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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

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SPECIAL REPORTS

# MORTALITY STATISTICS

1900 TO 1904



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WASHINGTON  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

1906

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# CONTENTS.

	Page.
Letter of transmittal.....	v
Introduction.....	ix-xvii
Movement for uniform registration laws, forms, and statistics.....	ix
Extent and composition of the registration area.....	xiv
The standard certificate of death.....	xiv
Treatment of the returns.....	xvi
Scope of the reports.....	xvi
Summary of results.....	xvii-xx
Population statistics.....	xvii
General death rates.....	xviii
Death rates in certain countries.....	xviii
Death rates in registration areas.....	xix
Death rates in registration states.....	xix
Urban and rural mortality.....	xix
Percentage of population and death rates in southern cities.....	xx
Causes of death.....	xx-lviii
Increase or decrease in death rates by each class of causes.....	xx
Death rates from principal diseases.....	xx
General diseases.....	xxi
Typhoid fever.....	xxi
Malarial fever.....	xxiii
Smallpox.....	xxv
Measles.....	xxvi
Scarlet fever.....	xxvii
Whooping cough.....	xxviii
Diphtheria and croup.....	xxx
Influenza.....	xxxii
Dysentery.....	xxxiii
Tuberculosis.....	xxxiv
Tuberculosis of the lungs.....	xxxiv
Venereal diseases.....	xxxvii
Cancer.....	xxxvii
Rheumatism.....	xl
Diabetes.....	xli
Alcoholism.....	xli
Diseases of the nervous system.....	xlii
Meningitis.....	xlii
Apoplexy and paralysis.....	xliv
Diseases of the circulatory system.....	xlv
Heart disease.....	xlvi
Diseases of the respiratory system.....	xlvi
Bronchitis.....	xlvii
Pneumonia.....	xlvii
Diseases of the digestive system.....	xlvi
Diarrhea and enteritis.....	l
Cirrhosis of the liver.....	lii
Peritonitis.....	lii
Appendicitis.....	liii
Diseases of the genito-urinary system.....	liii
Bright's disease and nephritis.....	liv
Violence.....	lv

## SUMMARY AND RATE TABLES.

Table I.—Population of registration areas: 1900 to 1904.....	lxi
Table II.—Death rates in registration cities: 1900 to 1904.....	lxv
Table III.—Number of deaths and death rates per 100,000 of population, in the registration area, from each disease and class of diseases: 1900 to 1904.....	lxviii

Table IV.—Death rates per 100,000 of population in each registration area, from certain principal diseases and classes of diseases: 1900 to 1904.....	LXXII
Table V.—Number of deaths and death rates per 100,000 of population in the main subdivisions of the registration area, from each specified disease and class of diseases: 1900 to 1904.....	CLVI
Table VI.—Death rates per 100,000 of population in cities and rural districts of the registration states, from each disease and class of diseases: 1900 to 1904.....	CLXVI
Table VII.—Number of deaths in each month in the registration area, from certain specified causes: 1900 to 1904.....	CXCIV
Table VIII.—Proportion of deaths in each month in the registration area, from certain specified causes: 1900 to 1904.....	CXCVII
Table IX.—Number of deaths in each age group in the registration area, from each specified disease and class of diseases, during the period 1900 to 1904.....	CC
Table X.—Proportion of deaths in each age group in the registration area, from each specified disease and class of diseases, during the period 1900 to 1904.....	CCII

## GENERAL TABLES.

## 1900.

Table 1.—Deaths in registration areas, by color, general nativity, parent nativity, and month.....	4
Table 2.—Deaths in registration areas, at each age.....	22
Table 3.—Deaths in registration areas, from certain principal diseases and classes of diseases.....	40
Table 4.—Deaths in registration areas, at each age, by sex, color, general nativity, and parent nativity.....	58
Table 5.—Deaths in registration areas, from each disease and class of diseases.....	76
Table 6.—Deaths in the registration area, from each specified disease and class of diseases, by sex and age.....	82
Table 7.—Deaths in registration states, from each specified disease and class of diseases, by age.....	90
Table 8.—Deaths in cities of 100,000 population or over, at each specified age, from certain causes.....	112
Table 9.—Deaths in registration areas, from certain specified causes, in each month, by certain divisions of age.....	154

## 1901.

Table 1.—Deaths in registration areas, by color, general nativity, parent nativity, and month.....	162
Table 2.—Deaths in registration areas, at each age.....	180
Table 3.—Deaths in registration areas, from certain principal diseases and classes of diseases.....	198
Table 4.—Deaths in registration areas, at each age, by sex, color, general nativity, and parent nativity.....	216
Table 5.—Deaths in registration areas, from each disease and class of diseases.....	234
Table 6.—Deaths in the registration area, from each specified disease and class of diseases, by sex and age.....	240
Table 7.—Deaths in registration states, from each specified disease and class of diseases, by age.....	248
Table 8.—Deaths in cities of 100,000 population or over, at each specified age, from certain causes.....	270
Table 9.—Deaths in registration areas, from certain specified causes, in each month, by certain divisions of age.....	312

## 1902.

Table 1.—Deaths in registration areas, by color, general nativity, parent nativity, and month.....	320
Table 2.—Deaths in registration areas, at each age.....	338
Table 3.—Deaths in registration areas, from certain principal diseases and classes of diseases.....	356
Table 4.—Deaths in registration areas, at each age, by sex, color, general nativity, and parent nativity.....	374
Table 5.—Deaths in registration areas, from each disease and class of diseases.....	392
Table 6.—Deaths in the registration area, from each specified disease and class of diseases, by sex and age.....	398
Table 7.—Deaths in registration states, from each specified disease and class of diseases, by age.....	406
Table 8.—Deaths in cities of 100,000 population or over, at each specified age, from certain causes.....	428
Table 9.—Deaths in registration areas, from certain specified causes, in each month, by certain divisions of age.....	470

## 1903.

Table 1.—Deaths in registration areas, by color, general nativity, parent nativity, and month.....	478
Table 2.—Deaths in registration areas, at each age.....	496
Table 3.—Deaths in registration areas, from certain principal diseases and classes of diseases.....	514
Table 4.—Deaths in registration areas, at each age, by sex, color, general nativity, and parent nativity.....	532
Table 5.—Deaths in registration areas, from each disease and class of diseases.....	550
Table 6.—Deaths in the registration area, from each specified disease and class of diseases, by sex and age.....	556
Table 7.—Deaths in registration states, from each specified disease and class of diseases, by age.....	564
Table 8.—Deaths in cities of 100,000 population or over, at each specified age, from certain causes.....	586
Table 9.—Deaths in registration areas, from certain specified causes, in each month, by certain divisions of age.....	628

## 1904.

Table 1.—Deaths in registration areas, by color, general nativity, parent nativity, and month.....	636
Table 2.—Deaths in registration areas, at each age.....	654
Table 3.—Deaths in registration areas, from certain principal diseases and classes of diseases.....	672
Table 4.—Deaths in registration areas, at each age, by sex, color, general nativity, and parent nativity.....	690
Table 5.—Deaths in registration areas, from each disease and class of diseases.....	708
Table 6.—Deaths in the registration area, from each specified disease and class of diseases, by sex and age.....	714
Table 7.—Deaths in registration states, from each specified disease and class of diseases, by age.....	722
Table 8.—Deaths in cities of 100,000 population or over, at each specified age, from certain causes.....	744
Table 9.—Deaths in registration areas, from certain specified causes, in each month, by certain divisions of age.....	786

## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR,  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS,  
Washington, D. C., May 4, 1906.

SIR:

I have the honor to transmit herewith a report presenting mortality statistics of registration states and cities, compiled under authority of section 8 of the act of Congress of March 6, 1902, which provides for the annual collection of these statistics.

This report covers the five calendar years 1900 to 1904. The complete series of general tables adopted is given for each year, separately, but in the analytical tables and the text relating thereto the results are brought together.

The statistics have been compiled in accordance with the International Classification of Causes of Death, which was adopted by the Bureau of the Census as a feature of the movement for the extension of the registration area and the improvement of the mortality data available for statistical purposes. It is gratifying to note that the "standard certificate of death," which was recommended by this Bureau, has been generally adopted by registration officials, and its use has resulted in greater uniformity in the details recorded and greater precision in the statement of causes of death—the two factors upon which accurate classification depends.

A number of states recently have enacted adequate laws providing for the systematic registration of births and deaths, in the formulation and application of which this Bureau has assisted the local authorities in every way possible. As soon as it is demonstrated that the systems thus introduced are being successfully administered, the registration area will be largely increased. There can be no accurate and complete vital statistics for the United States until adequate registration laws are enacted and effectively enforced in every state.

The report herewith submitted was prepared under the supervision of the late William A. King, chief statistician for vital statistics. Shortly after completing the text and tables of this report, Mr. King was taken ill, and he died on April 27. It seems proper that a brief sketch of his official services should be incorporated in the letter transmitting the volume which represents his last and in some respects his best work in the service of the Census.

Mr. King first became associated with census work at the Tenth Census. He returned to it at the organization of the Eleventh Census, and remained in this branch of public service from that time until his death, or almost seventeen years—probably the longest term of continuous service in this field of Government work. At the Eleventh Census Mr. King worked in close association with Dr. John S. Billings, obtaining a thorough training in the subject of vital statistics. He was the *ad interim* clerk in charge of the census work and records in the period between the disbandment of the Eleventh Census and the organization of the Twelfth, and rendered invaluable service to the committees of both houses of Congress when the act for the taking of the Twelfth and subsequent censuses was under consideration. Immediately upon the organization of the Twelfth Census he was appointed chief statistician for vital statistics, and upon the organization of the permanent Census Office he was reappointed to that position.

Mr. King was the originator of the standard certificate of death now in use in practically all the registration states and cities; and his untiring zeal in the great work of standardizing vital statistics and in extending the registration areas entitles him to a rank among the very foremost of the comparatively few men in this country who have devoted their lives to the development of this important branch of statistical science.

Very respectfully,

  
Director.

Hon. VICTOR H. METCALF,  
Secretary of Commerce and Labor.

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MORTALITY STATISTICS  
1900 TO 1904

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