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The Falling Off of the Marriage Market

ALARMING REPORT

—Summers in the Cleveland *News*

WHAT will the New Deal do for the marriage market?

It is to be hoped that it will do something, editors say, as they sadly contemplate the figures showing that American marriages dropped to an all-time low in 1932. Of course, the depression is blamed.

"For the first time in twenty-one years," says the Associated Press, "the number fell below the million mark. There were only 981,759 in the year, a 7.5 per cent decrease from the year before."

"The one sustaining thought," comments the Toledo *Blade*, "is that romance lives and love will survive till the cloudless day comes."

Another bit of cheer is found by editors in the news that in 1932 the divorce rate also declined, even more than the marriage rate. Telling us more about these statistics, the Washington correspondent of the New York *Times* writes:

"the Wedding Slump"

"Prior to 1931, the lowest marriage rate since 1867 occurred in 1917, when large numbers of the male population were in war service.

"Marriages performed throughout the United States in 1932 numbered 981,759, or 79,032 fewer than for the preceding year, the preliminary figures show.

"Thus while financial stringency reduced the marriages by 7½ per cent. in 1932, compared with 5.9 per cent. in 1931, the toll on divorce was even more noticeable. Divorces fell by 12.7 per cent. under 1931, when they numbered 183,664, to 160,329.

"This compared with a reduction of 4.1 per cent. in the number granted from 1930 to 1931, while the 3,900 marriages annulled during 1932 compared with 4,339 for the preceding year."

But "cold figures do not tell the story when they say that the ratio of marriages to the population fell to its lowest in 1932," says the Brooklyn *Eagle*. "This signifies the thwarting of many fond plans and bright hopes. It brings the conditions of that year much nearer our sympathies than does the price of hogs or the scarcity of tax collections.

"It probably signifies that many young people anxious to marry were standing by their relatives in need and putting off their own happiness. Quite possibly it means also that many who would have met and drifted together toward matrimony, or even hastened in that direction, never met at all, but stayed home and economized."