

maione, San Francisco, state Democratic chairman; W. M. Roth, Sausalito, steamship executive.

born evacuating some of the patients by Sat. Among the patients were seven new-born babies. a Russian-born boy, 2 months old, who drew up the plan.

Crime In Santa Cruz In 1955 Drops Another 10 Per Cent

3-8-56

Crime in Santa Cruz slipped another 10 per cent in 1955, Police Chief Al Huntsman has informed the FBI.

In its annual uniform crime report to Washington, the police department lists 313 serious offenses as having been committed within the city limits last year.

In 1954 there were 348 offenses in the same category—and that was a 25 per cent reduction in incidence over the preceding year.

Capt. Elmer Geyer, who compiles the facts and figures for the yearly accounting to the FBI, explains that the federal forms divide crime into two classes.

The first category contains seven classifications ranging from homicide to petty theft. The second group lists 20 types of wrongdoing of a lesser nature, from simple assault to parking meter violations.

Here is the box score for 1955 covering crimes in the first, or "big seven" category (1954 figures in parentheses):

Homicide, none (1); rape (includes statutory rape), 2 (5); robbery, 4 (6); aggravated assault, 1 (2); burglary, 71 (58); larceny (a) over \$50, 27 (24) and (b) under \$50, 164 (234); auto theft, 44 (18).

The figures show decreases in most offenses with these exceptions: burglary, larceny over \$50 and auto theft.

There were three more cases of larceny over \$50 in 1955—not an appreciable gain.

However, last year's record of 71 burglaries was 13 more than took place here in 1954. Capt. Geyer says part of the gain is attributable to a revised procedure which places breaking into a locked car in the burglary—rather than larceny—category.

But the most startling instance of stepped-up criminal activity is in the auto theft column. The 44 authenticated cases of car theft in 1955 was nearly a 250 per cent jump over the 18 similar offenses racked up in 1954.

This is a hard one to explain, Capt. Geyer indicated. But the records show that most car thieves who added to last year's police paperwork were under 21 years of age and that most were from out of town.

There were a number of instances where youths stole cars elsewhere and abandoned them here to steal another vehicle off Santa Cruz streets.

There seems to be no logical reason why it should have happened two and one-half times as often in 1955 as it did the year before.

Speaking of youthful offenders, a total of 213 boys and girls under 18 made the trip to headquarters last year in the course of police investigations. Some were released later and some were actually charged with crime.

Before you get well launched into mutterings about the sad state of our youth, digest this figure: 266 persons 40 years of

age and up were brought to the police station for questioning concerning specific offenses.

The teen-agers' weaknesses are petty theft, burglary and liquor law violations. Those in the 40-and-over bracket are prone to attacks of disorderly conduct, drunkenness, vagrancy and drunk driving.

In all, 774 persons suspected of breaking the laws of the sovereign state of California were treated to a first-hand inspection of the interior of the police station last year—42 more than in 1954.

This would seem to indicate that while the crime rate dropped police watchfulness didn't.

Of the 774 suspects, 596 stood before the wire screen at the booking desk and saw their names entered on the blotter on formal charges.

Of course, the cold statistics dealing with offenses reported and persons charged with crime have little to do with the average, hard-working, law-abiding citizen.

But, lest we forget, here is a whopping reminder that old John Q.—and Mrs. John Q.—are not necessarily the purest of the pure:

A grand total of 13,224 persons locked horns with the law in 1955 in the city of Santa Cruz (population 22,794).

The great majority of the offenders—over 12,500 of them—were recipients of citations for such humdrum violations as overtime parking and breaches

of road traffic rules.

The police department, it should be added, harbors no fear that the ranks of these law-breakers who forgot to feed the parking meter or failed to signal for a turn will produce a bumper crop of machine gun-toting gangsters.

But the staggering number of violations in which the offenders were caught and cited—there is no way of estimating the number of unrecorded infractions—is proof that the so-called average motorist could save himself money and embarrassment by paying a little more attention to his driving and parking habits.

In all, then, it was a good year for law enforcement and a poor year for crime in Santa Cruz.

Capt. Geyer said the department's energies will continue to be concentrated on "preventive" law enforcement—the combination of alertness and thoroughgoing police work that discourages crime.

This policy makes for community well-being and stretches the taxpayer's law enforcement dollar, Geyer said.

There is one other aspect of the declining crime scale that cannot be overlooked, Geyer pointed out. That is the general good times and high employment prevalent here in recent years.

"When a man has money in his pocket he doesn't get the urge to steal something," Geyer said.