

Interracial Births in Baltimore, 1950-1964

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DURING the course of routine, periodic examinations of birth certificates for accuracy and completeness, the Bureau of Vital Records in the Baltimore City Health Department has observed an increasing number of interracial births in Baltimore from year to year over the past decade. Although such births do not occur in large numbers, they are indicative of a contemporary social phenomenon which is taking place in numerous U.S. urban areas.

In Baltimore this social phenomenon is manifested by children born to white and Negro parents, white and Filipino parents, and white and oriental parents. These children represent the legitimate issue of interracial marriages and, to a lesser extent, the natural offspring of unwed parents.

The bona fide interracial unions are of special interest because Maryland law prohibits the intermarriage of a white person and a Negro to the third generation, a white person and a member of the Malay race, and a Negro to the third generation and a member of the Malay race. (On March 28, 1966, the Maryland House of Delegates defeated a bill previously passed by the State Senate to repeal the 305-year-old law prohibiting white-Negro marriages and the 1935 amendment which broadened the original statute by further prohibiting marriages between whites or Negroes with members of the Malay race.)

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There is no provision in the statute which prohibits Japanese-white, Chinese-white, or Chinese-Negro marriages. Obviously, the marriages prohibited in Maryland were contracted in jurisdictions which have no racial restrictions.

Maryland is 1 of 19 States which have an anti-miscegenation statute, a law prohibiting white-Negro marriages. With the exception of the Union of South Africa, no other country has such a law. The legislation prohibiting the marriage of Malays with white persons or Negroes in Maryland is aimed specifically at Filipinos, who are said to represent many different racial and cultural backgrounds.

Despite this interdiction, resident Filipinos and white women have been intermarrying outside of Maryland with increasing frequency over the past several years. Many of the Filipinos in Baltimore are physicians who have come for postgraduate training in medicine. As for other mixed marriages, white persons and American Indians marry frequently and without any legal restrictions. Also noteworthy are the great numbers of U.S. military personnel who married Chinese, Japanese, and Korean women as well as the numbers of Negro servicemen, particularly those who were stationed in England and Germany, who married white women and subsequently brought their wives to the United States.

This study was undertaken to determine the complete incidence of interracial births in Baltimore from 1950 to 1964 by racial origin, country of birth, ages of parents, occupation of father, and legitimacy status of the child.

When an interracial birth occurs in a Balti-

more hospital, as did all those reported here, the medical records staff doublechecks to assure the accuracy of the registration.

Births and Parentage

A total of 684 resident interracial births occurred in Baltimore during 1950-64. These births resulted from 14 different types of union (table 1). The following births were of principal interest: (a) 176 (26 percent) from white-Negro unions, 102 from unions of Negro fathers and white mothers; (b) 164 (24 percent) from white-oriental unions, 103 from unions of white fathers and oriental mothers; (c) 163 (23 percent) from white-American Indian unions, 80 from unions of white fathers and American Indian mothers; and (d) 102 (15 percent) from white-Filipino unions, 87 from unions of Filipino fathers and white mothers.

The 684 resident interracial births constitute 0.5 percent of the total number of nonwhite births to Baltimore residents during 1950-64. However, interracial births have been increasing periodically (table 2). The largest number occurred between 1960 and 1964, and these

Table 2. Ratio of interracial births to total nonwhite births, Baltimore, 1950-64

Years	Total nonwhite births	Interracial births	
		Number	Rate ¹
1960-64.....	55,499	402	724.3
1955-59.....	51,837	186	358.8
1950-54.....	39,386	96	243.7
Total.....	146,722	684	466.2

¹ Per 100,000 live births.

represent 0.7 percent of the total number of resident nonwhite births during the same period.

The most frequent types of union from which interracial births stem are shown in table 3. White fathers and white mothers account for the largest number during 1950-64, followed by Negro fathers and oriental mothers. There were more Filipino fathers than oriental or American Indian fathers and more oriental mothers than Negro, Filipino, or American Indian mothers.

Table 1. Resident interracial births, by race of parents, Baltimore, 1950-64

Year	F white, M American Indian	F white, M Filipino	F white, M Negro	F white, M oriental	F Negro, M American Indian	F Negro, M Filipino	F Negro, M oriental	F Negro, M white	F Filipino, M Negro	F Filipino, M white	F oriental, M Negro	F oriental, M white	F American Indian, M Negro	F American Indian, M white	Total
Total.....	80	15	74	103	6	17	32	102	12	87	6	61	6	83	684
1964.....	11	1	11	4	2	2	1	15	0	19	1	3	3	10	83
1963.....	7	0	7	11	0	0	3	13	1	15	1	9	1	13	81
1962.....	13	1	10	8	2	2	2	12	0	14	0	8	0	14	86
1961.....	11	4	9	9	2	1	3	13	0	13	1	6	0	10	82
1960.....	10	4	4	12	0	1	4	12	1	7	0	6	0	9	70
1959.....	8	0	7	15	0	0	4	11	1	4	0	5	0	6	61
1958.....	6	1	5	8	0	1	1	5	0	0	0	9	0	6	42
1957.....	6	1	4	9	0	1	3	6	2	4	0	5	0	0	41
1956.....	1	1	1	6	0	0	2	5	1	2	0	0	0	4	23
1955.....	0	1	3	5	0	0	2	0	1	3	1	1	0	2	19
1954.....	4	0	3	5	0	2	2	5	1	1	0	1	0	3	27
1953.....	2	0	4	3	0	0	2	2	1	2	0	2	1	2	21
1952.....	0	0	2	5	0	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	21
1951.....	1	1	2	2	0	3	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	13
1950.....	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	1	1	2	0	3	0	1	14

NOTE: F indicates father, M indicates mother.

As indicated by the rates of interracial births (table 3), the most productive period for white fathers was 1955-59; for Negro and oriental fathers, 1950-54; and for Filipino and American Indian fathers, 1960-64. For white and American Indian mothers the peak period was 1960-64; for Negro and Filipino mothers, 1950-54; and for oriental mothers, 1955-59.

Illegitimacy

The birth certificate form used in Baltimore contains no reference to legitimacy status of a child in either the open or the confidential section. To ascertain legitimacy status, the "inferential method" is used. This method is based on association between specific items stated on the birth certificate: the surname of the child, surname of the father, maiden name of the mother, and legal name of the mother as it

appears in the confidential medical section under "Mother's Name and Address for Mailing Registration Notification." Accordingly, it was determined that 75 interracial illegitimate children were born in Baltimore during the study period.

As shown in table 4, the greatest percentages of these births resulted from unions involving Negroes, followed by American Indians and whites. Of a total of 202 interracial births involving an oriental parent, 4 were illegitimate.

A comparison of illegitimacy rates for resident interracial births with resident citywide nonwhite births revealed that the nonwhite illegitimate births were more than three times greater than the interracial illegitimate births during 1950-59 and slightly lower during both the entire study period and 1960-64.

A review of the data on the birth certificates of the 75 illegitimate interracial children re-

Table 3. Percentage of resident interracial births, by race of parents, Baltimore, 1950-64

Race	1950-64 (N=684)		1960-64 (N=402)		1955-59 (N=186)		1950-54 (N=96)	
	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers
White.....	39.7	48.6	36.6	55.0	47.3	42.0	38.5	35.4
Negro.....	23.0	14.4	22.4	12.4	22.0	14.0	27.0	22.9
Filipino.....	14.5	4.7	17.4	4.0	9.7	3.2	11.5	10.4
Oriental.....	9.8	19.7	8.7	14.2	11.3	29.5	11.5	24.0
American Indian.....	13.0	12.6	14.9	14.4	9.7	11.3	11.5	7.3

NOTE: N=number of interracial births.

Table 4. Percentage of illegitimate births among resident interracial births, by race of parents, Baltimore, 1950-64

Race	1950-64	1960-64	1955-59	1950-54
<i>Fathers</i>				
White.....	11.4 (272)	10.9 (147)	11.4 (88)	13.5 (37)
Negro.....	15.3 (157)	21.1 (90)	7.3 (41)	7.7 (26)
Filipino.....	5.1 (99)	5.7 (70)	5.6 (18)	0 (11)
Oriental.....	4.5 (67)	29.0 (35)	4.8 (21)	9.1 (11)
American Indian.....	13.5 (89)	16.7 (60)	5.6 (18)	11.1 (11)
<i>Mothers</i>				
White.....	11.4 (333)	14.0 (221)	6.4 (78)	6.0 (34)
Negro.....	23.4 (98)	18.0 (50)	30.7 (26)	27.2 (22)
Filipino.....	0 (32)	0 (16)	0 (6)	0 (10)
Oriental.....	.7 (135)	0 (57)	0 (55)	4.3 (23)
American Indian.....	15.1 (86)	17.2 (58)	14.3 (21)	0 (7)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses are the total numbers of resident interracial births.

vealed the following race distribution of the natural parents.

Race	Fathers	Mothers
White.....	31	38
Negro.....	24	23
American Indian.....	12	13
Filipino.....	5	0
Oriental.....	3	1

Of the white, Negro, and American Indian parents, 27 mothers and 27 fathers were native-born Marylanders, 27 fathers and 38 mothers were southerners, 4 fathers and 9 mothers were born in other continental States, 9 fathers came from Latin American countries, and 1 mother came from Europe.

Ages of the natural parents of the illegitimate interracial children appeared on 69 of the birth certificates; 6 showed parents of the same age, 50 showed fathers older than mothers; and 13 showed mothers older than fathers. By age groups, 22 of the mothers were 15-19 years; 22 mothers, 20-24 years; and 25 mothers, 25-39 years.

Almost half of the fathers were laborers, 12 were members of the Armed Forces or merchant marine, 8 were professionals or students, 7 were proprietors, and 3 were clerks.

Characteristics of Parents

The greatest number of fathers of interracial children were 30 to 39 years of age, and the greatest number of mothers were aged 20 to 24 years. The second largest group, both fathers and mothers, ranged in age from 25 to 29 years, and the third largest consisted of fathers from 20 to 24 years and mothers from 30 to 39 years of age. One hundred fathers and 24 mothers were under 20 years of age; 60 fathers and 11 mothers were 40 and older.

A comparison of age differences among the parents showed: (a) 509 or 74 percent of the fathers were older than their mates—388 were up to 10 years older and 121 were more than 10 years older, (b) 118 or 17 percent of the mothers were older than their mates, and (c) 51 or 7 percent of the parents were in the same age group. The age of either parent was not stated on six of the birth certificates.

The following data on selected characteristics of parents were derived from the personal par-

ticulars stated on the birth certificates of their biracial offspring.

White-Negro unions. Despite the statutory prohibition in Maryland of unions between white and Negro persons, intermixture of these races continues, as evidenced by the incidence of resident births resulting from these unions.

- 74 or 10 percent of all the interracial births involved white fathers and Negro mothers; 19 or 25.7 percent of these births were illegitimate.

- 102 or 14 percent of all interracial births involved Negro fathers and white mothers; 22 or 21.6 percent of these births were illegitimate.

- 54 of the white fathers were older than their Negro mates, 15 Negro mothers were older than their white mates, and 5 white fathers and their Negro mates were the same age.

- 73 Negro fathers were older than their white mates, 20 white mothers were older than their Negro mates, and 5 Negro fathers and their white mates were the same age. Ages of parents were not stated on four birth records.

As shown in table 5, a majority of the white and Negro parents were born in the United States. However, a sizable number of white mothers were born in Germany.

The occupations of the white and Negro fathers are listed below; those for two white fathers and four Negro fathers were not stated.

Occupation	White	Negro
Physicians.....	3	1
Other professionals.....	7	10
Managers or proprietors.....	8	7
Clerical workers.....	4	4
Armed Forces.....	5	9
Merchant marine.....	4	2
Students.....	3	4
Service workers, laborers, craftsmen.....	38	61

White-Filipino and Negro-Filipino unions. Although the Filipino is essentially Malayan, he is said to be a mixture of Chinese, Spanish, and other European races and to represent numerous cultural backgrounds. Maryland law prohibits marriage between whites and Filipinos and Negroes and Filipinos; yet, the data indicate that these unions occur frequently in Baltimore.

Of 87 Filipino fathers whose mates were white, 36 were in the Armed Forces, 31 were physicians, 4 were other professionals, 10 were

Table 5. Birthplace of white and Negro parents of biracial children born in Baltimore, 1950-64

Birthplace	White		Negro	
	Fa-thers	Moth-ers	Fa-thers	Moth-ers
United States:				
Maryland.....	19	27	50	35
Southern States.....	8	21	40	30
Other States.....	20	24	11	8
Caribbean and Latin America.....	19	3	0	1
Europe:				
Germany.....	3	24	0	0
Other countries.....	2	3	0	0
India.....	2	0	1	0
Philippines.....	1	0	0	0
Total.....	74	102	102	74

merchant seamen, and 6 were proprietors, clerks, or sales or service workers.

Fifteen white fathers had Filipino mates, and 12 Filipino fathers had Negro mates. None of the Filipino mothers bore illegitimate children, but four children born to white mothers and Filipino fathers and one child born to a Negro mother and a Filipino father were illegitimate.

The mates of Filipino mothers were usually older; the mother was seldom older than the father and both parents were seldom the same age.

Of the white mothers who had Filipino mates, 61 were Marylanders, 10 were southerners, 14 were natives of other States, 1 was Latin American, and 1 was European.

White-oriental and Negro-oriental unions. Of the 164 births resulting from white-oriental unions, 103 fathers and 61 mothers were white. Only one child was illegitimate, and the father was white.

The majority of the white fathers were less than 5 years older than their oriental mates, but the majority of the oriental fathers were up to 19 years older than their white mates. However, almost one-fourth of the oriental mothers were less than 5 years older than their white mates. Sixteen children from white-oriental unions had parents of the same age.

The 61 oriental mates of white mothers included 18 physicians, 11 other professionals, 17

service workers, 7 proprietors, 2 soldiers, 2 operatives, 1 clerk, 1 student, 1 laborer, and 1 craftsman.

Of the 38 births resulting from Negro-oriental unions, 33 fathers and 5 mothers were Negro. Three of the children were illegitimate; two had oriental fathers and Negro mothers and one had a Negro father and oriental mother.

Most of the Negro fathers were less than 5 years older than their oriental mates, and all the oriental fathers were older than their Negro mates.

The five oriental mates of Negro mothers were a professional, a proprietor, a soldier, a student, and a service worker.

White-American Indian and Negro-American Indian unions. A total of 175 or 25 percent of all the interracial births involved an American Indian parent; 80 fathers and 83 mothers were white, 6 fathers and 6 mothers were Negro.

Twelve children born to white fathers and American Indian mothers and 11 children born to American Indian fathers and white mothers were illegitimate. One illegitimate child resulted from each of the Negro-American Indian unions.

In the white and American Indian unions, the fathers were older than their mates; in the Negro and American Indian Unions, twice as many American Indian fathers than Negro fathers were older than their mates.

The majority of the American Indian men and women were natives of the Carolinas, Tennessee, and Virginia.

The American Indian fathers were primarily laborers; a few were craftsmen or professionals. The same situation was true for the white and Negro mates of American Indian mothers.

Summary

An analysis of the birth certificates registered during 1950 to 1964 with the Bureau of Vital Records of the Baltimore City Health Department revealed a total of 684 resident interracial births. These births represent only a small number when compared with the total number of resident births during the 15-year period. However, beginning in 1960, a gradual upward trend has been observed in the numbers of children born of white-Negro unions, white-Filipino unions, and white-oriental unions.