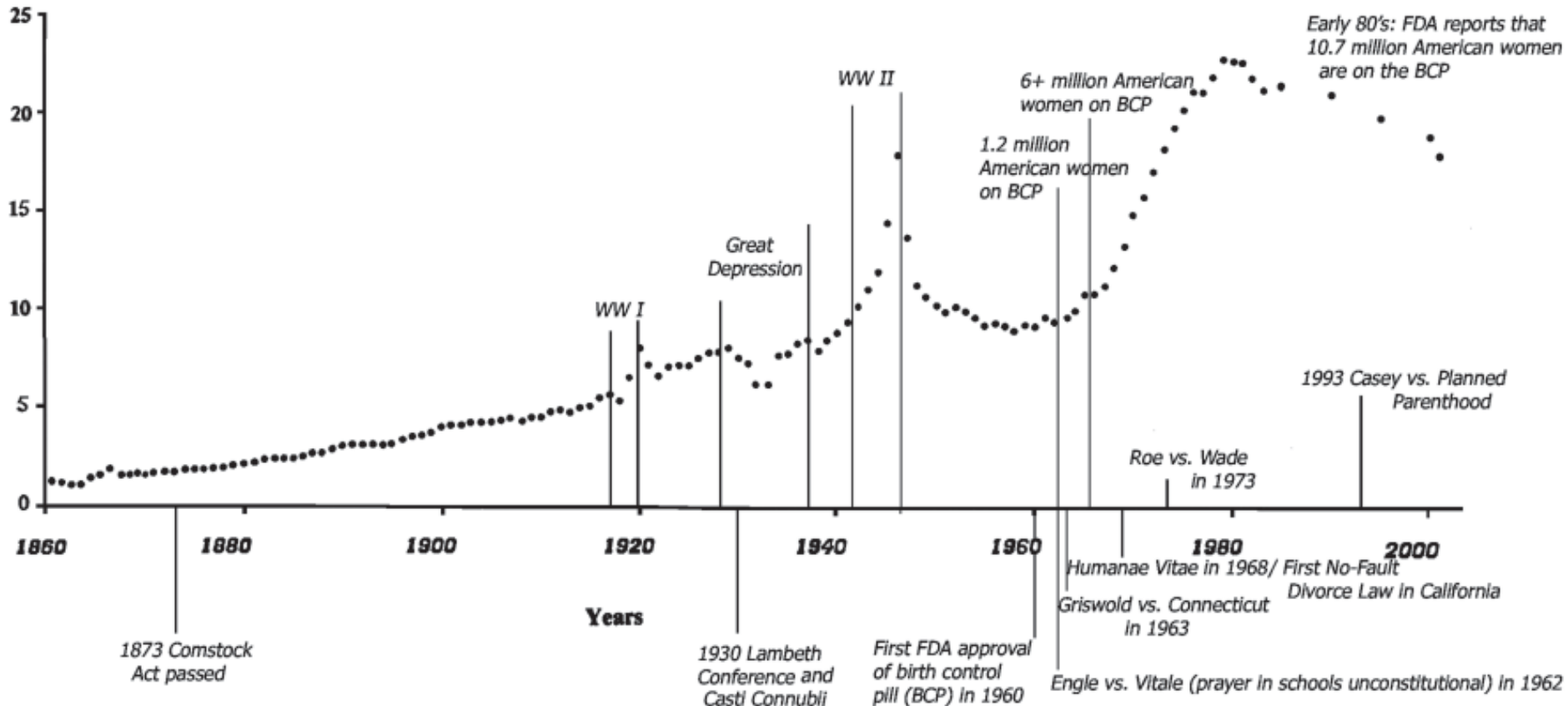


CONTRACEPTION AND DIVORCE: IS THERE A CONNECTION?

U.S. Divorce Rate 1880-2001

(per 1000 married women 15 and older)

Divorce Rate



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Year	Event	Description
1873	The Comstock Act	“The Comstock Act defined contraceptives as obscene...Congress outlawed the dissemination through the mail or across state lines of any ‘article of an immoral nature, or any drug or medicine, or any article whatever for the prevention of conception’” (Tone, 5).
1879		Connecticut criminalizes actual use of contraception (Tone, 24).
1916	First birth control clinic	Margaret Sanger and her sister Ethel Byrne served 488 women over a period of ten days before their arrest.
~1917-1918	World War I	- Chemical prophylactic packets distributed in Army and Navy. United States was only Allied force to not distribute condoms to its troops (Tone, 102). - Condoms were easily accessible in Europe and were sold “unofficially” in many government operated American canteens. - Many women first learned about condoms from their husbands who had served in the war (Tone, 105). - VD (venereal disease) crisis during war reclassifies sex as a legitimate subject of scientific and social research, making sexual behavior a matter of public welfare.
1918	Condoms legalized for disease prevention	“After 1918, the condom industry flourished as skins and rubbers marked ‘for the prevention of disease only’ became familiar sights in neighborhood drugstores and a host of male commercial venues...” (Tone, 108).
1923	First permanent birth control clinic	“Under the auspices of protecting women from life-threatening pregnancies, a clinic doctor prescribed contraceptives, usually diaphragms...”
~1929-~1937	Great Depression	Contraception becomes attractive as birth control activists exploit concerns about growing welfare costs.
1930	Anglican Church’s Lambeth Conference	First approval by a major Christian denomination of the use of contraception in marriage for serious reasons.
	Casti Connubii issued	Pope Pius XI issues Church encyclical on Christian marriage, condemning contraception.
1938	First report on birth control business by Fortune magazine	- Contraceptive industry’s annual sales exceed \$250 million. - 400 known businesses making contraceptives. - Julius Schmid pronounced undisputed king of the American condom empire makes \$900,000/year (Tone, 187).
~1941-1945	World War II	“During World War II...military units were authorized to distribute, free of charge, condom kits purchased with military funds. Military demand for rubbers gave the American condom industry its biggest boost yet, doubling production capacity between 1939 and 1946.” (Tone, 108).
1960	FDA approves Enovid	The requisite field tests are performed demonstrating the effectiveness of the Pill at lower doses, the FDA approves the drug for contraceptive use at 2.5 and 5 milligrams. The pharmaceutical industry awakens to the huge market for effective contraception, and 13 major drug companies, nine of them American, work to develop new birth control methods and their own versions of the Pill.
1962	Engle v. Vitale	Supreme Court decides that prayer in school is illegal. 1.2 million American women are on the Pill.
1965	Griswold v. Connecticut	U.S. Supreme Court rules Connecticut’s law prohibiting birth control for married couples violates a newly defined right of privacy found in the penumbra of the Constitution. Over 6 million American women are on the Pill.
1968	Humanae Vitae issued	Pope Paul VI confirms Church’s ban on contraception and encourages the use of Natural Family Planning.
1969	First No-Fault Divorce Law	Governor Ronald Reagan signs the Family Law Act of 1969 in California.
1970	Title X signed into law	Program provides contraceptive and related reproductive health care services to low-income women.
1972	Eisenstadt v. Baird	Guarantees unmarried couples’ right to use contraception.
1973	Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton	U.S. Supreme Court strikes down all laws criminalizing abortion, in all states, throughout the pregnancy, on the basis of the same “right to privacy” used in Griswold v. Connecticut..
1980s		10.7 million American women are on the Pill.
1992	Planned Parenthood v. Casey	Supreme Court decision confirming Roe v. Wade states, “ in some critical respects the abortion decision is of the same character as the decision to use contraception...for two decades (since Roe v. Wade) of economic and social developments, people have organized intimate relationships and made choices that define their views of themselves and their places in society, in reliance on the availability of abortion in the event that contraception should fail.”

SOURCES:

1. Tone, Andrea. *Devices & Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America*. Hill and Wang: New York, 2001.
2. Original Chart from “Why Did the U.S. Divorce Rate Double in a Decade” by Robert T. Michael in *Research in Population Economics*, Volume 6, pages 376-399, 1988.
3. Statistics for 1860 -1920 from P.H. Jacobson (1959) *Marriage and Divorce*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
4. Statistics for 1920-1982 from *Vital and Health Statistics*.
5. Statistics for 1985-2001 (every 5 years plus 2001) from Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2001, page 87, table 117; National Vital Statistics Reports, August 22, 2001; California Current Population Survey Report: 2000, table 3, March 2001; Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2002, page 88, table 11 and calculations by the National Marriage Project for the US less Colorado, California, Indiana, and Louisiana using the US Census Bureau tables from the American Community Surveys, 2002.