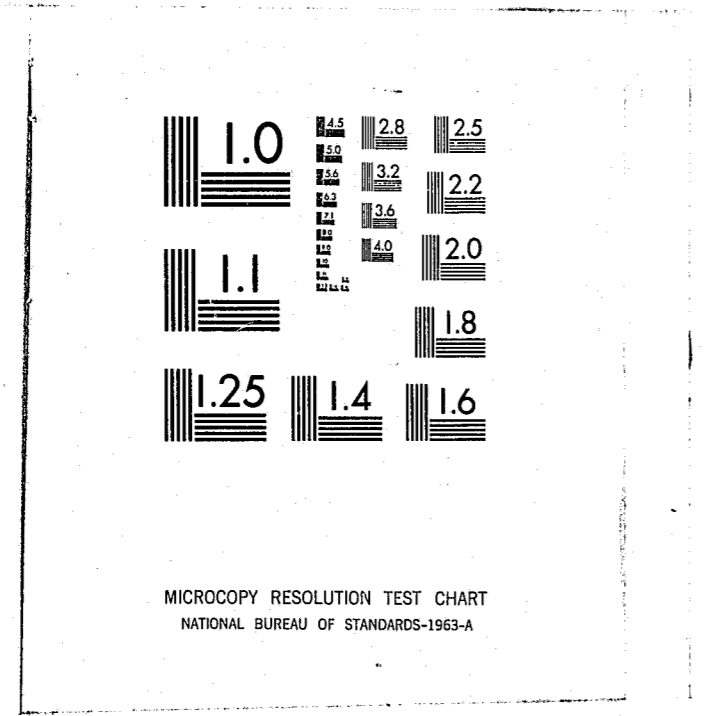


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PLACE OF MASSACHUSETTS IN NATIONAL CRIME RATE STATISTICS FOR 1974

Using national averages as the bases of comparison we find that in 1974 Massachusetts has a lower rate in four of the seven offenses that make up the Crime Index of the Uniform Crime Reports. Last year the Commonwealth was better than the national averages in five of these offenses.

In 1974 in regard to the four crimes against persons the Massachusetts rate was lower for three offenses - murder, forcible rape and aggravated assault - but was slightly higher for robbery.

In regard to the three crimes against property Massachusetts was lower only for the one offense of larceny and was higher than the national averages for burglary and motor vehicle theft. In fact for motor vehicle theft the Commonwealth rate is about three times worse than the national average.

Turning to use of the median rates of the fifty states as the bases of comparison we find that Massachusetts again ranks better than the medians for the same offenses of murder, rape, aggravated assault and larceny and has worse rates for robbery, burglary and motor vehicle theft.

Although usually issued in late August, the "Uniform Crime Reports" for 1974 was not issued by the Federal Bureau of Investigation until mid November 1975. As customary this report published, as one of many tables, the rates (per hundred thousand inhabitants) of every state, of nine regions of the country and of the United States for the following selected crimes: murder (including non-negligent manslaughter), forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft (including both unauthorized use and stealing for resale).

It is the Federal practice to add together the rates of all of these seven crimes to establish the "Crime Index" of an area. This index is alleged to indicate the amount of "serious" crime. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation the seven selected crimes "-- are all serious crimes, either by their very nature or due to the volume in which they occur."¹

We have consistently disagreed with their notion that because an offense occurs in high volume it should be considered a serious crime. If this were really true then many minor traffic law violations should be considered serious crimes. It seems more sensible to regard minor crimes which occur in high volume as creating serious social problems, but not that high volume makes serious crimes out of comparatively minor offenses.

In earlier "Place of Massachusetts ---" annual monographs we have discussed in detail why the Crime Index of the Federal Bureau of Investigation is not a satisfactory measure of serious crime. This is chiefly because this index has always been overweighted by large numbers of comparatively minor offenses. In essence what we object to is giving each minor crime (e.g. each petty larceny) equal weight with each serious crime (e.g. each murder) when the overall Crime

¹ For the full F.B.I. definition of these seven offenses as "serious" crimes see the first paragraph on page ten of the 1974 Uniform Crime Reports.

PLACE OF MASSACHUSETTS IN NATIONAL
CRIME RATE STATISTICS FOR 1974

(Tables show each state and region rank ordered
by its crime rate for each offense.)

Massachusetts Department of Correction

Frank A. Hall
Commissioner

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

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Index is computed - especially as there are about ten times as many crimes against property than the more serious crimes against persons. This results in inflated Crime Indices for states with comparatively few serious, violent crimes like murder and rape but with more numerous minor property crimes. These numerous minor offenses balloon their overall indices to specious high figures.

The 1973 and 1974 Crime Indices have been further distorted because all larcenies are now included under the "larceny" category. In previous years only larcenies of fifty dollars and over were counted. Now the addition of all petty larcenies improperly inflates the overall index with at least double the number of larcenies. Consequently the 1973 and 1974 overall Crime Indices are now an even more inaccurate indication of the amount of serious crime. Therefore there is now more reason than ever to continue our policy of not using the Federal Bureau's overall Crime Index figures.

Since 1967 the Federal Bureau of Investigation has broken down their single total into two additional sub-indices, one limited to the total of the rates of the four violent crimes against persons and the other totalling only the rates of the three less serious property crimes. This practice reduces the inflationary effect of the numerous minor property crimes. However, within the two separated categories the crimes still occur in unequal proportions; for example, about twenty times more robberies than murders occur within the category of crimes against persons. Nevertheless, separating the two totals is much better than lumping together over four million larcenies with less than twenty thousand murders and having each counted equally. Because the division of the overall Crime Index into two sub-indices reduces the "overweighting" problem, we do include these sub-indices in our tables. But not because we really believe these are satisfactory measures of rates of crimes. These indices are listed only because they are the least unsatisfactory nationwide measures of crime rates.

To obtain a comparison of Massachusetts with all other states we rank order all states according to their rates for each crime and according to the total rate for each sub-index. The state with the lowest rate in each column is ranked number one at the top of the list. This procedure, of course, results in the state with highest rate for any offense, or group of offenses, being ranked fiftieth at the bottom of the column.

Table 1 shows the resulting rank order for 1974 of each state for each crime and for each of the two sub-indices, as well as providing the rank order for each of the nine regions² (See Footnote) for each crime and sub-index.

² Region	States Included
1. New England	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
2. Middle Atlantic	New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania
3. East North Central	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin
4. West North Central	Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North and South Dakota
5. South Atlantic	Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North and South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia
6. East South Central	Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee
7. West South Central	Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
8. Mountain	Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
9. Pacific	Alaska, Hawaii, California, Oregon, Washington

Table 2 shows the trends in national average rates for each crime and sub-index for each year from 1968 through 1974.

Table 3 shows the yearly fluctuations in crime rates and rankings of the New England region for the same seven year period.

Table 4 provides similar listings of Massachusetts crime rates and rankings for each crime and sub-index for each year from 1968 through 1974.

Inspection of the regional rankings at the top of Table 1 shows that in regard to the four crimes against persons the New England area has the lowest rates of murder and rape, the second lowest rate for aggravated assault and the third lowest rate for robbery. In regard to the sub-index of the total of all four crimes against persons, New England ranks second best of all nine regions of the country.

In regard to the property crimes New England ranked sixth in burglary, third in larceny and ninth in motor vehicle theft. By looking at the bad rankings in motor vehicle theft of the three more urban states (see the lower section of Table 1) it becomes clear that they pulled New England down to the bottom rank despite the small rate of motor vehicle theft in the three northern more rural states. In regard to the aggregate rate for the three property crimes New England ranked sixth among the nine regions.

The lower section of Table 1 listing state rankings shows that, in regard to the violent crimes against persons, Massachusetts, among the fifty states, is ranked fourteenth in murder, fourteenth in rape, forty-first in robbery and twenty-third in aggravated assault. For the aggregate rate of these four crimes against persons Massachusetts is ranked thirty-second. In regard to the property crimes Massachusetts ranks thirty-ninth in burglary, twentieth in larceny and fiftieth - as usual - in motor vehicle theft. For the aggregate of all three property crimes the Commonwealth ranks fortieth.

Examining Table 2 which shows trends from year to year in national average crime rates, we find that in 1974 (as in 1973) the rates for each individual offense as well as the total rates for crimes against persons and for crimes against property all increased.

Table 3 listing the rates and rankings of the New England region compared to the eight other regions of the country shows that in regard to crimes against persons New England maintained good rankings. Although the rates increased for each offense, because of similar increases in the other regions New England maintained the same good rankings it enjoyed in 1973 for crimes against persons.

In regard to property crimes New England continued its poor record of always ranking ninth in motor vehicle thefts. Although for larceny it continues to be the third best area in the country, for burglary it dropped from fifth to sixth rank. For its aggregate rate for all three property crimes New England continued to rank sixth.

Table 4 compares Massachusetts rates and rankings for 1974 with each of the previous six years. In regard to crimes against the person the total rate increased and the aggregate ranking dropped from thirty-one to thirty-two. The rate of murder remained the same at 4.4 per hundred thousand but the ranking climbed from fifteenth to fourteenth. The rate of rape decreased to cause a ranking climb from eighteenth to fourteenth. The rate of robbery increased but the ranking

TABLE 2 CRIME RATES of the UNITED STATES 1968 through 1974

AREA and YEAR	TOTAL CRIMES vs PERSONS		MURDER		RAPE		ROBBERY		AGGRAVATED ASSAULT		TOTAL CRIMES vs PROPERTY		BURGLARY		LARCENY*		AUTO THEFT	
	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
UNITED STATES 1968	294.6	6.8	15.5	131.0	141.3	1940.2	915.1	636.0	389.1									
U.S. 1969	324.4	7.2	18.1	147.4	151.8	2146.7	965.6	749.3	431.8									
U.S. 1970	360.0	7.8	18.3	171.5	162.4	2380.5	1067.7	859.4	453.5									
U.S. 1971	392.7	8.5	20.3	187.1	176.8	2514.0	1148.3	909.2	456.5									
U.S. 1972	397.7	8.9	22.3	179.9	186.6	2431.8	1126.1	882.6	423.1									
U.S. 1973	414.3	9.3	24.3	182.4	198.4	3702.1	1210.8	2051.2	440.1									
U.S. 1974	458.8	9.7	26.1	208.8	214.2	4862.6	1429.0	2473.0	460.6									

TABLE 3 CRIME RATES and RANKINGS of NEW ENGLAND 1968 through 1974 among the Nine Regions of the United States

AREA and YEAR	TOTAL CRIMES vs PERSONS		MURDER		RAPE		ROBBERY		AGGRAVATED ASSAULT		TOTAL CRIMES vs PROPERTY		BURGLARY		LARCENY*		AUTO THEFT	
	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate
NEW ENGLAND 1968	1	131.6	1	2.9	1	7.9	2	52.6	1	68.2	6	1909.5	5	831.0	3	512.6	9	565.9
N.E. 1969	1	152.2	1	3.0	1	8.8	2	65.6	1	74.8	6	2166.9	6	920.5	4	637.0	9	609.4
N.E. 1970	1	170.7	1	3.1	1	9.7	2	74.2	1	83.6	6	2383.1	5	1013.6	3	727.4	9	642.1
N.E. 1971	1	209.4	1	3.2	1	11.0	4	97.8	1	97.3	7	2658.8	6	1128.0	4	813.8	9	716.9
N.E. 1972	2	228.5	1	3.3	1	10.9	3	102.8	2	111.5	7	2556.4	4	1053.4	5	821.2	9	681.8
N.E. 1973	2	261.6	1	3.6	1	13.0	3	119.2	2	125.9	6	3667.9	5	1140.5	3	1761.5	9	765.8
N.E. 1974	2	286.2	1	3.8	1	12.7	3	136.5	2	133.2	6	4428.4	6	1391.5	3	2133.1	9	903.8

TABLE 4 CRIME RATES and RANKINGS of MASSACHUSETTS 1968 through 1974 among the Fifty States

AREA and YEAR	TOTAL CRIMES vs PERSONS		MURDER		RAPE		ROBBERY		AGGRAVATED ASSAULT		TOTAL CRIMES vs PROPERTY		BURGLARY		LARCENY*		AUTO THEFT	
	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate
MASSACHUSETTS 1968	20	164.0	16	3.5	16	9.5	30	74.3	18	76.7	41	2220.6	33	868.3	29	545.7	50	806.6
MASS. 1969	23	187.9	16	3.5	13	10.8	33	90.6	17	82.9	38	2552.3	36	1032.6	27	661.0	50	858.8
MASS. 1970	20	202.9	13	3.5	18	12.0	32	99.5	16	87.9	41	2801.1	37	1134.1	27	788.9	50	878.1
MASS. 1971	25	266.0	16	3.8	13	12.4	39	140.1	18	109.6	43	3221.2	38	1339.8	31	896.6	50	984.4
MASS. 1972	25	295.2	13	3.7	12	13.5	40	152.8	22	125.2	43	3096.3	38	1242.3	32	881.4	50	972.4
MASS. 1973	31	351.9	15	4.4	18	16.3	41	182.0	22	149.3	37	4169.1	40	1330.3	19	1729.2	50	1109.6
MASS. 1974	32	388.7	14	4.4	14	15.6	41	212.4	23	156.3	40	4998.2	39	1549.8	20	2078.8	50	1365.1

* Prior to 1973 only larcenies of \$50 and over are included. In 1973 and 1974 all larcenies are included. In 1974 column title changed to MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT
 Source of data for Tables: UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS 1968 through 1974 Tables by M.M. Cochrane

END