

DIVORCE IN THE MIDDLE YEARS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Divorce has now become a common and acceptable phenomenon in the American family system, yet seldom do we regard it as anything but failure and tragedy. Since current predictions indicate that at least one out of three marriages being contracted at the present time will end in the divorce courts, the termination of a marriage must become an important part of family life education. Through studying marriage failure, insight may also be gained in prevention of problems and means of achieving marital success.

Research related to divorce has been approached from many different perspectives: analysis of divorce statistics regarding the demographic variables; surveys of the recently divorced to determine cause of marital failure; studies of the legal aspects of separation and divorce; investigations of the effects of divorce on the involved parties (especially the children); and assessment of the adjustment process following divorce. The major studies have included subjects from the general population with young divorcees as the central focus. Very little attention has been given the long term marriage that disintegrates in the middle years.

Current statistics indicate that 25% of all divorces involve persons who have been married longer than 15 years. During the last five years the number of divorces among middle-aged couples has

increased 50% (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1974). Conditions leading to the decision to divorce after a couple has invested 15, 20 or more years of their lives in the relationship could be very different from those of the short term marriage failure. Adjustment to divorce when the marriage partners are older would undoubtedly be quite different from the termination of the early marriage.

Although middle-age divorce has received very little attention by researchers, marriage and life satisfaction in the middle and later years have been subjects of investigation during the past decade. The post-parental years have been described by family counselors to be a period of crisis that requires major role adjustments for both husbands and wives. It has been assumed that women must make the greatest degree of adjustment because they have been more intensely involved in the child rearing process and thus they lose one of their major roles when the children leave home. In addition, they often face the emotional and physical problems that are attributed to menopause, along with the realization that they are losing their youthful appearance. Often at this time the woman's husband is deeply engrossed in his work, leaving very little time or energy for shared activities. It is at this time she finds herself searching for a new identity much the same as an adolescent (Fried, 1967).

For the middle-aged man, the problem may be centered in his occupation, primarily disappointment in his accomplishments, boredom or disillusionment. He may also worry about his health and fear loss of masculine virility and youthful physique. He often becomes bored with his marriage and his marriage partner or he feels neglected by his wife as she becomes engrossed in solving her own problems. Bergler (1957)

indicates that no man escapes some suffering during the middle-age crisis but this need not lead to the break-up of his marriage.

It is not known at the present time to what extent the above problems are causative factors in middle-age divorce. For many years it was believed that the rise in divorce during middle-age could be attributed to the desire to spare the children the trauma of divorce and thus the marriage would dissolve as soon as the children left home. This may now be questioned since a marked increase in divorce involving young children has been noted during the past twenty-five years (Kenkel, 1965). Although studies have not focused on this particular age group, it is reasonable to assume that societal changes that affect the family in general will also have some influence on the older marriage: women's quest for equality and personal fulfillment; women working outside the home; a changing sex code that condones extra-marital relations; less influence of organized religion as an authority in people's lives; a more tolerant attitude toward divorce and remarriage. To date none of these changes have been investigated as a possible disruptive force in long term marital relationships.

Another long neglected area has been the positive aspects of many divorces. To terminate an unhealthy or destructive relationship and begin a new life during the forties or fifties may improve the mental health of the individuals and contribute to the life satisfaction of both partners. Since mental health problems tend to become more pronounced as the aging process occurs, solutions should be sought to make family life and personal relationships as satisfying as possible for all concerned and if this is impossible within the old relationship, new solutions should be sought. Perhaps it is not until middle-age that a

dependent marriage partner feels they have enough ego strength to stand on their own two feet and divorce signifies a personal victory in their struggle for autonomy.

The forces within society that aid divorcees in adjustments have been investigated for the young divorcees and remarriage to a more appropriate partner has been considered the best of all possible solutions to their problems, but older people who have invested the major part of their lives in the marriage may very well have problems that have not as yet been explored and remarriage will not be a possibility for many, especially women in their forties, fifties and older. However, this age group may also have resources available to them that will make their life reconstruction less painful than at an earlier age, such as financial resources, support of grown children and a mature attitude toward life.

The lack of research information concerning the problems which lead to divorce in the middle years and the adjustment processes that divorced middle-aged persons undergo suggests that there is a vital need for additional study in this area.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate causes and effects of divorce in the middle years. It was conducted in two phases:

Phase I consisted of a short questionnaire administered to a large number of middle-aged divorced men and women who had been married a minimum of fifteen years to determine:

- A. Common background factors of respondents regarding: race, age at marriage, age at divorce, number of years married,

number of children, if married previously, how was that marriage ended, occupation of husband and wife, family income level, educational level of husband and wife.

- B. Basic facts regarding divorce process: partner initiating it, major cause, efforts made to solve problem, time in marriage when problems developed, forces that worked against divorce, factors that were significantly related to the decision to divorce.
- C. Respondents' present feelings about the divorce and legal settlement, their assessment of the support and commitment of each partner to the marriage.

Phase II consisted of interviews with seventy men and women, volunteers from the above sample, to explore in depth the following areas:

- A. Mate selection and decision to marry: Ages at marriage, readiness for marriage.
- B. Marital interaction: Dominance, communication, conflict, shared activities, expression of affection, sexual relationship, ego support, affect of husband's work and wife's work, extra-marital sexual involvements, changes occurring at middle-age.
- C. The Divorce: Circumstance that triggered the action, help sought in making the decision, reaction of children, sources of help and major problems.
- D. Adjustment to a new life: Present attitude of children, remarriage, present attitude toward divorce.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be examined:

Hypothesis I. There is no significant relationship between sex of the respondent and (a) perception of major cause of marital dissatisfaction that led to divorce, (b) perception of factors that kept respondent in relationship longer than desired, and (c) perception of what respondent would do differently if they could go back and re-live their marriage.

Hypothesis II. There is no significant relationship between sex of the respondent and (a) perception of whether final financial and property settlement was satisfactory, (b) perception of whether life is more satisfying at the present time than during the last few years of marriage, and (c) feelings about the divorce at the present time.

Hypothesis III. There is no significant relationship between marriage partner that requested the divorce (wife, husband or mutual decision) and respondent's perception concerning whether life is more satisfying now than during the last few years of marriage.

Hypothesis IV. There is no significant relationship between number of years married at time of divorce and (a) perception of whether or not life seems to be more satisfying at the present time than during the last few years of marriage and (b) feelings about the divorce at the present time.

Hypothesis V. There is no significant relationship between family income level and each of the following: (a) point in marriage when problem developed, (b) satisfaction with financial and property settlement, (c) perception of whether life is more satisfying now than before

the divorce, (d) feelings about the divorce, (e) whether or not respondent plans to re-marry.

Hypothesis VI. There is no significant relationship between educational level of husband and (a) point in marriage when problem developed, (b) satisfaction with financial and property settlement, (c) perception of whether life is more satisfying now than before the divorce, (d) feelings about the divorce, (e) whether or not respondent plans to re-marry.

Hypothesis VII. There is no significant relationship between educational level of wife and each of the following: (a) point in marriage when problem developed, (b) satisfaction with financial and property settlement, (c) perception of whether life is more satisfying now than before the divorce, (d) feelings about the divorce, (e) whether or not respondent plans to re-marry.

Hypothesis VIII. There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and each of the following: (a) perception of period in marriage when problem developed, (b) satisfaction with final financial and property settlement, (c) perception of whether or not life is more satisfying now than during the last few years of marriage, (d) whether or not either partner received counseling, and (e) partner requesting divorce

Interview Questions

The following questions from the interviews will be examined:

1. Do respondents perceive that they were ready for marriage?
2. Which marriage partner was dominant in the relationship?

3. Did respondents perceive that communication was effective in their relationship?
4. Did the amount of conflict increase through the years?
5. Did the number of shared activities increase or decrease through the years?
6. Was respondent satisfied with the amount of affection expressed to them by their ex-spouse?
7. Were respondents satisfied with their sexual relationship?
8. Did respondents feel their marriage partners contributed to their feelings of self esteem?
9. Did respondents feel they contributed to spouse's feelings of self esteem?
10. What were subjects perception of the ways in which their mates tended to make them feel bad?
11. Did the self concept of both marriage partners change while they were married to each other?
12. Were respondents satisfied with the way their spouses maintained their personal appearance?
13. Did husband's success or lack of success in his occupation have an effect on the marriage relationship?
14. Did the wife's work affect the relationship?
15. Was wife supportive of the movement for women's equality?
16. Did either marriage partner engage in extra-marital sexual relations while they were married?
17. Did a change occur in marriage partners as middle-age approached?
18. What incident or circumstance triggered the divorce?

19. If professional counseling was sought, was it helpful in making the decision to divorce?
20. What was the reaction of the children to the divorce when it was first announced?
21. What was the greatest source of help during the divorce process?
22. What was the most difficult problem during the entire process?
23. What are the children's present feelings about the divorce?
24. Has subject re-married?
25. What is subject's present assessment of the divorce?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The lack of knowledge and concern for the divorced older people in our society was emphasized by Payne and Pittard (1969) when they discovered that there was a complete absence of research in this area, in spite of the fact that there has been a great increase in the rate of divorce that occurs after twenty years of marriage. They indicated a number of changes in our society that contribute to middle-age divorce: (1) decline in median age of first marriage, (2) life expectancy extended, (3) shorter child-bearing period, (4) increased independence of women, and (5) change in divorce laws and attitude toward divorce. They stressed the need for research on middle-age divorce to take into account the demographic factors, political, legal and moral framework, the divorce process, nature and types of divorce, post-divorce adjustments, relationships of the divorced, economic factors and implications.

Demographic Factors

Many behavioral scientists have analyzed divorce statistics to determine demographic variables that are significantly related to divorce. Glick and Norton (1971) examined race, age at marriage, education and income level as significant variables related to divorce. They found higher divorce rates among Negroes as compared to whites, early marriages as opposed to older ages at marrying, lower educational

levels as opposed to the better educated, and low income level as opposed to middle and upper incomes. Scanzoni (1972) examined the same variations in divorce rates, as well as occupation, socio-economic position and health, and related all significant variations to the availability of the rewards and benefits of "the good life," indicating that those who could not achieve their expectations within their relationship tended to look elsewhere for their rewards.

Reiss (1971) indicated that the average duration of marriages that end in divorce is about seven years. By this time fifty percent of those who are going to divorce have actually done so. He also indicated that divorce is associated with economic conditions in part and during good times the over-all divorce rate increases, partly as a result of more people being able to afford the legal process instead of simply deserting or separating. Goode (1956) examined occupation as it related to divorce and found that divorce rates are lowest at the top of the occupational structure, with professionals and proprietors contributing barely more than half their proportionate share. As he dropped down to semiskilled and operatives, he found groups exceeding its proportionate share, and the unskilled had almost twice as many divorces as their share in the population as a whole. Kephart (1955) found much the same thing regarding occupation, as did Monahan (1955), when he found that farmers had the lowest divorce rates of all.

Kenkel (1966) explained that among the twenty percent of all divorces that were granted to those who had experienced fifteen or more years of marriage, the problems would probably be related more to what happened to the individuals and to their life situations after marriage than to conditions that existed at the time of marriage. He also said

that while twenty-five years ago six out of every ten divorces did not involve a child, today the opposite is true, with six out of every ten divorces involving at least one child. This may indicate that parents are no longer inclined to stay in an unhappy marriage for the sake of the children.

In Hunt's study of divorced men and women (1966), he cited a Kansas City study of adult life which indicated that by age forty or fifty lower status people have given up on life and accepted it. On the other hand, middle class men and women see themselves as young, healthy, vital; hence, middle-age divorce may occur more frequently among the middle class. He also indicated that devout church goers are less likely to divorce (but may have unhappy marriages) and that divorce is about fifty percent more common among urban people than among farm families.

Karen Renne (1970) correlated dissatisfaction in marriage with demographic variables. Similar to divorce statistics, she found that black people were more dissatisfied than white, low income more than high, low educational level more than high, people with physical illness were more dissatisfied than the healthy. Other common factors correlated with unhappy marriages were low morale, isolation, depression and heavy drinking.

Divorce statistics for the State of Oklahoma indicates that only twice as many marriages than divorces occurred during 1974 and 1975, with Oklahoma County reporting three marriages to every two divorces (Oklahoma State Department of Public Health, 1976). Oklahoma has the third highest divorce rate in the United States and this is explained by the fact that it is one of the easiest states in which to get a

divorce, using grounds of "incompatibility" as reason for ending a marriage.

For the past several years Oklahoma County has reported that more divorce petitions were filed than marriage licenses issued, leaving the impression that the divorce rate was now exceeding the marriage rate. What is not considered is that many of the divorce petitions are dismissed or left indefinitely in the file without the final decree being granted.

Causes of Divorce

While causes of divorce have been explored in many studies, it is hard to determine the underlying reasons since the legal grounds are seldom the actual cause of the break-up. Levinger (1972) investigated marital complaints of couples applying for divorce and found that the most common complaints of wives were: mental cruelty, neglect of home and children, physical abuse, financial problems, drinking, verbal abuse, infidelity, lack of love, sexual incompatibility, in-laws, and excessive demands. For men the following complaints were most prevalent: mental cruelty, neglect, infidelity, sexual incompatibility, lack of love, in-law problems, financial problems, verbal abuse, drinking, excessive demands, physical abuse.

Levinger (1972) also explained the three factors that are significant in making the decision to divorce: A) Attractions within the marriage, such as esteem for spouse, desire for companionship, sexual enjoyment, husband's income, home ownership, husband's amount of education, husband's occupation, similarity in social status; B) Sources of barrier strength, including obligation to dependent children,

obligation to marital bond, proscriptive religion, joint church attendance, primary group affiliation, community stigma, legal and economic bars; C) Sources of alternate attraction, including preferred other sex partner, disjunctive kin affiliations, opposing religious affiliations, wife's opportunity for independent income, and freedom from responsibility. It is when the alternate attraction becomes stronger than attractions within the marriage and the strength of the barriers that divorce is forthcoming. Levinger says that by definition, both partners must value another alternative over that of present marriage before both will agree to a separation. Usually the wife is plaintiff in divorce proceedings (70%), partly because of cultural prescription and partly because her feelings are more important than husband's as an indicator of divorce proneness.

Bernard's article "No News, but New Ideas" (1970) listed a number of reasons why divorce is on the increase. Old disapproval of divorce and the divorced person is gradually disappearing. There is an increase of women in the work force which means more women can support themselves and are not totally dependent on their husbands. Living conditions are now better for the single woman and society is slowly accommodating to the woman alone. In examining divorce proneness, she sees a high incidence of mortality and morbidity rates, especially alcoholism, mental illness and suicide.

A recent Roper poll (Daily Oklahoman, October 14, 1974) indicated that more women are favoring divorce today than in the past. In a poll of 3,000 women, they found that 55% of women think children are better off if a bad marriage is ended and only 10% say that unhappy parents should stay together for the children's sake. Sixty percent of women

favored divorce for poor marriages and 20% were against it. Sixty-six percent believed that alimony should not be granted to women able to support themselves and 71% say the mother should not automatically receive custody of the children. Two-thirds of the women polled believe a woman who walks out on her spouse and children deserves no more criticism than a man who does the same thing.

Hunt (1966) found that the major causes of divorce were: financial problems, control or domination by others, adultery, drunkenness, personality differences, irresponsibility or lack of interest in home life. Regarding divorce in middle-age, he says, "It is in middle-age that one gives up hope that things will change and the situation, which before was only distasteful, becomes unbearable" (p. 15). LeMasters (1959) study of 36 couples whose marriages had been characterized by chronic conflict for at least ten years found evidence of personal disorganization, including alcoholism, psychosomatic illness, neurotic or psychotic behavior, occupational problems and extramarital affairs. He found no evidence that these couples were able to improve their marriages over time and that the husbands were more likely to suffer personality damage from their marriages than were the wives.

Komarovsky's study of blue collar marriages found that approximately fourteen percent of marriages were rated "very unhappy" (1967). She indicated that deviant behavior plays only a minor role in marriage problems: illegitimacy, adultery, juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, refusal of wife to fulfill obligations. The more common kinds of social disorganization appearing were: wife's outside activities (with husband feeling neglected), wife's social status (background) superior to husband's, separation from kinship group, lack of friends. The blue

collar version of masculinity is to be reserved, an incapacity to share, and poor communication. She found that many couples in their late thirties, usually uneducated, seemed to be withdrawn from life, spending most of their leisure time in front of the television set.

Neuhaus and Neuhaus (1974), while admitting that many external and internal causes are cited by divorcing spouses, explained that personality factors seem to be at the root of most marital discord. These are observed in a variety of ways: Lack of independence, overdependence on parents, self-punishment or self-defeating attitudes, problems of identity in one's sex roles, lack of emotional maturity. They also indicated that social causes that contributed to the problems were parental interference, economic and financial pressures.

A number of writers have related the wife's working outside the home as a contributing factor in marital breakdown. Axelson (1960) found poorer marital adjustment when the wife works outside the home and when the wife works full time rather than part-time. This appears to be a threat to the husband's culturally defined dominance. Leslie (1972) also indicated that the number of working women within the middle-age category may be a contributing factor to divorce. He found that among 35 to 44 year old women, 47.2% were in the labor force, while among the 45 to 64 year group, 44.1% were employed.

Middle-Age Marital and Life Satisfaction

In spite of the absence of data related to middle-age divorce, a number of studies have focused on life satisfaction and marital adjustment through the family cycle, revealing a variety of problems related to the marriages of the middle-aged population. Marital unhappiness in

the middle years was studied by Bossard and Boll (1955) when they interviewed brothers and sisters to determine the satisfaction of married couples' marriage relationships. Their case material suggested the late forties and early fifties as a critical period for married women and the fifties as a crisis decade for men as far as happiness with marriage was concerned.

Axelson (1960) found that it was the wife who has the most severe period of adjustment when the children leave home because this often coincides with the time that her husband goes through a period of intense involvement with his occupation. He also found that husbands suffer personal maladjustment when they find their wives less attractive, fear loss of their own virility and become depressed by mediocre occupational attainments. Wives indicated an increase in loneliness during the "empty nest" period. While Blood and Wolfe (1960) found that many marriages may improve after the children leave home, only 20% of wives married twenty years or longer were fully satisfied with their marriage, while 21% were definitely dissatisfied.

Rollins and Feldman (1970) studied 799 couples at all stages of the family life cycle and found that satisfactions were at a low point when launching the children from home. Gurin, Veross and Feld (1960) also found the lowest point in marital satisfaction was close to the "empty nest" stage. Pineo (1961), following up on the longitudinal data of the Burgess Wallen sample of 1,000 married couples, found that after fifteen years of marriage there was a decrease in intimacy and shared activities which he termed the "process of disenchantment." However, Hayes and Stinnett's investigation of life satisfaction of middle-aged married people (1971) found that among their sample, the most troublesome

aspect of their marriage at that time was too little time to spend together, while the most rewarding aspect of their marriage relationship was companionship.

Marital happiness at middle-age and socio-economic levels have also been investigated. Cuber and Haroff (1963), in their study of upper middle-class married men and women between the ages of 35 and 55, found that marriages are not necessarily stable because the two people are deeply satisfied with the marriage. They indicated that often married couples who are disaffected with each other remain married because of a lack of attractive alternatives to the marriage or because the instrumental aspects of the marriage may be more than sufficiently met. Both Rainwater (1969) and Komarovsky (1964) found that there are different orders of intimacy, expectations and satisfactions found among the very poor and working class husbands and wives as compared to middle-class, as well as indications of higher rates of marital unhappiness.

In studying personality and adjustment in middle-age (Neugarten and Associates, 1964) it was found that the personality development of persons in the age range 40 to 64 vary consistently by social class but not by age or sex. Adjustment to the aging process comes most easily to upper status people, not only because of economic advantages, but also because in the lower classes the ill-developed personalities interfere with good adjustment in middle and old age.

Middle-age may be assumed to be a period of life when accumulated resources and maturity make coping with life's problems easier, or a time when problems become compounded beyond help. The National Committee on Mental Illness reported that the largest age category of first admissions to mental institutions was that of the 35 to 64 year group.

In 1960, Joint Commission on Mental Health and Illness reported that for non-hospitalized American adults, there was greater distress and more symptoms reported by women than by men in all areas of adjustment and that feelings of impending breakdown and psychological distress was reported more frequently by divorced and separated females than any other group of either sex (Chesler, 1972). Among separated and divorced people, one-fifth of men and two-fifths of women seek help for emotional problems, while many others felt they needed it but did not get it. Surveys of problem drinkers indicated the percentage is highest among males, among middle-aged, among residents of larger cities, among divorced or unmarried, and among those with the least and highest vocational status, according to the First Report to the U. S. Congress of Alcohol and Health (1971). Segal (1969), in a study of suicides in New Hampshire, found that they occur most frequently during the middle years (35-64) and are especially high among the maritally unattached. In suicides, men outnumber women three to one.

Chilman (1968) indicated that a review of all available research shows a decline in marital satisfaction during the forties and fifties, part of which is attributable to the middle-age stage of human development. Some of the changes affecting marriage are: the slow descent from peak of capacities (in both physical and mental sense); diminishing sex drive; anxiety caused by heightened expectations and increasing demands of women; increase in extra-marital affairs which are linked with anxiety over declining sex drive and fear of loss of personal attractiveness. She also reviewed the positive aspects of middle-age: family income tends to increase; wives are able to return to labor

force; many adults in middle years have achieved a far higher level of emotional maturity; not as much mobility.

LeShan, in The Wonderful Crisis of Middle Age (1974), discussed change as a significant factor in middle-age marriage satisfaction.

She says:

It is not easy for us to begin to accept the idea that divorce can often be a testament to courage, to human integrity, to idealism; that it can mean a refusal to settle for half a life, or less. Most of us, including those who do divorce, cannot shake that sense of failure and shame which may have nothing to do with the merits of the situation at all but is simply a residue of what we learned when we were most impressionable as children (p. 149).

She also feels that middle-age may not necessarily bring new marital problems, but only tends to accentuate those that have been there all along but have been successfully avoided by such ingenious devices as struggle for economic solvency and having children. When these struggles are over, there remains nothing of value in the relationship.

Middle-age and the increase in extra-marital involvements was discussed by Neubeck (1969). As the middle-aged male becomes more affluent, more poised, more powerful, he becomes more manly in the eyes of women; his attractiveness does not decrease until much later than his wife's. Berger (1972) sees the restlessness of the middle-aged man as a symptom of unhappiness with himself but searching for causes and answers outside himself. She calls for understanding from the wife to help him through the difficult times.

O'Neill and O'Neill (1974) also discuss change as a continuing phenomenon throughout the life cycle and describe the "forty-year old scrap heap." Many people feel at this time of life that the peak has been reached and from that time forward their life's path is on a

decline. "Nothing can be more destructive to the human spirit and psyche than the idea that there are no more goals, that the process of growing and living is on the downswing" (p. 56).

Effects of Divorce

Effects of divorce on the two involved parties have been investigated by a number of researchers. Goode (1956) interviewed 425 Detroit-area mothers who had been divorced and found that the period of greatest trauma tends to come at the time of final separation, rather than at the time of the legal divorce. He classified the respondents into high, medium and low trauma groups, based on the impact of their divorce on sleeping, health, loneliness, work efficiency, memory difficulties, smoking and drinking. Slightly over one-third were classified as low-trauma, with almost 42% falling in the high trauma group. The trauma that begins with separation gradually eases during the process of divorce.

Waller (1967) focused on the emotional aspects of adjustment to divorce and identified typical stages that the divorced person goes through: shock, followed by frustration of deeply rooted habits; ambivalence toward partner and self, along with feelings of failure; disruption of established sexual patterns which may lead to a period of sexual promiscuity. Later comes new social relationships and a gradual adjustment, with pain easing and a new life beginning. Hunt(1966) found that loneliness was the most common affliction, followed by role disturbance. He indicated that divorce affects all aspects of a person's life--social, work and family.

Gurin, Veroff and Feld (1960) found that women suffered more symptoms of maladjustment during divorce than did men, as their change to a solitary status involves the removal of what was a central anchor and identity focus. Neuhaus and Neuhaus (1974) also indicated that regardless of who seeks the divorce, each partner is left with feelings of failure or rejection. Both suffer guilt, grief, resentment, self-pity, frustration, depression, and feelings of failure.

Stages of emotional divorce were discussed by Kessler (1975), beginning with disillusionment of the marriage, followed by erosion of the relationship, detachment, physical separation, mourning, second adolescence, exploration and hard work.

Bohannon (1970) describes six stations of divorce, all requiring an adjustment: the emotional divorce, the legal divorce, the economic divorce, the co-parental divorce, the community divorce, and the psychic divorce. He feels that the emotional divorce involves grief much the same as in loss by death, but also involves a purposeful and active rejection by another. He explained that the community helps less when divorce has occurred than they do when a marriage is terminated by death. Krantzler (1973) also indicated that society holds out no helping hand to divorced men and women who have experienced the loss that comes with the death of a relationship. He stated that his experience with divorced people suggests that mourning usually reaches its peak within the first six months of separation and diminishes markedly thereafter. For many people, the mourning period starts long before separation occurs, when the individual realizes that the marriage is over but for some reason has not yet broken away from their marriage partner. The most common feelings experienced during the emotional

crisis are anger, fear, anxiety, resentment, vulnerability, and guilt-- side by side with equally strong urges to return to the past.

Chen (1968) suggests group therapy as a means of aiding divorcing people in making the decision and in adjusting to a single life. He feels that all types of people need help in seeing the situation accurately and in examining alternatives and believes that divorce may not be the answer to many people's problems. Felder (1971) examines divorce from a lawyer's perspective and also asks the question, "will divorce solve your problem?" His experience suggests that most people are miserable after a divorce and in many cases they take the same problems into a second marriage without any examination of the major cause of the difficulty. Both marriage and divorce counseling have been suggested as a valuable assistance in making the decision and adjustment to divorce. Guren, Veroff and Feld (1960) indicated that the sources of help used by people who sought professional counseling for a personal problem were distributed as follows: Clergyman - 46%; Doctor - 36%; Psychiatrist or Psychologist - 33%; Marriage Counselor or Clinic - 92%; Other private agency - 50%; Lawyer - 61%; Other - 11%.

Rose and Price-Bonham (1973) reviewed available research related to divorce adjustment and concluded that it was a much bigger problem for women than for men. In 90 to 95% of the cases, women have custody of the children. There is less opportunity to develop a new social life which is essential in adjusting to divorce. Re-marriage is seen as the end result of good adjustment.

Krantzler (1973), Sheresky and Mannes (1972), and Gettleman and Markowitz (1974) have all concentrated on the positive aspects of divorce. They emphasize the opportunity for growth, self understanding,

personal development and the creation of a new and more satisfying life. Epstein (1974), on the other hand, emphasizes the pain, the cost, and the difficulty in adjusting to a single life or a single parent status. He concludes that divorce should be avoided if at all possible, but not if the price is an unhappy life for those involved.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Selection of Subjects

One thousand thirty-five men and women who filed a petition for divorce in the State of Oklahoma between January 1, 1974, and June 30, 1974, and who had been married at least fifteen years at the time of divorce were selected to participate in this study. Court records were examined in seven counties in Oklahoma to secure names and addresses of qualified men and women. Those counties selected for inclusion in the study were: Oklahoma County (representing an urban area), Payne, Kay, and Pottawatomie Counties (representing medium sized towns and rural areas), and Rogers, Logan, and Kingfisher Counties (representing small towns and rural areas). All persons fitting the above criteria were contacted by mail if addresses could be found.

Phase I of the study included those divorced persons who responded to the first questionnaire. Of the 1,035 questionnaires mailed, 105 were returned as "non-deliverable." There were 138 questionnaires returned that were usable. Three of those returned were not included in the study because they had re-married their divorced partner.

Phase II included 70 of the 88 respondents who volunteered to be interviewed. Those volunteering included their names, addresses, and telephone numbers on the first questionnaire.

Development of the Instruments

Original instruments were used in both phases of the study. The questionnaire mailed to the large sample included questions concerning demographic information about the subjects, causes of the divorce, feelings about the decision, help sought in solving problems, and evaluation of both spouse's commitment and concern with the relationship (see Appendix A).

The interview schedule was not completed until some of the responses to the first questionnaire were received and evaluated. The interview was seeking more in-depth information about mate selection, marriage interaction, the divorce and adjustment to life since the divorce (see Appendix B).

Both instruments were submitted to a group of six family life specialists for their criticisms and suggestions before the final printing. The first instrument was also submitted to a pilot group of 15 divorced men and women to determine clarity and ease in answering questions.

Those subjects that indicated on the questionnaire their willingness to be interviewed were contacted by telephone by the interviewer and a date, time, and place was agreed upon for the session. Most of the interviews were done in the privacy of the respondent's home but others took place in a restaurant or coffee shop. The interview was designed to take approximately one and one-half hours, but the majority extended beyond this time period, lasting up to three hours in some instances.

Analysis of Data

Analysis of data for Phase I of the project included percentage and frequency description of all responses on the first questionnaire. In order to determine which background factors were significantly related to perceptions concerning the marriage and divorce, the Chi Square test was used for the analysis of relating nominal level to nominal level data. For analyses relating nominal level to ordinal level data, the Kruskal-Wallis analysis of variance was used.

Analysis of data for Phase II also included percentage and frequency description of selected responses.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Description of Subjects

A detailed description of the 138 subjects who participated in this study is presented in Table I. Over 63% were female and the vast majority were white (92%). More than half the respondents had married before their 21st birthday, with only 11% marrying after age 25. Thirty-four percent of the participants were between ages 40 to 44 at the time of divorce, with 32% still under age 39. The remainder were over 45 years of age (34%). Thirty-five percent had been married between 15 and 19 years at the time of divorce, while almost 40% were married between 20 to 24 years. Two of the subjects had terminated a marriage of over 40 years duration.

All but 6% of the total sample were parents. The largest proportion (61%) had either two or three children. Only 16 of the respondents indicated they had been married before and ten of these first marriages had ended in divorce. Approximately 63% of the wives were employed outside the home at the time of separation, but the majority (62%) had been employed less than half of their married life. The occupation of the wife most often was of a secretarial or clerical nature (41%), while almost 38% had occupations requiring more extensive training (nurses, teachers, etc.). There were more professional

TABLE I
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECTS

Variable	Classification	No.	%
Sex	Male	51	36.96
	Female	87	63.04
Race	White	128	92.75
	Black	9	6.52
	Indian	1	.73
Age at Marriage	17 and under	27	19.71
	18 - 20	48	35.04
	21 - 24	47	34.31
	25 - 29	8	5.84
	30 - over	7	5.11
Age at Divorce	39 - under	44	31.88
	40 - 44	47	34.06
	45 - 49	27	19.57
	50 - 54	12	8.70
	55 - 59	2	1.45
	60 - over	6	4.35
Number of Years Married	15 - 19	48	34.78
	20 - 24	54	39.13
	25 - 29	27	19.57
	30 - 34	5	3.62
	35 - 39	2	1.45
	40 - over	2	1.45
Number of Children	None	8	5.84
	One	6	4.39
	2 or 3	83	60.58
	4 - 6	36	26.28
	7 - more	4	2.92
If married before, it was ended by -	Annulment	2	12.50
	Divorce	10	62.50
	Death	4	25.00
Was wife employed at time of separation?	Yes	85	62.50
	No	51	37.50
Length of Wife's Employment	Less than one year	17	19.32
	Less than half of married life	38	43.18
	At least half of married life	14	15.91
	Most of married life	19	21.59

TABLE I (Continued)

Variable	Classification	No.	%
Occupation of Wife	Professional	2	2.22
	Teachers, Supervisors, Libr.	16	17.78
	Reg. Nurse, Elem. Teacher	16	17.78
	Secretarial, clerical	37	41.11
	Beauty operator, store clerk	13	14.44
	Waitress, factory, maid	6	6.67
Occupation of Husband	Professional, Executive	20	15.87
	H.S. teacher, Accountant	27	21.43
	Salesmen, clerks, contractors	30	23.81
	Carpenters, electricians	35	27.78
	Policemen, military	7	5.56
	Common laborer	7	5.56
Family Income	Less than \$10,000	21	15.56
	\$10,000 - \$20,000	58	42.96
	\$20,000 - \$40,000	46	34.07
	Over \$40,000	10	7.41
Husband's Highest Level of Education	Completed graduate work	16	11.77
	Graduated from 4 year college	30	22.06
	Attended college 2 years	21	15.44
	Graduated from high school	42	30.88
	Att. high school (not grad.)	17	12.50
	8th grade or less	10	7.35
Wife's Highest Level of Education	Completed graduate work	7	5.07
	Graduated from 4 year college	20	14.49
	Attended college 2 years	18	13.04
	Graduated from high school	65	47.11
	Att. high school (not grad.)	21	15.22
	8th grade or less	7	5.07

occupations represented among the husbands (16%), with a fairly equal distribution among the skilled (24%) and semi-skilled (27%). The combined family income most often designated was from \$10,000 to \$20,000 (43%). Only 16% earned less than \$10,000 and over 7% had an income of over \$40,000 a year. Husbands tended to be better educated than the wives. Twelve percent of the men had completed graduate work for a profession and 22% had graduated from a four year college, as compared to slightly over 5% of the women. Over 7% of the men had an eighth grade education or less. Almost half of the women were high school graduates, with 5% completing graduate work and 5% having an eighth grade education or less.

Perceptions of Divorce

The majority of the respondents (55%) indicated that the wife was the marriage partner that first requested the divorce. Only 35% of the respondents indicated it was the husband who made the first request and the remaining indicated it was a mutual decision.

Table II categorizes the various reasons that were given as the major cause of the divorce. The largest proportion, almost 20% of the respondents, indicated that the spouse's involvement with a member of the opposite sex was the major cause of the divorce. Lack of love was the second most frequently mentioned cause (13%) and emotional problems of one of the partners was indicated by over 11% of the responses. Factors associated with "change of life" and alcohol or drug problems both encompassed approximately 9% of the subjects.

Analyses concerning the degree to which certain factors were important in making the decision to divorce are presented in Table III.

TABLE II

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTION
OF MAJOR CAUSE OF MARITAL DISSATISFACTION LEADING TO DIVORCE

Major Cause	No.	%
Involvement with a third party	29	19.21
Lack of love	19	12.58
Emotional problems of one spouse	17	11.26
Change of life	14	9.27
Alcohol or drug problems	14	9.27
Lack of common interests	13	8.61
Communication problems	12	7.95
Sexual incompatibility	12	7.95
Interference of work	5	3.31
Other	16	10.60

TABLE III

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS RELATED TO THE DECISION TO DIVORCE

Factor	NO IMPORTANCE				VERY IMPORTANT					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Financial Problems	65	47.79	17	12.50	19	13.97	7	5.15	28	20.59
Gradual Deterioration of the Relationship	30	22.06	8	5.88	13	9.56	15	11.03	70	51.47
Sexual Incompatibility	65	47.79	9	6.62	20	14.71	8	5.88	34	25.00
Infidelity of Wife	111	81.62	3	2.21	3	2.21	4	2.94	15	11.03
Infidelity of Husband	74	54.41	6	4.41	7	5.15	6	4.41	43	31.62
Drinking (drug) Problem of Wife	121	88.97	1	.74	4	2.94	4	2.94	6	4.41
Drinking (drug) Problem of Husband	105	77.20	3	2.21	5	3.68	5	3.68	18	13.24
Interference of Husband's Career	108	79.41	5	3.68	2	1.47	7	5.15	14	10.29
Interference of Wife's Career	109	80.15	5	3.68	7	5.15	4	2.94	11	8.09
Personality Change/Husband	54	39.71	13	9.56	11	8.09	12	8.82	46	33.82
Personality Change/Wife	70	51.47	8	5.88	26	19.12	8	5.88	24	17.65
Conflicting Philosophies	56	41.18	4	2.94	23	16.91	14	10.29	39	28.68
Mental, Emotional Illness/Husband	97	71.32	3	2.21	8	5.88	4	2.94	24	17.65
Mental, Emotional Illness/Wife	103	76.30	5	3.70	7	5.19	5	3.70	15	11.11
Physical Illness/Husband	126	92.65	1	.74	2	1.47	3	2.21	4	2.94
Physical Illness/Wife	127	93.38	2	1.47	2	1.47	1	.74	4	2.94
Conflict over Children	84	61.77	9	6.62	14	10.29	11	8.09	18	13.25
Lack of Common Interests	39	28.68	13	9.56	24	17.65	11	8.09	49	36.03

The factor most often indicated as "very important" in making the decision to divorce was "gradual deterioration of the relationship" (51%). "Lack of common interests" was listed second in frequency as "very important" (36%), followed by "personality change in husband" (34%), and "infidelity of husband" (32%). "Conflicting philosophies" (29%), "sexual incompatibility" (25%), and "financial problems" (21%) also were indicated as very important. Those factors that were rarely indicated as very important were "physical illness of husband" (3%), "physical illness of wife" (3%), "drinking or drug problem of wife" (4%), and "interference of wife's career" (8%). In general, the husband's problems tended to be much more significant in making the decision to divorce than those of the wife.

In recalling the point in their marriage when there was evidence that there was a problem in the relationship, almost 25% of the subjects felt the problem was there from the very beginning. Thirty-three percent of the respondents became aware that there was something wrong at some point during the first half of their marriage. This would indicate that over 60% of the subjects had lived with an awareness that there was something wrong with their marriage for many years. Only 12% indicated that the relationship was good until just before the divorce and 27% felt the problem developed sometime during the second half of the marriage.

All but 10% of the respondents indicated that there were forces that kept them in the marriage longer than desired. Children's welfare was indicated most often (33%), with financial necessity (13%), religious reasons (10%), and societal pressures (10%) following. Over 11% of the responses were other than those specified on the questionnaire.

In response to the question, "If you could do it over again, would you marry the same person?," over 70% indicated "no." The remaining 30% of the responses were "yes," with six of the subjects not answering this question.

Counseling

Over 50% of the respondents indicated that some counseling was received by one or both of the marriage partners. The largest proportion (47%) indicated that neither husband nor wife received counseling. The second highest proportion indicated that husband and wife sought help together (29%), while the third highest proportion (21%) indicated that the wife only received counseling. Only 3% indicated that husband only was counseled.

The type of counselor most often designated was the psychiatrist (45%), followed by the psychologist (24%), priest or pastor (17%), and social worker (13%). The family doctor was consulted by only one respondent.

Present Feelings About the Divorce

A check list of the respondent's present feelings about the divorce is summarized in Table IV. "Relief" was the feeling indicated by the largest proportion of the responses (15%). "Peace" (12%) and "sadness" (7%) as well as "bitterness" (7%) were the next most designated emotions.

In categorizing each subject's indication of present feelings as to whether they were positive, negative or mixed, it was found that 37% of the respondents checked all negative feelings and the same proportion

checked a mixture of negative and positive feelings, while 25% of the subjects had only positive feelings at the time they responded.

In response to the question "Is life more satisfying now than during the last few years of your marriage?," almost 72% indicated "yes," 21% indicated "no," and 7% indicated "no change." The majority of the subjects (68%) felt the financial and property settlement was satisfactory to them and the same proportion (68%) felt it was also satisfactory to their spouse.

TABLE IV

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS' INDICATION
OF PRESENT FEELINGS ABOUT THE DIVORCE

Feelings	No.	%	Feelings	No.	%
Relief	81	14.86	Failure	36	6.61
Peace	64	11.74	Happiness	32	5.87
Sadness	38	6.97	Opportunity	30	5.50
Bitterness	38	6.97	Blessing	25	4.59
Satisfaction	37	6.79	Confusion	25	4.59
Disappointment	36	6.61	Guilt	24	4.40
Regret	36	6.61	Ambivalence	8	1.47
Tragedy	36	6.61			

Support, Concern, and Commitment to
Marriage Partner

In all three areas, "standing by spouse when they were in need," "concern with promoting spouse's welfare and happiness," and "degree of commitment during marriage to spouse," the majority of the subjects rated themselves high and their mates low, with 20 to 27% rating both in the middle category. Table V shows the ratings for both self and spouse. Approximately 67% rated themselves high in the degree to which they stood by their ex-spouse when he/she was in need, while only 24% rated their ex-spouse high. Fifteen percent of the subjects rated their ex-spouse high in concern with promoting their welfare and happiness during the marriage, while 69% rated themselves high in concern for spouse. In the area of commitment to the relationship, almost 69% rated themselves high while only 24% rated their ex-spouse high.

The subjects' responses to the question, "Do you hope to re-marry at some time in the future?," indicated that the largest proportion (37%) do hope to re-marry while 13% had already re-married. Twenty percent responded negatively and almost 31% were undecided at that point.

Table VI indicates responses to the question "If you could go back and re-live your marriage, what would you do differently?" A wide variety of answers were given to this question and in categorizing them the largest proportion of the responses (26%) indicated they would be more assertive and concerned with their own welfare. Sixteen percent suggested they would be more supportive of their marriage partner, while 15% indicated they would postpone marriage or make a better selection of

TABLE V

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' ASSESSMENT
OF SUPPORT, CONCERN AND COMMITMENT OF SELF AND MATE
TO THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

Perception	Low		Medium		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
With reference to your marriage, rate the degree to which:						
Your ex-spouse stood by you when you were in need	68	51.13	33	24.81	32	24.06
You stood by your ex-spouse when he/she was in need	11	8.33	33	25.00	88	66.67
Your ex-spouse was concerned with promoting your welfare and happiness	86	64.66	27	20.30	20	15.04
You were concerned with promoting your ex-spouse's welfare and happiness	19	14.29	34	25.56	80	60.15
Degree of commitment of your ex-spouse to you	63	48.84	35	27.13	31	24.03
Degree of commitment of you to ex-spouse	12	9.09	29	21.97	91	68.94

TABLE VI

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES OF WHAT SUBJECTS
WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY IF THEY COULD RE-LIVE MARRIAGE

Response	No.	%
Be more assertive/concerned with own happiness	35	25.74
Be more supportive of mate	22	16.18
Postpone marriage, make a better selection of marriage partner	20	14.71
Divorce sooner	15	11.03
Seek help earlier	6	4.41
Involve God, religion, prayer	3	2.21
Other	19	13.98
Nothing	16	11.76

a marriage partner if they could do it over again. Over 12% of the total responses indicated they would do nothing different, which might indicate they were not sorry about the marriage or the divorce.

Discussion

As both Goode (1956) and Levinger (1972) indicated, it was most often the wife rather than the husband who first requested the divorce. Goode's study of younger divorced women with children found that more often than not the husband was the first to desire divorce but the wife was first to suggest it, usually following obnoxious behavior or disinterest on the husband's part. While Goode's study indicated 62% of the wives first requested divorce, this study found 55% of respondents said the wife was the first to make the request. This could indicate that wives in an older age group may be more reluctant than younger wives to terminate the marriage and will tolerate objectionable behavior for a longer period of time or wait for the husband to make the request.

In analyzing the major cause of divorce, this study differs greatly from Goode's results. Twenty percent of the responses indicated involvement of one spouse with party outside the relationship, as opposed to only 6% in Goode's sample. The fact that extramarital involvement was mentioned as the major cause of divorce much more often in this study may reflect an increased portrayal of extramarital involvement as acceptable and even desirable by the media during recent years for personal growth and marriage happiness. The present finding, in conjunction with the results of the interviews showing that one half of the interviewees reported extramarital involvement as the major factor instigating the divorce does not support this "open marriage"

type of philosophy. Economic factors involved the greatest proportion of Goode's sample (13%) and this was scarcely mentioned in the middle-age group. Lack of love, which was listed by 13% of subjects, was not listed at all in Goode's study.

The scale measuring the importance of specific factors related to the decision to divorce indicated that over 60% of respondents considered "gradual deterioration of the relationship" as important or very important. This tends to substantiate the literature on the middle-age marriage which indicates that often the relationship receives very little attention during the child-rearing years and after the children are launched, both husband and wife find the marriage empty. Pineo (1961) found there was a decrease in intimacy and shared interest after 15 years. Rollins and Feldman (1970) found marital satisfaction at a low point when launching children from home and Bossard and Boll (1955) suggested late forties and early fifties as a crisis decade for men as far as happiness with marriage was concerned.

In combining the "important" and "very important" categories, it was found that lack of common interests was considered to be of great importance for 44% of subjects and a personality change in husband was considered of great importance for 43% of the subjects. The 36% who indicated that infidelity of husband was important is not an accurate evaluation of this factor. Interviews showed that it was actually the involvement of the husband that instigated the divorce for over one-half of the subjects. It was perhaps less threatening to both men and women to list other factors as the precipitating agent on the questionnaire.

The most common factors in the majority of the marriages represented by the questionnaire: a gradual deterioration of the marriage relationship (60%), lack of common interests (44%), personality change of husband (43%), conflicting philosophies (39%), infidelity of husband (36%), and sexual incompatibility (31%). However, the interviews revealed that the sequence of events usually followed this pattern: gradual deterioration of the relationship, including lack of common interests and conflicting philosophies, and often sexual incompatibility, resulting in infidelity of husband and concurrently a distinct personality change of husband.

Since over 60% of the subjects were aware that all was not well with their marriage since before the mid-point of the relationship, it would be interesting to speculate whether they remained in the marriage because of attractions within it, because of barriers that kept them from divorcing, or because of lack of attractive alternatives outside the relationship (Levinger, 1972). In examining the barriers or forces that kept them in the relationship longer than desired, all but 10% of the respondents indicated that there were such forces. Since 94% of the subjects had children, it could be expected that the children's welfare would be the most frequently indicated reason (one-third of total group). Financial necessity was the second most common response (13%) and 10% indicated religious reasons. Since the status of the children and the financial situation tends to change at middle-age, one may assume that the most significant barriers became weaker. However, at the same time, the attractions outside of marriage also may become stronger as the husband becomes involved with another woman or the wife

finds she can at last support herself and attains the strength to separate from an undesirable relationship.

Over one-fourth of the respondents indicated an awareness of trouble in the marriage from the very beginning. In the interviews many of the subjects admitted they got married for many wrong reasons-- a need to get away from home, a pregnancy, guilt over sex relations, peer pressures--and they were entirely too young to make a wise choice of marriage partner or to see the potential partner accurately. Usually children were born soon after marriage and they had felt trapped in a bad relationship from that point. This explanation was given by both men and women. Research shows that a higher rate of divorce is associated with entering into marriage for the wrong reasons (Landis and Landis, 1973; Blood, 1969).

It should also be pointed out that for the 12% who felt their marriage was very good until just before the divorce, there were different explanations from men and women. The men usually indicated they did not ever understand what happened to the wife when she suddenly became dissatisfied as they were totally unaware of a problem. They had a tendency to blame menopause for the problem. The women, on the other hand, indicated their husband first became involved with another woman and then changed drastically, leaving what the wife described as a "good" marriage. The termination of marriages that had been perceived as "good" by the deserted spouse proved to be the most traumatic for both men and women. This group would probably fall into the 30% who indicated that they would marry the same person if they could do it again.

More than half of the respondents received counseling before or during the divorce, a larger proportion than was reported by Gurin, Veroff, and Feld (1960), which was 42%. This may indicate that the older age group may make more of an effort to save the marriage; however, the interviews revealed a reluctance on the part of the marriage partner that wanted out of the relationship but they would agree to a minimum amount of counseling to appease the partner and relieve some guilt. This study was also different from Gurin, et al., in the area of type of counselor consulted. The psychiatrist or psychologist was designated by 69% of the respondents compared to 33% in Gurin's report. Clergymen were only consulted by 17% of the subjects, but it should be noted that the majority of the subjects were from an urban area where psychiatrists and psychologists were available, which would not often be the case in rural areas and small towns.

In reviewing the respondents' present feelings about the divorce, it should be pointed out that at least one year had elapsed since the divorce was final for the majority of the subjects and much of the emotional hurt had diminished. "Relief" was the most frequently checked feeling. Krantzler (1973) indicated that the mourning following divorce usually reaches its peak within the first six months of separation and diminishes thereafter. It was interesting that "guilt" was being experienced by only 17% of the responses because interviews indicated most of the subjects felt guilty about the marriage failure at the time it occurred. Time undoubtedly erases part of the guilt. It would be expected that "sadness" would be expressed by many since the marriage had encompassed many years together.

The responses of almost three-fourths of the subjects who indicated that life was more pleasant now than during the last few years together would also be an indication that they were feeling pretty good about the divorce at that point in time. For the majority an adequate adjustment in their life style had occurred.

It is easier to raise questions regarding the respondents' assessment of support, concern and commitment to the marriage relationship than it is to explain it. It would seem that the majority of the subjects felt their mate failed the relationship in all three areas, while they see themselves contributing a great deal. One might wonder if defenses were at work and guilt was lessened if they felt they had done their part to make the marriage work. Another explanation may be that the person that felt less guilt about the failure was the person that was willing to participate in the research. In comparing the six couples that were both participants, there were different perceptions from husband and wife in four out of the six couples. There was general agreement among two of the couples.

Re-marriage in the future was indicated as "uncertain" for almost one-third of the subjects, while one-fifth responded negatively. Interviews found that half of the males had already re-married, while many others had definite plans, but only four women interviewed had re-married at the time of the interview and very few seemed to have possibilities for marriage at any time in the near future. The difference in opportunity for re-marriage or even dating for men and women in the middle years is glaring. It is extremely difficult for women who have been married for most of their adult life to get back into the social stream but most men indicated they were overwhelmed with the

availability of dating partners. The interviews also revealed that many of the men who were involved with another woman before the divorce did marry her but others terminated that relationship after the divorce and began dating other women.

In evaluating the subjects' answers to the question "what would you do differently if you could go back and re-live your marriage?," as might be expected, it was primarily women who would be more assertive and insist on equal rights within the marriage. Most of the women whose husbands had left them for another woman described their husbands as being very domineering and themselves as being very submissive. Self-centeredness and lack of concern for spouse was also reflected. The women who felt they were not as supportive as they should have been were not found in the interviews. Many felt they tolerated a bad situation far too long. The same number of men and women felt they should have postponed marriage or made a better selection of marriage partner. This is another reflection of the disadvantages of early marriage.

Examination of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I. There is no significant relationship between sex of respondents and (a) perceptions of major cause of marital dissatisfaction that led to divorce, (b) perceptions of factors that kept respondents in relationship longer than desired, and (c) perceptions of what respondents would do differently if they could go back and re-live their marriage.

Frequency and percentage analysis was used to examine this hypothesis. As indicated in Table VII, a marked difference existed in the respondents' perceptions of the major cause of marital

TABLE VII
 DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING MAJOR CAUSE OF
 MARITAL DISSATISFACTION LEADING TO DIVORCE
 ACCORDING TO SEX OF RESPONDENT

Perception of Major Cause of Divorce	Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%
Involvement with third party	4	6.78	25	27.17
Lack of love	12	20.34	7	7.61
Emotional problems of one spouse	8	13.56	9	9.78
Change of life	4	6.78	10	10.87
Alcohol or drug problems	4	6.78	10	10.87
Lack of common interests	7	11.86	6	6.52
Communication problems	4	6.78	8	8.70
Sexual incompatibility	6	10.17	6	6.52
Interference of work	4	6.78	1	1.09
Other	6	10.17	10	10.87

dissatisfaction that led to divorce according to sex. Approximately four times as many women as men indicated that it was an affair that ended their marriage. Many more men than women felt it was lack of love that was the major problem (20% men and 7.6% women). Almost twice as many men (12%) than women (6.5%) indicated lack of common interests as the major cause.

Table VIII indicates that there were no marked differences in respondents' perceptions of factors that kept them in the relationship longer than desired according to sex. One exception was that more than twice as many females (12.5%) than males (6%) indicated religious reasons as a force that kept them in the marriage longer than desired.

An examination of frequency and percentage distribution of what respondents would do differently if they could re-live their marriages (Table IX), indicates that more than twice as many women (33%) than men (12.5%) would be more assertive and concerned with their own happiness and almost twice as many men (21%) than women (11%) would postpone marriage or make a better selection of marriage partner if they could go back and re-live their marriage.

Hypothesis II. There is no significant relationship between sex of respondents and (a) perceptions of whether final financial and property settlement was satisfactory, (b) perceptions of whether life is more satisfying at the present time than during the last few years of marriage, and (c) feelings about the divorce at the present time.

The Chi Square test was used to examine this hypothesis. The Chi Square value obtained indicated that there was no significant relationship between sex of the respondents and their perceptions of whether the final financial and property settlement was satisfactory, their

TABLE VIII

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING FACTORS THAT KEPT
RESPONDENT IN THE RELATIONSHIP LONGER THAN DESIRED
ACCORDING TO SEX OF RESPONDENT

Factors Keeping Respondent in Relationship	Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%
Childrens' welfare	37	35.58	51	30.36
Societal pressures	12	11.54	14	8.33
Parent, family pressures	9	8.65	13	7.74
Financial	11	10.58	24	14.29
Religious reasons	6	5.77	21	12.50
Lack of alternatives	4	3.85	12	7.14
Other	13	12.50	18	10.71
None	12	11.54	15	8.93

TABLE IX

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT RESPONDENTS WOULD DO
DIFFERENTLY IF THEY COULD RE-LIVE THEIR MARRIAGES
ACCORDING TO SEX OF RESPONDENT

What Subject Would Do Different	Male		Female	
	No	%	No.	%
Be more assertive, concerned with own happiness	6	12.50	29	32.96
Be more supportive of mate	10	20.83	12	13.64
Involve God, religion, prayer	2	4.17	1	1.14
Postpone marriage, make a better selection of marriage partner	10	20.83	10	11.36
Divorce sooner	5	10.42	10	11.36
Seek help earlier	1	2.08	5	5.68
Other	7	14.58	12	13.64
Nothing	7	14.58	9	10.23

perception of whether life is more satisfying at the present time than during the last few years of marriage, and their present feelings about the divorce.

Hypothesis III. There is no significant relationship between marriage partner that requested the divorce (wife, husband or mutual decision) and respondents' perceptions concerning whether life is more satisfying now than during the last few years of marriage.

The Chi Square value obtained found no significant relationship between marriage partner that requested the divorce and respondents' perceptions concerning whether life is more satisfying now than during the last few years of marriage.

Hypothesis IV. There is no significant relationship between number of years married at time of divorce and (a) perception of whether or not life seems to be more satisfying at the present time than during the last few years of marriage, and (b) feelings about the divorce at the present time.

A Chi Square analysis of this hypothesis found that there was no significant relationship between number of years married at time of divorce and the respondents' perceptions of whether or not life seems to be more satisfying now or respondents' feelings about the divorce at the present time.

Hypothesis V. There is no significant relationship between family income level and each of the following: (a) point in marriage when problem developed, (b) satisfaction with financial and property settlement, (c) perceptions of whether life is more satisfying now than before the divorce, (d) feelings about the divorce, and (e) whether or not respondent plans to re-marry.

The Chi Square value obtained indicated that there was no significant relationship existing between family income level and each of the above listed variables.

Hypothesis VI. There is no significant relationship between educational level of husband and: (a) point in marriage when problem developed, (b) satisfaction with financial and property settlement, (c) perception of whether life is more satisfying now than before the divorce, (d) feelings about the divorce, (e) whether or not respondent plans to re-marry.

The Chi Square values obtained found that there was no significant relationship between educational level of husband and (a) point in marriage when problem developed, (c) perception of whether life is more satisfying now than before the divorce, (d) feelings about the divorce, and (e) respondents' plans to re-marry. However, as indicated in Table X, a Chi Square value of 10.43 (significant at the .02 level) was obtained in analyzing the relationship between educational level of husband and the respondents' satisfaction with the financial and property settlement. Eighty-three percent of the college graduates expressed satisfaction with the property settlement, with only 17% expressing dissatisfaction. This is significantly different from those who indicated the husband had less than a high school education, where only 50% expressed satisfaction.

TABLE X

CHI SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN RESPONDENTS'
SATISFACTION WITH FINANCIAL AND PROPERTY SETTLEMENT
ACCORDING TO EDUCATION OF HUSBAND

Satisfaction	College Graduate		Att. Coll. No. Grad.		Hi School Graduate		Less than Hi School		χ^2	Level of Sig.
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Yes	35	83.3	11	55.0	29	72.5	13	50.0	10.43	.02
No	7	16.7	9	45.0	11	27.5	13	50.0		

Hypothesis VII. There is no significant relationship between educational level of wife and each of the following: (a) point in marriage when problem developed, (b) satisfaction with financial and property settlement, (c) perception of whether life is more satisfying now than before the divorce, (d) feelings about the divorce, (e) whether or not respondent plans to re-marry.

Chi Square values obtained indicated no significant relationship in the educational level of the wife and (a) the point in marriage when problem developed, (b) satisfaction with financial and property settlement, (c) perception of whether life is more satisfying now than before the divorce, and (e) whether or not respondent plans to re-marry. There was a relationship at the .05 level between the educational level of the wife and (d) the respondents' feelings about the divorce (see Table XI). Those respondents who indicated the wife's highest level of education was high school graduation had a higher proportion with negative feelings about the divorce (47%) while the smallest proportion

expressing negative feelings were those with less than high school education (20%). Those respondents indicating the wife's education was less than high school graduation expressed the most positive feelings about the divorce (48%) while those indicating the wife's education was high school graduation were least likely to have positive feelings (17.5%).

TABLE XI

CHI SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN FEELINGS ABOUT THE DIVORCE ACCORDING TO EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF THE WIFE

Feelings	Education of Wife						χ^2	Level of Sig.
	Some Coll. or Grad.		Hi School Graduate		Less than H.S. Grad.			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Positive	9	22.0	10	17.5	12	48.0		
Negative	14	34.1	27	47.4	5	20.0	11.05	.05
Mixed	18	43.9	20	35.1	8	32.0		

Hypothesis VIII. There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and each of the following: (a) perceptions of period in marriage when problem developed, (b) satisfaction with final financial and property settlement, (c) perceptions of whether or not life is more satisfying now than during the last few years of marriage, (d) whether or not either partner received counseling, and (e) partner requesting divorce.

The Kruskal-Wallis analysis of variance indicated that no significant differences existed in socio-economic status rating scores according to the following variables: (a) perception of period in marriage when problem developed, (b) satisfaction with final financial and property settlement, (c) perception of whether or not life is more satisfying now than during the last few years of marriage.

The results did indicate that a significant difference existed in socio-economic status rating scores according to who received professional counseling (see Table XII). An H score of 8.48 was obtained, indicating a significant difference at the .02 level. Those respondents reporting that both the husband and wife received professional counseling had the highest socio-economic status rating. Those respondents reporting that neither spouse received counseling had the lowest socio-economic status rating.

TABLE XII

H SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCE IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS RATING
SCORES ACCORDING TO WHO RECEIVED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING

Person(s) Receiving Professional Counseling	No.	Average Rank	H	Level of Sig.
Wife	29	59.16		
Both	39	55.78	8.48	.02
Neither	64	76.36		

A significant difference was also found to exist in socio-economic status rating scores according to which partner requested the divorce. An H score of 13.27 was attained, significant at the .01 level (see Table XIII). Those respondents reporting that the husband requested the divorce received the highest socio-economic status rating, while those indicating that the wife requested the divorce received the lowest socio-economic rating.

TABLE XIII

H SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCE IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS RATING SCORES ACCORDING TO WHICH PARTNER REQUESTED THE DIVORCE*

Partner Requesting Divorce	No.	Average Rank	H	Level of Sig.
Wife	76	78.13		
Husband	49	52.70	13.27	.01
Mutual Decision	12	72.63		

*The highest socio-economic status rating was represented by the lowest numerical scores, while the lowest socio-economic status rating was represented by the highest numerical scores.

Discussion of Hypotheses

Major differences were noted between men's and women's perceptions of the major cause of divorce. While over one-fourth of the women designated the spouse's involvement with another woman as the major

cause, only 7% of the men gave that reason. The men preferred to place the blame on some failure within the relationship: lack of love (20%), emotional problems of one spouse (14%), which may include boredom, emotional instability, mental stress, etc., lack of common interests (12%), sexual incompatibility (10%). All of these marital problems may have led to his involvement with another woman.

Goode (1956) also explored extra-marital involvement as an "index" or a "cause" of the marital problem. He said, "... it is certainly necessary to face the fact that in some cases the behavior that began as a mere index of conflict may in time take on an autonomous status" (p. 89). He further explained that often the adultery is at first merely an expression of a husband's dissatisfaction with the marriage (or with himself) but in time it may lead to a serious attachment to a new woman, or to an irremediable conflict with his wife.

In evaluating the forces that kept the marriage together longer than desired, it would be expected that both men and women would be concerned about the effect on the children. More than twice as many women as men designated religion as a deterrent and more men than women were concerned about societal pressure. While Levinger (1972) discussed all three of the above barriers to divorce, he did not designate male and female differences in the influence of external forces. The findings of this study may indicate that while women are concerned about the morality of divorce and the disapproval of their church group, men may tend to be more concerned about how a divorce may reflect on their occupational success and their reputation in the business world.

The marked difference that occurred in male and female responses to the question "if you could go back and re-live your marriage, what would you do differently?" reflects a major dissatisfaction on the part of the wife with the husband-dominated relationship that has been traditional in our society. A great amount of bitterness was expressed by many wives in the interviews over the fact that they had allowed their husbands to always put their own needs first, while trying to please him on a subservient level. Since he left her anyway, there was never any pay-off for her. One-fifth of the males, on the other hand, felt that they would make a wiser choice of partners or postpone marriage to an older age, indicating there was always something lacking in the relationship. Twenty percent of the men did indicate that they would be more supportive of their mate, which may be an admission that he did play a part in the failure of the marriage.

An explanation of the significant difference in respondents' satisfaction with the financial and property settlement according to educational level of the husband may be that college graduates tend to have a higher income and can better afford to pay child support or alimony. It could also be that his wife contributed to his achieving a college education and he feels more indebted to her, while the man that did not complete college may feel that he has achieved through his own efforts and should not have to share his earnings or savings. Those respondents that designated the husband's education as high school graduate, tended to be more satisfied than those indicating the husband had some college education. Perhaps these people had less property to bargain over or another explanation may be that the wives may have been working for many years and felt more financially independent.

The educational level of the wife was found to be significant in assessing differences in present feelings about the divorce. The fact that the group with the lowest educational level had the greatest proportion of positive perceptions about the divorce has a very logical explanation. Those lower educated women that were interviewed often reported long lasting and severe problems--drinking, non-support, mistreatment--but they were forced to tolerate the situation while the children were dependent because they felt they could not support themselves and their children. Once they started to work and the children were older and the marriage dissolved they experienced peace, relief and satisfaction that they had not had in years. The low proportion of college educated respondents (22%) that experienced only positive feelings, may indicate that this group had more to lose in terms of status, material possessions and security and therefore had more mixed feelings (43%). The high school graduate category had the highest proportion of negative responses (47%) and a possible explanation for this may be that many of the women in this group had husbands that were better educated than they were; in fact, they may have sacrificed their own education in order for the husband to go to college. With divorce this proved to be a very poor investment on her part and it is possible that her standard of living will be lower. The husbands of the high school educated wives may have more negative feelings because of an obligation to continued support of her.

The results indicated a significant difference in socio-economic rating scores according to marital partner that requested the divorce, with those respondents reporting that the husband initiated the action receiving the highest socio-economic scores. There is a possibility

that the husbands in the higher socio-economic group more often were involved with someone outside the marriage. Kinsey's study (1948) indicated that men in middle and upper-middle class are more apt to be unfaithful in the middle years than those men in the lower socio-economic class. If this were the case, the husband very possibly would be the spouse to first suggest divorce.

Significant differences were also reflected in socio-economic rating scores according to whether or not either partner received counseling. It is logical that those in the lower socio-economic class were less likely to have received professional counseling since counseling is very expensive and many could not afford it.

Analysis of Interviews

Phase II of the study consisted of interviews with 70 men and women, volunteers from the first sample, to explore in depth the following areas:

- A. Mate selection and decision to marry: Ages at marriage, readiness for marriage.
- B. Marital interaction: dominance, communication, conflict, shared activities, expression of affection, sexual relations, ego support, effect of husband's and wife's occupation on the marriage, wife's support of the women's movement, extra-marital involvements, changes occurring with middle-age.
- C. The Divorce: Circumstance that triggered the action, help sought in making the decision, reaction of children, sources of help, problems.

D. Adjustment to a new life: Present attitude of children, re-marriage, present appraisal of divorce.

While 64% of the 138 subjects volunteered to be interviewed, only 70 were included in the second phase of the study due to inability to locate some, distance in reaching others, and a lack of time. Of the 70, 46 were female and 24 were male. Specific questions from the interview schedules were analyzed by frequency and percentage of responses, with male and female differences indicated (see Table XIV).

How old were respondents at time of marriage?

Over 78% of wives were married before their 21st birthday, with almost one-fourth entering marriage at age 17 or before. Only two of the wives married after age 25. The largest proportion of husbands were between 21 and 24 (46%) at time of marriage. Only 16% were 25 or older at the time of marriage.

Do respondents perceive that they were ready for marriage?

Sixty-one percent of female respondents replied negatively to this question, with 37% responding positively. Males were evenly divided into positive and negative responses. Of the total group, 57% felt they were not ready.

Which marriage partner was dominant in the relationship?

Of the total group interviewed, 67% indicated that the husband was the dominant marriage partner, with 16% indicating the wife was dominant and 17% indicating an equalitarian relationship. A larger proportion of the females (72%) perceived their husbands as dominant than did the males (58%) who perceived themselves as dominant. Twenty-one percent of the men interviewed thought the relationship was equalitarian.

TABLE XIV
 FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SELECTED
 RESPONSES FROM THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Questions and Responses	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Age of wife at marriage?</u>						
Under 17	11	23.91	6	25.00	17	24.29
18-20	24	52.17	14	58.33	38	54.29
21-24	9	19.57	4	16.67	13	18.57
25-29	2	4.35	0	0	2	2.86
<u>Age of husband at marriage?</u>						
Under 17	3	6.52	0	0	3	4.29
18-20	18	39.13	5	20.83	23	32.86
21-24	19	41.30	13	54.16	32	45.71
25-29	5	10.87	5	20.83	10	14.29
30-over	1	2.17	1	4.17	2	2.86
<u>Were you ready for marriage?</u>						
Yes	17	36.96	12	50.00	29	41.43
No	28	60.87	12	50.00	40	57.14
Undecided	1	2.17	0	0	1	1.43
<u>Dominant marriage partner?</u>						
Wife dominant	6	13.04	5	20.83	11	15.71
Husband dominant	33	71.74	14	58.33	47	67.14
Equal	7	15.22	5	20.83	12	17.14
<u>Was spouse an easy person to talk to?</u>						
Yes	13	18.26	6	25.00	19	27.14
No	32	69.57	18	75.00	50	71.43
Undecided	1	2.17	0	0	1	1.43
<u>Were you an easy person to talk to?</u>						
Yes	36	78.26	10	41.67	46	65.71
No	9	19.57	13	54.17	22	31.43
Undecided	1	2.17	1	4.17	2	2.87

TABLE XIV (Continued)

Questions and Responses	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>How often did the two of you take the time to visit?</u>						
once a day or more	17	36.96	8	33.33	25	35.71
several times each week	4	8.70	2	8.33	6	8.57
about once a week	8	17.39	7	29.17	15	21.43
about once a month	5	10.87	4	16.67	9	12.86
less than once a month	12	26.09	3	12.50	15	21.43
<u>Did you and your mate quarrel frequently?</u>						
seldom	20	43.48	12	50.00	32	45.71
moderately	7	15.22	3	12.50	10	14.29
often	10	21.74	3	12.50	13	18.57
constantly	9	19.57	6	25.00	15	21.43
<u>Did the amount of conflict increase or decrease?</u>						
became more frequent	30	65.22	12	50.00	42	60.00
became less frequent	6	13.04	4	16.67	10	14.29
remained the same	10	21.74	8	33.33	18	25.71
<u>Did the number of shared activities increase or decrease?</u>						
increased	11	23.91	5	20.83	16	22.86
decreased	29	63.04	13	54.17	42	60.00
remained the same	6	13.04	6	25.00	12	17.14
<u>Were you satisfied with the amount of affection your spouse expressed to you?</u>						
Yes	19	41.30	11	45.83	30	42.86
No	27	58.70	13	54.17	40	57.14
<u>How satisfied were you with your sexual relationship?</u>						
very satisfied	16	34.78	4	16.67	20	28.57
moderately satisfied	10	21.74	9	37.50	19	27.14
dissatisfied	8	17.39	6	25.00	14	20.00
very dissatisfied	11	23.91	4	16.67	15	21.43
no answer	1	2.17	1	4.17	2	2.86

TABLE XIV (Continued)

Questions and Responses	Female		Male		Total	
	No	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Did your mate tend to contribute to your self esteem?</u>						
usually	5	10.87	4	16.67	9	12.86
sometimes	7	15.22	8	33.33	15	21.43
seldom	34	73.91	12	50.00	46	65.71
<u>Do you feel you contributed to your spouse's self esteem?</u>						
Yes	30	65.21	12	50.00	42	60.00
No	13	28.26	10	41.67	23	32.86
undecided	3	6.52	2	8.33	5	7.14
<u>In what ways did your mate make you feel bad?</u>						
criticized/disapproved	19	31.67	7	36.84	26	32.91
lack of concern for feelings	15	25.00	4	21.04	19	24.05
nothing/ignored	5	8.33	3	15.79	8	10.13
put down in front of others	5	8.33	3	15.79	8	10.13
rejection/esp. sexually	4	6.67	2	10.53	6	7.59
resentful of my outside activities	5	8.33	0	0	5	6.33
kept dependent/helpless	5	8.33	0	0	5	6.33
expects too much of me	2	3.33	0	0	2	2.53
<u>In what ways did you tend to make your mate feel bad?</u>						
criticized/disapproved	16	44.44	13	59.09	29	50.00
nothing/ignored	5	13.89	6	27.27	11	18.97
rejection/esp. sexually	3	8.33	1	4.55	4	6.90
showed lack of concern for feelings	4	11.11	0	0	4	6.90
resentful of outside activities	4	11.11	0	0	4	6.90
kept dependent/helpless	2	5.56	0	0	2	3.45
put down in front of others	1	2.78	0	0	1	1.72
<u>Did your self concept change while married?</u>						
became more positive	6	13.04	13	54.17	19	27.14
became more negative	24	52.17	6	25.00	30	42.86
remained the same	14	30.43	5	20.83	19	27.14
undecided	2	4.35	0	0	2	2.86

TABLE XIV (Continued)

Questions and Responses	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Did mate's self concept change while married?</u>						
became more positive	13	28.26	3	12.50	16	22.86
became more negative	13	28.26	16	66.67	29	41.43
remained the same	14	30.43	1	4.17	15	21.43
undecided	6	13.04	1	16.67	10	14.29
<u>Were you satisfied with the way your spouse maintained personal appearance?</u>						
Yes	33	71.74	12	50.00	45	64.29
No	13	28.26	11	45.83	24	34.29
uncertain	0	0	1	4.17	1	1.43
<u>Have you made an effort to take care of yourself and keep up your personal appearance?</u>						
Yes	38	82.61	22	91.67	60	85.71
No	8	17.39	1	4.17	9	12.86
uncertain	0	0	1	4.17	1	1.43
<u>Did husband's success affect the marriage relationship?</u>						
made it better	1	3.33	1	5.26	2	4.08
did not affect it	16	53.33	7	36.84	23	46.94
damaged it	13	43.33	11	57.89	24	48.98
<u>Did husband's lack of success affect the marriage relationship?</u>						
made it better	0	0	0	0	0	0
did not affect it	4	25.00	3	60.00	7	33.33
damaged it	12	75.00	2	40.00	14	66.67
<u>Did the wife's work affect the marriage?</u>						
helped it	4	8.70	3	12.50	7	10.00
did not affect it	13	28.26	5	20.83	18	25.71
damaged it	20	43.48	8	33.33	28	40.00
not applicable	9	19.57	8	33.33	17	24.29

TABLE XIV (Continued)

Questions and Responses	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Was wife supportive of movement for women's equality?</u>						
Yes	21	45.65	4	16.67	25	35.71
No	18	39.13	17	70.83	35	50.00
undecided	7	15.22	3	12.50	10	14.29
<u>Did you ever engage in extra-marital sex?</u>						
Yes	11	23.91	18	75.00	29	41.43
No	34	73.91	6	25.00	40	57.14
no answer	1	2.17	0	0	1	1.43
<u>Did your spouse engage in extra-marital sex?</u>						
Yes	32	69.57	6	25.00	38	54.29
No	8	17.39	15	62.50	23	32.86
suspected but not sure	6	13.04	3	12.50	9	12.86
<u>Did spouse change with middle-age?</u>						
Yes	30	65.22	11	45.83	41	58.57
No	10	21.74	13	54.17	23	32.86
undecided	6	13.04	0	0	6	8.57
<u>What was nature of change?</u>						
problem became more severe	5	16.67	4	36.36	9	21.95
hated to see aging	5	16.67	2	18.18	7	17.07
change in personality	13	43.33	3	27.27	16	39.02
change in interests	0	0	2	18.18	2	4.88
ego problem	3	10.00	0	0	3	7.32
became interested in other women/men	2	6.67	0	0	2	4.88
became more rigid	1	3.33	0	0	1	2.44
other	1	3.33	0	0	1	2.44
<u>Did you change with middle-age?</u>						
Yes	31	67.39	16	66.67	47	67.14
No	10	21.74	7	29.17	17	24.29
undecided	5	10.87	1	4.17	6	8.57

TABLE XIV (Continued)

Questions and Responses	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Nature of change?</u>						
more tolerant, flexible	2	6.25	6	40.00	8	17.02
re-acted to mate's problem	3	9.38	3	20.00	6	12.77
more assertive/independent	15	46.88	0	0	15	31.91
personal growth	6	18.75	5	33.33	11	23.40
more concerned with security	2	6.25	0	0	2	4.26
more conservative/religious	2	6.25	0	0	2	4.26
other	2	6.25	1	6.67	3	6.38
<u>Incident triggering divorce?</u>						
self or mate involved with someone else	23	50.00	14	58.33	37	52.86
objectionable behavior						
became intolerable	5	10.87	1	4.17	6	8.57
specific incident/final straw	5	10.87	0	0	5	7.14
needed freedom for mental health/happiness	11	23.91	7	29.17	18	25.71
conflict over child/children	0	0	2	8.33	2	2.86
financial (non-support)	2	4.35	2	8.33	2	2.86
<u>If you sought professional counseling, was it helpful in making the decision?</u>						
very helpful	20	43.48	0	0	20	28.57
moderately helpful	4	8.70	3	12.50	7	10.00
not helpful	5	10.87	5	20.83	10	14.29
not applicable	17	36.96	16	66.67	33	47.14
<u>What was the reaction of children when they learned of divorce?</u>						
approved	15	33.33	3	12.50	18	26.09
expected it	3	6.67	3	12.50	6	8.70
angry/hurt	22	48.89	10	41.67	32	46.38
unconcerned	1	2.22	3	12.50	4	5.80
supportive	4	8.89	4	16.67	8	11.59
don't know	0	0	1	4.17	1	1.45

TABLE XIV (Continued)

Questions and Responses	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Who or what was greatest source of help?</u>						
work	5	10.87	2	8.33	7	10.00
God/church/religion	5	10.87	1	4.17	6	8.57
counseling	7	15.22	1	4.17	8	11.43
children	9	19.57	2	8.33	11	15.71
friend/friends	9	19.57	4	16.67	13	18.57
dating partner	3	6.52	8	33.33	11	15.71
own inner resources	2	4.35	2	8.33	4	5.71
parents/relatives	2	4.35	2	8.33	4	5.71
other	3	6.52	2	8.33	6	8.57
<u>What was most difficult problem?</u>						
emotional state/loneliness	16	34.78	9	37.50	25	35.71
legal settlement	7	15.22	8	33.33	15	21.43
spouse's behavior	7	15.22	1	4.17	8	11.43
financial	7	15.22	1	4.17	8	11.43
children	5	10.87	2	8.33	7	10.00
many, many	3	6.52	0	0	3	4.29
none	1	2.17	3	12.50	4	5.71
<u>Oldest child's present feelings about the divorce?</u>						
positive	33	73.33	15	62.50	48	69.57
negative	9	20.00	4	16.67	13	18.84
uncertain	3	6.67	5	20.83	8	11.59
<u>Youngest child's present feelings about the divorce?</u>						
positive	28	66.67	12	50.00	40	60.61
negative	9	21.43	6	25.00	15	22.73
uncertain	5	11.90	6	25.00	11	16.67
<u>Have you remarried?</u>						
Yes	4	8.70	12	50.00	16	22.86
No	42	91.30	12	50.00	54	77.14
<u>Present assessment of divorce</u>						
should have done it sooner	18	39.13	9	37.50	27	38.57
much happier now	17	36.96	8	33.33	25	35.71
mistake/tragedy	5	10.87	5	20.83	10	14.29
no choice	6	13.04	2	8.33	8	11.43

Did respondents perceive that communication was effective in their relationship?

Seventy-one percent of those interviewed indicated their spouse was not an easy person to talk to, while 66% perceived themselves as being easy to talk to. In answer to the question "how often did the two of you take the time to really visit with each other," over one-third of the subjects indicated once a month or less, while over one-third indicated once a day or more. Approximately 55% of the subjects reported once a week or less. A number of respondents answered that question with "never."

Did the amount of conflict increase through the years?

The largest proportion (46%) indicated that they "seldom" quarreled during most of their marriage, with approximately one-fifth saying they quarreled "constantly." Sixty percent of the total group did feel the conflict became more frequent toward the end, with a larger proportion of females (65%) than males (50%) indicating an increase in quarreling.

Did the number of shared activities increase or decrease through the years?

Sixty percent of the respondents indicated shared activities decreased while 23% felt they increased.

Was respondent satisfied with the amount of affection expressed to them by their ex-spouse?

While 57% of the total group expressed dissatisfaction with this aspect of their marriage, there were 43% that were satisfied. Slightly more women than men were dissatisfied.

Were respondents satisfied with their sexual relationship?

Answers to this question were fairly evenly divided among the four categories which ranged from very satisfied to very dissatisfied, with slightly more expressing extreme satisfaction (29%). More women (35%) than men (17%) were very satisfied but also more women (24%) than men (17%) expressed "very dissatisfied."

Did respondents feel their marriage partners contributed to their feelings of self esteem?

Sixty-five percent of the total group indicated their mate "seldom" contributed to their self esteem. This was more prevalent among women (74%) than men (50%).

Did respondents feel they contributed to spouse's feelings of self esteem?

A larger proportion of women (65%) than men (50%) indicated they did make an effort to build their mate's ego. Sixty percent of the total group answered this question in the affirmative.

What were subjects' perceptions of the ways in which their mates tended to make them feel bad?

The largest proportion of the respondents (33%), both male and female, indicated criticism and expressions of disapproval of behavior by the spouse which made them feel bad. Lack of concern for feelings (24%), ignoring (10%), and putting down in front of others (10%) were also frequently mentioned.

Did the self concept of both marriage partners change while they were married to each other?

While women had a tendency to indicate their self concept became more negative (52%), men more often indicated their self concept became

more positive (54%). Men also perceived their wives' self concept as becoming more negative (66%) but a somewhat larger proportion of wives felt their husbands self concept remained the same (31%).

Was respondent satisfied with the way their spouse maintained his/her personal appearance?

Almost 65% indicated they were satisfied with spouse's grooming and general appearance. Over 85% indicated they had made an effort to take care of themselves and keep up their personal appearance.

Did husband's success or lack of success in his occupation have an effect on the marriage relationship?

Almost one-half of the subjects interviewed who believed their husband (or themselves) had achieved the degree of success sought, felt that the success had damaged the relationship. This was true of a larger proportion of males (58%) than females (43%). Of those subjects who did not perceive the husband as a success, twice as many felt it damaged the marriage (67%) as felt it did not affect it (33%).

Did the wife's work affect the relationship?

Forty percent of the subjects indicated that the wife working was detrimental to the marriage. One-fourth of the total group indicated the marriage was not affected, and one-fourth explained that the wife did not work and therefore it did not apply to them.

Was wife supportive of the movement for women's equality?

Fifty percent of subjects replied negatively to this question; however, there is a major sex difference. More of the female respondents (46%) said "yes" as opposed to 17% of male respondents. Many of the females indicated they did not become supportive until after the divorce.

Did either marriage partner engage in extra-marital sexual relations while they were married?

A major sex difference was noted here, with 75% of males indicating they did engage in extra-marital sex as opposed to 23% of the females who responded affirmatively. Seventy percent of the women interviewed believed their husband had been sexually unfaithful and an additional 13% suspected he had but were not sure, making a total of 82% who knew or suspected. One-fourth of the men interviewed believed their wives had been unfaithful sexually and another 13% suspected but were not certain.

Did a change occur in marriage partners as middle-age approached?

Sixty-five percent of the women interviewed felt their husbands had changed and the largest proportion indicated that it was primarily a personality change. Forty-five percent of the men indicated their spouse changed. Concerning the nature of the change, the largest proportion (36%) indicated that an earlier problem of the wife became more severe. Two-thirds of subjects indicated a change within themselves, with women more often indicating the change was toward becoming more assertive and independent (47%) and the largest proportion of males indicated they either became more tolerant and flexible (40%) or that personal growth occurred (33%). Both females and males had a tendency to see change in themselves as positive and change in their mates as negative. !

What incident or circumstance triggered the divorce?

The largest proportion of subjects indicated that one of the partners' involvement with another person was the instigating circumstance (53%). The next largest proportion (26%) reported that the

divorce was needed for their own mental health or happiness without a specific incident occurring.

If professional counseling was sought, was it helpful in making the decision to divorce?

Over one-half of the women indicated that counseling was either very helpful or moderately helpful to them, while none of the men indicated it was very helpful and only 12% felt it was even moderately helpful. Sixty-seven percent of males received no counseling.

What was the reaction of the children to the divorce when it was first announced?

The largest proportion (46%) of the respondents indicated that their children were angry and hurt. Over one-fourth of the subjects indicated the children approved.

What was the greatest source of help during the divorce process?

The largest proportion (19%) indicated friend or friends as the major source of support, while children and dating partners were next (16%). Women more often indicated support from children (20%) while men received support from the women they were dating (33%).

What was the most difficult problem during the entire process?

Over one-third of respondents indicated their emotional state, including loneliness and adjusting to single living, as the major problem. Legal settlement was indicated by the second largest proportion (21%). Twice as many men (33%) than women (15%) considered the legal settlement as most difficult.

What are childrens' present feelings about the divorce?

In assessing both oldest and youngest child's feelings, 70% indicated the oldest child had positive feelings about the divorce at the present time, while 61% indicated the youngest child had positive feelings.

Has subject re-married?

One-half of the males interviewed were re-married at the time of the interview. Only 9% of the females were re-married.

What is respondent's present appraisal of the divorce?

Almost three-fourths of subjects responded positively to this question by indicating they should have done it sooner (39%) or that they are much happier now (36%). Fourteen percent of subjects considered the divorce a mistake or tragedy, while 11% indicated they had no choice and therefore they may as well accept it.

Discussion of Interviews

While teen-age marriage has always been considered a high risk, it is usually expected that those couples realizing their mistake would divorce within a few years of marriage, yet this study indicates that termination of such relationships is not always possible and many couples suffer through years of unpleasantness together. As already indicated, staying together for the children's sake is the primary reason for not divorcing earlier, but for the wife who married before finishing high school or soon after graduation, there seemed to be few alternatives from which to choose. She did not feel she could earn a living for herself and her children. It was not until middle-age that

she developed a sense of self-sufficiency or was forced into it because her husband left her.

The reason why one-fourth of the wives married at age 17 or earlier was investigated. The most common answers were related to a need to get away from home, a premarital pregnancy, or guilt feelings about a sexual relationship. Such negative reasons for marriage have been found to be associated with marital unhappiness and divorce (Blood, 1969). Very seldom did the woman who married in her teens feel she was ready for marriage and its responsibilities, but also in retrospect she realized she used poor judgment in her choice of a marriage partner. In most cases, children were conceived during the first year of marriage.

The dominance pattern in the relationship was examined to determine the extent to which the husband-centered marriage was still in effect. As divorced women looked back on their marriage, their most frequent complaint was the extent of the control the husband exerted over their lives. It went far beyond the husband as the head of the household and the primary decision maker. He often prevented her from participating in any activities that promoted self fulfillment or personal growth. For these women, "he wouldn't let me" was the central theme of their conversation. This finding is related to other research indicating that when either spouse is extremely dominant over the other, the marriage is more likely to be unhappy or end in divorce (Bell, 1971; Landis, 1975).

Both Pineo (1961) and Goode (1956) indicated that while couples appear to give lip service to the ideal of equalitarian relationships between men and women, as they grow older relationships become more authoritarian. This is partly due to the power that tends to accrue to middle class husbands as their income becomes higher and they attain

occupational prestige. Komarovsky (1967) found that the husband-dominated marriage was the norm in the lower socio-economic levels and this tended to be the common pattern among those interviewed from the working class in the present study.

An attempt was made to gain insight into why those relationships that were good at the beginning gradually deteriorated. A generalization may be made from the interviews that one or both of the marriage partners invested less and less of themselves in the marriage as the years passed. Communication between mates became less frequent, as evidenced by the fact that over one-third of the subjects indicated they actually visited with each other once a month or less, while a few indicated "never." For many of those who said they visited daily, their evaluation of the quality of the conversation was very low. Women, especially, complained that their husbands were unable or unwilling to share their feelings and conversation remained on a casual or superficial level. Other common complaints from both men and women were: "we always turned our conversations into quarrels," or "he (or she) was such a know-it-all, I avoided conversation." It became evident to the interviewer that the primary problem with communication was lack of interest, and often times proximity, on the part of one or both partners. Interests outside the home took precedence over family interaction.

Conflict may or may not be found in the deteriorating relationship. Forty-six percent of those interviewed indicated they "seldom" quarreled. This may be related to Cuber and Haroff's (1966) study of the marriages of upper middle-class Americans, where they found that during the middle years the devitalized marriage was more common than the conflict-habituated. This type of marriage started with the two

people being deeply in love, enjoying time together and having a close identification with one another. By middle-age their time together is considered "duty time" with very little sharing of the intrinsic aspects of their lives. For these couples, the amount of conflict did increase as more serious problems were developing in the marriage.

While some of the subjects indicated the number of shared activities increased as the children grew older and more money was available for recreation, the majority of those interviewed reported a decrease in activities enjoyed together. This was usually explained by such statements as "we didn't enjoy being together," "we did more and more separately," "he was gone much of the time," "we didn't enjoy the same kinds of activities." One woman reported her husband took her out only twice in their eighteen years of marriage and one of those occasions was a funeral.

Rollins and Feldman's study of marital satisfaction over the life cycle also found that stimulating common activity in marriage decreases from the very beginning, with no recovery (1970). Blood and Wolfe (1960) and Pineo (1961) also found that the "launching period" was a low point in the marriages of their subjects, due partly to a lack of companionship. Satisfactions had been found in children, jobs, friends, but not in the number of things that spouses do for and with each other.

Satisfaction with the amount of affection expressed to them by their mate while they were married was indicated by 43% of those interviewed. Satisfaction for many meant that there actually was no affection expressed but they didn't want any affection because they had no feeling for their mate. Many men and women expressed discomfort in overt demonstrations of affection, either on their part or their mates.

The difficulty arose when one marriage partner wanted demonstrations of affection and the other did not. There were many who reported their mates "never" showed any affection for them; others noticed a gradual diminishing of caresses and warmth through the years.

A larger proportion of the subjects were satisfied with their sexual relationship than were dissatisfied. It is interesting that more women than men were "very dissatisfied" and also "very satisfied." Most of the men and women interviewed talked very openly about problems in sex. Women more often than men complained about lack of concern for their satisfaction and often blamed poor techniques and an unwillingness on the part of the husband to get help or even read books on the subject. Men more often complained about their wives' unresponsiveness or complete lack of interest and usually cited her upbringing as the major cause. Both men and women expressed a decline in sexual enjoyment as the relationship developed more serious problems.

Both men and women felt their ego needs were not being met by their marriage partners while they were married. A lack of genuine appreciation and support was evidenced in all of the questions pertaining to feelings of self worth. Women were more adversely affected by this void due to lack of other means of validation. While one-half of the men indicated their wives "seldom" contributed to their feelings of self esteem, only one-fourth felt their self concept became more negative while married. Rewards from the husband's work apparently were a strong influence in his feelings of self worth.

Means of building up or tearing down feelings of self esteem were explored. Criticism was the biggest culprit for both men and women. While the word "nagging" was seldom mentioned, criticism came in the

form of negative comments about personality, appearance and behavior. As divorced people look back at their lives together, perhaps they only remember the criticism and tend to overlook the words of appreciation. Sixty percent of those interviewed felt they made a real effort to occasionally express appreciation and to compliment their mate. Others admitted they had difficulty in doing this. Several women indicated their husbands were so conceited already that they could not tell him they thought he was great and add to that conceit. Lack of concern for the other's feelings and neglect were in evidence for both men and women. This may be contrasted to Stinnett's and Sauer's (1976) study of family strengths where they found that members of strong families enhance each other's self esteem primarily by complimenting and expressing appreciation to each other.

Since middle-age is typically a time of losing youthful beauty, of bulging waistlines and balding or greying heads, an attempt was made to see if there was dissatisfaction with the mate's personal appearance or grooming. This did not appear to be a major complaint for either men or women, although more men (50%) expressed dissatisfaction or uncertainty about their wife's attractiveness. The most common complaint from men was the wife's overweight and sloppiness. Many men complained about lack of cleanliness or hygiene. Seventy-two percent of the wives were satisfied, but for those who were dissatisfied with their husband's appearance, the problem was usually that of poor grooming or cleanliness or lack of taste in clothing. While the majority of the women interviewed felt they had made an effort to keep up their personal appearance, others admitted they had lost a great deal of weight since the divorce and now spend more time and effort on grooming.

Success in one's occupation--the great American dream--is not achieved without paying a price. That the price is the dissolution of the marriage is often not recognized until it is too late. Fifty-eight percent of the men interviewed who felt they were successful also perceived the success as damaging to the relationship. In explaining how success affected the marriage, they recognized the great amount of time they had invested in their work. They also explained that as they advanced, their egos became larger and their expectations greater and many felt they had outgrown their wives. Many of the wives that had worked to help the husband through school so that "they" might have greater opportunity for advancement, found that when success was attained, they had very little in common. Many times the major problem developed with an advancement or new responsibilities.

Those who perceived the husband's lack of success as damaging the relationship (it was more often the women who expressed this perception), indicated that business failures made the husband very difficult to live with and he frequently developed other problems, such as drinking or an affair. Several women reported continual failure throughout their marriage, putting the heavy load of support and family care on their shoulders.

Only in a few cases did the wife working outside the home appear as the major contributing factor to the break-up of the marriage and these related primarily to relationships the wife developed while working. However, 44% of the women interviewed felt that their working did damage the marriage. Their explanation of the damage to the relationship was the husband's resentment of her sharing her time with others or of her success if she was making more money than he was receiving. A number of

women said their employment provided them with the self confidence and the means by which to get out of a bad marriage.

Only two women interviewed were actively involved in the women's movement for equality. Many others, however, indicated that they have come to realize that women do need equality in employment and within marriage since they have divorced. There were women interviewed that had been cruelly treated by a dominating husband who kept them in the position of a servant and then deserted her in middle-age for another woman, yet some of these women still wanted a husband-dominated marriage; they simply wanted someone who would be nicer to them. One assumption drawn from the interviews is that the women's movement is having a very indirect effect on middle-age divorce, if any, based on the fact that the majority of the men were unaware that their wives were interested in the movement, and the majority of the wives were not concerned until after the divorce.

Extra-marital sexual relationships were engaged in by three-fourths of those men interviewed and almost one-fourth of the women. This finding is related to the results of Hunt's study (1969) who reported that a third of his sample of persons involved in affairs had divorced as a direct result of the affairs. These relationships ranged from casual one-time encounters to long-lasting affairs of up to 13 years duration. Most of the men felt that their wives were unaware of the infidelities and it was only the involvement that led to the break-up of the marriage that became known to the wife. Many of the women, however, told of repeated infidelities throughout the marriage, a situation which many tolerated because they had no other alternative. Reasons for the relationships were not expressed, but there was no

indication that it was a deliberate choice because he was not getting sufficient affection at home. Most of the affairs were casual, with no emotional involvement, and most of the men down-played the effect the affair had on their marriage. For the majority, the first extra-marital encounter came earlier in the marriage and not with middle-age. Serious involvements came with middle-age.

Of the women interviewed, 70% were aware of their husband's infidelity. Many of the known infidelities were the major cause of the divorce. Chilman (1968) cited an increase in extra-marital affairs at middle-age, linked with anxiety over declining sex drive and fear of loss of personal attractiveness. If this was the motivation for the affairs, it was not so indicated by the men interviewed. Several of the wives did blame "male menopause" as the husband's major problem.

There was no woman that volunteered for an interview who had left her husband for another man. Several of the interviewed men, however, did cite their wife's infidelity as the major cause of the break-up. Men told of going to great lengths to finding out for certain that their wives were being unfaithful, hiring private detectives, "bugging" the house, or following the wife, but once the evidence was complete, they did not confront their wives with it. In such cases, it was usually the wife who eventually asked for the divorce.

The change at middle-age that women perceived in their husbands was usually described as a personality change, but typically the change followed his involvement with another woman. The personality change described included a complete lack of interest in family and past activities, new interests, and moral standards.

Women explained the change in themselves as involving personal growth and the attainment of self confidence. This often occurred following therapy, Weight Watchers, a new job, or more education. Their newly acquired independence often led to their request for divorce.

The catalyst that brought on the decision to divorce in over 50% of the subjects interviewed was the attraction of another woman (or man) outside the marriage. In applying Levinger's theory (1972) that divorce occurs when the attractions outside the marriage become stronger than those within and overcome the strength of the barriers, it is obvious that for many men the pull of the new relationship was very intense, since the price paid was usually also great. For the majority of those interviewed, it was the husband who was involved in an extra-marital relationship and he often gave up a lifetime accumulation of material possessions for the freedom he desired. At the time he also felt he was being condemned by his family, friends, and society. If he perceived his marriage relationship as totally unrewarding, the decision was not too difficult to make and his adjustment following the divorce was good. There were a number of men interviewed, however, who felt strong attractions both within the marriage and in the relationship outside, and the final decision to divorce was often made by the wife who finally became "fed-up." Following the divorce, the extra-marital involvement may have been terminated or may have resulted in marriage. In several instances, the husband wanted to come back home after the extra-marital affair ended, but the wife refused.

For the women who requested the divorce, the attraction outside the relationship was not as powerful as the total absence of rewards within the marriage. Several women told of reaching a point where they could

not function any longer without getting some help--usually therapy. In some cases the therapy was "sneaked" after the husband had strictly forbidden it. The freedom and joy experienced by these women far overshadowed the lack of male companionship after the divorce.

Women more often sought counseling and valued the help they were given. For those men who did go to a counselor, it was usually under duress and since the man's mind was already made up, he did not consider it helpful. Sixty-seven percent of the men interviewed did not seek any help from a professional counselor. Hunt (1966) also found that about twice as many separated and divorced women seek help as do men. Many men and women reported extreme dissatisfaction with marriage counselors and they tried several before finding one they felt was beneficial.

The children of the divorces in this study typically were teenagers or young adults, although there were a few still in elementary school. The reaction of the children depended largely on their awareness of the problem before the announcement was made. Many were relieved that the conflict was finally over. However, if the child or children had been unaware of a problem and were suddenly confronted with the fact that their father was more interested in some other woman than he was in his own family, it was quite a trauma to both sons and daughters. There were many cases of sons dropping out of school, getting involved in drugs or other forms of rebellion following the separation. A number of teen-age daughters became pregnant and involved in unhealthy relationships. The adjustment was especially difficult if the father had experienced a close relationship with his children.

An assessment of the children's present feelings about the divorce found that the majority now feel positive about it. Their adjustment

had been made and most were accepting of the decision of their parents. Almost one-fifth of those interviewed reported that their children were still feeling very negative about the divorce but there were also many of the marriage partners who were still very bitter and hostile.

In investigating sources of help while going through the divorce, there is a difference between men and women. Many of the men who left the marriage because of their involvement with another woman found solace in the companionship of that woman. There were no great pangs of loneliness for these men. Women more often received comfort and support from their friends or from their children. Also, more women than men considered work as a satisfying means of filling the void.

The most difficult problem during the separation and divorce was the emotional trauma associated with the loss of a mate and learning to live alone after many years of marriage. While there were a few that insisted that there was no emotional upheaval and the transition was very smooth, most of those interviewed had considered the divorce a major crisis and many had still not recovered at the time of the interview. In some cases tragedies occurred following the divorce. Four of the men had heart attacks following the divorce and one of these had died. Two were described by their ex-wives as being on skid-row. One-third of the men felt the legal settlement was the most difficult problem and several described the court hearing as a humiliating experience. Several women told of harassment from their ex-husbands or from their husband's new woman friend.

While there were many questions asked about life since the divorce, the only one analyzed was that regarding re-marriage. The results indicate that one-half of the men interviewed had re-married while this was

true of only 9% of the females. The opportunities for new relationships are very unequal for the two sexes at middle-age. Women told sad and sometimes humorous stories about their efforts to get back into circulation. Solo Clubs, singles bars, singles church groups, efforts of family and friends all proved to be fruitless. The majority of the women were not dating at all and felt that the lack of male companionship was the biggest void in their lives.

The majority of those interviewed had been divorced from one to two years at the time they shared their experiences with the interviewer. In assessing the divorce at that point in time, the overwhelming majority (75%) felt very positive about it. Almost 40% expressed the wish that they had made the move years earlier--some within the first year of marriage. Of the five women who felt the divorce was a tragedy, three of them had very serious health problems and had fears of being unable to care for self. The other two women were still isolating themselves in an empty home and had not attempted to fill the vacancy in their lives with anything worthwhile. The men who considered it a tragedy were confused and could not understand why their wives had left them. Two of these men also had major health problems.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate causes and effects of divorce in the middle years. It was conducted in two phases:

Phase I consisted of a short questionnaire administered to a large number of middle-aged divorced men and women in seven counties in Oklahoma who had been married a minimum of fifteen years to determine:

- A. Common background factors of respondents regarding: sex, race, age at marriage, age at divorce, number of years married, number of children, if they had been married before, how was first marriage ended, employment of wife and husband, family income, educational level of wife and husband.
- B. Basic facts regarding divorce process: partner initiating it, major cause, efforts made to solve problem, time in marriage when problems developed, forces that worked against divorce, and factors that were significantly related to the decision to divorce.
- C. Respondents' present feelings about the divorce and legal settlement; their assessment of the support and commitment of each partner to the marriage.

Phase II consisted of an interview with 70 men and women, volunteers from the first sample, to explore in depth the following areas:

- A. Mate selection and decision to marry: ages at marriage, readiness for marriage.
- B. Marital interaction: dominance, communication, conflict, shared activities, expression of affection, sexual relations, ego support, effect of husband's and wife's occupation on the marriage, wife's support of the women's movement, extra-marital involvements, changes occurring with middle-age.
- C. The Divorce: circumstance that triggered the action, help sought in making the decision, reaction of children, sources of help, problems.
- D. Adjustment to a new life: present attitude of children, re-marriage, present appraisal of divorce.

The sample in Phase I was composed of 138 divorced people who responded to the first questionnaire, 87 females and 51 males. They were primarily Caucasian and the majority were between 35 and 55 years of age. Most had been married between 15 and 30 years at the time of divorce and had from two to six children. The subjects in Phase II were 70 men and women from the above sample who volunteered to be interviewed.

The data from the first questionnaire were analyzed by percentage and frequency to determine background, causes, perceptions and attitudes toward the divorce. The Chi Square test and Kruskal-Wallis analysis of variance were used to examine the hypotheses. Selected questions from the interview schedule were analyzed by percentage and frequency distribution.

The results of the study were as follows:

1. The respondents' most common perception of the major cause of the divorce was that one of the partners became involve in another relationship.
2. The most important factors that played a part in the decision to divorce was "deterioration of the relationship," "lack of common interests" and "personality change in the husband."
3. The point in the marriage when the problem became evident was "from the very beginning of the marriage" for one-fourth, and sometime during the first half of the marriage for one-third more.
4. Ninety percent of the subjects indicated there were forces that kept them in the relationship longer than desired and the most common reason was the welfare of the children. Seventy percent would not marry the same person again if they could live their life over.
5. Slightly more than one-half of subjects sought some counseling before making the decision to divorce. Most often it was a psychiatrist.
6. "Relief" was the most frequently indicated emotion experienced. The majority had mixed emotions about the divorce. Almost three-fourths felt life is more satisfying now than during the last few years of marriage. The majority were satisfied with the legal and property settlement.
7. In assessing the degree of support, concern, and commitment to the marriage, respondents had a tendency to rate their mates low and themselves high.
8. The majority hope to re-marry at some time in the future or are already re-married.

9. There was a marked difference in perceptions of major cause of divorce according to sex of respondent. Men more often indicated lack of love and lack of common interests, while women cited an affair as the major cause.
10. There was a marked difference in perceptions of what they would do differently if they could re-live their marriage according to sex of respondent. Women would be more assertive and concerned with own happiness while men would postpone marriage or make a better selection of marriage partner.
11. There was no significant relationship between sex of the respondent and (a) perception of whether final financial and property settlement was satisfactory, (b) perception of whether life is more satisfying now than during the last few years of marriage, and (c) feelings about the divorce at the present time.
12. There was no significant relationship between marriage partner that requested the divorce and respondents' perceptions concerning whether life is more satisfying now than during the last few years of marriage.
13. There was no significant relationship between number of years married at time of divorce and (a) perception of whether or not life seems to be more satisfying at the present time than during the last few years of marriage and (b) feelings about the divorce at the present time.
14. There was no significant relationship between family income level and each of the following: (a) point in marriage when problems developed, (b) satisfaction with financial and property settlement, (c) perception of whether life is more satisfying now than before

the divorce, (d) feelings about the divorce, (e) whether or not respondent plans to re-marry.

15. There was no significant relationship between educational level of husband and (a) point in marriage when problem developed, (b) perception of whether life is more satisfying now than before the divorce, (c) feelings about the divorce, and (d) whether or not respondent plans to re-marry. There was a relationship at the .02 level between educational level of husband and the respondents' satisfaction with the financial and property settlement, with more college graduates expressing satisfaction.
16. There was no significant relationship between educational level of wife and (a) the point in marriage when problem developed, (b) satisfaction with financial and property settlement, (c) perception of whether life is more satisfying now than before the divorce, and (d) whether or not respondent plans to re-marry. There was a relationship at the .05 level between the educational level of the wife and the respondents' feelings about the divorce, with those who indicated the wife's highest level of education was high school graduation having the most negative feelings and those with the wife having the least amount of education expressing the most positive feelings.
17. There was no significant relationship between socio-economic status and (a) perception of period in marriage when problem developed, (b) satisfaction with final financial and property settlement, (c) perception of whether or not life is more satisfying now than during the last few years of marriage. There was a significant difference in socio-economic status according to which partner

requested the divorce, with those respondents reporting the highest socio-economic status indicating the husband requested the divorce. There was also a significant difference existing in socio-economic status according to who received professional counseling (.02 level). Those respondents with the highest socio-economic status rating indicated both husband and wife received counseling and those with the lowest socio-economic status rating reported that neither received counseling.

18. From the interviews, the following findings were noted:
 - a. There was a tendency toward early marriage and a lack of readiness for marriage.
 - b. The majority of the relationships were dominated by the husband.
 - c. There was difficulty in communication and an increase in conflict.
 - d. There was general dissatisfaction with expressions of affection and many were dissatisfied with their sexual relationship.
 - e. There was an expressed lack of appreciation and ego support from mate.
 - f. The woman's self concept was more often negatively affected by marriage than was the man's.
 - g. Both husband's success and lack of success were perceived as damaging to the marriage.
 - h. The wife's work was perceived as damaging to the marriage.
 - i. Extra-marital sexual relations were experienced by three-fourths of men and one-fourth of women.
-

- j. Most respondents perceived changes in self and mate at middle-age. Change in self was interpreted as positive but change in mate was perceived as negative.
- k. Counseling was very helpful to women.
- l. While children may be upset over divorce at first, most come to accept it later.
- m. The greatest source of help for women was friends and children; for men it was friends and dating partners.
- n. The most difficult problem experienced during the divorce process was the emotional adjustment and loneliness.
- o. Men re-marry earlier.
- p. Overall assessment of divorce was positive, with largest proportion indicating they should have done it sooner.

Conclusions and Implications

The major problem that resulted in the termination of marriage after fifteen or more years duration was the gradual deterioration of the relationship over the years. This was due primarily to lack of investment in the relationship, poor communication, lack of appreciation and ego support, few common interests and shared activities. Early marriage, poor mate selection and lack of preparation had resulted in many of the relationships being perceived as unsatisfying from the beginning. The most common precipitating factor that triggered the divorce was the husband's involvement with another woman. For the majority of the divorced men and women, the decision to divorce was considered a very positive action in spite of the trauma that accompanied the initial step. Opportunities for building a satisfying

new life are much greater for the middle-aged man than for the middle-aged woman.

There are a number of implications derived from this study that are pertinent to family life education:

1. While young people should be discouraged from going into marriage with the attitude "if it doesn't work there is always divorce," they should realistically face the possibility that their marriage may not last forever, therefore women as well as men should be prepared to support themselves, be able to fully care for themselves, and be continuously concerned with developing to their fullest potential. Young married couples should be encouraged to delay the birth of children until the marriage has been sufficiently tested.
2. Continued emphasis must be placed on the principle that the relationship will be only as good as the quantity and quality of time and effort invested in it. Meaningful interaction, mutual support and appreciation, common goals and interests, tolerance and flexibility and willingness to change must be stressed in marriage and family classes.
3. Frequent marital check-ups could be made periodically as the years go by to provide an opportunity to improve communication, discuss problem areas and re-assess goals. Blood (1976) encourages couples to attend marriage enrichment workshops at least once a year as a means of revitalizing their marriages. Satir (1972) encourages "family engineering" which involves modifying and structuring the family environment in such a way as to maximize satisfaction and a

sense of individual and family worth. Programs in family life education must be available for all throughout the family life cycle.

4. Couples should be encouraged to avoid the middle-age rut of boredom, emptiness, and complete predictability by developing new interests and new ways of interacting with each other.
5. Better marriage counseling is needed for the troubled marriage and divorce counseling is needed prior to re-marriage. Education for re-marriage should become an important part of family life education.
6. Society must become concerned about the middle-aged woman who has been defined as the "displaced housewife." She finds herself at middle-age without a husband or skills and no means of support and she is still many years away from social security.
7. New attitudes are needed regarding the double standard of aging that puts high value on the middle-age man and low value on the woman, where it is acceptable for men to choose women half their age but women are limited to men that are in their age range or older. This situation, plus the higher death rate for middle-age men, is making it very difficult for the middle-aged women to develop new heterosexual relationships. New social forms are needed to make it possible to meet members of the opposite sex for both men and women.

Recommendations

In assessing the methodology of the research, it is recognized that in undertaking a study of such a sensitive and personal nature as

divorce, the sample will be biased and each subject will evaluate the entire process from his or her point of view.

While information gained from the interviews provided more insight than could be gained from the questionnaire, the combination of the two techniques proved to be an effective method of examining the perceptions of divorced persons concerning their marriages and the divorce process.

While this study was limited to those divorced men and women in Oklahoma who were willing to participate, there is no way of knowing if their experiences and attitudes are representative of the majority of the middle-aged divorced in the United States. A study to make regional comparisons would be a worthwhile investigation, as well as a study of ethnic differences and a study involving equal distribution of socio-economic levels.

Another area where information is completely lacking is that of marital reconciliation. Approximately one in five of those couples filing for divorce after fifteen years of marriage have the petition dismissed before the decree is granted or have the decree set aside during the six months waiting period. It is not known whether the majority of these couples effectively work out their differences or simply postpone the inevitable and file again later. If they are successful, what advice can they give to others, or how do they differ from those that followed through on the divorce action?

More attention should be given to the effect that middle-age divorce has on teen-age children. There was sufficient evidence from this study to indicate that for many of the subjects very serious problems developed with their teen-agers after the parents separated.

A follow-up study is planned for this project. The 70 people that were interviewed expressed a willingness to be contacted again within five years after their divorce for a reassessment of their attitudes toward the divorce and their lives since the divorce.

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APPENDIX A



OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY • STILLWATER

 Department of Family Relations & Child Development
 (405) 372-6211, Ext. 6084

74074

June 20, 1975

Hello:

Divorce statistics tell us that approximately 14,000 marriages ended in divorce or annulment in the State of Oklahoma during the first six months of 1974. Almost one-fourth of the total number of divorces include couples who have been married over fifteen years. In spite of the great increase in divorce during the middle years of marriage, little or no research has been done to determine cause and effects. We are now undertaking such a study in the Department of Family Relations and Child Development at Oklahoma State University and we are hoping that you will be willing to participate in this project. Your name was acquired from the court records of divorces filed during the first six months of 1974.

We are all aware that there are many adjustments that a divorcing person must make. In the search for ways of making the divorce process less traumatic and to help people deal with divorce in the most effective and constructive manner, we feel that those who have experienced divorce are the only persons who are qualified to give us answers to our many questions. The information gained through this research will be of assistance to persons considering divorce and also of benefit to those in the helping professions.

The first phase of the research calls for the administering of the enclosed questionnaire to a number of people similar to you who have been married at least fifteen years and are recently divorced. The second phase consists of personal interviews with those of you who are willing, through which we hope to gain more in-depth information about both marriage and divorce. Participation in the first phase does not require participation in the second phase, but we do invite you to help us in both.

Instructions are self explanatory. After completing the questionnaire, please place it in the enclosed addressed envelope (no postage required) and drop it in the mail. This should be done within one week after you receive this letter. If you are willing to be interviewed, you will need to give us your name, address and telephone number so that we may contact you for an appointment. If you do not care to be interviewed, you need not identify yourself on the questionnaire. Please be assured that you will be making a valuable contribution to the field of Family Relations and that your responses will be completely confidential.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Cordially yours,

Maggie Hayes
 Maggie Hayes, Researcher

Nick Stinnett

Nick Stinnett, Ph.D.
 Associate Professor
 Family Relations and Child Development

Enclosures: 2

QUESTIONNAIRE
ON
DIVORCE



OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY • STILLWATER

Department of Family Relations & Child Development
(405) 372-6211, Ext. 6084

74074

Please check or fill in appropriate answer to each question and be as honest with your answers as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. It is not necessary to put your name on the questionnaire if you do not want to participate in the interviews. Your responses will be held in strict confidence.

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Race: _____
3. Present status of your divorce proceedings:
(a) Final decree granted _____ months ago.
(b) Divorce still pending.
(c) Divorce petition dismissed.
4. Age at the time the divorce petition was filed? _____
5. Number of years married at time of divorce? _____
6. Ages of children born to union: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____
7. If you have been married before, was your first marriage ended by
(a) annulment
(b) divorce
(c) death of spouse
8. Was wife employed at time of separation? Yes No
9. How long had she been employed? _____
10. Occupation of wife: _____
11. Occupation of husband: _____
12. Combined family income at time of separation:
(a) Less than \$10,000
(b) \$10,000 - \$20,000
(c) \$20,000 - \$40,000
(d) over \$40,000
13. Highest level of education attained by husband: _____
14. Highest level of education attained by wife: _____
15. Marriage partner that first requested the divorce:
_____ Wife _____ Husband _____ Mutual Decision
16. What do you consider to be the major cause of the marital dissatisfaction that led to the divorce? _____
17. Did you and/or your spouse receive counseling from a professional counselor before making the final decision to divorce?
(a) Wife received counseling
(b) Husband received counseling
(c) Both received counseling together
(d) Neither received counseling

18. If so, what kind (or kinds) of counselor did you consult?
 (a) ___ Psychiatrist (d) ___ Priest or Pastoral Counselor
 (b) ___ Psychologist (e) ___ Family Doctor
 (c) ___ Social Work Agency (f) ___ Other. Specify _____
19. Were there reconciliations after your first separation? Yes ___ No ___
20. If you could do it over again, would you marry the same person? Yes ___ No ___
21. At what point in your marriage was there evidence that all was not well with your relationship?
 (a) ___ It was wrong from the first.
 (b) ___ Approximately during the ___ year of marriage.
 (c) ___ The relationship was good until just before the divorce.
22. Were there forces either within or outside the marriage that kept you in the relationship longer than desired?
 (a) ___ the children's welfare
 (b) ___ societal pressures
 (c) ___ parental or family pressures
 (d) ___ financial necessity
 (e) ___ religious reasons
 (f) ___ lack of alternatives
 (g) ___ other. Specify: _____
 (h) ___ none.
23. Was the final financial and property settlement satisfactory to you? Yes ___ No ___
 to spouse? Yes ___ No ___
24. How important were each of the following factors in relation to your decision to divorce? (Circle the number most appropriate with 5 representing the greatest degree of importance and 1 representing the least degree).
- | | No Importance | | | Very Important | | |
|---|---------------|---|---|----------------|---|--|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| A. Financial problems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| B. Gradual deterioration of relationship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| C. Sexual incompatibility | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| D. Infidelity of wife | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| E. Infidelity of husband | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| F. Drinking (or drug) problem of wife | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| G. Drinking (or drug) problem of husband | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| H. Interference of husband's career | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| I. Interference of wife's career | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| J. Personality change in husband | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| K. Personality change in wife | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| L. Conflicting philosophies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| M. Mental or emotional illness of husband | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| N. Mental or emotional illness of wife | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| O. Physical illness of husband | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| P. Physical illness of wife | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Q. Conflict over child or children | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| R. Lack of common interests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
25. Do you consider your life to be more satisfying now than during the last few years of your marriage? Yes ___ No ___ No change ___

16. Check those words listed below that represent your feelings about the divorce at the present time.
 (a) ___ Relief (f) ___ Bitterness (k) ___ Blessing
 (b) ___ Disappointment (g) ___ Opportunity (l) ___ Happiness
 (c) ___ Guilt (h) ___ Peace (m) ___ Ambivalence
 (d) ___ Satisfaction (i) ___ Failure (n) ___ Confusion
 (e) ___ Tragedy (j) ___ Sadness (o) ___ Regret
27. With reference to your marriage, rate the degree to which:
 Your ex-spouse stood by you when you were in need. 1 2 3 4 5
 You stood by your ex-spouse when he/she was in need. 1 2 3 4 5
 Your ex-spouse was concerned with promoting your welfare and happiness. 1 2 3 4 5
 You were concerned with promoting your ex-spouse's welfare and happiness. 1 2 3 4 5
28. How would you rate the degree of commitment (during your marriage) of:
 Your ex-spouse to you 1 2 3 4 5
 You to your ex-spouse 1 2 3 4 5
29. Do you hope to remarry at some time in the future?
 Yes ___ No ___ Already remarried ___ Undecided ___
30. If you could go back and relive your marriage, what would you do differently?

If you are willing to be interviewed by the researcher, a family life specialist, concerning your marriage, the divorce and the adjustment, please give name, address and telephone number. The interview will be approximately one hour in length and will take place at a time and place convenient for you.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Number: _____

Sex of Respondent: _____

Interviewer: _____

Date of Interview: _____

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The first group of questions are related to the courtship and mate selection:

1. What were the ages of you and your spouse at the time you married?
 wife's age husband's age
2. How long had you dated each other before marriage? _____
3. Did you have any other steady dating relationships before this one?
 None
 One or two
 Several
 Many
4. Were you ever "in love" before this relationship?
 yes
 no
 undecided
5. Can you look back now and see why you made the decision to marry? (may be more than one answer)
 you were "in love"
 a strong sexual attraction
 it was expected by everyone
 a need to get away from home
 a pregnancy
 you thought it may be your only opportunity
 you needed someone to take care of you
 all of your friends were getting married
 other: _____
6. Did one of you seem to want to get married more than the other?
 wife did
 husband did
 equal desire
7. Did either of you have any reservations about following through with the marriage plans once they were made?
 wife did
 husband did
 neither did
 both did
8. Did either of you have any feelings of regret shortly after marriage?
 wife did
 husband did
 neither did
 both did
9. At the time, what were your beliefs about having sexual relations before marriage?
 it was wrong for anyone outside of marriage
 it was o.k. if the two people were in love
 it was o.k. if both parties were agreeable
 it was o.k. for men, but not for women
 other: _____

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10. Was your behavior consistent with the above attitude?
___ yes
___ no
11. Did you go into marriage with any specific obstacle or problem already present? (may be more than one answer)
___ no problems
___ a pregnancy
___ parental opposition
___ financial hardship
___ sacrifice education or job
___ separation due to military commitment
___ other: _____
12. As far as background factors were concerned (socio-economic level, education, race, religion, age), were you very much alike or different?
___ very similar
___ similar except for: _____
___ very different because of _____
13. Did you have similar goals for your lives?
___ very similar
___ somewhat similar
___ different
14. Knowing as much about marriage as you know now, do you think you were "ready" for marriage?
___ yes
___ no
___ undecided

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II. MARITAL INTERACTION: These questions pertain to the majority of years you spent together as husband and wife. Sometimes change will have occurred over the years and you will need to indicate this.

1. Were there clear-cut male and female roles as far as your marriage relationship was concerned?
 - wife homemaker / husband provider
 - wife provider / husband homemaker
 - both worked / both did household chores
 - wife worked and also did most of household chores
 - husband worked and also did most of household chores
2. As you started living together, did one of you tend to be more dominant than the other?
 - wife dominant
 - husband dominant
 - equal
3. Did this have a tendency to change through the years?
 - yes Explain: _____
 - no
4. Was there agreement on most of the goals you worked for? (home, family, work)
 - yes
 - no
 - undecided
5. If not, in what area was there disagreement? _____
6. Do you feel now that you reached most of the goals?
 - yes
 - no
7. Was your spouse an easy person to talk to?
 - yes
 - no
8. Were you an easy person to talk to?
 - yes
 - no
9. Did either of you have any of the following communication problems as you talked to each other?

	YOU	SPOUSE
1) was a poor listener	_____	_____
2) was too judgmental	_____	_____
3) inability to express self	_____	_____
4) engaged in meaningless conversation	_____	_____
5) unable to express feelings	_____	_____
6) has irritating voice	_____	_____
7) had fear of conflict	_____	_____
8) talked too much	_____	_____
9) other _____	_____	_____

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10. In what areas were you most able to talk freely? _____

11. What areas were the most difficult for you to discuss? _____

12. How often did the two of you take the time to really visit with each other?
 once a day or more
 several times each week
 about once a week
 about once a month
 less than once a month
13. Did you and your mate quarrel frequently?
 seldom
 moderately
 often
 constantly
14. How did you usually handle conflict or strong disagreement?

	<u>YOU</u>	<u>SPOUSE</u>
1) verbally (quarreling)	_____	_____
2) physically (blows)	_____	_____
3) avoidance (escaping)	_____	_____
4) crying	_____	_____
5) sulking	_____	_____
6) giving in to mate	_____	_____
7) other _____	_____	_____
15. Did the amount of conflict get better or worse through the years?
 became more frequent
 became less frequent
 remained the same
16. Can you identify an area (or areas) that you quarreled about the most?

17. Did you and your mate have similar values and philosophies?
 yes
 no
 uncertain
18. In those areas where you differed, did each of you respect the other's right to be different?
 YOU: yes SPOUSE: yes
 no no
 undecided undecided
19. During most of the time that you were married, did you consider your mate to be a good friend?
 yes
 no
 undecided

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20. What kind of shared activities did you and your mate participate in together?
- sporting events (spectator)
 - sport participation
 - movies
 - theatre, concerts, lectures
 - night clubs or bars
 - church attendance and activities
 - dancing
 - outdoor activities (camping, fishing, water sports)
 - traveling
 - dining out
 - community activities, social clubs
 - entertaining
 - gardening or yard work
 - other _____
-
21. Did the number of shared activities increase or decrease during the years?
- increased
 - decreased Why? _____
 - remained the same
22. As you look back, what do you remember that you did together that gave you the most pleasure? _____
-
23. Did you as a family have many rituals or traditions that you enjoyed through the years?
- celebration of holidays
 - birthday celebrations
 - mealtimes (such as family discussions, grace before the meal, etc.)
 - other _____
24. How often did you and your spouse have dinner together in the evening?
- usually
 - about half the time
 - seldom
25. In what ways did you and your spouse express affection for each other? (leave open):
- | | <u>YOU</u> | <u>SPOUSE</u> |
|------------------------|------------|---------------|
| 1) verbally | _____ | _____ |
| 2) touching | _____ | _____ |
| 3) hugging (embracing) | _____ | _____ |
| 4) kissing | _____ | _____ |
| 5) sexually | _____ | _____ |
| 6) other _____ | _____ | _____ |
26. How often did you tell your spouse that you loved him/her?
- often
 - occasionally
 - never

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27. How often did your spouse tell you that he/she loved you?
 often
 occasionally
 never
28. Were you satisfied with the amount of affection your spouse expressed to you?
 yes
 no
29. Was there a change in this area over the years?
 affection expressed more often
 affection expressed less often
 remained the same
30. During the early years of your marriage, did you seem to have the same amount of interest in and enjoyment of sex?
 husband more interested
 wife more interested
 equal
31. Was there a change in the enjoyment of sex over the years?
 Wife: enjoyed more Husband: enjoyed more
 enjoyed less enjoyed less
 remained the same remained the same
32. Were there any specific problems that interfered with a satisfying sexual relationship during the years you were married? _____

33. Were you and your spouse able to talk to each other about sexual matters?
 yes
 no
 uncertain
34. Generally speaking, how satisfied were both of you with your sexual relationship?
 YOU: very satisfied SPOUSE: very satisfied
 moderately satisfied moderately satisfied
 dissatisfied dissatisfied
 very dissatisfied very dissatisfied
35. Did your mate tend to contribute to your feelings of self esteem (make you feel good about yourself)?
 usually
 sometimes
 seldom
36. In what ways did he/she tend to make you feel good about yourself? _____

37. Were there ways in which your mate made you feel bad about yourself (a tendency to put you down)? _____

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38. Do you feel your self concept has changed since you married?
 became more positive
 became more negative
 remained the same
 undecided
39. Do you feel that you contributed to your spouse's feelings of self esteem?
 yes
 no
 undecided
40. In what ways did you help your spouse feel good about herself/himself?

41. Were there ways in which you may have made your mate feel bad about themselves?

42. In what way do you feel your mate's self concept has changed since marrying you?
 became more positive
 became more negative
 remained the same
 undecided
43. Was there much laughter and joy in your home while you were married?
 very much
 moderate amount
 very little
44. Was there a change in this area over the years?
 increased joy
 decreased joy
 no change
45. Was your spouse fun to be with?
 yes
 no
 undecided
46. Do you think that you were fun to be with?
 yes
 no
 undecided
46. During most of the time you were married, do you feel that you and your spouse had a "zest for living" (enthusiasm, enjoyment of life)?
 YOU: very much SPOUSE: very much
 somewhat somewhat
 very little very little
47. Did you trust your marriage partner?
 completely
 most of the time Indicate areas of distrust _____
 rarely _____

48. Do you believe that your mate trusted you?
 completely
 most of the time Indicate areas of distrust _____
 rarely
49. How would you rate the general state of health for both you and your spouse during most of your married life?
- | | YOU | SPOUSE |
|------------------------|-------|--------|
| very good health | _____ | _____ |
| moderately good health | _____ | _____ |
| frequent illness | _____ | _____ |
| very poor health | _____ | _____ |
50. What were the major health problems (if any)?
 YOU: _____
 SPOUSE: _____
51. Were you satisfied with the way your spouse maintained his/her personal appearance?
 yes
 no Explain: _____
 uncertain
52. Have you made an effort to take care of yourself and keep up your personal appearance?
 yes
 no Explain: _____
 uncertain
53. Number of children born to union? _____
54. Number of children planned? _____
55. Did you and your mate, for the most part, enjoy your children?
 YOU: yes SPOUSE: yes
 no no
56. How much time did you devote to child rearing:
 YOU: great amount of time SPOUSE: great amount of time
 moderate amount moderate amount
 very little time very little time
57. Did you and your mate agree on child rearing methods?
 yes
 no
 undecided
58. Generally speaking, are you satisfied with the way your children have turned out?
 extremely pleased
 moderately satisfied
 disappointed Explain _____
 uncertain

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59. Regarding the husband's job or career, would you judge him (or yourself) to be an ambitious person?
- very ambitious
 - moderately ambitious
 - little ambition
 - no ambition
60. How much time did he (you) devote to work in relation to time devoted to family and spouse?
- work always came first, family neglected
 - work was most important, but family shared in use of time
 - family came first, with work taking second place
 - both areas neglected
61. Did you (your wife) resent the amount of time your husband (you) devoted to his work?
- yes
 - no
62. Reason for wife's resentment? (may be more than one answer)
- felt neglected as a wife
 - felt children needed father
 - could not see results of effort
 - was not interested in husband's success
 - other _____
63. Did your husband (you) achieve the degree of success in his occupation that he (you) sought?
- achieved beyond expectation
 - did achieve it
 - has almost achieved it
 - has not achieved it
64. If successful in his (your) occupation, has success affected the marriage relationship in any way?
- made it better
 - did not affect it
 - damaged it. Explain _____
65. Did husband's lack of success affect the relationship in any way?
- made it better
 - did not affect it
 - damaged it Explain _____
66. Has wife worked during the marriage?
- for only a short time
 - off and on during marriage
 - most of married life
 - never

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67. How would you assess the degree of importance of the career to the wife?
 not important (a necessity)
 somewhat important
 extremely important
 not applicable

68. How did husband feel about wife's work?
 very supportive
 moderately supportive
 indifferent
 resentful
 not applicable

69. Did the wife's work affect the marriage relationship?
 helped it
 did not affect it
 damaged it Explain: _____
 not applicable

70. Is your wife (are you) supportive of the movement for women's equality?
 yes
 no
 undecided

71. How would you rate your ex-spouse in the following roles?
 (check appropriate column)

	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Good</u>
As a wife or husband (emotional support)	_____	_____	_____
As a parent	_____	_____	_____
As a provider	_____	_____	_____
As a companion	_____	_____	_____
As a homemaker (household chores)	_____	_____	_____
As a lover	_____	_____	_____
As a manager (all resources)	_____	_____	_____
As a cook	_____	_____	_____

72. How would you rate yourself in the following roles?

	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Good</u>
As a wife or husband (emo. sup.)	_____	_____	_____
As a parent	_____	_____	_____
As a provider	_____	_____	_____
As a companion	_____	_____	_____
As a homemaker (Household chores)	_____	_____	_____
As a lover	_____	_____	_____
As a manager (all resources)	_____	_____	_____
As a cook	_____	_____	_____

73. If money was ever a source of conflict in your home, what was the major cause of the problem?
 inadequate income
 wife's spending habits
 husband's spending habits
 wife's thriftiness
 husband's thriftiness
 other _____
 none

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74. How many "close friends" (other couples) did you and your spouse enjoy together (average at any one time)?
 none
 one or two couples
 three to five couples
 six or more couples
75. How many close friends of the same sex did you as an individual have on an average during your marriage? (Close friends means liking each other enough to spend time together, confiding, sharing, etc.)
 YOU: none one or two three to five six or more
 YOUR SPOUSE: none one or two three to five six or more
76. How many close friends of the opposite sex have you had during all of your married life?
 YOU: none one or two three to five six or more
 YOUR SPOUSE: none one or two three to five six or more
77. If either of you had "close" friends of the opposite sex, did the other mate approve of these friendships?
 YOU: did approve did not approve not applicable
 YOUR SPOUSE: did approve did not approve not applicable
78. Did you engage in extra-marital sexual relationships at any time during your marriage?
 yes
 no
79. If yes, please indicate
 Number of different partners: _____
 Type or types of relationship: _____
 At what time in the marriage did they occur? _____
80. If yes, was your spouse ever aware of this?
 yes
 no
 suspected but not sure
81. If aware, what was their reaction?
 very disturbed
 moderately disturbed
 indifferent
 understanding and tolerant
82. Did your spouse ever engage in extra-marital sexual relations?
 yes
 no
 suspected but not sure

83. If yes, how did you feel about it?
 very disturbed
 moderately disturbed
 indifferent
 understanding and tolerant
84. How would you evaluate the amount of freedom you had in your marriage relationship (regarding choice of friends, activities, use of time, money, etc.)
 great deal of freedom
 moderate amount of freedom
 very little freedom
 none
85. How much freedom did you feel your spouse had in the same areas while married to you?
 great deal of freedom
 moderate amount of freedom
 very little freedom
 none
86. How would you evaluate the effect of in-laws or relatives on your marriage?
 positive effect
 negative effect
 no effect
87. If a positive effect, in what way did they contribute to your marriage? _____

88. If a negative effect, who or what caused the problem? _____

89. Did you or your spouse have any obvious personal problems that had a negative effect on the marriage? (may be more than one answer)
- | | <u>You</u> | <u>Spouse</u> |
|-------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| 1) drug or alcohol dependency | _____ | _____ |
| 2) compulsive spending | _____ | _____ |
| 3) compulsive gambling | _____ | _____ |
| 4) overly dominating | _____ | _____ |
| 5) totally self centered | _____ | _____ |
| 6) over dependent | _____ | _____ |
| 7) overly independent | _____ | _____ |
| 8) chronic depression | _____ | _____ |
| 9) emotionally unstable | _____ | _____ |
| 10) chronic adultery | _____ | _____ |
| 11) other _____ | _____ | _____ |
90. Did your spouse seem to change as he/she approached middle-age?
 yes
 no
 undecided

91. If yes, what do you feel was the nature of the change? _____

92. Do you feel that you changed as you approached middle-age?
 yes
 no
 undecided
93. If yes, what was the nature of the change? _____

94. As you look back, how well do you think you really knew your spouse?
 not very well
 fairly well
 extremely well
95. How well do you think he/she knew you?
 not very well
 fairly well
 extremely well
96. Were you in love with someone else at the time of separation?
 yes
 no
 involved with someone but not in love
97. Was your spouse in love with someone else at the time of separation?
 yes
 no
 involved with someone but not in love

III. THE DIVORCE

These questions pertain to the decision to separate or divorce and the actual divorce process:

1. Which marriage partner first suggested divorce?
 - husband
 - wife
 - mutually decided

2. Was such a request a surprise to the other partner?
 - yes
 - no

3. Disregarding the fact that many factors play a part in the decision, what incident or circumstances triggered the request for the divorce? _____

4. If you requested the divorce, how long did you think about it before confronting your mate with the request? (leave open)
 - less than a day
 - about a week
 - about a month
 - about six months
 - about a year
 - several years

5. If it was your partner that first requested divorce, what was your immediate reaction? (may be more than one answer)
 - resisted
 - felt problem could be solved without divorce
 - ambivalent (both wanted it and resisted it)
 - somewhat relieved
 - totally agreed
 - other _____

6. Did you talk your problem over with anyone as it was developing or during the separation and divorce? (may be more than one answer)
 - with a close friend
 - with several friends
 - with a relative
 - with your own children
 - with a minister
 - other _____

7. If you sought professional counseling, did you feel it was helpful to you in making the decision?
 - very helpful
 - moderately helpful
 - not helpful
 - harmful
 - not applicable

8. What is your interpretation of the reaction of those people close to you when they learned of your divorce plans?
Your children: _____
Parents or other close relatives _____
Friends _____
Colleagues _____
9. When was the most difficult or painful time for you?
____ before making the decision to divorce
____ at time of separation
____ at time divorce was final
____ it was all about equally painful
____ other _____
10. Who or what was the greatest source of help to you during the divorce process?

11. What was the most difficult problem during the entire process? _____

12. Have you ever felt that you made a mistake in getting a divorce? _____

13. Did you find it difficult to tell your children about the divorce?
____ very difficult
____ somewhat difficult
____ little difficulty
____ no difficulty

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7. When the separation occurred, what did you do to fill the gap in your social life?
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> club activities | <input type="checkbox"/> greater attention to children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> church activities | <input type="checkbox"/> went around with same-sex friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> went alone to movies | <input type="checkbox"/> did nothing to fill it |
| <input type="checkbox"/> began dating | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |
8. Following the divorce, did you receive any counseling or group therapy to help you adjust to the divorce?
- yes What kind _____
- no
9. In general, do you have many opportunities to meet new people?
- some
- few
- none
10. Where are you most successful in meeting people? _____
-
11. Have you started dating?
- yes
- no
12. What is your attitude about having sexual relations with your dating partners?
- _____
-
13. Outside of your job or housework, what are your main recreational activities?
- _____
-
14. In which of the following areas has the adjustment been most difficult for you?
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> financial problems | <input type="checkbox"/> feelings of adequacy (self concept) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> social life | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sexual needs | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> coping with children | |
15. If remarriage has already occurred, how soon after the divorce was final did you remarry? _____
16. Did you marry someone that you already knew before the separation?
- yes
- no
17. What is your appraisal of the divorce at the present time? _____
-
-
-

VITA

Maggie Parks Hayes

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: DIVORCE IN THE MIDDLE YEARS

Major Field: Higher Education

Minor Field: Family Relations and Child Development

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