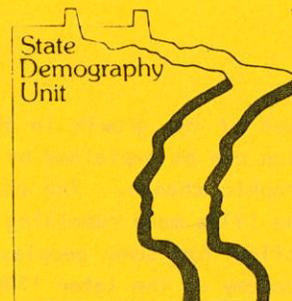


POPULATION NOTES

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MARITAL STATUS OF MINNESOTANS CHANGES IN 1970s

SINGLE, DIVORCED POPULATIONS SHOW RAPID GROWTH

Between 1970 and 1980, the proportion of married Minnesotans declined from 64% to 59%. During the same period, never married singles grew from 26% to 28% of the adult population and the divorced share doubled from 2.5% to 5% (Table 1). These changes reflect similar trends in the U.S., where married persons in the population declined from 63% to 57%, singles increased from 23% to 26%, and the divorced share also doubled, from 3% to 6%.

Both in Minnesota and the U.S. the widowed percentage of the population declined slightly, while the proportion of separated persons showed no significant change.

Differences in marital status are found between the metropolitan counties of Hennepin and Ramsey and the remaining counties in the state, and between urban and rural areas. In general, a greater proportion of adults in rural areas are

married than are the adults living in urban areas. Persons in different age groups also show diversity in marital status. Increases in single and divorced populations are greatest in younger age groups in contrast to the slower growth or decline in percentages of single or divorced older persons.

Large Increases Occur in Single Population

Younger Minnesotans are showing a greater tendency to remain single or postpone marriage than in the past. While 26% of 20 to 34 year olds were single in 1970, almost 37% were single in 1980. This trend, combined with a 43% increase in the 20-34 age group between 1970 and 1980, has led to a 100% increase since 1970 in the number of 20 to 34 year olds who have never married. By comparison, there has been a 30% increase in the total number of Minnesotans 15 and over who have never married.

TABLE 1. MARITAL STATUS IN MINNESOTA: 1970 AND 1980

Marital Status	% of		% of		Absolute Change	% Change 1970-80
	1970	Total	1980	Total		
TOTAL POPULATION						
15 and over	2,653,425	100.0%	3,138,955	100.0%	485,530	18.3%
Single	681,260	25.7	882,928	28.1	201,668	29.6
Married	1,685,005	63.5	1,851,598	59.0	166,593	9.9
Divorced	65,269	2.5	154,956	5.0	89,689	137.4
Widowed	203,009	7.7	219,519	7.0	16,510	8.1
Separated	18,882	0.7	29,954	1.0	11,072	5.9

Much of the growth in the never married population can be explained by factors other than demographic change. The changing social climate of the 1970s made remaining single a more acceptable option for some people. The somewhat unstable economy of the later '70s, and the desire of many young people for more education, may also have added to a tendency to postpone marriage. Although most of these young men and women will probably marry eventually, it is not clear at this time how long or how permanent the postponement of marriage will be.

The increasing single population has a ripple effect, contributing to the 25% surge in the number of Minnesota households between 1970 and 1980 and the accompanying decrease from 3.20 to 2.74 in the number of persons per household. More households add to the demand for municipal services and strain the housing supply, as evidenced by a 25% growth in rental housing units during the 1970s.

Some social trends and fads of the 1970s may be partially explained by the increasing number of young singles during the decade. For example, discos, singles bars, and computer dating services all grew in popularity during the 1970s.

Most Rapid Growth in Divorced Population

The number of divorced Minnesotans increased 137% between 1970 and 1980, by far the largest growth rate among the various marital status categories. This gain was slightly higher than the U.S. increase of 126%. Although Minnesota's divorce rate was one of the lowest in the nation (Table 2), it was the highest rate ever recorded for Minnesota. The percent divorced increased in all age categories, with the largest increase in the 35-44 age group (Figure 1).

Differences in Minnesota divorce rates exist between men and women. In 1980, 5.6% of women over age 15 were divorced, while 4.4% of men were divorced. These numbers represent the total number of persons who were listed as divorced at the time of the census, rather than the number of divorces which took place during that year. One explanation for the difference in rate by sex is that men are more likely to remarry after a divorce, and they tend to do so more quickly than their female counterparts.

The increasing number of divorces has important implications for society. The breaking of one household into two is one of the factors contributing to the trend towards more, smaller households. Living arrangements of children are also frequently affected. In 1980, 12% of all own children under age 18 in Minnesota were living with a single parent compared with 7% in 1970. While some of the parents had never married, most were divorced.

High divorce rates may in themselves be a factor in maintaining divorce rates in the future. Although most divorced persons eventually remarry, these remarriages have a higher propensity for ending in divorce than do first marriages.

Only one percent of the adult population identified themselves as separated on the 1980 census. The 6% increase since 1970 is the slowest rate of change shown by any of the marital status categories. The increasing social acceptability of divorce may allow couples to end unsatisfactory marriages, rather than continuing a separated life style for extended periods.

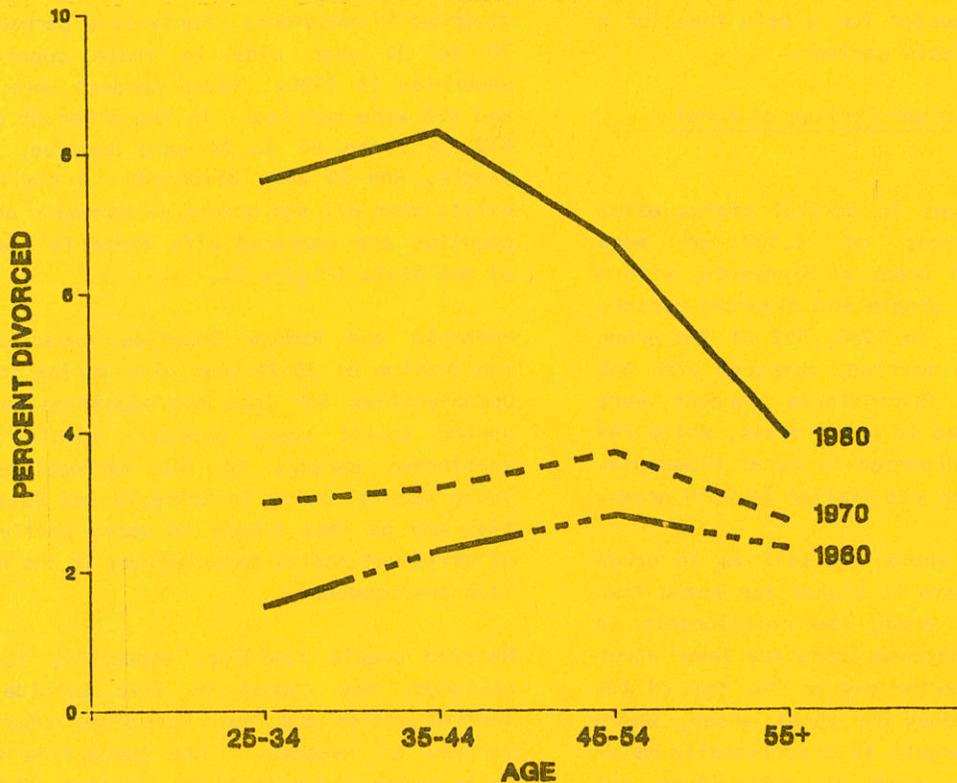
TABLE 2.
STATES WITH LOWEST DIVORCE RATES IN 1980
(Divorces per 1,000 population in 1980)

<u>Area</u>	<u>Rate</u>
United States	5.2
Massachusetts	2.9
Pennsylvania	2.9
New York	3.1
North Dakota	3.3
MINNESOTA	3.7
New Jersey	3.7
Connecticut	3.8
Rhode Island	3.8
Wisconsin	3.8
Delaware	3.9
Maryland	3.9

Source: Monthly Vital Statistics Report,
National Center for Health Statistics,
January 17, 1983.

Figure 1

**PERCENT OF MINNESOTANS DIVORCED,
BY AGE GROUP: 1960-1980**



Married Persons Still Largest Group

In spite of a slow rate of growth and a declining share of the total population since 1970, most adult Minnesotans are married. In 1980, 59% of the total population over age 15 were married. By contrast, 64% were married in 1970. The proportion of married persons ages 20 to 34 fell from 68% in 1970 to 56% in 1980.

While some individuals apparently are choosing not to marry, others are simply postponing marriage. Since 1970, the median age of brides has increased from 21.4 to 23.3 years, and the median age for grooms from 23.4 to 25.1 years. These figures include persons who married for the first time, as well as those previously married. Some of the increase in median age can be attributed to the increasing number of remarriages, where bride and groom are likely to be older. At the national level, where data for first marriages are available separately, the median age for first-time brides was the highest since 1890, at 22 years. For grooms, the median age of 24.6 was the oldest since 1910 (Figure 2).

One effect of later marriages may be continued low birth rates. Because women who marry later have fewer remaining child-bearing years, they may bear fewer children.

Although the proportion of the Minnesota population which is married has declined, the marriage rate has risen steadily. The 1980 rate of 9.2 marriages per 1,000 population was the highest since the years following World War II. Two factors combine to explain these apparently conflicting trends. First, a large number of people are now at the traditional "marrying ages" of early to mid-20s. Second, the majority of divorced persons eventually remarry, and these remarriages contribute to the marriage rate.

Widowed Proportion Declines Slightly

The percentage of widowed Minnesotans fell from 7.7% to 7.0% between 1970 and 1980. The decrease included both men and women, and crossed all age groups except women aged 75 years and over, where the percent widowed increased by almost one percent.

Almost 18% of persons aged 45 and over are widowed, with large differences between men and women. Twenty-seven percent of women aged 45 years and over are widowed, while only 6% of men in this age group are widowed. The greater life span of women partially explains this phenomenon. In 1980, the life expectancy was 78 years for women, and 71 years for men, allowing more women than men to outlive their spouses. Another

possible explanation is that men are more likely than women to remarry after the death of a spouse. The existence of larger numbers of women in older age categories and the perceived custom of men marrying women younger than themselves suggest that it is easier for a male than for a female to find a suitable partner.

Married Persons Are Larger Portion of Rural Population

Substantial differences in marital status exist between urban (places of 2,500 or more population) and rural areas of Minnesota, with a higher proportion of single and divorced persons in the urban areas. In 1980, 55% of the urban adult population was married, compared with 66% of rural adults. Thirty-three percent were single and 6% divorced in urban areas, while 24% were single and 3% divorced in rural Minnesota. The widowed population was similar in both areas.

For the state as a whole, as well as in urban areas, the divorce rate is higher for women than for men. In rural areas the relationship is reversed, partially because there are fewer women than men. Another factor may be the lack of job opportunities for women in rural areas, where employment may be largely in traditionally male-dominated industries such as agriculture and mining.

More Single and Divorced Persons Live in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties

The metropolitan counties of Hennepin and Ramsey seem to be attractive to young single and divorced Minnesotans. Forty-five percent of the 20 to 34 year olds in these counties were unmarried in 1980. Seven percent were divorced and 46% were married. In the other 85 counties, 63% of those 20 to 34 were married, 31% were single, and 5% were divorced. A similar trend exists when all age groups in Hennepin and Ramsey counties are compared with those in the balance of the state (Figure 3).

Hennepin and Ramsey Counties experienced net immigration of 20-29 year olds during the 1970s. Opportunities for jobs and education and a more varied social scene probably combine to draw unattached persons to the metropolitan area. Young people living in Hennepin and Ramsey counties may be less likely to marry partly because of different social expectations in the metropolitan environment.

Married couple families, especially those with children, may choose to live outside of the central cities and their immediate suburbs for a variety of reasons. The perception of lower crime rates and more space, greater availability of less expensive housing, or a preference for

Figure 2

**MEDIAN AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE BY SEX
UNITED STATES: 1890-1980**

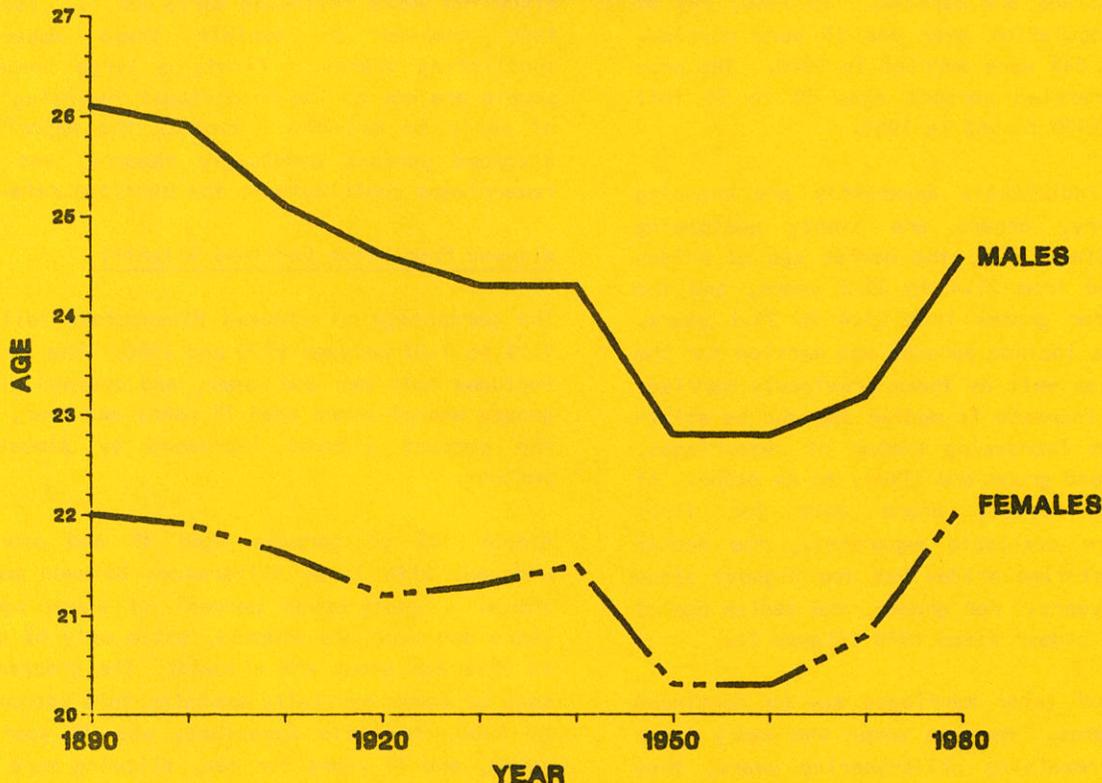
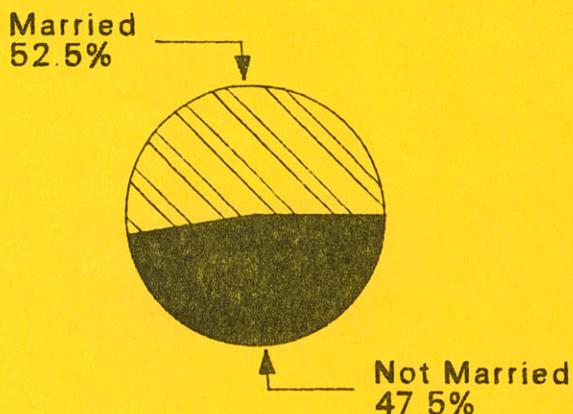


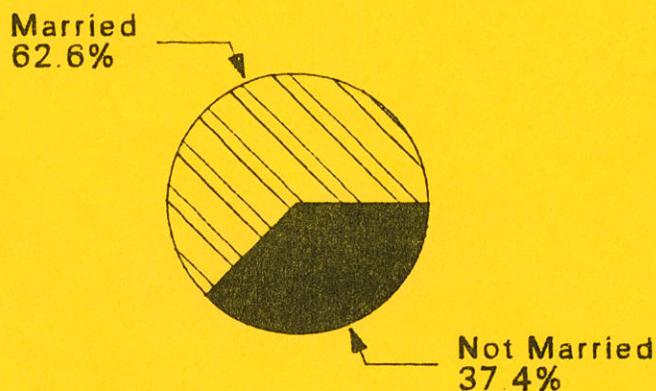
Figure 3

MARITAL STATUS IN MINNESOTA: 1980

HENNEPIN & RAMSEY COUNTIES



ALL OTHER COUNTIES



suburban or rural school districts may be factors in deciding to live outside of Hennepin and Ramsey counties.

Marital Status Varies by Age

The marital status of Minnesotans in older age groups contrasts sharply with the life style choices of the 20 to 34 year bracket. Eighty-three percent of 35 to 54 year olds were married in 1980, little changed from the 85% married share in 1970. The proportions of single and widowed declined slightly, with no significant change in the separated group. Only the divorced category of 35 to 54 year olds changed substantially. This share more than doubled, from 3% to 8%.

As might be expected, the percent widowed rises markedly in the 55 and over age group. Twenty-four percent were widowed in 1980, the same proportion as in 1970. Persons over age 55 have lower divorce rates than other age groups, possibly because different social standards in their peer group have made divorce less accept-

able to this generation. Four percent of persons age 55 and over were divorced in 1980, a slight increase from the 3% divorced in 1970. Table 3 displays differences in marital status in 1980, both by age and sex.

Population Notes

This is the twelfth in a series of "Population Notes" which will be published from time to time on such subjects as Minnesota's educational attainment, income distribution and minority populations.

Correction to Population Note No. 11, Use of Foreign Language at Home

The legend for Figure 1, Percent Using Foreign Language at Home 1980, should be as follows:

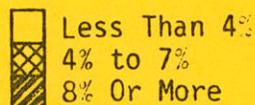


TABLE 3. MARITAL STATUS OF MINNESOTANS BY AGE AND SEX: 1980

Marital Status	Age Groups									
	15-19		20-34		35-54		55-64		65 and over	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Single	98.5%	94.8%	42.1%	31.2%	7.0%	4.9%	7.2%	5.3%	9.6%	9.0%
Married	1.4	4.8	52.0	60.2	84.5	82.1	84.7	72.7	73.1	37.6
Divorced	0.1	0.2	4.8	6.7	6.7	8.5	4.5	5.5	3.0	3.1
Widowed	a	a	0.1	0.3	0.6	3.2	2.8	15.6	13.8	50.0
Separated	0.1	0.2	1.1	1.6	1.2	1.4	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.4

a = Less than .05%.

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