

**PUBLIC DOCUMENT NO. 1. ANNUAL
REPORT - VITAL STATISTICS OF
MASSACHUSETTS. BIRTHS, MARRIAGES,
DIVORCES AND DEATHS. FOR THE YEAR
ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1931**

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FREDERICK W. COOK & ARTHUR J. HASSETT

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REPORT - VITAL STATISTICS OF
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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

DIVISION OF VITAL STATISTICS

ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE

VITAL STATISTICS OF MASSACHUSETTS

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DIVORCES AND DEATHS

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1931

PREPARED BY

FREDERIC W. COOK

THE SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH

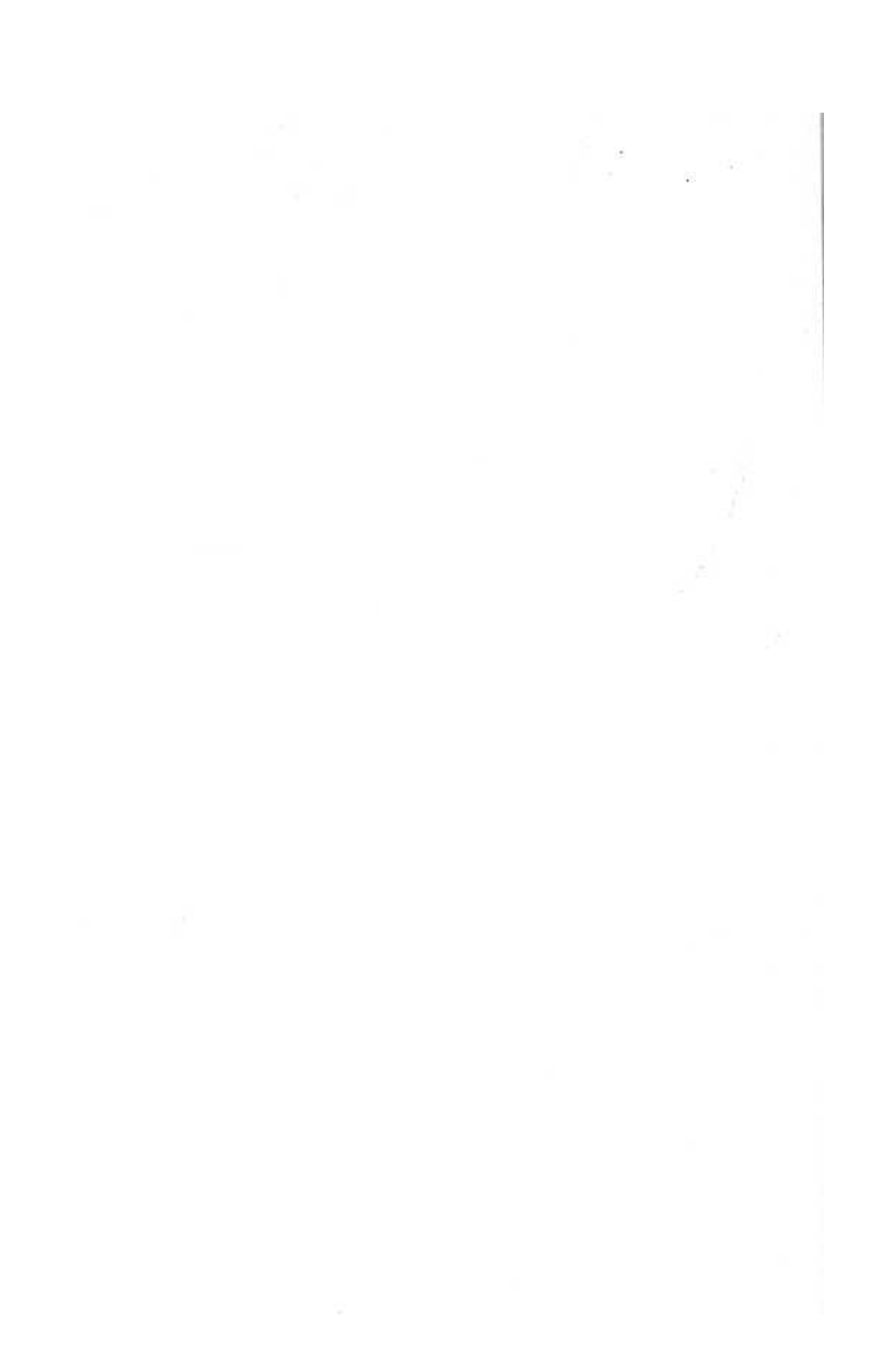
EDITED BY

ARTHUR J. HASSETT

STATE REGISTRAR OF VITAL STATISTICS



PUBLICATION OF THIS DOCUMENT APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE



CONTENTS.

EDITORIAL REVIEW OF THE VITAL STATISTICS OF MASSACHUSETTS: 1931

PART I.		PAGE
MORTALITY STATISTICS.		
INTRODUCTION		1-17
General mortality		1-4
Death registration		1
Purpose		1
Mortality statistics		1, 2
Source of data		2
Death rates and their comparability		2
Number of deaths and death rates		2, 3
Sex		3
Age		3
Sex and age		3
Marital condition		3
Centenarians		3
Nativity		3, 4
Seasonable distribution of deaths		4
Infant mortality		4, 5
Cause of death		5-8
Sources of error in mortality statistics		5
Principal causes of death		5-8
Deaths investigated by medical examiners		8, 9
Source of data		8
Number of deaths investigated		8
Autopsies		8
Cause of death		8, 9
STATISTICAL TABLES		18-143
General mortality		18-110
TABLE 1.—Deaths, by sex and nativity, population, and death rates in each county and city: 1931		18-23
TABLE 2.—Deaths, by sex and age, in each county: 1931		24, 25
TABLE 3.—Deaths, by sex and age, in municipalities having over 10,000 inhabitants in 1930: 1931		26-31
TABLE 4.—Population, deaths, and death rates per 1,000 population: 1907 to 1931		32
TABLE 5.—Mortality of males and females: 1907 to 1931		32
TABLE 6.—Deaths at specified ages: census years 1905 to 1930		33
TABLE 7.—Per cent of deaths at specified ages—both sexes: 1907 to 1931		33
TABLE 8.—Male deaths per 1,000 female deaths at specified ages: 1928 to 1931		33
TABLE 9.—Deaths of males and females at specified ages: 1922 to 1931		34
TABLE 10.—Deaths of persons 100 years of age and over, by age, sex, place of death, place of birth, marital condition, date of death and name of decedent: 1931		35
TABLE 11.—Deaths of persons 100 years of age and over, by sex, nativity, marital condition, and age of oldest decedent: 1907 to 1931		35
TABLE 12.—Deaths by sex, age, and marital condition: 1931		36
TABLE 13.—Deaths in counties, and in cities having over 50,000 inhabitants, in 1930, by months: 1931		37
TABLE 14.—Deaths from each cause and class of causes, according to the detailed International List, by months and sex and by age and sex: 1931		38-75
TABLE 15.—Deaths from important causes in each municipality: 1931		76-100
TABLE 16.—Deaths from important causes: 1907 to 1931		101
TABLE 17.—Deaths, death rates per 100,000 population, and per cent distribution by each cause and class of causes according to the abridged International List: 1925 to 1931		102, 103
TABLE 18.—Death rates per 100,000 population based on annual average number of deaths for the five-year period of which the census year is the median year: census years 1900 to 1925		104
TABLE 19.—Deaths produced by external causes: 1907 to 1931		104
TABLE 20.—Deaths from cancer, by sex, age, and marital condition: 1931		105-110
Infant mortality		111-133
TABLE 21.—Deaths under 1 month of age; also under 1 year of age, by sex, in the State and each municipality: 1931		111-113
TABLE 22.—Live births, deaths under 1 year, infant mortality rates, and per cent of deaths under 1 year to deaths at all ages: 1907 to 1931		113
TABLE 23.—Infant deaths per 1,000 live births in municipalities having over 15,000 inhabitants in 1930: 1924 to 1931		114
TABLE 24.—Birth rates, death rates, natural increase, infant mortality rates, and survivorship in municipalities having over 15,000 inhabitants in 1930: 1931		114, 115
TABLE 25.—Infant mortality in Massachusetts, Boston, and the remainder of the State outside Boston: 1915 to 1931		115
TABLE 26.—Survivors at end of first year of life per 1,000 population and per 1,000 live births: 1906 to 1931		116
TABLE 27.—Infant deaths per 1,000 live births, by causes: 1924 to 1931		116
TABLE 28.—Deaths under 2 years of age from diarrhea and enteritis, by months: 1924 to 1931		116
TABLE 29.—Deaths from important causes for certain subdivisions of the first year of life for the State and for cities having 50,000 inhabitants or more in 1930: 1931		117-133
Maternal mortality		134
TABLE 30.—Deaths and death rates per 100,000 population, and per 100,000 female population, from diseases caused by pregnancy and confinement: 1907 to 1931		134

STATISTICAL TABLES— <i>Concluded.</i>		PAGE
Maternal mortality— <i>Concluded.</i>		
TABLE 31.—Death rates per 10,000 confinements, per 10,000 births, and per 10,000 live births, from diseases caused by pregnancy and confinement: 1907 to 1931	134	
Deaths investigated by medical examiners	135-143	
TABLE 32.—Deaths (inclusive of stillbirths) due to violence and other causes, investigated by medical examiners in each county, by causes; and number and per cent of deaths autopsied in each county: 1931	133	
TABLE 33.—Deaths (inclusive of stillbirths) due to violence and other causes, investigated by medical examiners, by causes, sex, and months, and by causes, sex, and age: 1931	136-141	
TABLE 34.—Deaths (inclusive of stillbirths) investigated and autopsies made by medical examiners in each county: 1922 to 1931	142, 143	

PART II A.

BIRTH STATISTICS.

INTRODUCTION	144-146
Birth registration	144, 145
Live births	145
Birth rate	145
Changes in the birth rate	145
Stillbirths	145
Birth rates of the principal cities	145, 149
Sex proportions at birth	146
Nativity of parents	146
Plural births	146
Natural increase	146
STATISTICAL TABLES	147-154
TABLE 35.—Live births, by sex and parent nativity; and birth rates in each county and city: 1931	147-151
TABLE 36.—Live births by month of birth in counties, and in cities having over 50,000 inhabitants in 1930: 1931	152
TABLE 37.—Plural births, by sex, and stillbirths, in counties and in cities having over 50,000 inhabitants in 1930: 1931	152
TABLE 38.—Live births and birth rates for the State and cities having over 100,000 inhabitants in 1930: 1907 to 1931	153
TABLE 39.—Live births, by sex and parent nativity, and sex proportions at birth: 1907 to 1931	153
TABLE 40.—Live birth rates per 1,000 population, excess of births over deaths, natural increase per 1,000 population, plural births (twins and triplets), and stillbirths by sex, per 1,000 live births, and sex proportions of stillborn: 1907 to 1931	154

PART II B.

MARRIAGE STATISTICS.

INTRODUCTION	155, 156
Marriage registration	155
Accuracy	155
Source of data	155
Purpose, marriage requirements	156
STATISTICAL TABLES	157-167
TABLE 41.—Marriages, classified by nativity and residence of bride and groom, in each county and municipality: 1931	157-161
TABLE 42.—Marriages by sex, age, and marital condition: 1931	161
TABLE 43.—Marriages by months, in counties, and in cities having over 100,000 inhabitants in 1930: 1931	162, 163
TABLE 44.—Marriages in each county, by sex and age: 1931	162, 163
TABLE 45.—Marriages, by sex and age: 1931	164
TABLE 46.—First marriages, by sex and age: 1931	164
TABLE 47.—First marriages of widows and remarriages of brides, by age: 1931	164
TABLE 48.—Remarriages of widows and first marriages of brides, by age: 1931	165
TABLE 49.—Remarriages of both parties, by ages: 1931	165
TABLE 50.—First marriages and remarriages: 1931	165
TABLE 51.—Marriages, marriage rates, and nativity of persons married: 1907 to 1931	166
TABLE 52.—Proportions of first marriages and remarriages per 1,000 marriages: 1907 to 1931	166
TABLE 53.—Marriages and marriage rates in the State, and in cities having over 100,000 inhabitants in 1930: 1907 to 1931	167

PART II C.

DIVORCE STATISTICS.

INTRODUCTION	168, 169
Causes for divorce	168
Source of data	168
Applications for divorce	168
Contested cases	168
Number of divorcees	168
Divorce rates	168, 169
Party to which granted	169
Divorcees classified by causes	169
Annulment classified as divorce	169
Duration of marriages	169
STATISTICAL TABLES	170-188
TABLE 54.—Labels for divorcees granted, refused, dissolved, contested, and not contested, and number of years libellants were married, by statutory causes and sex of libellant: The State—1931	170
A. Barnstable County	171
B. Berkshire County	172
C. Bristol County	173
D. Dukes County	174
E. Essex County	175

CONTENTS.

iii

STATISTICAL TABLES— <i>Concluded</i>	PAGE
F. Franklin County	176
G. Hampden County	177
H. Hampshire County	178
I. Middlesex County	179
J. Nantucket County	180
K. Norfolk County	181
L. Plymouth County	182
M. Suffolk County	183
N. Worcester County	184
TABLE 55.—Number and per cent of divorces granted to husbands and to wives: 1907 to 1931	
TABLE 56.—Divorces granted, number and per cent increase in each five-year period over preceding five-year period, and per cent increase in total population over preceding census: 1905 to 1929	185
TABLE 57.—Comparison of increase in divorces and divorce rates with increase in population: 1905 to 1930	185
TABLE 58.—Divorce rates based on total population and on married population: census years, 1900 to 1925	185
TABLE 59.—Annual average number of divorces in the State and in each county: census years, 1905 to 1925	186
TABLE 60.—Divorces granted for specified causes for 25 years: 1907 to 1931	186
TABLE 61.—Statutory causes of divorce: 1907 to 1931	187
TABLE 62.—Applications for divorce: 1907 to 1931	187
TABLE 63.—Divorces granted, classified by cause and party to which granted: 1931	187
TABLE 64.—Labels for divorce granted and not granted, contested and not contested, classified by party to which granted: 1931	187
TABLE 65.—Number of years libellants were married at time of application for divorce: 1907 to 1931	188

PART II D.

POPULATION STATISTICS.

Introductory	189
Estimated population	189
STATISTICAL TABLE	190
TABLE 66.—Census population of municipalities having over 15,000 inhabitants in 1930: 1905 to 1930	190

APPENDIX.

International classification of causes of death	191-197
1. Detailed International List	191-196
2. Abridged International List	197

LETTER OF SUBMITTAL

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
DIVISION OF VITAL STATISTICS, BOSTON, March 31, 1932.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

I have the honor to submit herewith, as required by chapter 46, section 21, and chapter 208, section 47, of the General Laws, the ninetieth annual report on statistics of births, marriages, divorces, and deaths in Massachusetts, for the calendar year 1931 in two parts: Part I, Mortality Statistics; Part II, Statistics of Births, Marriages, and Divorces. The fact that deaths are reported monthly, while births, marriages, and statistics of divorce are not reportable until March, April and May of the year following that in which the events occur, makes possible the availability of the mortality report earlier than the report of births, marriages, and divorces. Hence the presentation in two parts in one volume.

The editorial review and the method of presentation of the statistical data were prepared by Arthur J. Hassett, State Registrar, in charge of the Division of Vital Statistics. The statistical tables were prepared under the direction of Elizabeth M. Canty, principal statistical clerk of the division. The exhibition of tabular results is restricted to such as are plainly of practical utility within the meaning of the statute by authority of which the tables are prepared.

Respectfully submitted,

FREDERIC W. COOK,
Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Editorial Review of the Vital Statistics of Massachusetts, 1931

BY ARTHUR J. HASSETT, STATE REGISTRAR OF VITAL STATISTICS.

PART I MORTALITY STATISTICS

	PAGE
Introduction	1-17
General mortality	1-4
Death registration	1
Purpose	1
Mortality statistics	1, 2
Source of data	2
Death rates and their comparability	2
Number of deaths and death rates	2, 3
Sex	3
Age	3
Sex and age	3
Marital condition	3
Centenarians	3
Nativity	3, 4
Seasonal distribution of deaths	4
Infant mortality	4, 5
Cause of death	5-8
Sources of error in mortality statistics	5
Principal causes of death	5-8
Deaths investigated by medical examiners	8, 9
Source of data	8
Number of deaths investigated	8
Autopsies	8
Cause of death	8, 9
Statistical tables	18-143

INTRODUCTION.

History.

Death Registration.—Massachusetts was the first colony to recognize the importance of the registration of vital statistics and Chapter 3 of the Acts of 1639 of the Laws of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts Bay required the registration of births, marriages and deaths, and in 1840 it was required by statute that copies should be filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. In 1880 the registration area for deaths recognized by the United States Bureau of the Census, i.e., the States, and cities in other States, effectively enforcing satisfactory registration laws of all deaths registered, included but two States, Massachusetts and New Jersey, the District of Columbia, and a number of cities in non-registration States.

During the period 1841 to 1931, inclusive, 3,396,973 deaths have been reported, recorded, and tabulated in the Division of Vital Statistics.

These records are not only on file in the cities and towns in which they occurred, and in the city and town given as the residence of the deceased at the time of death, but also at the State House.

Purpose.—Death registration often gives the first intimation of pestilential disease, permitting health officers to attack epidemics in their incipiency. It serves as evidence in the inheritance of property and in the settlement of life insurance. It is useful in preventing crime through the restriction placed upon the disposal of dead human bodies, and insures a permanent and uniform record of the death of each individual for both sentimental and legal reasons.

Mortality Statistics.—Mortality statistics, or statistics of deaths, are useful