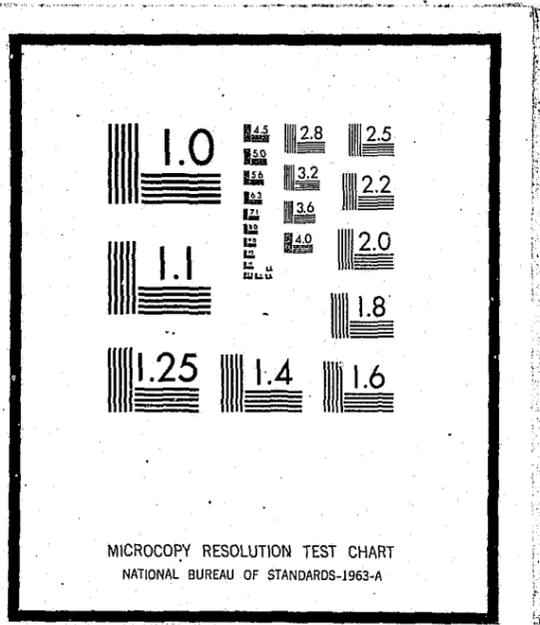


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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20531

Date filmed

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ANALYSIS OF THE 1974 CRIME TRENDS- DO WE NEED TO CONSIDER A NEW APPROACH?

Beginning in 1972, Utah County began to experience a phenomenon which was unique in a nation plagued by expanding delinquency and anti-social behavior; serious crime in the relatively peaceful valley of the Provo-Orem metropolitan area actually dropped by five percent of the previous year, the first such decrease in eight years of statistical reporting of crime.

Police and other officials were understandably elated at the news, all felt that the tide had turned against the criminal, and it looked like at least this county was going to finally reduce an already small crime problem. Law enforcement planners at the State and Regional level were quick to suggest that the Federal law enforcement assistance program was the principal factor in the reduction, by virtue of a set of federally funded projects, the intent of which was to reduce crime. Other officials pointed to a concurrent reduction in unemployment.

Then, in 1973, serious crime dropped by another five percent, and all were certain that the crime problem was on its way out. That is, until 1974 rolled around.

Early in this year there was evidence of a serious problem, one that probably started in the final months of 1973. The police chiefs and Sheriff of Utah County began cooperating on the quarterly crime report, which showed data that made it look like the old upward trends were returning; however, since quarterly figures had not previously been compiled, and no comparisons could be made with the quarters of previous years, it was difficult to say that the early returns meant any more than the seasonal shifting.

But now, after the year has finished, and it is obvious that an upward swing continued through the four quarters, it is quite simple to postulate a serious situation for Utah County. The seven serious offenses tracked in the quarterly report increased by a startling 33 percent, which is equally as unique as the two year reduction experienced before, because it is about twice the national average!

You will note in Appendix III that the increase over 1973 is shown as 58 percent. The reason for this discrepancy is that the 33 percent figure is based on the reports of eight police agencies in Utah County that have consistently reported serious offenses over the years, such as is shown in Appendix II. With the introduction of the Quarterly Crime Report, a number of smaller city agencies joined this group and provided report data through the year 1974, thus swelling the rate of increase. Consequently, the best that can be done to assess Utah County's 1974 increase is to say that it was somewhat between 33 and 58 percent.

An interesting thought, however, comes out of the move by the small agencies to join the larger cities in the reporting program, and that is that something of great concern caused them to feel a need for such involvement. Without hard data upon which to base a solid conclusion, we have no way of proving the basis for this concern; however, police officials in the small agencies can subjectively say that serious crimes have begun to occur in the outlying cities and towns with greater frequency and consistency than ever before. In other words, serious crime was not a problem in 1973, but it was in 1974, a change that can partially be substantiated by the increase in the County Sheriff's workload in the unincorporated areas. Perhaps the 58 percent increase is more nearly accurate than the smaller figure.

Leaving the increase rate aside momentarily, we will now begin to explore some of the implications of the data:

Adult Involvement and the Unemployment Correlation

An obvious development that is glaringly portrayed by the attached appendices is the involvement of adults in serious crime. Annual clearance levels relating to the arrest of persons eighteen years of age or older have more than tripled during the ten year period in question. The upswing appears to have begun in 1969 and 1970, about the same time that parallel patterns between crime and unemployment became pronounced, and this correlation gives rise to questions about the relationship of economic factors to crime.*

Taking this theme a little further, a recent profile study of a group of persons convicted of burglary, grand theft and miscellaneous sex offenses, revealed that approximately thirty-one percent were unemployed at the time that they were placed in the custody of the Provo office of Adult Probation and Parole, and that many others of the same group had trouble holding jobs. Although this information is scanty, and it would be difficult to determine if the same persons were unemployed at the time they committed the offenses for which they were convicted, there seems to be more reason for examining the crime implications of the prevailing economic conditions.

Juvenile Involvement

Another interesting development illustrated by the data is that fewer persons under the age of eighteen are involving themselves in serious

*See Appendices VI and XI.

crime during this decade than did during the last. It is obvious that, in the first few years of the ten year period in question, between sixty-five and seventy-five percent of the serious crime clearances were affected by the arrest of juveniles; recent years, however, have seen that ratio drop significantly below fifty percent, as shown in Appendix VIII.

This phenomenon becomes more significant when rated against the growing school population. The secondary schools of Utah County have thirty-three percent more students this year than during the 1965-66 school year, yet, although juvenile offenders are almost always secondary school students, juvenile offenses in the serious crime categories have not increased at an equal rate. In fact, the average offenses during the last five years are twenty-one percent lower than during the immediately previous five years, a difference between 48.3 serious crime clearances by juvenile arrest per thousand secondary students, and 38.2 during the most recent five year period.* Adding to this significance is the fact that the police are improving their effectiveness in solving serious offenses, and the likelihood of apprehension is much greater today than it was ten years ago.

A review of the intake statistics of the Third District Juvenile Court will reveal that referrals to the Court have increased during this period when juvenile involvement in serious crime appears to have decreased. It should be noted, however, that such data only reflect discretionary decisions by police and school officials, and not actual juvenile involvement in crime. As workloads have increased, police officers are becoming more inclined to refer juveniles to the Court rather than handle offenses within the community.

*Based on Appendix X.

Contributing Factors

The questions that should arise in everyone's mind are: why is serious crime growing so rapidly? do economic or other stress factors actually cause changes in crime trends such as that experienced in 1974? and why are more adults and fewer juveniles committing serious offenses?

The final answers to these questions will not be found in this analysis, but perhaps some thinking about new directions could begin developing here that would lead the law enforcement program to those answers. Hard-fast conclusions are difficult to come by when dealing with the crime phenomenon, and a multitude of factors must be considered, no one of which can be emphasized as the principal cause of crime.

First of all, it would be easy to hang a label on the economy and give this complex factor all the blame for current trends. The graph on the correlation of unemployment appears dramatically illustrative, and could be used to point a finger. Law enforcement could "cop out" to the obvious connection, and all the world could feel comfortable with it, saying that poor economic conditions, and the emotions that always accompany such conditions, are the causes of all our problems.

But are the trends of crime only indications of economic conditions, unemployment, and mental frustrations? Or are these factors, along with crime, symptoms of common social ills that lie much more deeply embedded in the fabric of the community?

The already implied answers to these questions should lead us to a review of past research efforts. The data searches in police and corrections files have revealed information that has been extremely valuable to the planning program up to this point. Important projects have been

implemented as a result of the research, and a great deal of good has been done toward the strengthening of the criminal justice system and the improvement of justice quality. But, it is obvious that this program has still not solved the problem of crime in the community.

There must be additional areas of research, planning, and funding that the Advisory Council and staff could profitably open up.

To digress for a moment, let us look at the circumstances surrounding the reduction of juvenile involvement in serious crime. A number of factors have probably contributed to this reduction, the most significant of which could be that young people of today appear to be much more aware than past generations of their potential for contribution to the quality of life in their communities. They seem to understand that the world being left to them by their parents is in poor condition, but also that it is in better condition than their parents found it, and that it now falls to them to assume the responsibilities of providing solutions to the social ills that remain. Such attitudes prevail in Utah County youth but whether the same is true in other areas of the nation remains to be seen.

The positive awareness of Utah County young people can safely be attributed to school programs that involve students in curriculum development and presentation, to civic organizations that promote community involvement by youth, to the correctional programs of the Juvenile Court, and to any other efforts to improve the quality of life for youth. But the single most important traditional institution that would logically have an impact on young people is the family.

People in this county have been making a real effort to return to the old traditions of family closeness. For the past eight or ten years,

religious organizations especially, and some civic groups, have urged families to come together under the direction of parents and to create an environment of security and stability in the home.

As family identity is strengthened in young people, the propensity to offend is reduced, and there is a strong possibility that this recent focus on the family as the basic unit of society has had a favorable impact on juvenile crime. Such would be the case in Utah County more than in any other urbanized area because of the dominant role played by the major proponent of family closeness, the L.D.S. Church.

The focal issue that must be dealt with in relation to crime and its causes, is that crime is not caused by economic conditions, but by a breakdown in moral and spiritual strength, or a loss of those values that motivate adherence to high ideals. These moral and spiritual values can only be instilled, or deleted, by family dynamics, and it is in this vitally important social unit that nobility and criminality are created. The social ills that have long plagued society with such symptoms as crime, unemployment, alcoholism, drug abuse, mental disease and so forth, will very likely be found right in the family, so deeply embedded in the social structure that the structure itself reaches the problem only with great difficulty.

Recommendations: Four-Point Program

In conclusion, the following activities are recommended to be carried out during 1975 and 1976:

- . Conduct an intensive review of standards and goals adopted by the State, and, where such are found beneficial and needful at the local level, assist municipal and county government in their implementation.

- . Open up the area of the family for intensive study. Retain the services of local professional persons in order to explore the impact of family dynamics on crime and other adverse phenomena.

- . Completely remodel the existing data collection system in order to broaden the analysis scope and thus upgrade program capabilities for comprehensive learning about crime and criminal offenders.

- . Continue the existing grant program only during the two year study period, giving notice to all grantees that a change in direction is likely in 1977, and that ongoing projects will only be granted funding in that and subsequent years where such are found to be consistent with the new thrust.

At the conclusion of this two year period beginning January 1, 1975 and ending December 31, 1976, the Criminal Justice Planning Program should have arrived at serious decisions regarding a new approach to crime control. A great deal of research study, analysis, and planning will be required before these decisions can be made, and the process will be costly. Local elected officials must be prepared to commit themselves totally to the effort and consider the cost a worthwhile expenditure, or the three counties of Mountainland will find themselves in a position well illustrated by the observation of Third District Juvenile Court Judge Merrill L. Hermansen: "If we don't learn how to shut off the water, we had better start looking for a bigger bucket."

CENTRAL UTAH CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION
REGIONAL CRIME REPORT
PART I OFFENSES
UTAH COUNTY

YEAR: 1974

Appendix I

Classification	First Quarter				Second Quarter				Third Quarter				Fourth Quarter				Annual			
	R	C	JC	COM	R	C	JC	COM	R	C	JC	COM	R	C	JC	COM	R	C	JC	COM
Criminal Homicide	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	2	4	3	0	4
Rape	5	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	6	2	0	4	2	2	0	1	13	7	0	8
Robbery	10	3	0	7	8	1	0	1	7	4	3	3	14	2	1	0	39	10	4	11
Assault	33	28	6	4	36	37	9	7	60	53	7	11	39	23	4	9	168	141	26	31
Burglary	188	43	17	13	199	46	26	19	277	40	14	12	213	25	9	26	877	154	66	70
Theft	1152	329	129	12	1271	317	173	33	1318	287	151	37	1313	238	122	25	5054	1171	575	107
Auto Theft	55	22	8	4	64	22	14	0	83	24	15	0	68	19	14	2	270	87	51	6
TOTALS	1443	428	160	43	1579	424	222	61	1752	411	190	68	1651	310	150	65	6425	1573	722	237
Percent of Offenses	/				/				/				/				/			
Percent of Clearances	/				/				/				/				/			

R = Reports C = Clearances JC = Juvenile Clearances COM = County Adult Complaints

Contributing Agencies: Alpine Lindon Payson Salem BYU
 American Fork Mapleton Pleasant Grove Spanish Fork County Sheriff
 Lehi Orem Provo Springville County Attorney

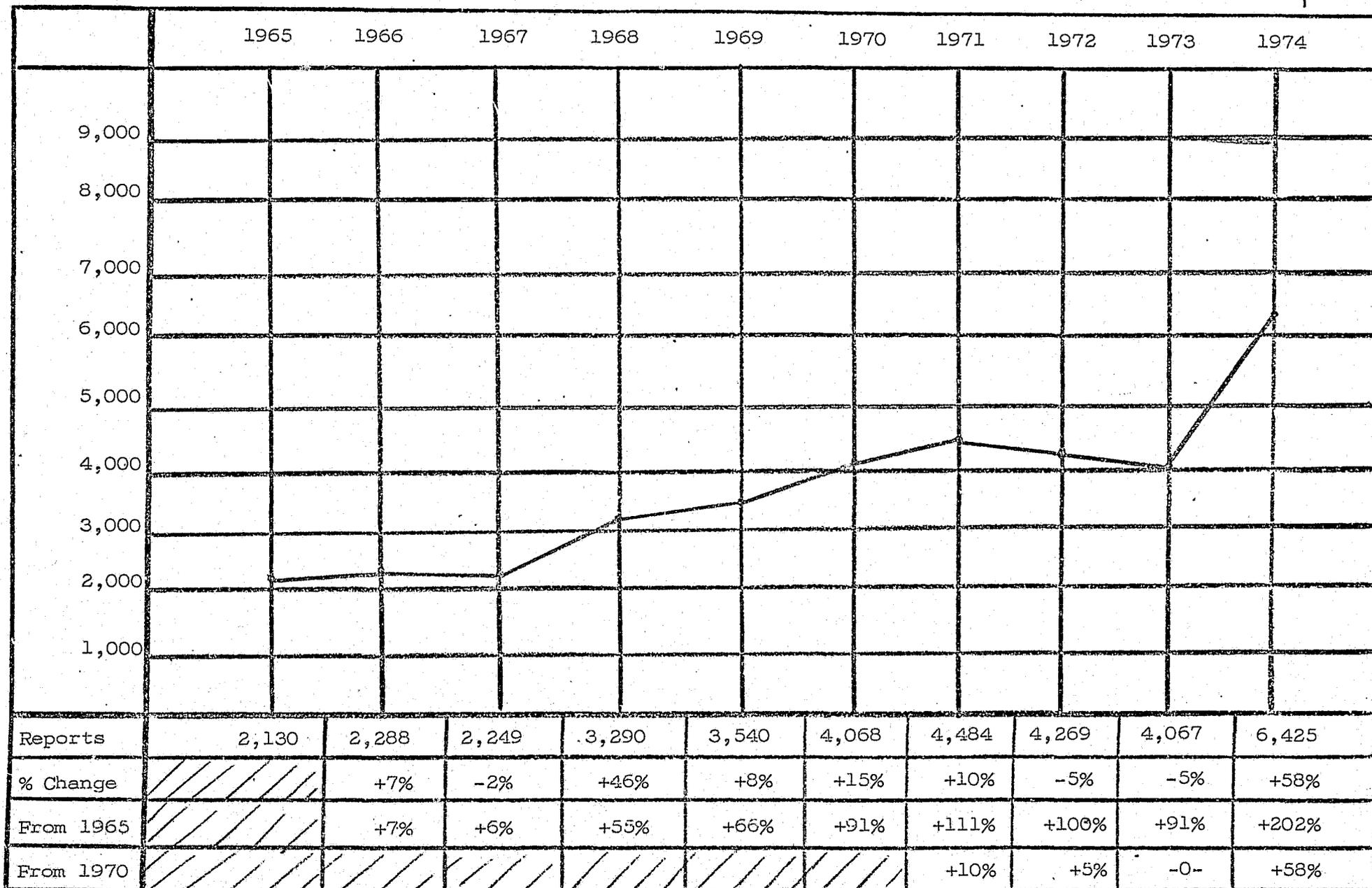
Appendix II

CONSISTENT REPORT DATA*

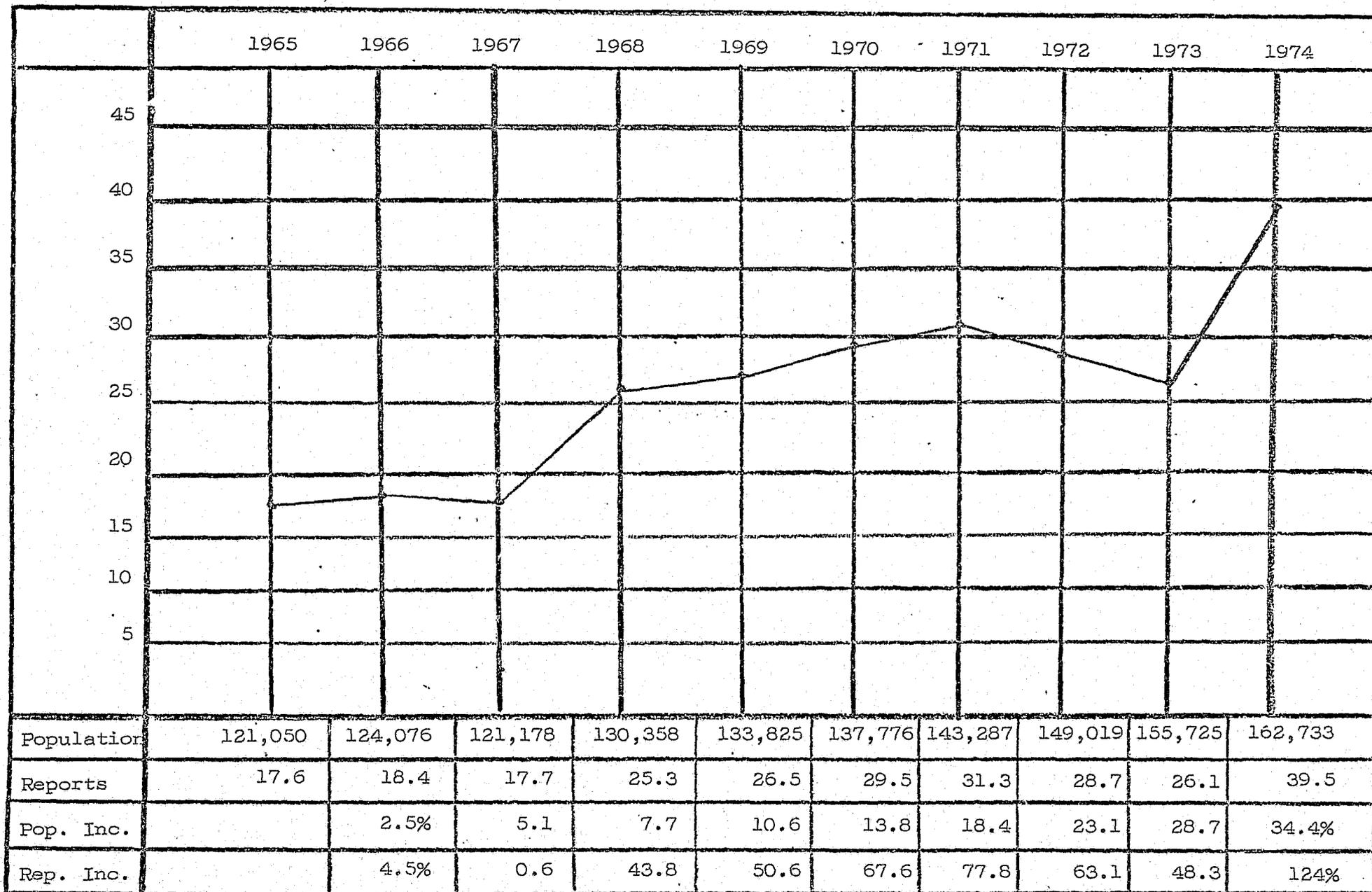
	<u>1965</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	% Change	
					<u>Over</u> <u>1965</u>	<u>Over</u> <u>1973</u>
Part I	2,130	4,068	4,067	5,392	153%	33%
Burglary	224	649	580	791	253%	36%
Theft	1,779	3,145	3,154	4,261	140%	35%

*Data taken from eight police agencies that have been consistently reporting serious crimes for several years, i.e., American Fork, Orem, Payson, Pleasant Grove, Provo, Spanish Fork, Springville, and the County Sheriff.

PART I OFFENSES
 REPORTS TO THE POLICE

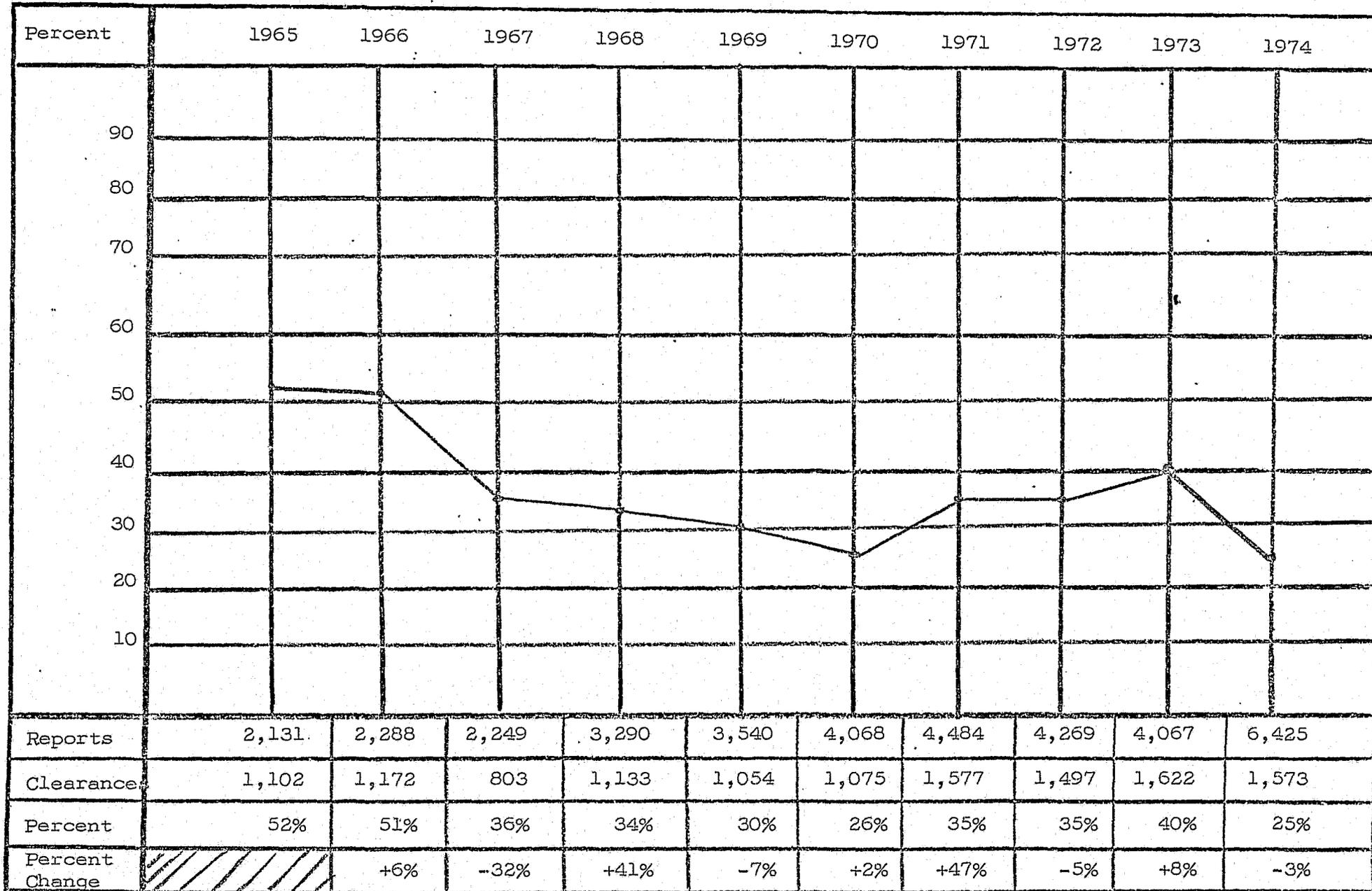


PART I REPORTS
PER THOUSAND RESIDENTS



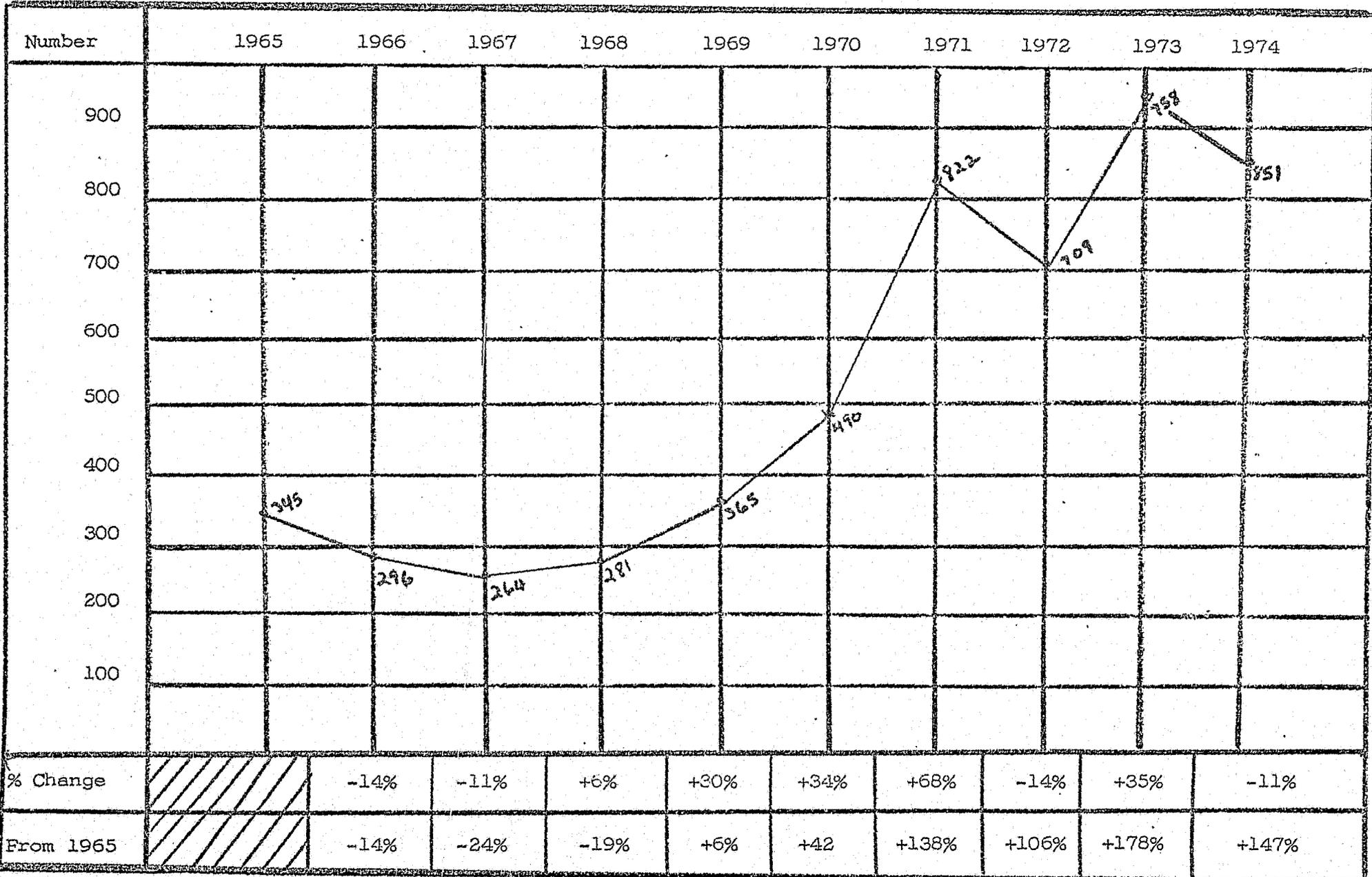
PART I. OFFENSES

CLEARANCE RATIO



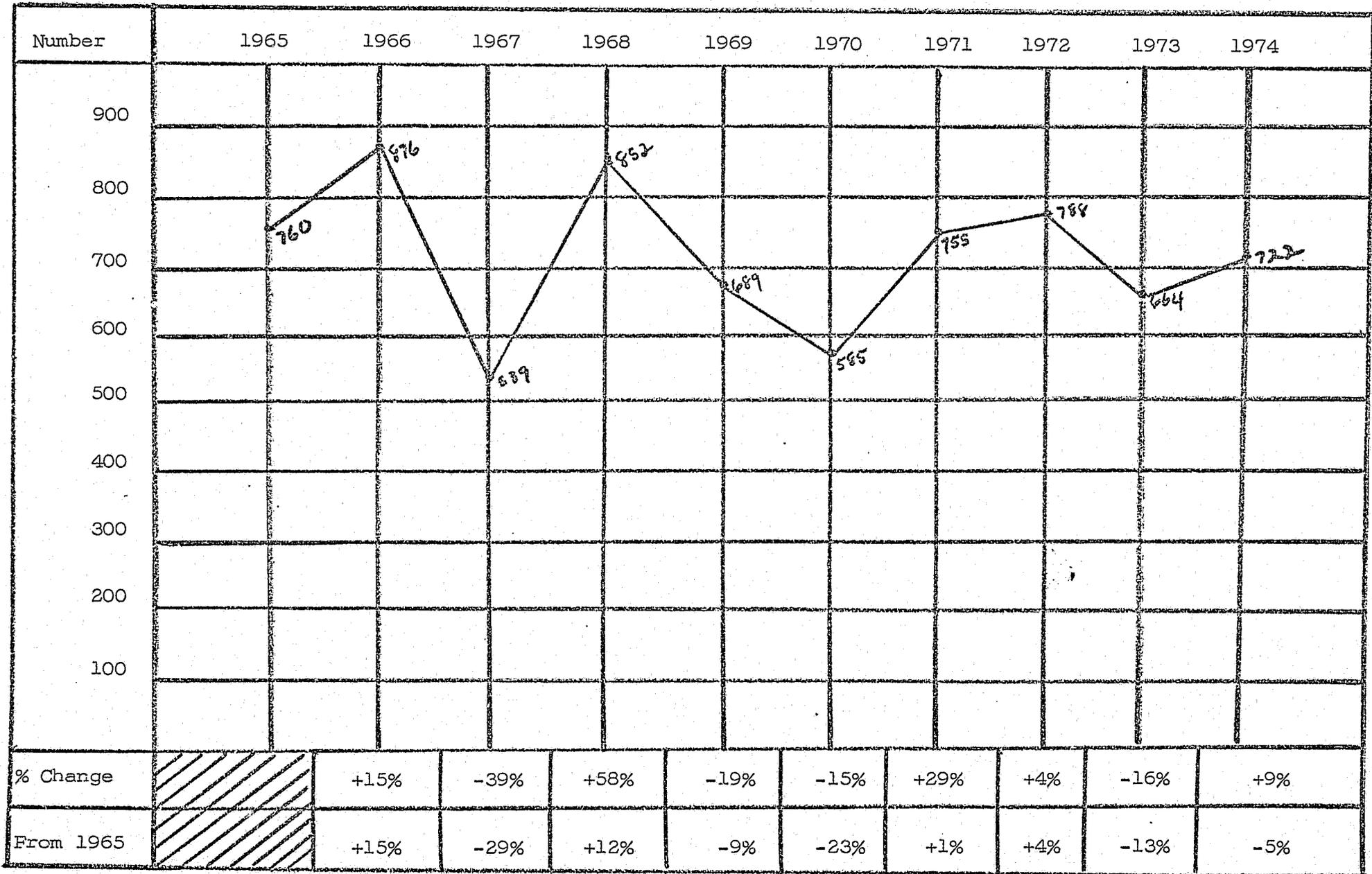
ADULT CLEARANCES

PART I OFFENSES



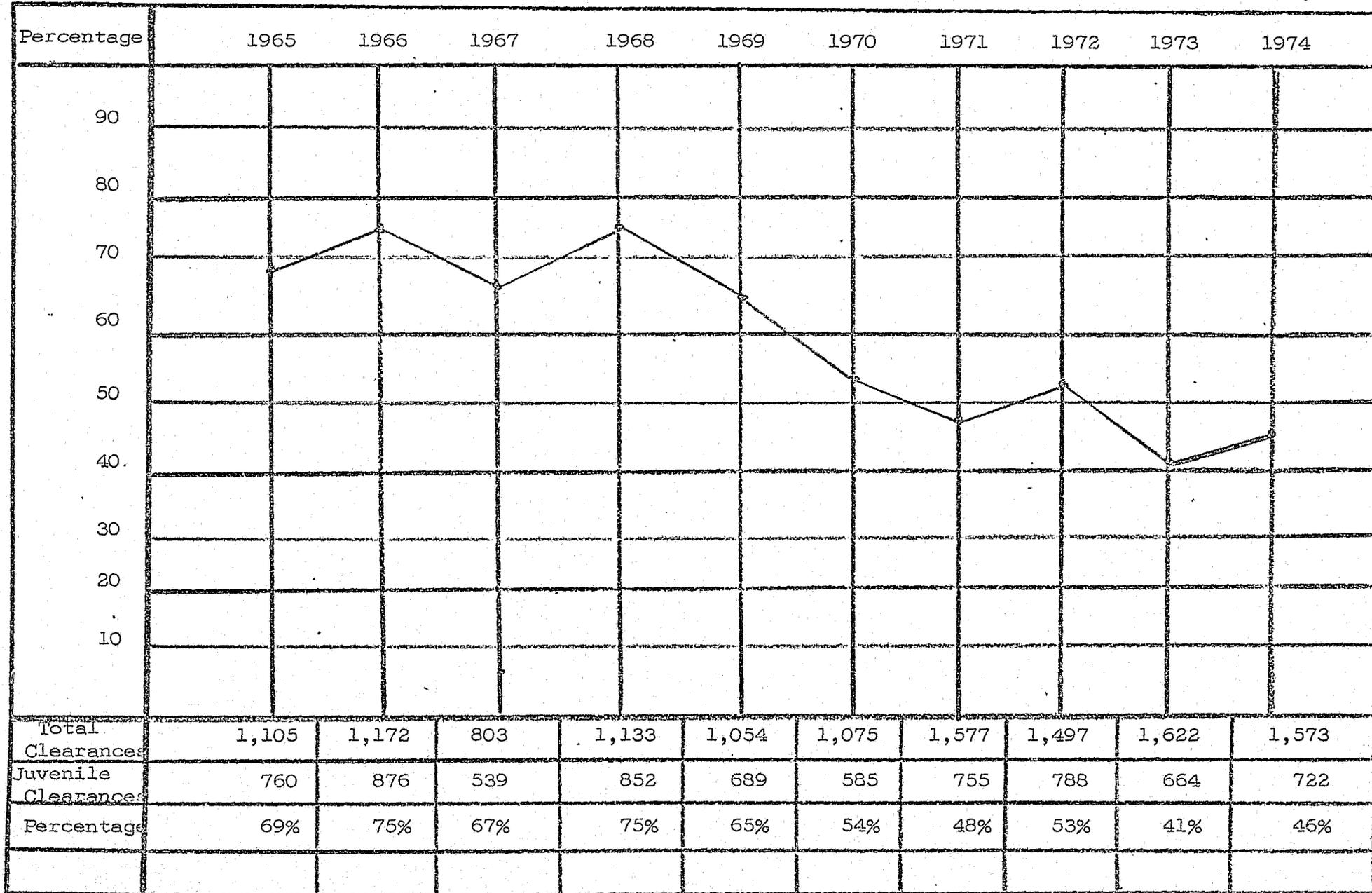
JUVENILE CLEARANCES

PART I OFFENSES



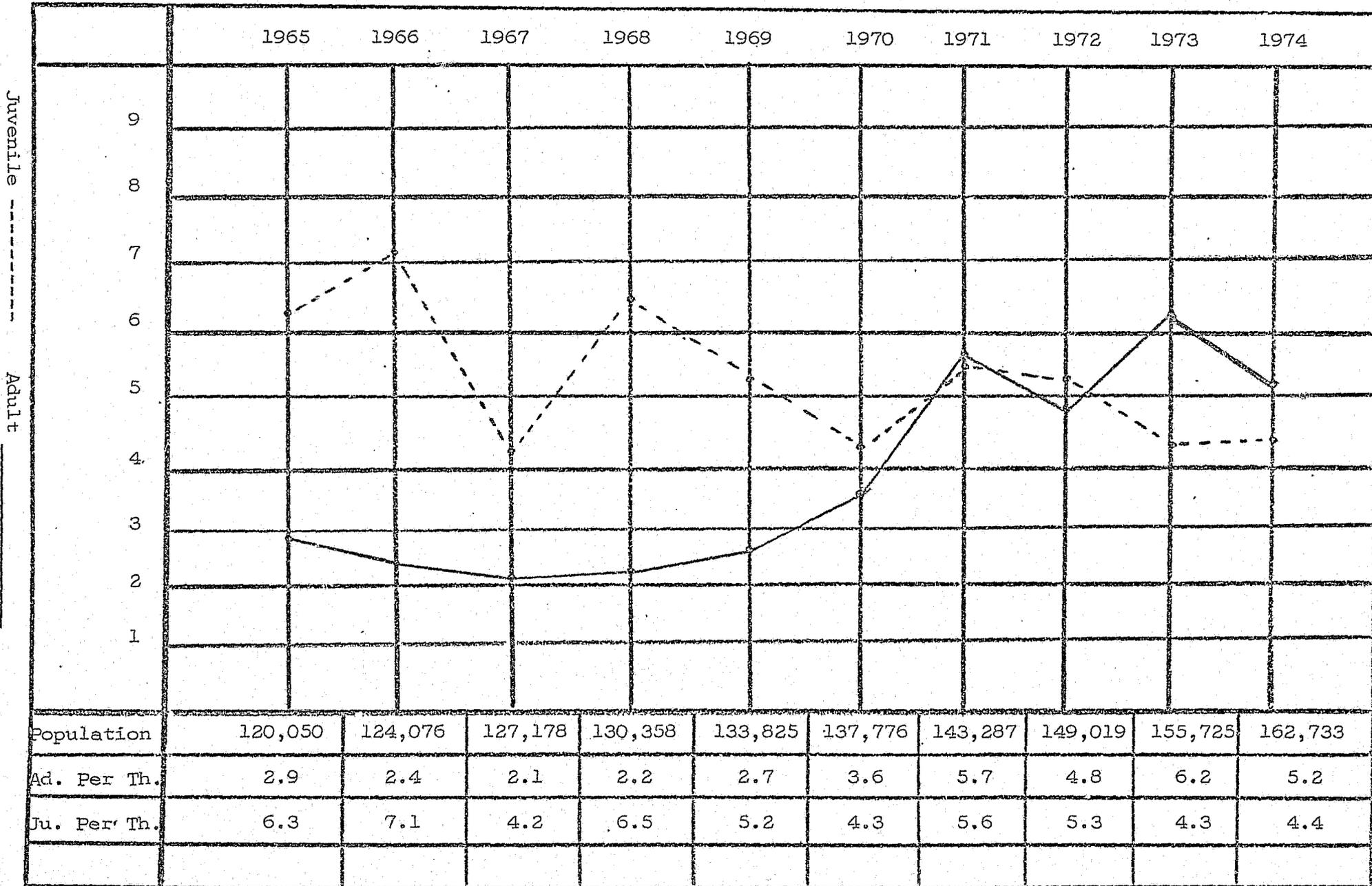
PART I CLEARANCES

JUVENILE RATIO

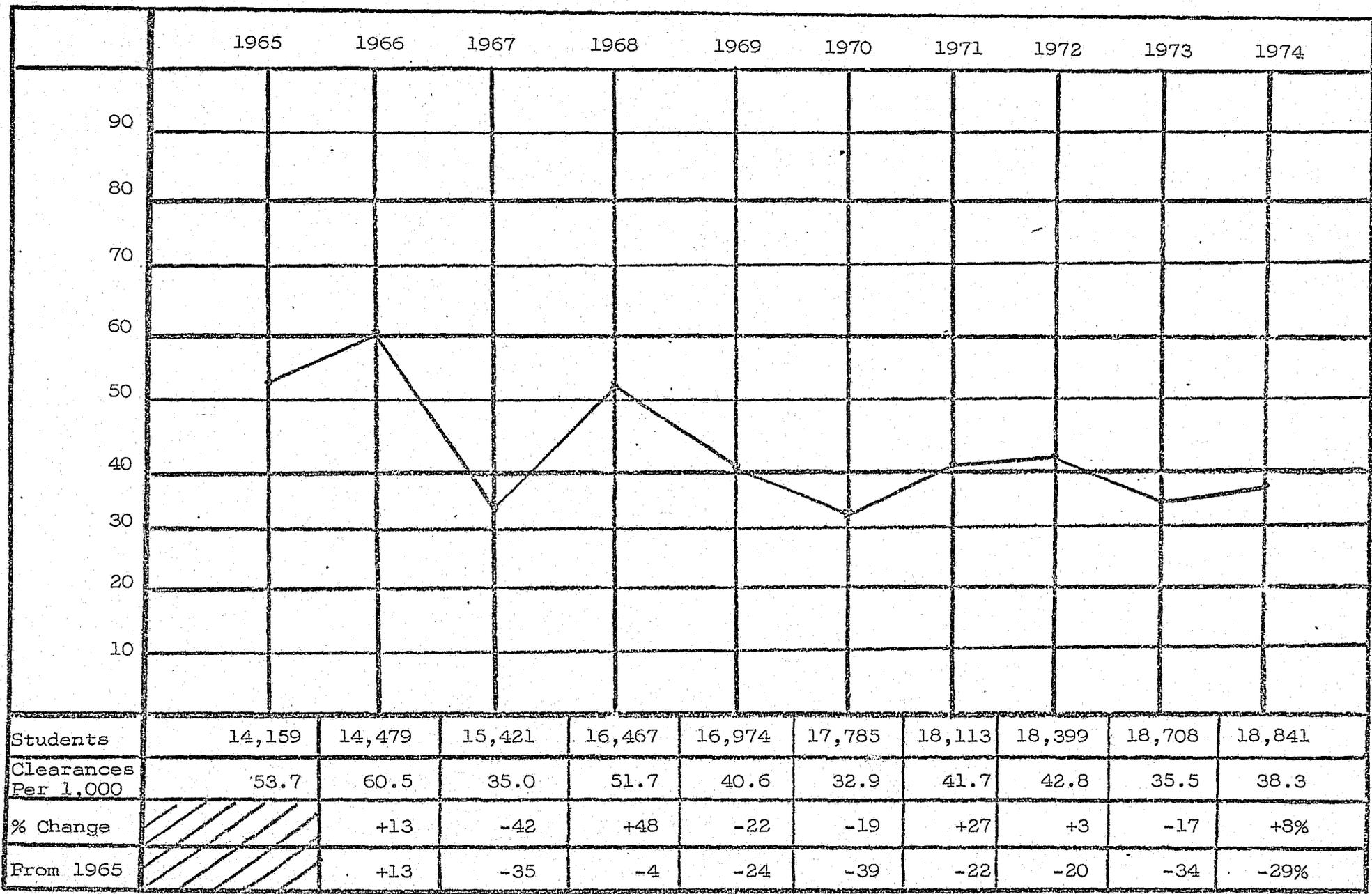


ADULT AND JUVENILE CLEARANCES

PER THOUSAND RESIDENTS

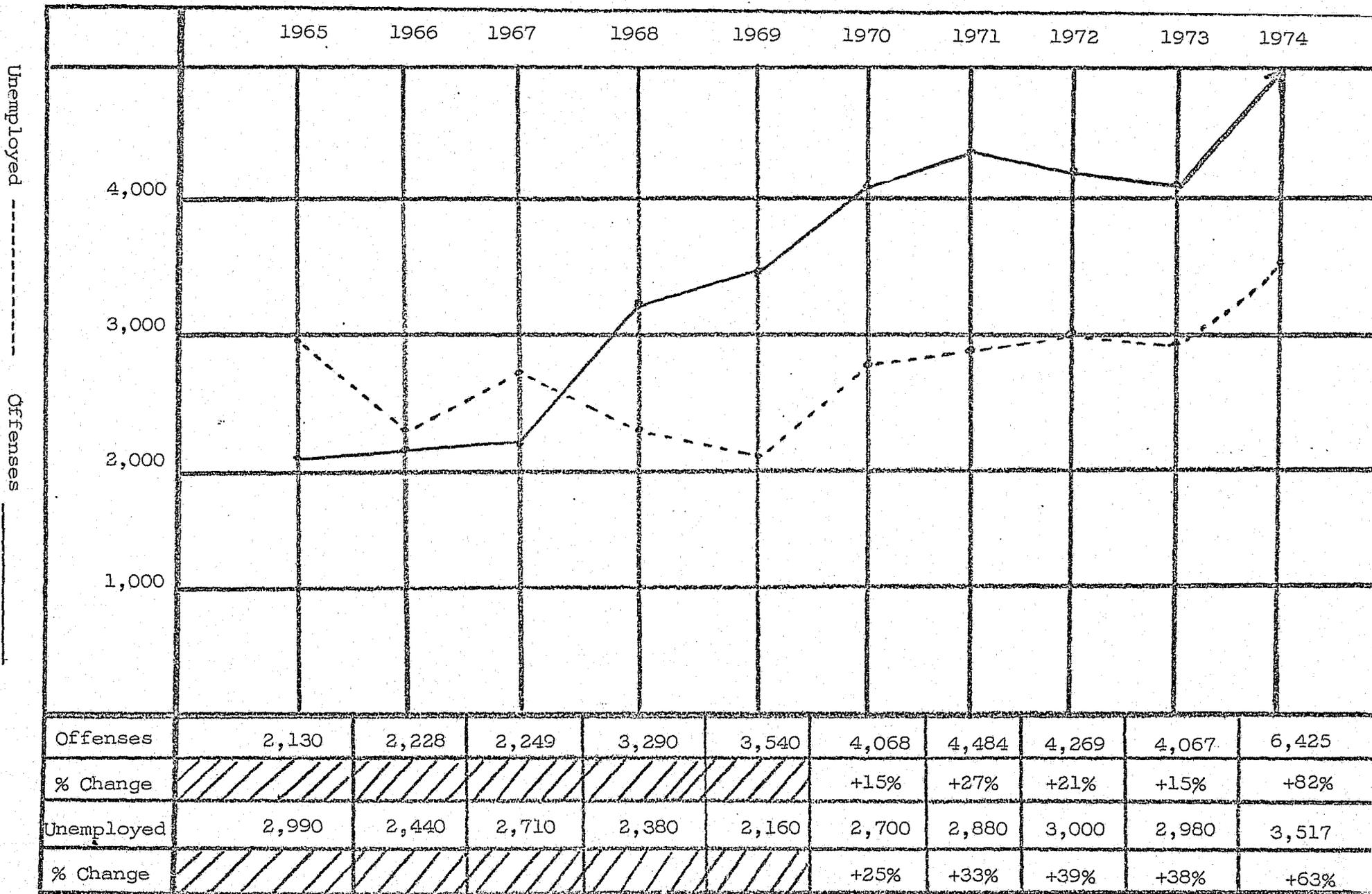


JUVENILE CLEARANCES
PER THOUSAND SECONDARY STUDENTS



COMPARISON GRAPH

PART I OFFENSES - UNEMPLOYED PERSONS



END