A Demographic Exploration of Frederick County
Census 2000
A History of Frederick County Women

Welcome to the March, 2005 edition of "A Demographic Exploration of Frederick County." In honor of National Women's History Month, this month's article focuses on the changing face of Women in Frederick County. Using the responses from the US Census, these attributes will be examined in order to create "A Demographic Exploration of Frederick County." For further information on the demographics and other statistics of Frederick County, please visit http://www.co.frederick.md.us/planning/Demographics/myweb/DemoHome.htm

Since at least 1930, females have always out numbered males in Frederick County. Females have composed between 50.3% and 51.1% of the total Frederick population. During the1980 Census, the County had the largest percentage (51.1%) of female population since 1930. This high of female ratio is probably due to Hood College, which until recently was an all girls school. In 1980, there was a spike in the number of females continuing their education past High School; this coincides with the increased percentage of women in the County. Currently there are 99,135 females living throughout the County, with the largest percentage of women living in the census tract of Hood College (Figure 1).

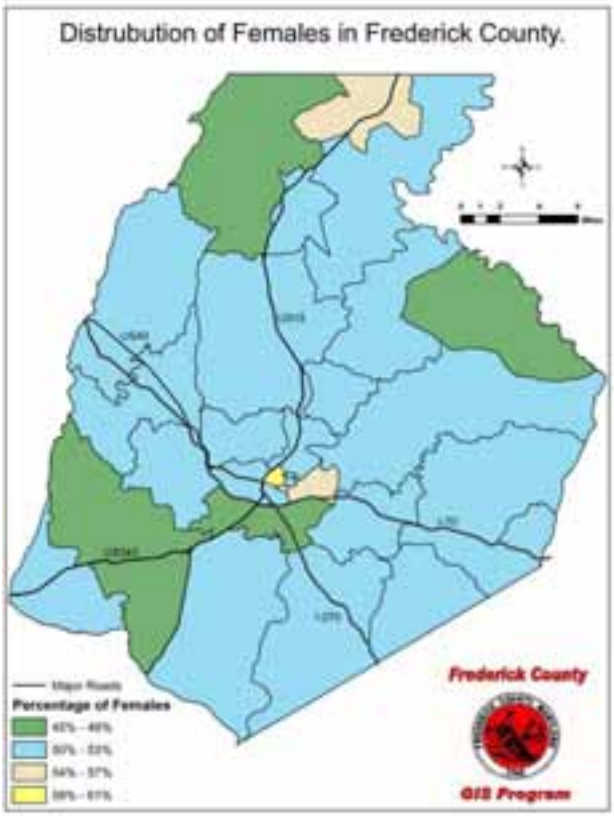

Figure 1.

Since 1970, there are fewer women, 15 years and over, that have never been married and more women that are divorced. Within the past 30 years, the marriage rate has consistently declined as the percentage of single females has continued to grow. The composition of single females has some interesting characteristics. More females are getting married but the marriages are not lasting, hence the decline in never married women and the rise in divorced females. In 2000, 8.5% of the female population over 15 years old has been divorced, compared to the 1970 figure of 2.5%. This is a significant gain in the divorced female population within the past 30 years. In 1970, 1 in every 15 single women were divorced, in 2000 1 in every 5 women were (Figure 2).

Marital Status For Frederick County Females 15 Years and Older 1970 - 2000				
	1970	**1980**	**1990**	**2000**
Total Females	32,011 (100%)	45,092 (100%)	59,565 (100%)	77,048 (100%)
Single (% of Total)	12,448 (38.9%)	17,981 (39.9%)	24,191 (40.6%)	30,824 (40.0%)
Never Married (% of Single)	7,309 (58.7%)	10,033 (55.8%)	12,710 (52.5%)	15,965 (51.8%)
Separated (% of Single)	535 (4.3%)	1,126 (6.3%)	1,643 (6.8%)	1,843 (6.0%)
Widowed (% of Single)	3,789 (30.4%)	4,699 (26.1%)	5,613 (23.2%)	6,463 (21.0%)
Divorced (% of Single)	815 (6.5%)	2,123 (11.8%)	4,225 (17.5%)	6,553 (21.3%)
Married (% of Total)	19,563 (61.1%)	27,111 (60.1%)	35,374 (59.4%)	42,596 (55.3%)

Figure 2.

At least since 1940, more and more women in Frederick County are entering the work place. In 1940, 22% of women over 14 years old were working, this rose to 27% in 1950. In 1970, the definition of Labor Force changed from people over 14 years old to people over 16 years old. Even with this redefining of the Labor Force, women continue to have an ever-increasing presence in the work place. In 1970, 42% of women were working, 1980 54%, in 1990 64%, and in 2000 66% of women in the County were in the Labor Force. In 2000, the top three occupations of Frederick County women were 1. Management, Professional, and Related Occupations; including jobs such as financial specialists, managerial positions, and business operations. 2. Sales and Office Occupations, including administrative support and sales positions. 3. Professional and Related Occupations, such as computer and mathematical fields, architecture, surveyors, drafters, mapping technicians, and engineers. Coinciding with the national trend, men

make more money then women in Frederick County, sometimes this difference in earnings is staggering (Figure 3).

	Female	Male
Total Population with Earnings	53,616	60,687
Under $15,000	17,001 (32%)	10,181 (17%)
$15,000 - $29,999	17,200 (32%)	12,225 (20%)
$30,000 - $44,999	11,350 (21%)	14,501 (24%)
$45,000 and Over	8,065 (15%)	23,780 (39%)
Median Earnings	$22,951	$37,352

Figure 3.

In 2000, 1 every 9 families in Frederick County were headed by women. Of the 11% of Frederick County families headed by women, 61% have children under the age of 18. Throughout the County, there were 1,530 families that were below poverty level in 1999. Women, with children under the age of 18, head 51% of the families below poverty level. Even though the number of families that were below poverty level has decreased within the past 20 years, the number of female-headed families below poverty level has increased (Figure 4). Families are defined in the below table as a householder with children under the age of 18.

	1979	1989	1999	Change 1979-1999
Total Families	30,251	40,561	52,278	22,027 (72.8%)
Families below poverty level (% of total Families)	1,496 (4.9%)	1,417 (3.5%)	1,530 (2.9%)	34 (2.3%)
Female headed families below poverty level (% of families below poverty level)	553 (37.0%)	708 (50.0%)	776 (50.7%)	223 (40.3%)

Figure 4.

In Frederick County the influence of women has increasingly been felt since 1930. The ratio of men to women has been growing in the favor of women for the past 70 years. The face of Frederick County's women population has been changing. Many of the County's women have been increasing their divorce rate and have become to head more households within the past 30 years. They are increasing their participation in the workforce and receiving more education. However, with this increased participation in the labor force, they are not making as much money as men, and with a growing number of single mothers, more female-headed families are below the poverty level. With these changing demographics, the County's female population has an increasingly distinct and growing presence throughout the communities of Frederick.