

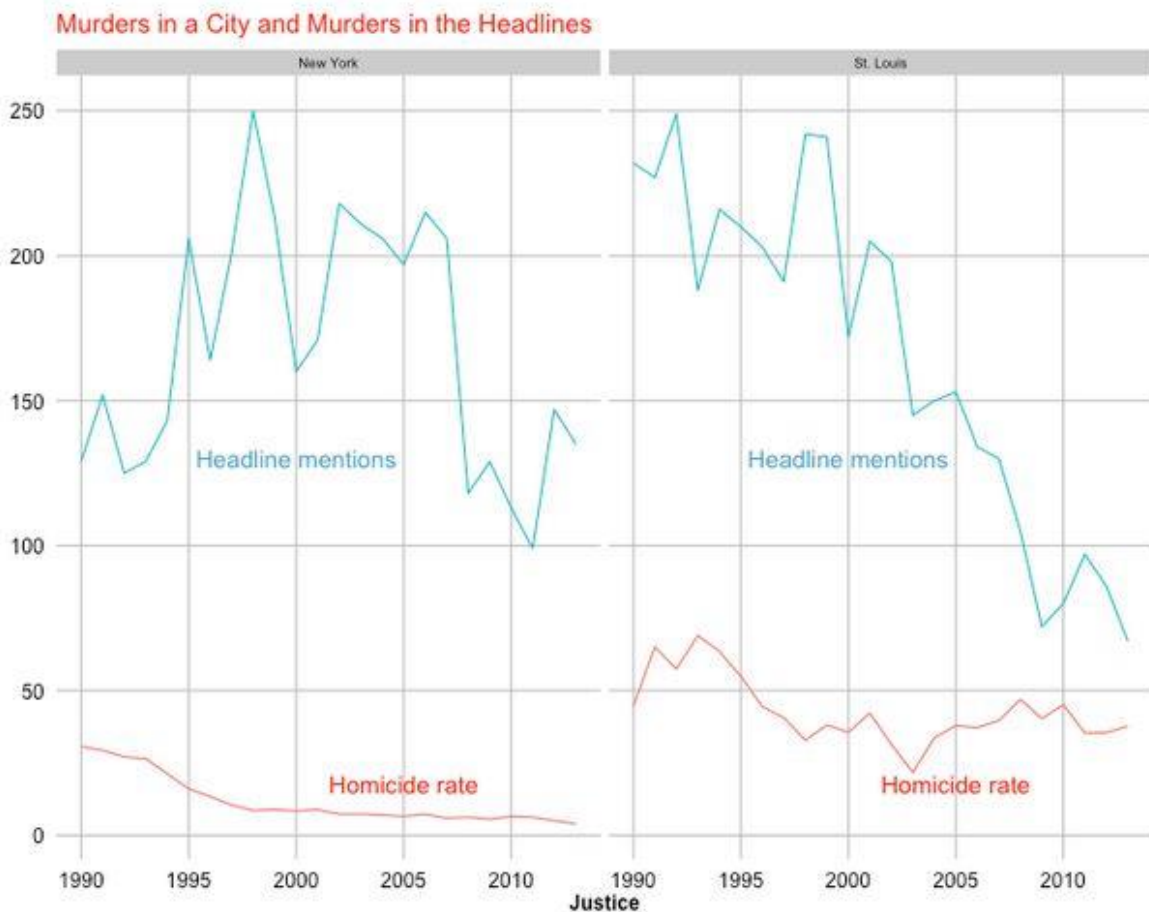
Whenever the Colerain Township monthly crime statistics are released, there are some who rail that they must be inaccurate, or more cynically, “made up”. In the minds of these few individuals, they see crime everywhere and therefore, the whole community must be having the same experience.

The calculation and presentation of crime statistics is not a difficult task. You simply enter a date range and crime in the records system and a number is generated. That number is compared to the number that was generated 12 months prior, a percentage change is calculated and the report issued.

So, why do many have an inaccurate perception of crime in their community? Much of it is embodied in that one word, perception. In the past, the local TV stations (the only ones we had) aired news at 11:00pm. They had ½ hour to do the headlines of the day, sports and weather. In all, they filled the program with less than 20 minutes of actual news. In order to claim a spot on the program, the story had to be significant.

We never heard of the everyday robberies, thefts, burglaries and other crimes, because the news carried homicides and some national news as well. That model has changed dramatically. Now, we have four local newscasts on each of the four local stations, 24-hour news channels and internet media that is updated hourly. Everything is reported, often for days on end.

In that deluge of information, our brains begin to process fear. “If I hear it every day and every hour, it must be getting worse.” we say to ourselves. However, that is simply not true.



“It seems that what the data shows is that despite decreasing murder rates and decreasing attention (at least in some newspapers), the public still believes crime is rampant. This indicates that the public still hasn't recovered from the years of the crime surge, or, perhaps more accurately, that the sensationalist coverage of isolated crimes has contributed to the public misperception that crime is increasing.”

-Lauren Brooke Eisen and Oliver Roeder-The Brennan Center for Justice, 2015

Crime is substantially lower in almost every category compared to the “good old days” of the 1970’s and 1980’s. This is a trend seen nationwide, to the point that it is known as “The Great American Crime Decline”.

New York City, for example, experienced nearly 2,200 homicides a year in the early 1990’s. They saw under 300 in 2017 (levels not seen since the 1950’s). Violent crime is down 75% and has stayed there.

“In the early 1990s, close to half of the major cities across the country were intensely violent places. A very small segment of cities is now intensely violent. Most cities are no longer dangerous. So that’s the broad shift: from a situation where city life was associated with violence to a situation where violence is anomalous. There’s no longer that large-scale link between urban life and violence.”

Patrick Sharkey- The Great Crime Decline, the Renewal of City Life and the New War on Violence

Sharkey also comments on the shift of crime to the suburbs:

“Violent crime fell everywhere. We’re talking about a long-term decline in violence that happened everywhere—rural, suburban, and urban areas. That said, we have seen a shift in what the suburbs look like and the proportion of the population that lives there, and that shift has meant that at an absolute level there’s now more violence in suburban areas.”

Matt Ford, journalist for The Atlantic, wrote “by virtually any metric, Americans now live in one of the least violent times in the nation’s history.”

Experts cite many reasons why the entire country has seen staggering reductions in crime over the past two decades.

Gentrification of formally high-crime neighborhoods

Improved law enforcement training and tactics (COMPSTAT)

Community policing

Rise in the use of private security

Increased use of residential and commercial alarm systems

Better automobile engineering to reduce theft

Education of public about crime prevention tactics

Neighborhood groups stepping forward to improve their community

Economy and unemployment rates

Increase in incarceration of offenders

Broken Windows Policing

Number of police officers/hiring grants from the Federal government

Income growth

Quality of education

Parental influences and responsibility

Removal of lead from gasoline, paint, etc:

“In states where consumption of leaded gasoline declined slowly, crime declined slowly, where it declined quickly, crime declined quickly.” And, perhaps most intriguingly, the correlation held in other countries, too.”- Kevin Drum, Mother Jones.

The Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law published an article entitled “America’s Faulty Perception of Crime Rates”. In that article, it is noted that national crime is about **half** what it was in 1991. This reduction follows a 123% increase in violent crime from the 1960-1970.

According to a Gallup poll from November 2014, the majority of Americans believe there is more crime than ever before. 63% believe crime is up from the previous year, even though that is proven to be false, nationwide. Serious crime has decreased, nationwide, every single year since 1994.

“As with the Gallup polls data, the narrative of violent crime -- at least in the popular press -- doesn't have much to do with the crime reality. Crime across the nation is at an all-time low. We need to recognize that and embrace effective policies to keep it even lower. Just as with the case of airplane crashes, the public may see the extraordinary event as representative of the norm when it is not.”

-Lauren Brooke Eisen and Oliver Roeder-The Brennan Center for Justice, 2015

So yes, crime is down in Colerain Township. There are many theories why this is the case, but none of them include presenting false statistics. Our experience is not an aberration, the trends are seen nationwide.

Crime could go back up should one of the important variables change. That is why we do monthly reports and review crime mapping daily. Having an open mind to try new methods of crime prevention serves us well. As researchers discover new tactics and programs, we will embrace them and push to keep the crime rate low.

Colerain Crime	1993	2017	%
Violent Crime	100	57	-43%
Property Crime	2,671	1,975	-26%
U.S. Crime	1993	2016	%
Violent Crime	1,926,017	1,248,185	-35%
Property Crime	12,218,777	7,919,035	-35%

2016 is the last published FBI Uniform Crime Report

