

BURGLARY AND THE MOBILE HOME

ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

1974-1976

50906

CRIME ANALYSIS DIVISION
ST. PETERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

MOBILE HOME BURGLARY

NCJRS

SEP 27 1978

INTRODUCTION

ACQUISITIONS

According to the most recent census data, 3% of the housing units in St. Petersburg are mobile homes. This represents 3,867 of the 114,172 dwellings. The vast majority of trailers are affiliated with one of the 35-40 "parks" within the city. A few are situated on school grounds for security purposes.

Most mobile home dwellers fall in the "retiree" age bracket, but represent a variety of socio-economic levels. Approximately 60% reside here on a permanent, year-round basis. The remainder are seasonal inhabitants, often away from the trailer premises three to six months a year.

66% of the mobile homes are located in the Northeast portion of the city, in an area bounded on the south by 22 Avenue, North, and on the west by Interstate 275. This section is referred to on the table as police Zones 13, 14, and 15. Of the 32,019 housing units in this area, 2551 (8%) are trailers. During the three years under study, 1,922 residential burglaries were reported, only 37 of these (or 2%) involved mobile homes.

Another area heavily populated with trailers is Zone 02 in the Southeast portion of the city. This encompasses the area between 9th Street, South, and the Bay, south of 22nd Avenue, South. 10% or 637 of the 6,231 dwellings are mobile homes, 7% or 61, of the 939 burglaries were to trailers. This was by far the zone of greatest burglary activity, with the comparative percentages most closely associated.

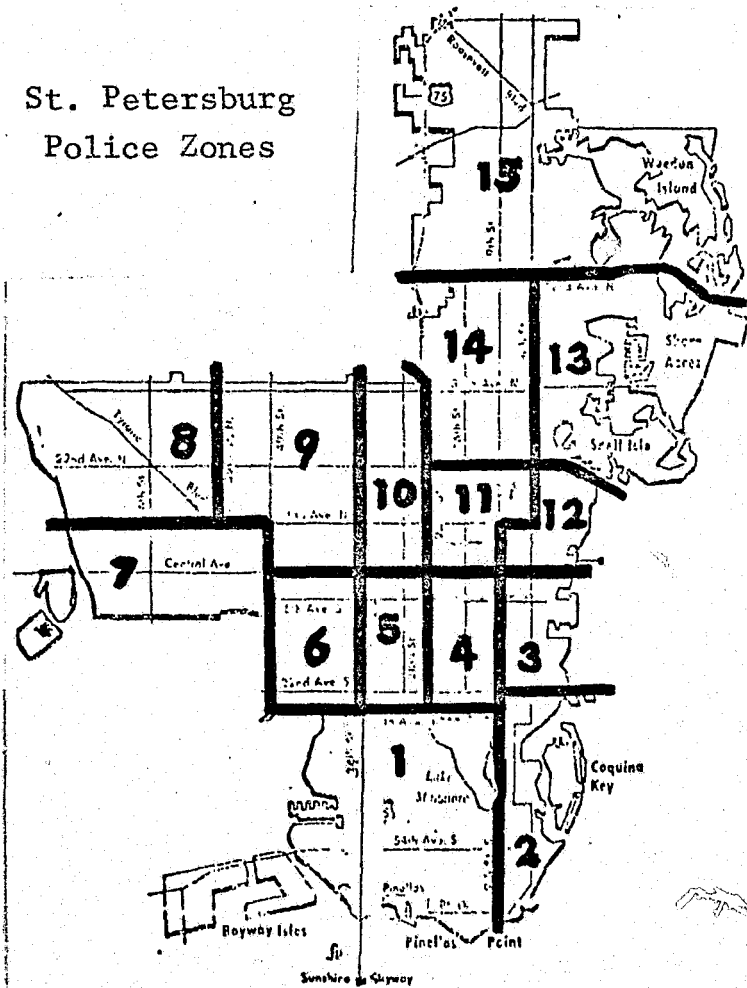
As reflected in the table, seldom does the percentage of trailers victimized surpass the percentage of housing units which are trailers. This is depicted by zone as well as citywide.

BURGLARY AND THE MOBILE HOME

1974 - 1976

Police Zone	Number Housing Units	Number Trailers	% of Total	Number Burglar Per Zone	Number Burglar To Trailers	% of Total
01	9613	4	.04%	927	1	.1%
02	6231	637	10%	939	61	7%
03	5709	43	.8%	1517	4	.3%
04	6133	56	.9%	2132	1	.05%
05	4278	7	.2%	1219	0	--
06	4576	12	.3%	2016	0	--
07	6771	7	.1%	581	2	.3%
08	8686	116	1%	701	11	2%
09	11096	52	.5%	860	0	--
10	5095	378	7%	527	10	2%
11	5590	3	.05%	697	4	.6%
12	8375	1	.01%	657	0	--
13	9671	703	7%	540	10	2%
14	10088	490	5%	694	17	2%
15	12260	1358	11%	688	10	1%
TOTAL	114172	3867	3%	14695	131	1%

St. Petersburg Police Zones



ANALYSIS

In the three years under study, 1974-76, 131 mobile homes were burglarized. This represents only 1% of the 14,695 total residential burglaries occurring in St. Petersburg.

An analysis of the incidents revealed many interesting components. Victim typology yielded 60% white males, 39% white females. A black male was victimized in one incident. 70% of the resident victims were over the age of 60, another 10% in the 51-60 age bracket. The age factor was not surprising, however, as most park dwellers in St. Petersburg are elderly.

Suspects went undetected in 87% of the incidents. When observed, 5% were black males, 8% were white males. They generally fell within the 20-24 year-old age range.

48% of the trailers were unoccupied at the time of the burglary, as victims were temporarily away from the premises. 12% were on vacation. In 36% of the cases, victims were inside their homes during the crime.

The majority of the incidents were staged under the cover of darkness, with 2200-2300 hours appearing especially vulnerable. Saturday-Monday were the most frequently cited days of occurrence.

Entry was gained through doors by 67% of the burglars. Prying was the chosen mode in 31% of the cases, and cutting in 27%. Doors were conveniently left unlocked by the victim in another 15%.

Windows were the point of entry in 31% of the breaks. They were pried and cut in equal proportions.

Cash was the favored theft object in almost one-third of the cases. Televisions and jewelry were also frequently taken. No losses were recorded in 31% of the burglaries.

Seasonal variance was difficult to establish, however December and January were high frequency months. Together they accounted for one-third of the total occurrences.

CONCLUSION

Based on three years of burglary analysis, mobile home dwellers appear to be among the safest in St. Petersburg. While representing 3% of the housing units, they experience only 1% of the city's burglaries.

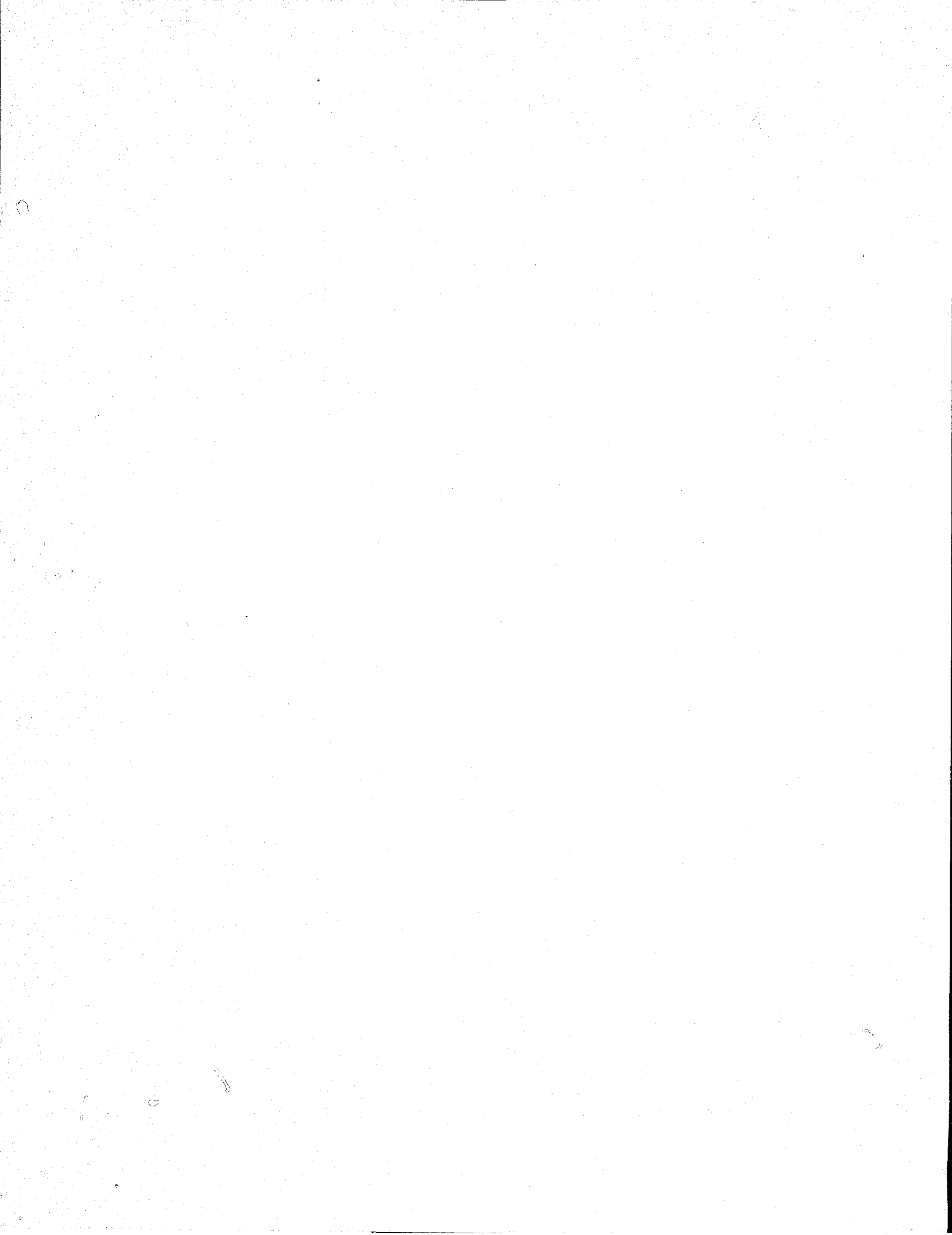
A study recently released on apartment burglary revealed that while apartments account for 28% of the dwelling units, they record only 18% of the city's total burglaries.

Single-family homeowners on the other hand, make up 64%* of the total residents and absorb the effects of over 80% of the total burglaries.

Several explanations may be tendered as to the relative infrequency of trailer burglaries. The physical structure itself may lend to its lack of vulnerability. Most have only one door and fewer windows than the average house. They are also less accessible due to their height. The close-knit atmosphere present in most parks may also lend to their security. Trailers are situated in close proximity and occupants make themselves aware of their neighbors living patterns. An open window, drawn curtains, presence or absence of lights may be out-of-the-ordinary and therefore signs of a problem. Also, as previously mentioned most mobile home residents are elderly, most perpetrators are young. A potential burglar thus becomes a highly visible subject.

Park residents generally host organized social or business assemblies. This increases their awareness levels and aids in conscious and uncommon crime prevention efforts.

* The 5% not accounted for represents rooming house occupants, motel/hotel residents, etc.



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