

Chapter 7. Marital Status

The data presented on marital status in this chapter cover the 1880 to 2010 period. Data for the 1880 to 1990 period are from Michael R. Haines (2006c and 2006d), “Sex, Age, Race, and Marital Status,” and “Singulate Mean Age at First Marriage,” *Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition*, Vol. 1, pp. 1-40 to 1-101, and p. 1-687, respectively. Census data on marital status were published in Census Bureau publications starting with the 1890 census. The estimates for 1880, the first year that a question on marital status was included in the census, are based the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS). (See Minnesota Population Center, no date, “IPUMS-USA, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ),” <http://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/faq.do> .)

Four categories of marital status are shown: never married, married, divorced, and widowed. Persons who were separated (for reasons of marital discord), which was introduced as a separate response category in 1950, are included here in the married category. Like all information collected in the census, information on marital status is subject to misreporting. In particular, it seems possible that the percentage of persons whose marital status is divorced is underreported, especially prior to World War II when divorce was less prevalent and less socially acceptable.

Data on the average age at first marriage are for the singulate mean age at first marriage, and are based on a procedure developed by John Hajnal (1953), “Age at Marriage and Proportions Marrying,” *Population Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 111-136, and described in Henry J. Shryock, Jacob S. Siegel, and Associates (1971), *Methods and Materials of Demography*, Vol. 1, pp. 294-295. The procedure yields an estimate of the average number of years lived as never married among persons who ever marry by age 50.

Figures

7-1. Average Age at First Marriage by Sex and Percent Ever Married by Sex and Age for the United States: 1880 to 2010

7-2. Percent Distribution of the Male and Female Populations 15 Years and Over by Age and Marital Status for the United States: 1880 to 2010

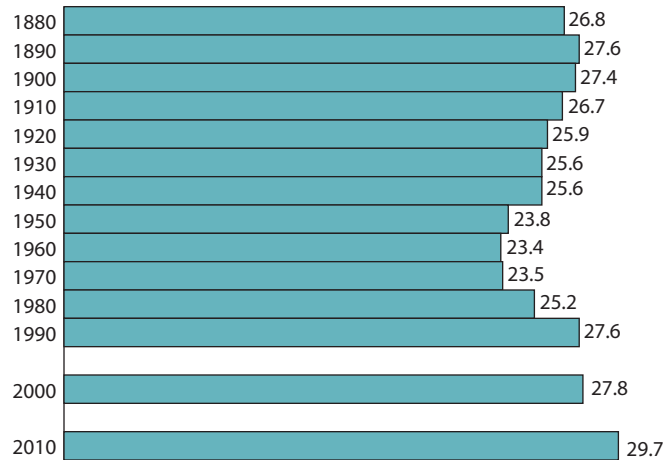
Figure 7-1.

Average Age at First Marriage by Sex and Percent Ever Married by Sex and Age for the United States: 1880 to 2010

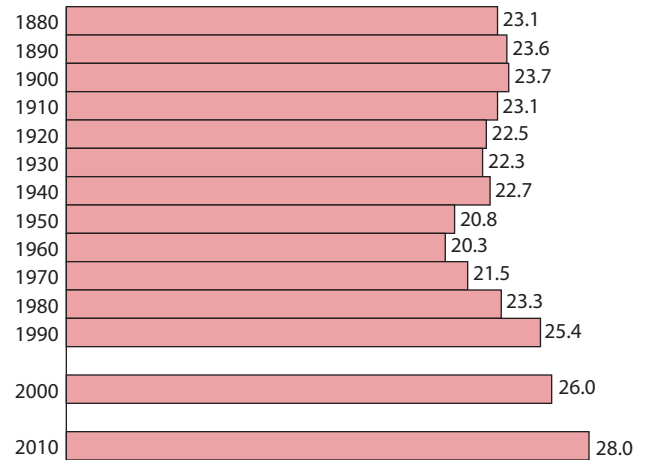
Male
Female

Average Age at First Marriage by Sex

Male



Female

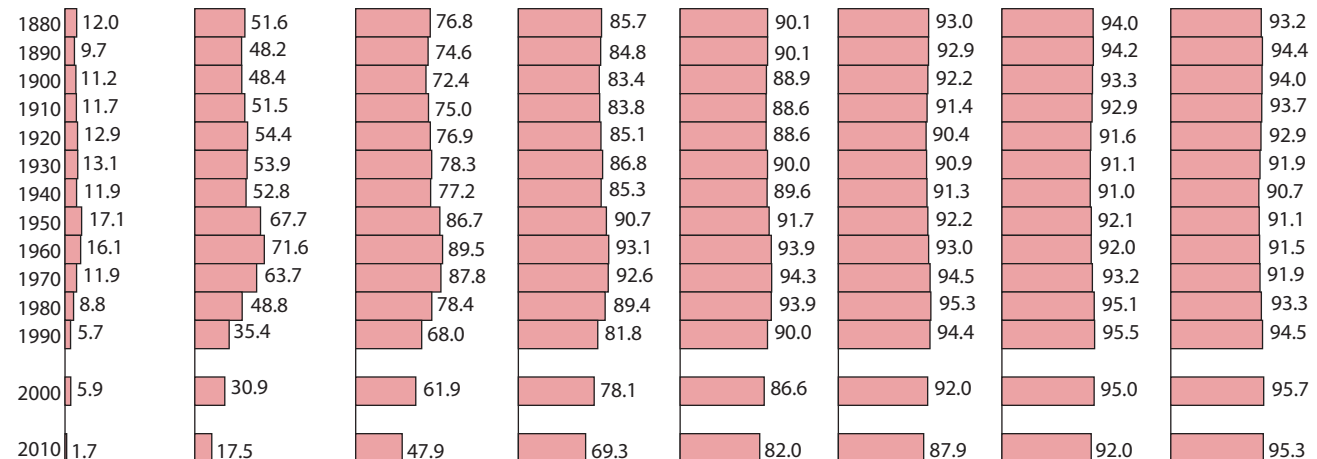


Percent Ever Married by Sex and Age

Male



Female



Sources: Michael R. Haines (2006c), "Sex, Age, Race, and Marital Status," and (2006d), "Singulate Mean Age at First Marriage," Vol. 1, pp. 1-40 to 1-101, and p. 1-687, respectively, in *Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition*. U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census publications, and for 2010, the American Community Survey (ACS). See www.demographicchartbook.com/References.

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Figure 7-2.

Percent Distribution of the Male and Female Populations 15 Years and Over by Age and Marital Status for the United States: 1880 to 2010

Never married Married Divorced Widowed



Percentages not shown on figure:

	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
15+														
Male, divorced.....	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.6	1.1	1.3	2.0	2.2	2.8				
Male, widowed.....	3.8	3.9	4.6	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.3	4.2	3.5	3.1	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Female, divorced.....	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.8	1.3	1.7	2.4	2.9	4.0				
20-24														
Male, divorced.....	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.9	1.0	1.4	2.2	1.5	1.2	0.6
Male, widowed.....	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0
Female, divorced.....	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.6	1.1	0.9	1.7	1.8	2.5	4.2	3.1	2.2	1.2
Female, widowed.....	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.0	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1

Sources: Michael R. Haines (2006), "Sex, Age, Race, and Marital Status," in *Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition*, Vol. 1, pp. 1-40 to 1-101. U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census publications, and for 2010, the American Community Survey (ACS). See www.demographicchartbook.com, *References*. Copyright © 2012 by Campbell Gibson. Graphics may be copied for personal use or for educational purposes, but may not be sold.

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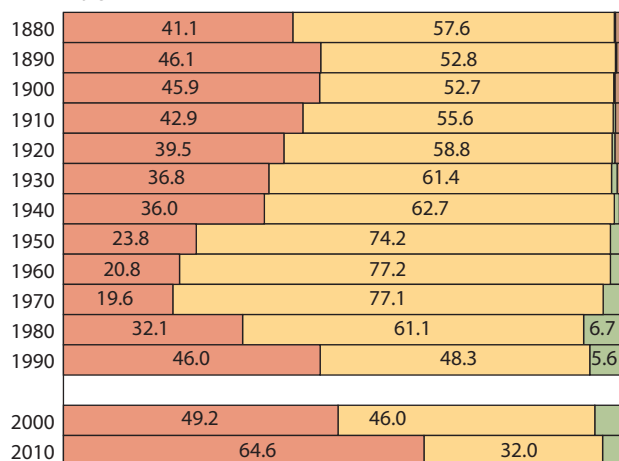
Figure 7-2.

Percent Distribution of the Male and Female Populations 15 Years and Over by Age and Marital Status for the United States: 1880 to 2010—Con.

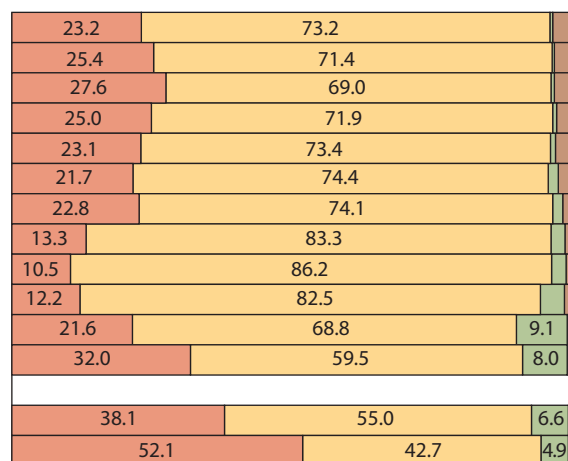
Never married Married Divorced Widowed

25 to 29 years

Male

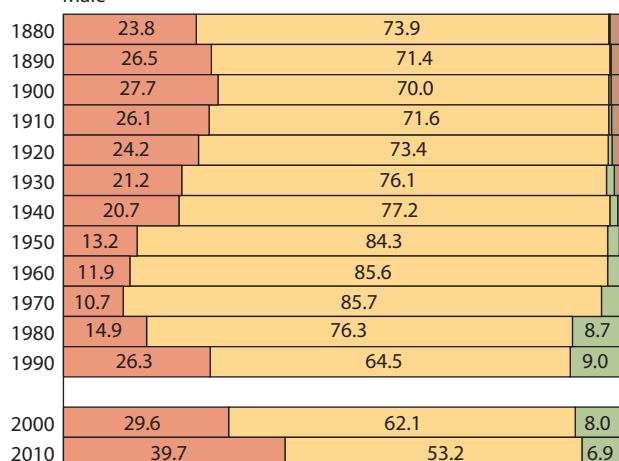


Female

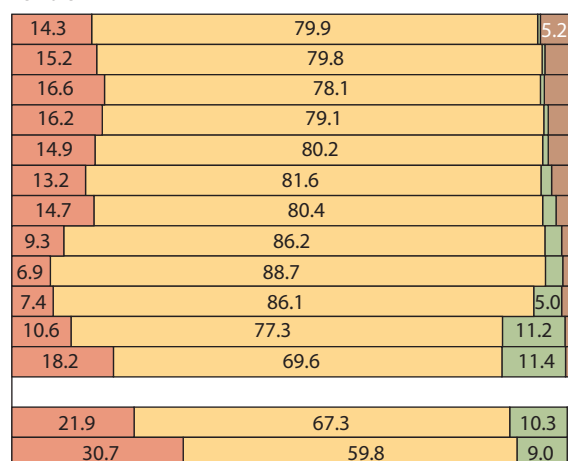


30 to 34 years

Male



Female



Percentages not shown on figure:

	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
25-29														
Male, divorced.....	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	1.0	0.9	1.7	1.8	3.0			4.6	3.3
Male, widowed.....	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.1	1.1	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1
Female, divorced.....	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.9	1.8	1.8	2.5	2.6	4.3				
Female, widowed.....	3.1	2.8	2.9	2.4	2.6	2.1	1.3	0.9	0.7	1.1	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.2
30-34														
Male, divorced.....	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.7	1.4	1.4	2.1	2.2	3.3				
Male, widowed.....	2.1	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.3	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2
Female, divorced.....	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.9	2.4	3.0	3.1					
Female, widowed.....		4.5	4.6	3.9	3.9	3.3	2.5	1.6	1.2	1.5	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.5

Sources: Michael R. Haines (2006), "Sex, Age, Race, and Marital Status," in *Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition*, Vol. 1, pp. 1-40 to 1-101. U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census publications, and for 2010, the American Community Survey (ACS). See www.demographicchartbook.com, References. Copyright © 2012 by Campbell Gibson. Graphics may be copied for personal use or for educational purposes, but may not be sold.

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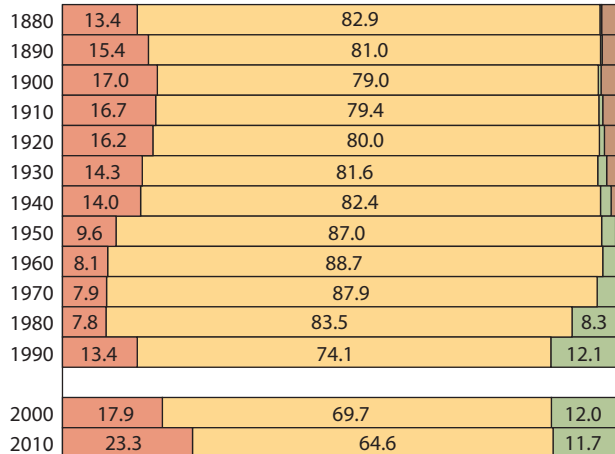
Figure 7-2.

Percent Distribution of the Male and Female Populations 15 Years and Over by Age and Marital Status for the United States: 1880 to 2010—Con.

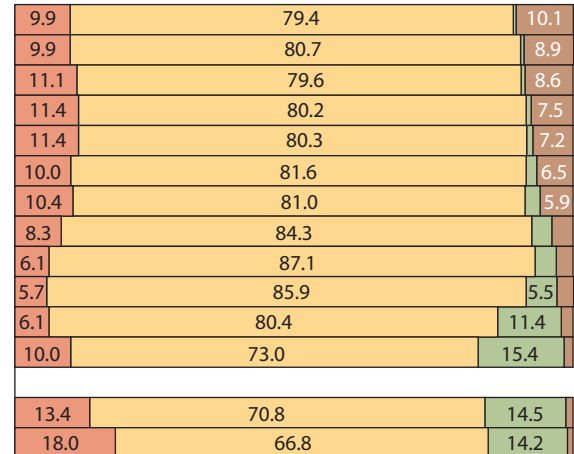
Never married Married Divorced Widowed

35 to 44 years

Male

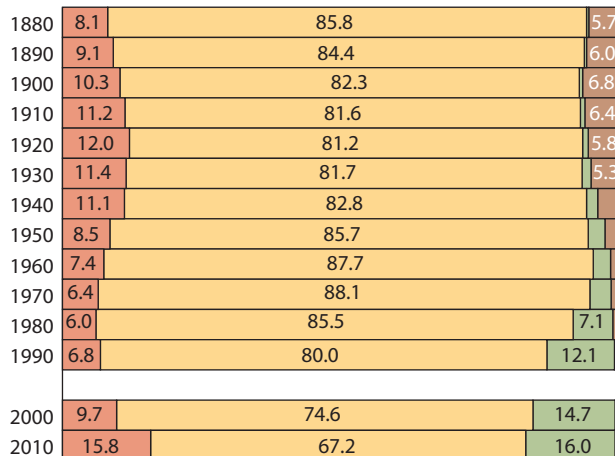


Female

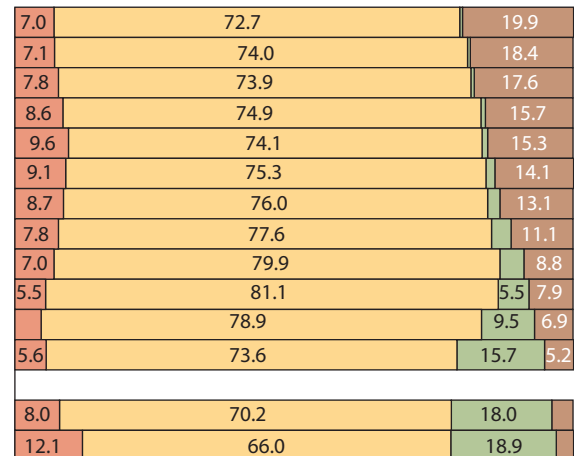


45 to 54 years

Male



Female



Percentages not shown on figure:

	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
35-44														
Male, divorced.....	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.9	1.6	1.9	2.5	2.6	3.6				
Male, widowed.....	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.2	3.0	2.5	1.7	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4
Female, divorced.....	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.9	1.1	1.9	2.7	3.6	3.8					
Female, widowed.....								3.8	3.0	3.0	2.1	1.6	1.3	1.0
45-54														
Male, divorced.....	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.6	2.0	3.0	3.1	3.8				
Male, widowed.....							4.1	2.8	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.1	1.0	1.0
Female, never married..											4.7			
Female, divorced.....	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.6	2.2	3.5	4.3				3.7	3.1
Female, widowed.....														

Sources: Michael R. Haines (2006), "Sex, Age, Race, and Marital Status," in Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition, Vol. 1, pp. 1-40 to 1-101.

U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census publications, and for 2010, the American Community Survey (ACS). See www.demographicchartbook.com, References.

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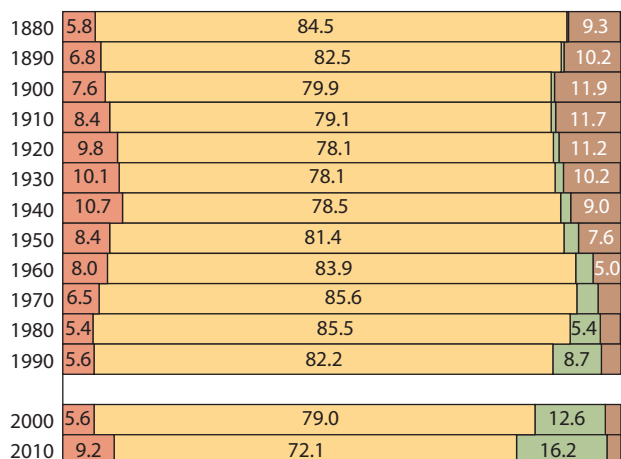
Figure 7-2.

Percent Distribution of the Male and Female Populations 15 Years and Over by Age and Marital Status for the United States: 1880 to 2010—Con.

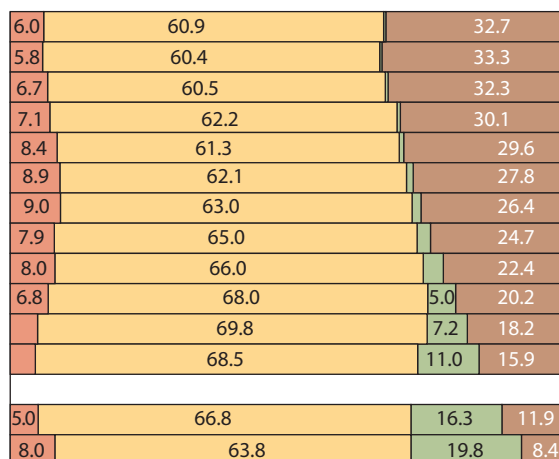
Never married Married Divorced Widowed

55 to 64 years

Male

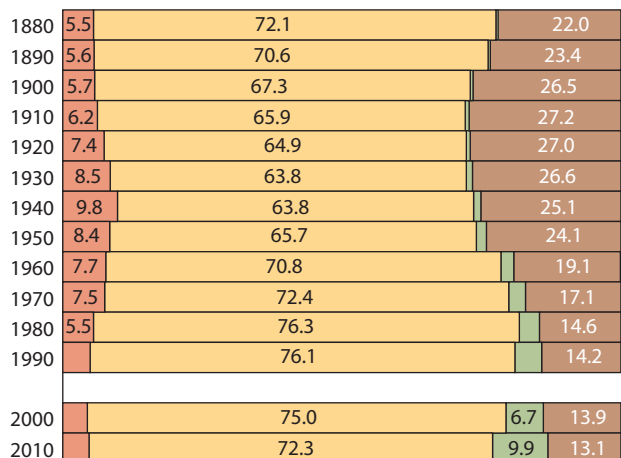


Female

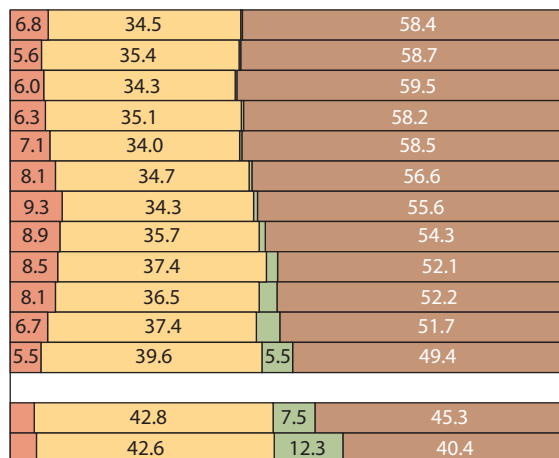


65 years and over

Male



Female



Percentages not shown on figure:

	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
55-64														
Male, divorced.....	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.5	1.8	2.6	3.1	3.8				
Male, widowed.....										4.1	3.6	3.5	2.8	2.5
Female, never married..											4.9	4.5		
Female, divorced	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.8	1.1	1.6	2.4	3.6					
65+														
Male, never married.....												4.9	4.4	4.7
Male, divorced.....	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.7	1.1	1.3	1.9	2.3	3.0	3.6	4.8		
Female, never married..													4.3	4.7
Female, divorced	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.7	1.1	2.0	3.2	4.2			

Sources: Michael R. Haines (2006), "Sex, Age, Race, and Marital Status," in *Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition*, Vol. 1, pp. 1-40 to 1-101. U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census publications, and for 2010, the American Community Survey (ACS). See www.demographicchartbook.com, References. Copyright © 2012 by Campbell Gibson. Graphics may be copied for personal use or for educational purposes, but may not be sold.

October 11, 2012