,450
Missouri-----	1	1/10	1,203	12,030
Pennsylvania-----	1	1/10	1,477	14,770
Stratum 5-----	1	1/20	1,187	23,740
Ohio-----	1	1/20	1,187	23,740

It should be noted that the weights of all sample records are identical within each registration area State. However, weights for divorce sample records for the DRA vary from 1 to 20. Variation between two or more equal subtotals in the relative proportions of cases with various weights results in each such subtotals having its distinctive sampling error, as discussed below.

Percentages were computed using data which excluded estimated numbers of not stated cases. Among the median ages of divorced wives at marriage, some fell into the lower intervals of under 20 years of age; it was assumed that the lower limit of this age group is 14.

All rates appearing in the tables were based on populations from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. These are populations present in the area; those for 1960 were enumerated as of April 1, and those for 1961, 1962, and 1963 were estimated as of July 1. The populations include Armed Forces stationed in the area but exclude Armed Forces abroad.

#### Sampling Errors of Estimates

Estimates computed from the samples (except statistics of States where the sample includes all records) are subject to sampling error. Since all cases in these samples were selected with known probabilities, the sampling error can be computed for each estimate. The sampling errors for estimated percentages shown in table II were computed by dividing the sampling error for the estimated frequency by the estimate of all divorces granted in the area. These sampling errors are the amounts which, when added to and subtracted from the estimated percents, give the intervals which contain the actual quantities being estimated in approximately 68 out of 100 similarly selected samples. As an example of the procedures described above, suppose the percentage of couples reporting three children in Kansas was 12 percent of

Table II. Sampling error of estimated percentages: divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1963

[Estimates for the entire divorce-registration area have distributions of sampling errors generated by changes in contribution of cases from each stratum; for the sampling errors in this table on the entire divorce-registration area, it is assumed that these contributions are proportionate to stratum totals. Alaska, Hawaii, Montana, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and Wyoming have no sampling variability because all records are tabulated]

Area and year	All decrees	Estimated Percentages										
		1 or 99	2 or 98	3 or 97	4 or 96	5 or 95	7 or 93	10 or 90	15 or 85	20 or 80	25 or 75	50
DRA-----	152,594	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Alabama-----	12,410	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3
Alaska-----	929	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.0
Georgia-----	10,605	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.0
Hawaii-----	1,514	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0
Idaho-----	2,702	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7
Iowa-----	4,992	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7
Kansas-----	5,428	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7
Maryland-----	6,230	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.3
Michigan-----	17,450	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1
Missouri-----	12,030	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.4
Montana-----	1,915	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0
Nebraska-----	2,444	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.4
Ohio-----	23,740	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.3
Oregon-----	6,215	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2
Pennsylvania-----	14,770	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2
Rhode Island-----	1,054	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0
South Dakota-----	957	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.0
Tennessee-----	10,235	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0
Utah-----	2,658	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.0
Virginia-----	8,110	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1
Wisconsin-----	4,844	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7
Wyoming-----	1,362	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0

the total for the State. The error shown in table II for this percentage is about 0.4. By adding and subtracting 0.4 from 12 one secures the interval 11.6 to 12.4; the chances are about 68 out of 100 that the actual percent of couples with three children is in this interval.

To determine if the difference between two proportions is attributable to sampling variability or is a true difference, divide the difference by the square root of the sum of the squares of their standard errors. If the quotient of this division is greater than 2, then the probability that the difference is due to sampling error is less than 1 in 20. For example, the proportions of divorces granted less than 1 year after marriage were 10.5 percent in Idaho and 3.2 percent in Michigan, and the standard errors of these proportions were 0.6 percent and 0.4, respectively. Division of the difference by the square root of the sum of the squares of the standard errors results in the following equation:

$$\frac{(.1 - .03)}{\sqrt{(.006)^2 + (.004)^2}} = 10.0$$

This value is more than 2, and therefore it is very unlikely that such a difference could be attributed to sampling error alone. Hence the observed difference is to a high probability a true difference.

### Special Estimates

In addition to the estimation of divorce statistics directly from the data on the sample records, three estimates of a different type are found in this report:

1. Estimates of children involved in divorce cases
2. Estimates of migratory divorce
3. Estimates of the likelihood of divorce by duration of marriage

These three estimating procedures are described below. Estimating methods for the number of children are the same as those used for 1961 and 1962 data. The other two procedures were used in two short studies, not published elsewhere, which were incorporated in the present report.

1. The number of children reported in divorce suits was estimated for each registration State, for the DRA, and for the United States. The distribution of

divorce and annulments by the number of children reported was prepared for each reporting State. In order to obtain a State total, the category "children not stated" was first distributed proportionally over the distribution of divorces by number of children reported. Then the number of divorces in each category with a given number of children was multiplied by the number of children per divorce (that is, the number of divorces involving one child was multiplied by 1, the number involving two children was multiplied by 2, and so forth). The sum of the products is the estimate of the number of children reported in a given registration State, and the sum of State estimates for participating States is the estimate for the DRA. The national estimate was obtained by multiplying by 5.40039 the combined estimates for 14 States—Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The factor 5.40039 is the ratio of the 1960 national estimate of children prepared from the nationwide sample to the comparable figure for the 14 States combined.

2. The number of migratory divorces was estimated using the following methods. First, the examination of State laws and of services available for divorce seekers indicated that divorce mills are likely to function in seven States. The entire State of Nevada, with a divorce rate almost five times as high as the second

highest State rate, was included among the divorce-mill areas. Divorce rates were computed for all counties where more than 100 divorces were granted during the year in the remaining six States (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming); 1960 data were used as county populations were not available for later years. Counties that had a rate 1.5 times as high as the State rate or higher were considered likely to contain a divorce mill. An estimate of the State resident rate, excluding these counties, was computed, and counties that had a rate 1.5 times as high or higher than the resident rate were added to the group. This was repeated until no county had a rate 1.5 times as high as the latest estimate of the resident rate. The process of selecting counties and computing resident rates is shown in table III. The factor 1.5 was obtained by analyzing the distribution of county divorce rates in States known not to possess divorce mills. The number of resident divorces was estimated by applying to the county populations the estimated resident State rates obtained in table III and the rate for the West Region was used for Nevada. No divorce mills were detected in two States originally included in the computation (Utah and Wyoming). The number of migratory divorces was estimated by subtracting the estimated resident divorces from all divorces granted in the divorce mill areas.

3. In order to prepare the approximations of divorce rates by duration of marriage, numerators and

Table III. Estimation of the number of divorce-mill counties and of resident divorce rates: six selected States, 1960

[Nevada was included as a unit, and the divorce rate for the West Region was used as resident rate]

Variables	Selected States						
	Total	Alabama	Arkansas	Florida	Idaho	Utah	Wyoming
Counties with over 100 divorces-----	86	27	16	29	8	4	2
Crude divorce rates-----	...	5.3	3.4	3.9	3.9	2.4	4.0
Maximum resident county rates (1st estimate)-----	...	8.0	5.1	5.9	5.9	3.6	6.0
Divorce-mill counties-----	20	6	4	7	3	-	-
State resident rates (1st estimate)-----	...	2.8	2.9	3.6	3.2	-	-
Maximum resident county rates (2d estimate)-----	...	4.2	4.4	5.4	4.8	-	-
Additional divorce-mill counties-----	5	2	3	-	-	-	-
State resident rates (2d estimate)-----	...	2.7	2.7	-	-	-	-
Maximum resident county rates (3d estimate)-----	...	4.1	4.1	-	-	-	-
Additional divorce-mill counties-----	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
State resident rates (3d estimate)-----	...	-	2.7	-	-	-	-
Maximum resident county rates (4th estimate)-----	...	-	4.1	-	-	-	-
Additional divorce-mill counties-----	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total divorce-mill counties-----	26	8	8	7	3	-	-
State resident rates (final estimate)-----	...	2.7	2.7	3.6	3.2	2.4	4.0

Table IV. Percent completeness of reporting of statistical variables: divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1963

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data]

Area	All divorces and annulments	Age at decree		Age at marriage		Race	
		Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Percent of cases with information available							
Divorce-registration area-----	152,594	53.8	53.9	53.4	53.2	56.2	56.1
Alabama-----	12,410	1.9	2.1	1.9	2.1	30.9	30.7
Alaska-----	929	28.1	27.8	28.0	27.8	52.2	52.1
Georgia-----	10,605	38.0	36.9	37.1	36.1	52.6	52.3
Hawaii-----	1,514	97.1	96.7	97.1	96.4	98.8	98.2
Idaho-----	2,702	74.3	74.3	73.6	73.3	81.5	84.8
Iowa-----	4,992	99.7	99.8	99.3	99.2	99.6	99.3
Kansas-----	5,428	73.7	73.8	73.2	73.1	75.6	75.4
Maryland-----	6,230	48.0	47.8	47.6	47.4	52.3	52.0
Michigan-----	17,450	1.9	2.2	1.9	2.2	9.3	9.5
Missouri-----	12,030	96.3	96.3	95.3	94.7	98.5	98.2
Montana-----	1,915	72.7	72.6	72.2	72.0	87.7	87.5
Nebraska-----	2,444	51.4	51.1	51.4	51.1	51.1	51.1
Ohio-----	23,740	31.8	32.7	31.7	32.4	(1)	(1)
Oregon-----	6,215	73.2	72.2	72.4	71.2	76.0	75.8
Pennsylvania-----	14,770	82.5	82.5	81.9	81.7	81.7	81.7
Rhode Island-----	1,054	93.9	93.1	92.0	91.3	95.5	94.1
South Dakota-----	957	9.0	8.3	8.8	8.3	34.1	33.4
Tennessee-----	10,235	96.7	96.2	95.6	94.3	99.0	98.8
Utah-----	2,658	69.3	68.3	67.5	66.7	72.2	71.3
Virginia-----	8,110	69.3	70.9	68.8	69.7	99.8	99.8
Wisconsin-----	4,844	99.4	99.5	99.1	99.0	99.0	98.9
Wyoming-----	1,362	6.9	7.0	6.9	6.9	23.5	23.5

<sup>1</sup>Item not reportable

denominators had to be estimated. Numerators were prepared under the assumption that the national distribution of divorces by duration of marriage was identical with that found in the reporting States combined. In order to compute the denominators, it was assumed that all divorces were granted in the midpoint of each calendar year, and marriages performed from July 1, year N-1, to June 30, year N, lasted less than 1 year, those performed between July 1, year N-2, and June 30, year N-1, lasted 1 year, et cetera. Marriages performed during these 12-month periods were computed or estimated from data for reporting States for the time between July 1, 1952, and June 30, 1963. For each added duration year, the number of divorces and the number of marriage disruptions due to deaths that occurred during the preceding year were subtracted from the married population. Age-specific

death rates of the married population in the years 1959-61 were used to estimate the number of deaths of marriage cohorts. Approximations of duration-specific divorce rates were computed from these data. These approximations form a matrix where rows give data by calendar year when decree was granted and diagonals show data by marriage cohorts.

#### Completeness of Data

Completeness of reporting is one of the most important factors in divorce statistics which produce nonsampling errors. Table IV shows for the DRA and for the registration States the numbers of cases with various characteristics given. The lack of 100-percent completeness is due to incompletely filled out sample records, to items not appearing on State record forms,

Table IV. Percent completeness of reporting of statistical variables: divorce-registration area and each Registration State, 1963—Con.

[By place of occurrence. Based on sample data]

Marriage order		Residence of defendant		Place of marriage	Duration of marriage	Month of marriage	Number of children	Legal grounds	Plaintiff	To whom decree granted
Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife							
Percent of cases with information available										
52.6	52.8	88.5	76.9	90.0	97.1	96.7	91.3	96.9	97.9	95.4
4.9	4.8	71.1	55.9	48.7	98.1	94.7	79.5	99.4	99.5	99.5
51.2	51.3	45.6	43.2	99.2	99.5	99.4	99.1	99.8	99.7	98.9
38.2	38.3	60.8	53.5	50.3	80.1	78.8	75.9	80.8	95.6	90.3
99.7	99.5	98.3	98.1	100.0	99.8	99.8	98.5	100.0	100.0	99.3
73.6	74.7	84.1	82.4	95.5	96.2	96.8	97.0	94.6	98.7	99.3
99.4	99.5	96.1	94.9	98.2	99.5	99.5	94.6	99.6	99.5	99.6
73.9	74.0	(1)	(1)	99.1	99.1	99.0	99.6	100.0	99.7	99.8
49.6	49.2	94.8	96.5	99.1	99.4	99.6	86.2	98.4	98.9	97.5
13.6	14.1	42.9	44.3	99.1	99.7	99.3	99.0	99.3	94.8	99.5
98.3	98.8	94.8	95.8	97.8	98.1	98.7	98.0	99.0	98.8	99.0
76.3	76.8	86.5	86.9	99.5	99.3	99.4	99.6	99.9	99.7	99.1
(1)	(1)	92.5	92.8	97.6	99.8	99.7	99.0	99.8	99.6	(1)
41.6	42.0	92.6	92.7	94.1	99.6	99.2	98.9	100.0	99.8	99.7
72.8	72.6	79.7	78.3	96.9	98.8	98.9	94.6	96.8	99.4	90.4
79.2	79.6	97.2	97.4	99.3	98.5	98.6	71.4	95.7	97.5	95.3
95.2	94.7	91.5	93.6	94.9	98.0	99.0	81.2	100.0	97.2	96.9
15.6	15.9	88.9	92.0	92.6	95.8	95.7	99.2	98.4	98.7	95.3
97.4	97.3	93.2	91.2	98.4	97.8	97.5	98.7	99.5	99.1	98.9
69.7	69.5	90.5	93.7	71.0	71.4	71.7	65.4	61.3	69.7	45.1
(1)	(1)	86.2	79.9	99.5	98.7	99.4	96.7	99.7	99.9	99.6
95.9	96.7	93.6	94.3	99.2	99.5	99.8	96.5	97.4	99.4	99.6
8.5	9.1	40.5	40.5	97.6	99.6	99.5	98.9	99.9	99.9	99.9

or to States not sending to the NCHS all their divorce records.

For the DRA, the sample records not received represent 0.5 of 1 percent of all divorces. In all detailed divorce tables the number of not stated cases was increased in order to bring the totals up to figures representing complete samples.

The principal source of incompleteness in the 1963 divorce statistics arises from failure to secure items of personal and demographic data in the States where these items are on the record forms (table IV). The proportion of records not stating age at decree varies from less than 1 to 98 percent; for race or color the corresponding range is from 0.2 to 91 percent; for marriage order the analogous range is from 0.2 to 96 percent; for duration of marriage the range is from 0.2

to 29 percent; and for number of children the range is from 0.4 to 35 percent.

The level of completeness of detailed divorce data rose slightly in most States from 1962 to 1963. Mean percentages of completeness were computed from data in table IV (omitting percents for month of marriage, which was not tabulated for 1962) and compared with similar means for 1962. Using this method, increases in the level of completeness were found in 14 States and declines in 7, but 3 of these 7 States experienced pronounced declines in completeness, and the overall mean for the DRA declined from 74.3 percent in 1962 to 72.9 in 1963. If the variable "month of marriage" is included in the 1963 mean percentage for the DRA, the value 74.3 is obtained, the same as the 1962 value of 74.3.



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