



MARRIAGE LICENSES RECORDED IN 2005

IN COLLABORATION WITH TOM DALY
ORANGE COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER/
COMMISSIONER OF MARRIAGES

OVERVIEW

The Orange County Clerk-Recorder Department is responsible for issuing and recording marriage licenses within Orange County. The Clerk-Recorder Department does this to:

1. Establish a permanent record that is legally recognized as evidence of the facts stated therein for each marriage occurring in California;
2. Provide information from those records to serve the needs of individuals for their legal requirements; and
3. Provide information from those records to government, education and research organizations.

There are two types of marriage licenses: public and confidential. Public marriage licenses are issued to applicants 18 years of age or older. There are no citizenship or residency requirements nor are blood tests required; but both applicants must be present at the time of issuance. Confidential marriage licenses are a confidential record, and the only individuals able to obtain information of this record are the bride and groom, except under certain circumstances. The Clerk-Recorder Department also performs a number of civil marriage ceremonies, averaging over 7,000 each year. For marriage licenses recorded in 2005, designated employees of the Clerk-Recorder Department, called Deputy

Commissioners of Marriage, performed ceremonies for 5,987 public licenses and 1,363 confidential licenses.

MARRIAGE LICENSES

Marriage licenses are valid for 90 days from the date of issuance and must be recorded within one year. Wedding ceremonies do not have to be held in Orange County. Of the 20,008 licenses recorded in 2005, 15,508 were public licenses, 4,457 were confidential and 42 were Declarations of Marriage. This issue of *Profiles* will report on the characteristics of the 15,508 public marriage licenses recorded in 2005. Thus, some of the ceremonies were held in 2004 and some ceremonies held in 2005 were recorded in 2006. This was the case for 355 ceremonies performed in calendar year 2004 but were submitted to the Clerk-Recorder Department in 2005 to be officially recorded. The 42 Declarations of Marriage were not included in this analysis because the ceremonies were performed between the years 1966 and 2003 but the executed license was lost in the mail or the person who performed the ceremony never returned the license for recording. In these cases, the couples went to the Clerk-Recorder Department in 2005 and declared that they were married in the year listed.

Table 1
Date of License Issue and Ceremony for all Orange County
Marriage Licenses Recorded in 2005

Month	# Licenses			# Ceremonies		
	Issued	Percent	Rank	Performed	Percent	Rank
January	861	5.6%	12	865	5.6%	12
February	1,010	6.5%	9	913	5.9%	10
March	1,314	8.5%	6	1,007	6.5%	9
April	1,262	8.1%	7	1,307	8.4%	7
May	1,446	9.3%	5	1,312	8.5%	6
June	1,713	11.0%	1	1,522	9.8%	5
July	1,655	10.7%	3	1,823	11.8%	1
August	1,700	11.0%	2	1,660	10.7%	2
September	1,542	9.9%	4	1,571	10.1%	3
October	1,171	7.6%	8	1,536	9.9%	4
November	878	5.7%	11	1,092	7.0%	8
December	956	6.2%	10	900	5.8%	11
Grand Total	15,508	100.0%		15,508	100.0%	

Source: Orange County Clerk-Recorder

Table 2
Number of Ceremonies Held on Holidays and Extended Holiday Weekends for Marriage Licenses Recorded in 2005

Holiday Ceremony Date	Day of Week	# of Ceremonies	Holiday Weekend Ceremony	# of Ceremonies
Christmas Eve 2004	Friday	6	Christmas Eve 2004	6
Christmas 2004	Saturday	3	Christmas 2004	3
New Year's Eve 2004	Friday	34	New Year's Eve 2004	34
New Year's Day 2005	Saturday	27	New Year's Day 2005	27
St. Valentine's Day (Feb. 14)	Monday	124	St. Valentine's Day	124
Memorial Day Observed (May 30)	Monday	6	Memorial Day Weekend (May 27 -30)	262
4th of July	Monday	14	4th of July Weekend (July 1 -4)	289
Labor Day Observed (Sept. 5)	Monday	6	Labor Day Weekend (Sept. 2 -5)	293
Thanksgiving (Nov. 24)	Thursday	5	Thanksgiving Weekend (Nov. 24 -27)	125
Christmas Eve 2005	Saturday	3	Christmas Eve 2005	3
Christmas Day 2005	Sunday	0	Christmas Day 2005	0
New Year's Eve 2005*	Saturday	0	New Year's Eve 2005 *	0

*Ceremonies performed on New Year's Eve 2005 would be recorded in 2006.
 Source: Orange County Clerk-Recorder

Table 3
Ten Most Popular Ceremony Dates for Marriage Licenses Recorded in 2005

Date Ceremony Performed	Number of Ceremonies	Rank
June 25, 2005	217	1
August 6, 2005	215	2
July 30, 2005	202	3
August 20, 2005	189	4
October 8, 2005	189	4
June 18, 2005	187	6
July 16, 2005	186	7
August 27, 2005	184	8
July 23, 2005	183	9
September 10, 2005	181	10
Total	1,933	

Source: Orange County Clerk-Recorder

Table 4
Residence of Bride and Groom for Marriage Licenses Recorded in 2005

	Number	Percent
Both spouses live in OC	11,215	72.3%
One spouse lives in OC	1,795	11.6%
Neither spouse lives in OC	2,498	16.1%
	15,508	100.0%

Source: Orange County Clerk-Recorder

WHEN, HOW OLD, AND WHERE DO THEY LIVE?

The Orange County Clerk-Recorder Department recorded 15,508 public marriage licenses in 2005. June was the most popular month to obtain a marriage license, followed by August and July (Table 1). Friday, July 1, 2005 was the most popular day to obtain a marriage license. One in three couples (5,421 or 35.0%) obtained their marriage license the day of the ceremony. A total of 433 couples (2.8%) obtained their license one day before the ceremony was performed. Eight couples were married one day before their 90-day license expired. In 2005, the most common month for when ceremonies were performed was July 2005, followed by August and September 2005 (Table 1).

About 7.5% of the public licenses recorded in 2005 were for ceremonies that were performed on a holiday or holiday weekend. St. Valentine's Day was the most popular holiday on which couples married, even though it fell on a Monday in 2005 (Table 2).

Table 3 shows the ten most popular dates for ceremonies, all of which fall on a Saturday. These ten dates account for 12.5% of all public licenses recorded in 2005. Though July 2005 was the most popular month for wedding ceremonies, the single-most popular day to get married on was June 25, 2005.

The median age of brides was 28.7 years and 31.1 years for grooms. The median age difference between spouses was 1.9 years for all couples. When the groom was older than the bride, the median age difference was 3.6 years. The bride was older in one out of four cases (27.6%) and the median age difference was 1.9 years. In 175 cases (1.1%), the bride and groom were the same age.

Nearly three out of four licenses recorded (72.3%) showed that both the bride and groom lived in Orange County (Table 4).

Neither spouse lived in Orange County in 16.1% of recorded licenses. About one in ten couples had one spouse that lived outside the County and of these over half, 57.7%, of the spouses that lived in Orange County were the brides.

I DO: AGAIN AND AGAIN

First-time marriages accounted for nearly two out of every three couples (64.4%) who submitted their license to be recorded. Table 5 also shows that 17.6% of the recorded licenses represent couples where one spouse had never been married, and the other spouse had been married once before. For 8.3% of couples, this was their second marriage for both spouses; for 9.4% of the recorded licenses, at least one spouse had been married at least twice before. The average number of previous marriages for both brides and grooms was 1.3.

For those that were previously married, about 8% of both brides' and grooms' previous marriages ended due to the death of their spouse (Table 6). About 2% of previous marriages were annulled (dissolution of a marriage and is treated as though it never happened) and the vast majority, 89%, ended through divorce.

For those spouses that had been married previously, the average time since their last marriage ended was 5.7 years for grooms and 6.1 years for brides. Although on average multiple years passed before the person married again, a total of 178 grooms and 160 brides married within 6 weeks after their previous marriage ended. About 20.5% of grooms and 18.5% of brides previously married, were married within one year of their previous marriage ending.

PLACE OF BIRTH

Marriage licenses do not require citizenship status, only place of birth; therefore for purposes of this report, we will focus on those individuals reported in the recorded marriage licenses that were born in the United States.

Half of couples (51.3%) comprised spouses who were both born in the U.S. (Table 8). In 22.1% of couples, one spouse was born in the U.S. and in 26.5% of couples neither spouse was born in the U.S. For 45.4% of brides and 48.5% of grooms, both spouses' parents were born in the U.S. Neither parent was born in the U.S. for less than half of brides and grooms (47.7% of brides, 44.2% of grooms). Only 6.9% of brides and 7.3% of grooms had one parent born in the U.S.

For marriage licenses recorded in 2005, 26.1% of brides

**Table 5
Number of Previous Marriages for Marriage Licenses Recorded in 2005**

Number of Previous Marriages	Number of Ceremonies	Percent
None	10,012	64.4%
1 spouse once; 1 spouse none	2,739	17.6%
Both spouses 1 each	1,295	8.3%
All Other (one spouse at least 2 prior)	1,462	9.4%
Total	15,508	100.0%

Source: Orange County Clerk-Recorder

**Table 6
Means of Previous Marriage Ending for Orange County Marriage Licenses Recorded in 2005**

Marriage ended as a result of:	Groom		Bride	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Death	328	8.2%	321	8.3%
Dissolution/Divorce	3,574	89.6%	3,429	89.1%
Annulment	89	2.2%	88	2.3%
Not stated	0	0.0%	12	0.3%
Spouse with previous marriage	3,991	100%	3,850	100%

Source: Orange County Clerk-Recorder

**Table 7
Number of Previous Marriages for Orange County Marriage Licenses Recorded in 2005**

# Previous Marriages	Groom	Bride
1	3,080	3,055
2	735	638
3	143	135
4	26	18
5	6	2
6	0	2
14	1	0
Grand Total	3,991	3,850

Source: Orange County Clerk-Recorder

and grooms along with their parents were born outside the U.S., i.e. for one in four couples everyone was born outside the U.S. One in three couples reported that the bride, groom and both sets of parents were born in the U.S. (34.4%). The remaining 39.5% of licenses represent couples where at least one of the bride, groom or parents of either was not born in the U.S.

Table 8
Birth Place of Couple Marrying, Groom's Parents and Bride's Parents for
Orange County Marriage Licenses Recorded in 2005

	<u>Couple</u>		<u>Groom's Parents</u>		<u>Bride's Parents</u>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Neither spouse born in US	4,119	26.5%	6,743	44.2%	7,301	47.7%
1 Spouse born in US	3,423	22.1%	1,106	7.3%	1,053	6.9%
Both spouses born in US	7,966	51.4%	7,393	48.5%	6,938	45.4%
	15,508	100.0%	15,242	100.0%	15,292	100.0%

Source: Orange County Clerk-Recorder

Note: Totals for parents of groom and bride do not equal total for couple due to information left blank on marriage license application

Exactly 81% of brides born in the U.S. married a man born in the U.S; 83.6% of grooms born in the U.S. also married a woman born in the U.S. Brides born outside the U.S. married a man born outside the U.S. in 72.5% of the recorded marriage licenses and 68.8% of grooms born outside the U.S. married a woman born outside the U.S.

When the groom had at least one parent born in the U.S., most often he married a female that was also born in the U.S. (84.2%). Fifty-nine percent (59.3%) of grooms that were born outside the U.S. and also had parents born outside the U.S., married a woman who was not born in the U.S.

When the bride was born outside the U.S. and her parents were as well, most often she married a man that was not born in the U.S. (70.0%). When the bride was born in the U.S. but her parents were not, about one in two married a man born in the U.S. (55.9%). When the bride was born in the U.S. and parents were also, 90.1% of brides also married a man born in the U.S.

When the groom and his parents were not born in the U.S., most often he married a woman that was not born in the U.S. (73.9%). When the groom was born in U.S. but his parents were not, about three in five married a woman born in the U.S. (59.9%). When groom was born in U.S. and parents were as well, 84.8% of grooms also married a woman born in the U.S.

SUMMARY

In general, changes in marital patterns are important to examine because they reflect broader demographic, as well as, societal and cultural changes. An example is seen in the age at first marriage: the postponing of one's first marriage has been affected by such things as the number of women attending college and entering the workforce outside the home often resulting in a delay of childbearing. Cultural changes can be seen in the transition of the woman whose role in the past was mother and homekeeper to the present where most women work outside the home; childbearing is delayed or avoided and housekeeping is secondary or accomplished through a hired employee. The demographic changes that result from this change in marital patterns are reflected in the lower birth and fertility rates due to the election of smaller family size as well as differing household and housing patterns.

The characteristics described in this issue of Profiles are for those couples that filed their marriage license for recording in 2005. The results discussed here are different than findings made for all couples getting married in 2005. Results are not available for all couples getting married in Orange County because marriage licenses could have been issued and filed in a different county. It would be interesting to do a long range comparison both by year license recorded, as is the case in this issue, and by year of ceremony and see if there are distinct differences.

PROFILES IS PRODUCED BY THE CENTER FOR DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON.

PROFILES IS A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION THAT FOCUSES ON DEMOGRAPHIC ISSUES IN ORANGE COUNTY.

THIS ISSUE WAS AUTHORED BY DEBORAH DIEP, CDR DIRECTOR & THE ORANGE COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER DEPARTMENT.

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