

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Pottstown crime is down, but it never was high

Major crimes were down 14 percent in 2016 over the previous year, Pottstown Police told The Mercury last week.

But looking over Pottstown crime statistics covering the last 24 years (below), serious crime hasn't changed much. The peak year was 1997, locally, and it is lower now than any time in the 1990s.

Pottstown was like Mayberry in the 1960s. Crime rose significantly in the late 1970s and early 1980s, mirroring national trends, peaking in 1982 before falling over the next 10 years. Then it started rising again, again mirroring national trends, before dropping at the end of the 1990s. It's been marginally up and down ever since.

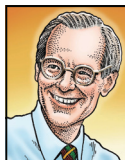
During our 44 years living in downtown Pottstown, my wife and I

have been crime victims only once, on a sunny August afternoon in 1980 when we were away for a few hours. Someone broke down our back door, in full view of a busy parking lot (traumatizing our dog, who subsequently was afraid of loud noises), and stole a cigar box full of pennies. That's it.

And during my years in the borough, I've easily walked more than 50,000 miles along our streets and never been molested.

But people are fascinated with crime and violence. Your local newspaper devotes an enormous amount of space to it. Social media mavens gossip relentlessly about it.

In reality, because of car accidents, it's safer for life and limb to live in Pottstown than the surrounding suburbs. But as I will show Thursday, neither is our greatest cause of unnatural death.



Commentary by
Tom Hylton

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Murder/Manslaughter	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	0
Forcible Rape	22	22	22	37	20	22	25	10
Robbery	48	49	66	63	61	62	78	64
Assault	341	375	328	294	341	350	477	426
Burglary	122	118	179	219	158	125	165	165
Larceny-Theft	753	917	899	960	768	697	785	773
Motor Vehicle Theft	55	57	63	42	36	39	56	73
Arson	4	4	16	7	13	12	10	10
Part I Crimes - Total	1345	1543	1575	1624	1398	1307	1596	1310

	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Murder/Manslaughter	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	2
Forcible Rape	16	20	18	23	25	27	11	19
Robbery	81	83	74	48	62	58	68	57
Assault	426	434	386	381	400	405	384	339
Burglary	181	192	232	124	154	175	183	145
Larceny-Theft	973	917	912	915	1004	853	879	759
Motor Vehicle Theft	90	84	88	104	94	94	93	82
Arson	17	22	26	16	10	15	14	11
Part I Crimes - Total	1636	1755	1737	1613	1750	1643	1633	1414

	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993
Murder/Manslaughter	1	1	0	3	0	1	1	0
Forcible Rape	7	7	10	8	18	7	8	15
Robbery	56	46	47	46	47	48	44	34
Assault	359	471	499	463	495	554	541	591
Burglary	136	194	233	253	231	227	232	310
Larceny-Theft	675	779	838	1041	915	659	703	738
Motor Vehicle Theft	86	83	62	89	90	66	62	86
Arson	4	17	26	8	7	8	11	8
Part I Crimes - Total	1324	1598	1715	1911	1803	1570	1602	1782

As the charts show, crime hasn't changed much over the last 24 years.