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A STUDY OF AUTOMOBILE THEFTS IN THE CHICAGO AREA

by

John Charles Callahan

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master of  
Social and Industrial Relations

June

1954

## LIFE

John Charles Callahan was born in Waukegan, Illinois, January 3, 1923.

He was graduated from Lane Technical High School, Chicago, Illinois, February, 1946, and from Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois, June, 1951, with the degree of Bachelor of Science.

He began his graduate studies at Loyola University in September, 1951.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to all who helped in any way to make this study possible--especially to Timothy J. O'Connor, Commissioner of Police, Chicago Police Department for affording the opportunity to pursue this study.

Gratitude is also due to Lieutenant Michael Shannon, Commanding Officer of Stolen Auto Section; to Officers William J. McCarthy and Gerald J. Pierce, who devoted their able assistance, time, and invaluable information gathered over years of experience, in aiding me in this study.

The encouragement, interest, and help of friends, fellow students and faculty members are also fully appreciated.

## PREFACE

This study was undertaken to determine the extent of the problem of automobile theft in the City of Chicago. It has been attempted to include the entire problem in this one study, but the magnitude of the total picture shows that further research and development on particular points offers further thesis material.

Material for this study was obtained from the Chicago Police Department, Stolen Auto Section, reports and pamphlets from agencies concerned with this problem, also personal interviews conducted with the different leaders in the agencies: Mr. W. G. Banister, Special Agent in Charge, Chicago Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Mr. William J. Davis, Secretary and Manager, National Automobile Theft Bureau (Western Division); Mr. E. J. Nerad, Chief Probation Officer, Family Court, Cook County; Mr. Virgil Peterson, Operating Director, Chicago Crime Commission; Mr. A. Schoenberger, Assistant State's Attorney, Cook County; also Captain William J. Szarat, Director, Youth Bureau, Chicago Park District Police Department.

These interviews gave access to confidential material

not available for publication and limits the scope of the report in this respect. Complete data from past records were not entirely available; totals in some cases were available but no breakdown to permit accurate checking of these totals. Recorded data often were contradictory with no reliable way to ascertain the correct data. In these cases of contradictory material the information was deleted or used in general terms as reference material.

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## CHAPTER I

### HISTORY OF STOLEN AUTO SECTION

In the year 1916 the Chicago Police Department officially recognized automobile theft as a future source of difficulty in the major crime field. At that time the first steps were taken to organize what is now considered to be the most modern and progressive automobile theft reduction organization in the entire field of law enforcement.

At its inception the stolen auto detail consisted of only two officers assigned nominally to the investigation of stolen automobiles under direct supervision of the Chief of Detectives. These officers had little knowledge of automobile identification. The automobile manufacturers were disinterested in the problems of police departments as the number of motor vehicle thefts was negligible. There was slight indication that the service of this department branch would ever be considered important.

The officers began their job by studying the most popular makes of automobiles with the view of working out a system of identification to trace ownership of vehicles through the auto-

mobile factories, as the license registration system of that time was not always adequate for that purpose. Then a very informal system of recording the relatively few stolen automobiles was established to obtain descriptions of stolen automobiles for the information of police officers who might come upon the vehicles in their normal duties.

At the conclusion of these preliminary arrangements the auto detail was considered to be a satisfactory unit for those times. The criminals of that era were also making plans for the use of automobiles in their activities, and they began by employing their legitimately owned vehicles in committing crimes, not realizing that a system of automobile identification would permit tracing ownership when they were forced to abandon the automobiles because of police pursuit or other reasons.

During the early prohibition years there was an increase in automobile thefts partially due to the fact that criminals became reluctant to use their own automobiles in bootlegging and hi-jacking activities. These criminals made temporary use of stolen automobiles which were abandoned after serving the purpose. Along with this complication, the ease with which automobiles could be stolen in those years made them a target for pranksters who used the vehicles for transportation purposes. Also the theft of motor vehicles for resale purposes developed. There was serious thought given to the special enforce-

ment of automobile larceny, the tracing of ownership and the recording of thefts was beginning to assume important proportions.

By 1922 the auto detail had been expanded to two sergeants and fourteen police officers to contend with the more serious problem. Improvements had been made in the still somewhat crude recording system. Members of the stolen auto detail had been assigned in each police district to confine their duties to investigation of automobile thefts. These revisions were of value, but the increasing production and use of automobiles continued to expand the problem of maintaining control over automobile theft.

In 1924 it became apparent that the problem demanded greater field enforcement of a specialized nature and additional manpower, four sergeants and twenty one police officers, were assigned to the auto detail to supplement the police district efforts. It was necessary to train these men intensively in the automobile field for suitable efficiency.

From 1924 to 1928, considerable progress was made in improving the auto detail. Its members achieved success in the efficient checking of suspect stolen automobiles, as well as by making frequent arrests of persons using stolen automobiles in other major crimes. Workable arrangements were made with the automobile manufacturers to identify and trace vehicles by numbers on stripped (removed) parts of the stolen automobiles. These

arrangements were particularly advantageous where men assigned to the checking of parts and records of used automobile and accessory dealers would come upon a part of a stolen automobile which could be traced by its serial number as being assembled with an automobile reported stolen; then by checking the dealer's records information could be obtained that would eventually lead to arrest of the thieves.

Until 1929 the cooperative efforts of district personnel and the stolen auto detail members were able to keep pace with the production of automobiles and increasing activities of the thieves, but from 1930 through 1933 the thefts and stripping of automobiles reached staggering proportions, over ninety seven thousand stolen automobiles in this three year period. Approximately 80 per cent of the automobiles recovered were minus major or minor parts, and 20 per cent (approximately seven thousand automobiles yearly) were disappearing permanently.

The era from 1930 through 1933 resulted in the first drastic revision of police and court policy toward the stolen automobile problem. A citizens' committee expressed indignation at the way automobile thieves were being treated as pranksters by the court. Insurance premiums for automobile theft were rising radically, over 200 per cent increase, as a result of the tremendous number of automobiles being stripped and stolen. There was some criticism on a constructive basis of the way in which the

police department was attempting to handle the situation; but after several conferences it was recommended that, because of the magnitude of the problem, a new Division of Stolen Automobiles be created, independent of any of the other department branches, and staffed by all available experienced auto officers within the department, with the Commanding Captain answerable only to the Commissioner of Police.

In June 1931 the new Division of Stolen Automobiles came into existence, commanded by a Captain with three Lieutenants assigned, two of the Lieutenants to serve as observers in the Boys' and Felony branches of the Municipal Court where stolen automobile cases were being heard, and the third to supervise the activities of the street personnel in an energetic enforcement program aimed not only at apprehending the thieves but also those unscrupulous dealers engaged in business of purchasing stolen automobiles and parts.

Prior to establishing the new division, it was recommended that as a part of the program new state legislation be passed requiring each motor vehicle to have a certificate of title without which a sale could not be completed. The lack of such legislation interfered with the success of the new program during 1931, 1932 and 1933 which were the all time high years for automobile larcenies in Chicago.

The State's Attorney of Cook County embarked on a cam-

paign to enlist the aid of the courts and the legislature in 1933. He insisted on strict prosecution of every automobile theft case and requested that severe punishment be inflicted on those convicted. The courts gave full cooperation in that campaign, and the Illinois legislature passed the Certificate of Title law which became effective January 1, 1934.

With the new Division of Stolen Automobiles operating at the desired efficiency, cooperation between the police department, prosecutors and courts resulted in the arrest and severe punishment of automobile thieves. The Certificate of Title law was an essential bulwark against the large scale commercial thieves.

The year 1934 was the first reflecting the benefits of the new theft reduction program. Thefts (12,164) dropped to about 40 per cent of the 1933 total (27,891) and 35 per cent of the peak years 1931 and 1932 (35,145 and 34,789 respectively). In 1935 there was another sharp decrease to 6,440, about 18 per cent of the peak totals. Also from 1936 through 1947 the theft totals ran from 8 per cent to 10 per cent of the peak totals (4,001 and 3,391 for the specific years mentioned). The year 1945 was an exception when the total thefts was about 3 per cent higher than the average for those years (1936 through 1947).<sup>1</sup>

---

1 See Appendix II

It should be recalled that 1945 was the year that World War II ended, and there was an exceptional demand for automobiles by returning servicemen. In many cases automobiles were stolen by veterans of that war from large cities for the sole purpose of returning home; as the manufacture of automobiles was restored to normal output, the spotty increase of 1945 was quickly eliminated.

In 1948 upon request of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which was attempting to institute a standard system of recording crime throughout the nation, an adoption of the present system of assigning auto theft numbers almost immediately upon receipt of the larceny complaints was inaugurated. This system went into effect October 1, 1948, and for that year there was a slight increase in the total automobile thefts which was partially attributed to becoming familiar with the new method. It is believed that the revised system has resulted in a considerable improvement for supplying an accurate picture of the overall problem.

There was some commercial automobile theft for resale during the years 1934 through 1948. As dealers demanded titles for automobiles purchased, there was an increasing trend in the numbers of spurious certificates produced by counterfeiting, photostating, photographing or altering, along with more professional work in obliterating, altering, and stamping engine



numbers to coincide with those numbers on the titles.

The operations of the reorganized auto detail showed no changes made from 1931 to 1953, except that in conformance with the department policy placed in effect in 1932 which separated the department into only two divisions--detective and uniformed--the unit was renamed Stolen Auto Section of the Detective Division that year and its position was restored as a function of the Detective Division, answerable to the Chief of Detectives, in which position it remains to date. The Stolen Auto Section since its beginning in 1916 with two men has expanded to one hundred and twenty one assigned personnel, a reflection of how the problem of automobile theft had increased through the years.

As previously stated there was a slight increase in automobile theft during 1948. In 1949 there was a 15 per cent increase over the preceding year, and each year thereafter there was a substantial increase through 1952 in which year the total was more than 140 per cent higher than the total of 1947. This represented a very serious situation demanding immediate attention. At the police department level an analysis was begun to determine all aspects of the problem and to offer some practical solution to alleviate the matter before it was completely out of control.

Checking the theft figures for the most recent years

up through 1952 indicates that about 90 per cent of the automobiles were stolen for the express purpose of joy-riding or obtaining transportation, as indicated by the fact that this percentage of stolen vehicles was abandoned within forty-eight hours of theft without any evidence of parts removed.

As the joy-rider and transportation borrower was the cause of theft in 90 per cent of the cases, he had to receive the greatest attention. In most cases he was in the juvenile or teen-age class, attending high school or in the process of obtaining jobs. In some cases he was just beginning a life of crime by starting with automobiles, and his particular type not only jeopardized his own career but affected many others who came into innocent contact with him. Others found the stolen automobile a means of satisfying their ego with regard to impressing boy or girl friends. Emotionally immature teenagers at times used the stolen automobiles in such daring "contests" such as bumper-to-bumper races and "chicken" exhibitions in which two automobiles were driven head-on toward each other with the thought that the "braver" one would not turn away; these escapades often resulted in death or serious personal injuries. Still others found the automobiles very useful in drinking and petting orgies.

The youths referred to above were in classes that could not be generally assisted by the police department; they

were either of a criminal nature that demanded incarceration, or required other assistance from sociologically trained professional people. The great majority of all the joy-riders were of good character--temporarily led astray. It was felt that a genuine educational program directed toward all high school students might produce benefits by acquainting the joy-riders and potential automobile thieves with the seriousness of taking automobiles and the frequent unhappy consequences. During the spring months of 1953 such a program was conducted in many of the public high schools by the Stolen Auto Section, with explanations as to how youths might become involved, the danger and possible punishment to be considered, and the stigma of a criminal record which could place unnecessary hardships on future careers. The informal lectures given in the schools were received with courteous attention by the students, and executive members of the Board of Education stated that this was an important contribution to the juvenile delinquency problem. Courteous attention by the students was of course not sufficient proof that the lectures were impressive, but subsequent interest by student groups reflected a thoughtful attitude by at least a portion of the audiences, and this in itself was a satisfying beginning. The lectures were continued, permission was requested to bring the information to all public and parochial high schools, and progress was made in solving the joy-rider and transportation thief

problem.

The problem of apprehending the thief who was stripping stolen automobiles required an intensive concentration of manpower where the vehicles were being recovered, and although many of the stripped automobiles had been abandoned after the removal job was performed elsewhere, the general area of such activities could be ascertained. Used automobile, accessory and junk dealers were checked frequently in search of parts that might be traced to the actual automobile thieves. Alleys and vacant lots were kept under surveillance during the hours when the stripping jobs would probably be performed. As pressure was exerted on this phase of theft, a decided improvement was noted.

The commercial theft problem was relatively a large one, but actually did not compare in number of thefts with the joy-rider phase. There was a continuous conflict between the skilled auto theft investigating officers and the crafty professional automobile thieves who were constantly changing their operations as the police became familiar with the modus operandi being employed. The situation could not be compared with the problem of 1931, 1932 and 1933 when automobile identification was inadequate. The thieves now realized that in general they must try to deal with a responsible automobile dealer having sufficient knowledge of registration certificates and familiar with the engine and serial numbering systems of the various manufacturers. The thieves devised various ways of producing cer-

tificates of titles for stolen automobiles, some photostated or photographed, others counterfeited, and still others issued for legitimate automobiles but altered to fit the automobile stolen. They attained varying degrees of efficiency in obliterating, altering and restamping fictitious engine numbers. The inadequate registration laws of a few states were used to great advantage in obtaining what appeared to be authentic titles. Responsible dealers had become extremely cautious in purchasing from strange sources; that is they carefully checked the certificate of title, engine and serial numbers with the corresponding numbers on the vehicles. When there were indications of engine number tampering or substitution of fraudulent serial number plates, dealers informed police. The thieves were forced to deal in many cases with small town dealers or with those refusing to be cautious because purchase prices of the automobiles appeared to be below the current market value. The years immediately following termination of World War II provided the best opportunity for such operations; production was so far behind demand that some greedy dealers anxious to make quick, large profits accepted automobiles without question or investigation. Such dealers not only contributed to the automobile theft problem but suffered large losses of money when the thieves were traced through their method of operation, the automobiles recovered from the ultimate buyers, and the dealers forced to reimburse the buyers.

Automobiles taken for scrap value presented another important problem. During the post-war years, again because of no automobile manufacturing from 1943-1945 the pre-war automobiles were in a large measure arriving at the derelict stage. Owners reluctant to invest money in expensive repairs, preferring to wait for the time when they could obtain newer vehicles. In the meantime vehicles were often left in front of homes or vacant lots in disrepair and without current year licenses. The police department was forced to remove several thousand of such automobiles as nuisances, towing them to the Police Auto Pond to be held pending redemption by owners upon payment of towing and storage fees plus presentation of the current licenses. If owners failed to redeem them, the vehicles were sold at public auctions as junk. Perhaps the sight of these vehicles being towed off the streets by police authorized towing concerns gave these petty thieves the idea, but in the years 1950, 1951 and 1952, 2 per cent of the total thefts were being stolen for the express purpose of sale as scrap. It was difficult to trace the actual thief, since he would take the automobile directly to a modern scrap disposal yard where the engine was removed and the balance of the vehicle crushed into a small cube that defied tracing of the body or serial numbers. The engines were quickly disposed of in melting operations, and there was no evidence unless police were fortunate to come upon the thief

as he was making the removal or were on hand at the yard when he came to sell the derelict. Emphasis was placed on this phase of automobile theft by stressing special surveillance of unauthorized towing trucks and individual cutting-up jobs. This along with the new automobile production increase, tended gradually to reduce that type of automobile theft.

Automobiles stolen for the purpose of committing other crimes were a problem for the entire police department, as they often were used in armed robberies, which receive considerable attention. The percentage of such thefts usually remains rather consistent, and these vehicles are ordinarily abandoned within a few hours after the taking. It is not particularly a stolen automobile problem considered in prevention measures, but it is a part of the statistical problem in evaluating and analyzing the total number of thefts.

With the breakdown of figures establishing the exact problem, it was decided to examine the system and methods used by the entire department in combating automobile thefts with the view of recommending innovations that might be of value. During 1953 the seriousness of the situation was recognized and the Chicago Police Department began a program of automobile theft reduction which was novel in that it did not attempt to usurp authority by the Stolen Auto Section over the individual police district responsibilities but, instead, supplied data for their

use in effecting proper enforcement.

Monthly report booklets were supplied to every police district, division headquarters, traffic units and executive officers of the police department, showing the preceding month statistics with a complete description of every automobile taken, where the stolen automobiles were recovered, zones of highest theft rates, charts of arrest clear-ups, and the number of persons arrested for automobile theft violations. Experienced officers of the Stolen Auto Section were sent into the traffic units to explain the nature of automobile theft and what might be accomplished by their mobile personnel which would come into contact with the moving vehicles carrying automobile thieves.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the private insurance agency, The National Automobile Theft Bureau, were consulted and their assistance was sought in interesting the automobile manufacturers in placing a protective enclosure over the terminals at the rear of ignition locks, as "jumping" these terminals with a piece of tinfoil and various other means made it an easy matter for any car thief to be in an automobile and off with it in a matter of seconds.

The assistance of the press and radio was obtained in impressing upon the public their responsibility to protect their vehicles by closing windows tightly, locking doors, removing the ignition key and other means of protection. The average thief



is generally reluctant to break a window to gain entrance, but contents himself with trying the unlocked door handles or taking advantage of a partially opened window.

Another source of assistance lay in the civic and business groups that were interested in the program. These people realized that the juvenile delinquency problem was definitely connected with the stolen automobile problem. Experienced officers of the Stolen Auto Section spoke at the meetings of these groups, explaining what might be accomplished by these groups having influence in their community.

Still more improvements were obvious within the police department, and in September of 1953 new theft and recovery investigation forms were put into use as a means of obtaining the most complete information into every automobile reported stolen or recovered in Chicago, along with a new type of Auto Theft Offender History Sheet, from which it was hoped to prepare a file instrumental during the future in locating persons possibly implicated in automobile theft.

As of February 1, 1954, the new vitalized program was showing evidence of success. The 1953 theft totals were about 8 per cent lower than those of the preceding year, and there were indications that the modern organization would continue to show improvements in the problem.

## CHAPTER II

### AUTOMOBILES INVOLVED IN THEFTS

A study of the makes of automobiles and the year of their manufacture brings some interesting facts into view. The automobiles that are most frequently stolen are neither late model automobiles nor the most expensive variety. The highest number of automobile thefts involve the 1949-1951 Ford and Chevrolet, also the 1949-1951 Mercury and Oldsmobile. The former in the lowest priced bracket and the latter in the medium priced field. The question arises as to why these particular types of automobiles have the highest rate of theft? One answer to this is that these automobiles provide the easiest entry for the thief; they also have an ignition switch that requires a minimum of knowledge to "jump" or by-pass.

The majority of automobile manufacturers today give little thought to the fact that they are making a potentially dangerous instrument that may be acquired by an automobile thief at his slightest wish and a few seconds of his time. The ease with which an automobile of today may be entered and started is extraordinary. The act of entering and starting an automobile by illegal means has been estimated to take as little as thirteen seconds. Although

this refers to professional theft in entering and starting a locked automobile, there is also the fact that a potential automobile thief need not learn all of the tricks of entry and "jumping" of the automobile ignition but may just wait for some careless individual to leave his automobile open with the keys in the ignition. All that is required in such cases is the ability to drive the automobile away.

A review of the police records for the year 1953, with a breakdown of the make of automobile and the year of manufacture, discloses the various aspects of the type of automobiles stolen and the year of their manufacture. The automobiles most subject to theft in Chicago, in 1953, were manufactured in the years 1949-1951--an automobile three to four years old, having a monetary value of less than one thousand dollars. Forty per cent of all the automobiles stolen in 1953 were manufactured in these years.

Figure 1 shows the Basic Map of Chicago as divided into Police Districts, also the different Police Divisions and the Division Headquarters. Figure 2 shows the separate Police Districts with the total automobile thefts committed in the District in 1953. Table I shows the information of Figure 2 in table form. Table II shows the District number; the area of the District in square miles; the population of the District with the number of persons, per cent white and per cent negro. The population figures are based on the 1950 United States Census.

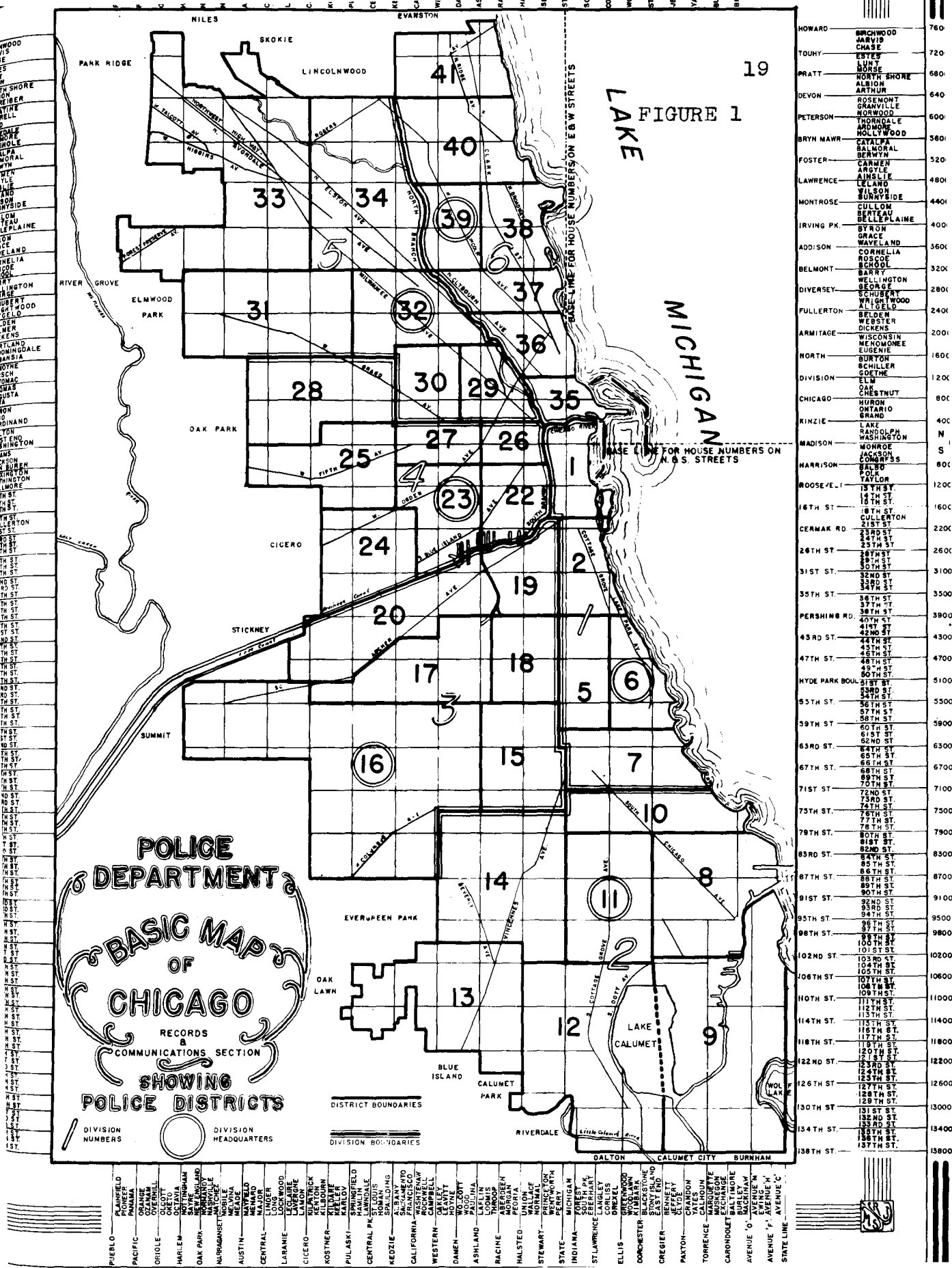
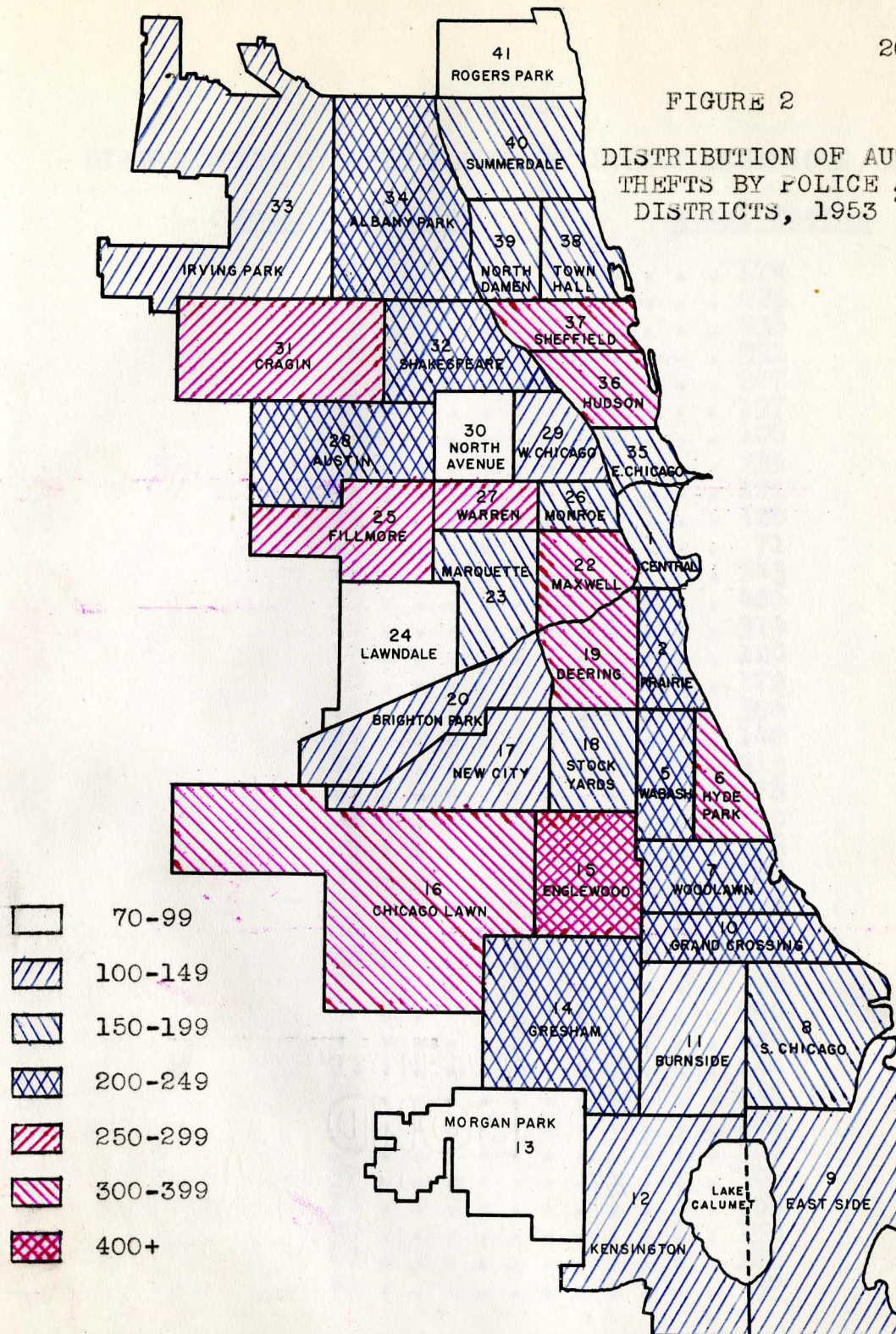




FIGURE 2

# DISTRIBUTION OF AUTO THEFTS BY POLICE <sup>2</sup> DISTRICTS, 1953



<sup>2</sup> source: Monthly Reports Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF AUTO THEFTS BY POLICE DISTRICTS, 1953<sup>3</sup>

<u>Police District</u>	<u>Total Thefts</u>
1 . . . . .	174
2 . . . . .	225
5 . . . . .	236
6 . . . . .	331
7 . . . . .	247
8 . . . . .	197
9 . . . . .	106
10 . . . . .	235
11 . . . . .	121
12 . . . . .	126
13 . . . . .	71
14 . . . . .	243
15 . . . . .	426
16 . . . . .	319
17 . . . . .	120
18 . . . . .	172
19 . . . . .	356
20 . . . . .	142
22 . . . . .	313
23 . . . . .	178
24 . . . . .	70
25 . . . . .	276
26 . . . . .	188
27 . . . . .	266
28 . . . . .	233
29 . . . . .	140
30 . . . . .	92
31 . . . . .	250
32 . . . . .	229
33 . . . . .	144
34 . . . . .	246
35 . . . . .	202
36 . . . . .	305
37 . . . . .	306
38 . . . . .	169
39 . . . . .	158
40 . . . . .	188
41 . . . . .	87

3 Source: Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section,  
Chicago Police Department.

TABLE II

CHICAGO POLICE DISTRICTS BY AREA AND POPULATION, 1950 <sup>4</sup>

District	Area of District (Square Miles)	Population of District, 1950		
		Number of Persons	%White	%Negro
1	2.26	9,976	66	34
2	2.95	100,801	14	86
5	3	162,341	2	98
6	2.34	101,678	93	7
7	4	128,088	62	38
8	6	79,468	93	7
9	14.5	33,803	100	0
10	3.67	83,504	99	1-
11	6	61,687	93	7
12	9.5	78,447	84	16
13	9.75	55,189	78	22
14	9.5	108,704	96	4
15	4.88	138,534	89	11
16	20.13	146,065	99	1-
17	5.5	87,171	99	1-
18	3.5	43,868	90	10
19	3.21	69,364	100	0
20	6.5	50,880	99	1-
22	3.5	72,570	86	14
23	4.5	94,902	83	17
24	5.5	91,442	97	3
25	5.5	161,839	99	1-
26	1.75	29,293	86	14
27	2.25	78,238	40	60
28	6	143,985	99	1-
29	3	82,885	99	1
30	2.75	83,883	99	1
31	8.75	123,847	99	1-
32	5.25	143,988	99	1-
33	15.37	159,635	99	1-
34	10	154,136	99	1-
35	1.5	56,235	68	32
36	2.75	97,231	98	2
37	2.5	90,014	99	1-
38	2.75	121,207	99	1-
39	2.5	72,938	100	0
40	5.25	135,656	99	1-
41	4.34	87,470	99	1-
Total	212.9	3,620,962	87.87	12.13

<sup>4</sup> Source: United States Bureau of Census, 1950

Table III shows the ten makes of automobiles with the highest theft rate and their year of manufacture. The high rate of manufacture of some of these automobiles does have some influence upon the rate of theft; but because of the frequency of theft, due to their abundant number, it does not exclude the fact that these automobiles have such weak mechanical construction that they become easy prey for the automobile thief.

TABLE III

TEN MAKES AND YEARS OF STOLEN AUTOMOBILES  
WITH HIGHEST THEFT RATE, 1953<sup>5</sup>

Make of Auto	Pre War	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954
Buick	99	59	90	75	131	181	112	80	85	
Chevrolet	45	24	51	88	153	188	210	187	146	
Chrysler	11	30	46	8	9	15	14	11	16	
Dodge	24	80	135	26	14	34	23	22	34	
Ford	48	26	39	44	813	491	132	90	117	
Kaiser			28	43	26	10	90	9		
Mercury	10	13	23	19	381	296	214	145	189	1
Oldsmobile	19	13	22	105	209	401	261	73	89	
Plymouth	34	147	182	88	39	34	42	28	44	3
Pontiac	24	12	19	25	69	79	84	53	28	

<sup>5</sup> Source: Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department.

Appendix I furnishes the complete breakdown of automobiles stolen by year of manufacture and make of automobile, truck, or others. The category "others," consists mainly of motor scooters, motorcycles, and vehicles of foreign manufacture. A more complete study of the type of automobile stolen as to the



year and make was not possible for comparison as to the unavailability of the records prior to the year of 1953.

The totals of the thefts reported for the year 1953 in relation to a month-to-month check reveal the same trend that is noted on a National scale.<sup>6</sup> The high rate of theft occurs in the darker months in comparison to the months of long periods of daylight. This trend has been long established, as seasonal variations show that crimes against the person has the highest rate in the summer months, while crimes against property rise in darker months.<sup>7</sup>

As noted in Table III the high number of thefts of certain makes of automobiles brings to light that these also are the ones with the highest rate of manufacture. Officials concerned with this problem confirm the fact that these particular makes of automobiles are the most frequently stolen. In addition it is also noted that these makes of automobiles are the easiest to steal and due to their abundance they receive the most attention from the automobile thief. Another aspect is the thief would be less conspicuous in an automobile that would not be outstanding on the street but blend in with the normal traffic.

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<sup>6</sup> Uniform Crime Reports, U. S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1953, XXIV, No. 2, 82.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 85.

Table IV shows the totals of stolen autos in Chicago on a month-to-month basis and the yearly total. It breaks down the reported thefts into the different classifications of Total Thefts Reported, Total Non Bona Fide Reported Thefts, Motor Scooters Reported Stolen, Automobiles Taken in Robbery, Automobiles Taken in Burglary, Automobiles Taken in Larceny. The Table also shows the Total Automobile Recoveries, Total Non Bona Fide Recovered, Motor Scooters Recovered, Automobiles Recovered Taken in Robbery, Automobiles Recovered Taken in Burglary, Automobiles Recovered Taken in Larceny, also the total of Automobiles Recovered Stripped.

TABLE IV

TOTALS OF STOLEN AUTOMOBILES IN CHICAGO BY MONTHS, 1953<sup>8</sup>

	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c	Tot- als
Thefts	752	782	828	889	825	609	639	674	774	821	812	828	9233
Non Bona Fide	132	119	113	115	111	105	93	108	105	125	125	102	1353
Motor Scooters	1	6	5	10	10	12	10	9	15	25	8	4	115
Robbery	12	16	11	10	12	10	12	11	8	11	8	6	127
Burglary	10	7	14	10	10	9	9	10	9	14	8	8	129
Larceny	598	640	690	754	692	485	525	545	652	671	671	712	7509
Recoveries	763	775	800	875	814	662	619	673	750	797	800	806	9134
Non Bona Fide	132	119	113	115	111	105	93	108	105	125	125	102	1353
Motor Scooters	0	2	3	7	4	6	3	2	8	6	7	2	50
Robbery	11	18	8	12	11	10	11	8	7	10	14	2	124
Burglary	9	6	13	10	10	5	10	8	7	11	9	6	104
Larceny	611	632	666	736	682	542	505	549	631	651	652	694	5763
Stripped	13	16	27	24	37	23	40	48	42	46	41	30	387

<sup>8</sup> Source: Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department.

Table IV shows that the total automobile thefts in Chicago were 7880. The total automobiles recovered were 7,781. Three per cent of the total thefts were taken in burglaries and robberies. Two and nine-tenths per cent of the total automobiles recovered were those taken in robberies and burglaries. Four and nine-tenths per cent of the total automobiles stolen were recovered stripped.

The foregoing data show the severity and the extent of the crime of automobile theft in the Chicago area. These figures are only a small part of the total national figure but they represent a crime of major importance to the City of Chicago.

The monetary loss to the individual victim and to the community cannot be accurately determined. The owner says his automobile is worth one thousand dollars and reports it as having this value, but an appraisal of the automobile may set the value at six hundred dollars. The national estimate of loss due to automobile theft in 1953, was \$235,137,140. Of this national total over fourteen million dollars worth remained unrecovered at the year's end.<sup>9</sup> Arbitrarily setting the value of \$600.00 for each automobile theft in Chicago in 1953, the value would be \$4,728,000. Of this Chicago figure \$709,200 would be the unrecovered loss. This ranks in the highest position in all types of

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9 Uniform Crime Reports, XXIV, 67.

crime as to monetary value. The preceding figure does not consider the cost to the community as reflected in the high rate of insurance, nor the persons for whom the theft of an automobile is but the first step in a life of crime, who later become burdens on the community in the form of criminals incarcerated, on probation, or on parole.

### CHAPTER III

#### CHANGES AND COMPARISONS OF AUTOMOBILE THEFTS

A check of the records for the past years confirms the steady rise in the crime of automobile theft in Chicago. From 1946 to 1953 inclusive, the records show an increase of over 140 per cent. This percentage figure can be analyzed from two viewpoints: one, the year to year increase in terms of the total percentage difference, then the addition of these figures for the total overall increase; two, a comparison of the number of automobiles registered in the City of Chicago, with the number of stolen automobiles in Chicago for the previous years, then the comparison of these figures with those of the current year.

In 1953 there were 1,096,794 more vehicles registered than in 1946, an increase of 36 per cent in State registrations. There has been an increase of 418,504 vehicles registered in the City, an increase of 44 per cent. Also, there has been a 36 per cent increase in County registrations during the 1946-51 period. The County figure is qualified as of 1951, since the information for 1952 and 1953 was not available.

Table V shows the motor vehicles registered in the State, County, and City for 1946-1953 inclusive, together with the number of vehicles stolen in the City and the vehicles recovered in the City.<sup>10</sup>

TABLE V

MOTOR VEHICLES REGISTERED, BY STATE, COUNTY, AND CITY:  
STOLEN AND RECOVERED, BY CITY OF CHICAGO, 1946-1953<sup>11</sup>

Year	State License	County License	City License	City Stolen	City Recovered
1946	1,884,556	804,079	512,055	3,384	3,613
1947	1,967,364	893,091	580,799	3,391	3,426
1948	2,252,405	973,541	641,003	4,013	3,952
1949	2,443,375	1,065,373	707,282	4,660	4,559
1950	2,676,233	1,118,384	782,938	5,510	5,263
1951	2,814,147	1,359,497	814,547	7,287	7,014
1952	2,863,735		803,499	8,464	8,227
1953	2,981,350		930,559	7,880	7,781

<sup>11</sup> Source: Records Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department

The State or City registrations do not include transfers, dealers' plates, etc. The State totals include about 13 per cent trucks, City totals include about 9 per cent trucks.

During the same period (1946-1953) there has been an increase of 6.8 per cent in population in the City of Chicago according to the 1950 census. There also has been an increase of 10.9 per cent in population in the County. The comparative rise

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix II for previous years totals

in population and vehicle registration is completely out balanced by the rise of automobile thefts. During the same period (1946-1951) there has been a 36 per cent increase of vehicles registered in the County. The period 1946-1953 has shown a 44 per cent rise in the City vehicle registration with an increase of 56 per cent in automobile thefts. These preceding figures are compared with a proportional rise in population and vehicle registration and automobile thefts. The rise in automobile thefts as thefts is 140 per cent.

Table VI shows the yearly totals of automobile thefts from 1947-1953 inclusive, with a breakdown of the total thefts; automobiles taken in robberies, automobiles taken in burglaries, automobiles taken in larcenies; also the total of automobiles recovered, those taken in robberies, those taken in burglaries, those taken in larcenies, and those automobiles recovered stripped. The year 1946 was not included as the breakdown of the totals was not available.

TABLE VI

YEARLY TOTALS OF AUTOMOBILE THEFTS, CHICAGO, 1947-1953<sup>12</sup>

Automobiles	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	
Stolen	3391	4361	4660	5510	7287	8464	7880	
Taken in Roberies	356	361	234	212	216	146	127	
Taken in Burglaries	189	195	154	117	204	172	129	
Taken in Larcenies	2846	3396	4272	5128	6867	8146	7509	
Recovered	3426	4300	4559	5263	7014	8227	7881	
Taken in Robberies	348	361	235	207	209	146	124	
Taken in Burglaries	177	195	144	159	178	162	104	
Taken in Larcenies	2901	3396	4108	4897	6627	7719	5763	
Stripped	112	127	130	203	443	479	387	

<sup>12</sup> Source: Records Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department

The recovery rate figures can be misleading as to the total recovery percentage. A comparison of the total number of vehicles stolen and the number recovered in the same year gives a figure of 99 per cent for 1953, whereas the figure should be 85 per cent of thefts in 1953 recovered, with the remaining recoveries referring to previous thefts in previous years. Of these remaining automobiles there will be a recovery rate of 14.2 per cent, leaving only 0.8 per cent as total losses, if 1953 losses are cleared at the rate of previous years. This is the reason for a recovery figure for a year that is greater than the reported number of thefts: example 1946 and 1947, more automobiles were reported recovered than reported stolen.

An area study was made to see if there was an organized

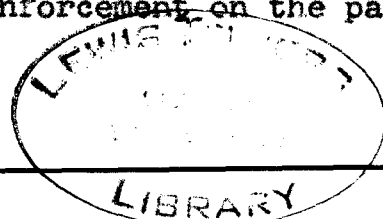


pattern in which automobiles were taken and abandoned, but this did not produce satisfactory results. There can be a sharp rise in automobile thefts in one Police District for a short period, and then a sharp halt. This shows up on the District report as a bad area for automobile theft, yet it may be no more than a spasmodic event brought about by a single person or gang that have started out in something new and are stealing automobiles from this one area, reflecting on this single district. When this person or gang is apprehended the sharp halt results, but the halt is still not reflected in a crime rate figure over the total year. An example of this can be given: the Automobile Show opened on a Friday night, and there were ten automobiles stolen from the area. Three extra police squads were assigned in addition to patrolmen in the area. Three more automobiles were stolen the next night with some of the thieves being apprehended. For the remainder of the show there were no more thefts reported from this area. The District monthly report would look bad, but automobile theft would be a "passive" type of crime at the end of the month. To predict a certain area as a danger area for automobile thefts is possible only on a day-to-day basis. It is true that there are areas in the City that have a higher rate of automobile thefts, but the problem can best be handled on a day-to-day basis for a disposition of more men in the area and whatever police action is necessary to bring about a reduction at the particular time.

The new Monthly Reports, starting January 1, 1953, issued by the Stolen Auto Section gives each District Commander an up-to-date picture of what is occurring in each District. The Report is divided into four sections and contains the following: monthly report of vehicles reported stolen, recovered and stripped automobiles in each district; automobiles taken in robberies, burglaries and larcenies; theft reports found to be non bona fide; monthly chart of districts divided into zones for determining where the greatest number of theft reports are being received; monthly list of automobiles reported stolen, separated into district classifications and showing the descriptions of automobiles, place of theft, recovery date, etc.; and monthly chart showing comparisons of automobiles stolen and recovered, and thefts cleared by arrest.

This gives the District Commander a complete picture for the last previous month which is based on a detailed daily picture of the stolen automobile problem kept in the Stolen Auto Section.

This method has produced the best results in communication of the problem to the different District Commanders. This method makes them aware not only of the situation in their own, but also the adjoining districts. The awareness of the seriousness of the situation is assured; this attention of the Commanders brings extra precautions, aids, and better enforcement on the part of police personnel.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE AUTOMOBILE THIEF

Ninety per cent of all recorded stolen vehicles were abandoned within forty-eight hours after the theft without any evidence of parts or accessories having been removed. This indicates that the automobiles were stolen for the express purpose of joy-riding or obtaining transportation. The persons engaged in this type of theft are usually immature non-professionals, as they apparently do not realize the serious consequences of their acts. The problem, as observed by the leading officials interviewed in the field, is definitely a teen-age problem.

Of the persons arrested for automobile theft in 1933 on a national scale, 69.8 per cent were minors (under twenty-one years of age), while 81 per cent of the persons arrested were under the age of twenty-five, 53.6 were under eighteen years of age. In the Cook County area for the year 1952 comparable figures show that 60 per cent of all persons arrested were under twenty-one years of age. In 1953 the comparable figures had declined slightly, but minors still accounted for 53 per cent of the total arrests for automobile theft.

The figures are inconclusive in many respects in that

they show only the number of persons arrested for the crime. This can in no way encompass the total problem. The arrest may actually clear up the theft of a great number of automobiles, while the charge upon which the thief is tried and convicted may concern only one or two thefts. The State's Attorney prosecutes only those cases in which he has conclusive evidence sufficient to obtain conviction. There is no accurate way to determine the extent of juvenile participation in the total problem. Individual confession may help to solve a number of thefts, but they do not cover the records of all thefts committed by minors.

The professional automobile thief or automobile theft ring presents an entirely different problem to the law enforcement agencies. Since the professional automobile theft ring is engaged in thefts solely for the purpose of resale or for stripping purposes, their operations are usually conducted along well laid plans to insure the speedy disposal of the automobile or parts and accessories stolen.

The theft of automobiles for the purpose of stripping may involve minors to the extent that there are available "fences" (receivers of stolen property) to handle the stolen parts or accessories. The professional automobile theft ring has already established its method of disposal of the parts and accessories stolen by having its "fence" connections established or by setting up their own used accessory shop, combining legitimate with illegal actions.

Where the professional automobile theft ring steals for the purpose of resale of the vehicle, the problem of title to the stolen vehicle arises. Today the vast majority of the states, thirty-seven, require that a certificate of title be presented to the buyer of each automobile. Thus the ring must either do business in the non-title states or in some manner procure fraudulent or counterfeit titles for the transaction.

In some cases it has been found that the rings have been thorough in disguising stolen automobiles, even going to the trouble of repainting the vehicles, altering engine numbers, and substituting serial number plates they manufactured or stole from other automobiles; but even these precautions are in most cases useless if titles are not available.

There are many ways in which titles have been created or falsified by these theft rings, including the following; counterfeiting by photographic or photostatic processes, using a legitimate title as the form with each automobile data inserted as required; obtaining registration certificates in non-title states, then submitting these certificates to motor vehicle bureaus in title states along with applications which result in procuring what appears to be a good title in each case; purchasing burned or wrecked vehicles for the purpose of getting titles, and using these titles in disposing of similar make and model stolen automobiles (in many cases the thief does not even bother

to take the burned or wrecked automobile); using titles of old automobiles and "doctoring" the data shown thereon to conform with engine and serial number on stolen automobiles; representing themselves as new automobile dealers at motor vehicles bureaus where titles may be obtained over the counter upon presentation of bills of sale for new automobiles (actually stolen in these cases).

These means of obtaining illegal titles for resale of stolen automobiles are the most common; but there are others, and from time to time variations are used by new theft rings. However the police system of following leads in theft ring cases is now developed to a point where once the pattern is known, an end is usually put to such particular ring within a relatively short time.

The preceding paragraphs describe the professional thief who steals for profit. His apprehension is entirely a police function. When it is considered that this professional thief is responsible for only 10 per cent of the total automobile theft problem, his importance falls in comparison with the non-professional. This does not mean that this phase should be neglected, but it shows that much more manpower could be advantageously used to combat the professional if a reduction of the non-professional theft, the joy-rider and transportation seeker, could be accomplished.

A third type of theft is committed by that person who uses the stolen automobile in the commission of another crime. Statistically, this type of theft comprises only 3 per cent of the total thefts. It is important to observe that the automobile is usually abandoned shortly after the commission of the other crime. This type of automobile thief must, of necessity, steal the vehicle within a relatively short period before the commission of the other crime.

Whether this type of theft would be materially reduced by making vehicles more theft proof is questionable. It, therefore, appears that this type of theft can be only materially reduced by other crime prevention methods.

The automobile thief is considered in a composite manner in this study. The subject offers a field of enlarged development and research for a detailed description of the thief.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A study of the statistics for the year 1953 to ascertain whether any significant patterns of automobile thefts could be established on a yearly scale revealed that there are few, if any, established patterns in automobile thefts. Seasonal trends were noted as is shown by the decline in thefts in June and July of the years studied. This decline appears to come from the teen-age group, who with the closing of schools for summer vacation find summer jobs and are thus occupied during the day. There are day-to-day patterns that appear within particular areas or districts and require immediate police action, but to forecast criminal activity from these is not statistically possible. The study conclusively indicated that seasons had an important effect upon automobile theft. Summer months where there is likely to be more daylight were found to be months of lower theft frequency. Responsible officials attribute this to the teen-age group as in periods of longer daylight more people were on the streets and using their automobiles, therefore the opportunities for thefts were greatly reduced.

Automobile theft by minors has created a serious and



dangerous situation on a national scale. In many cases it has been the first step leading to a life of criminal activity. The young person who steals an automobile for a lark, on a dare, or to impress someone fails to realize the danger in which he places himself. There is a probability of physical harm, for when an automobile is reported stolen and the description of the automobile is received by the police, it is immediately broadcast over the police radio network and reaches not only the city and park police, but all police squads in three states. Under Illinois statutes automobile theft is a felony, and the police are empowered to use whatever force they deem necessary to apprehend the person committing the crime. The police may and in some cases have found it necessary to shoot to kill in order to apprehend the automobile thief. Police cruising an area who spot a stolen automobile have no way of knowing who is involved in the theft and can and must act according to the seriousness of the crime involved.

The teen-ager does not seem to realize that by being caught and convicted of an automobile theft, he becomes a convicted felon and can endanger what may have been his goal in life. He bars himself from the many professional fields and businesses that require a license. He bars himself from public office and cannot hold positions in the federal, state or local governments.

The logical conclusion from these facts is that educa-

tional methods could be a very potent weapon in crime prevention. An educational program has been undertaken on a small scale in Chicago. This work is being done by police officers of the stolen auto section who visit the various high schools and give lectures. This program should be greatly expanded to obtain coverage of all high schools, public and private, throughout the city and county.

The limitations on such a program at the present time lie in the lack of trained personnel to conduct the lectures, the need for funds to conduct the program, and the difficulty of fitting the program into the school educational program. Educators, police personnel and crime prevention organizations envision a greatly expanded educational program as the most obvious method of reducing or eradicating the problem of automobile theft among the teen-age group. This program includes intensive adult education through fraternal groups, the Chamber of Commerce, business organizations and other similar organizations. Close cooperation between the schools and the Parent Teachers Associations can result in coordinated education of the adult and juvenile groups involved. The education of the parent to the problems of the juvenile are of prime importance.

The adult educational program involves the important problems of unlocked vehicles and leaving keys in the ignition. Statistics are not available as to the total number of thefts

directly due to carelessness of this sort on the part of adults. However, an intensive educational program directed at eradicating this type of carelessness on the part of adults should greatly reduce automobile thefts among minors. Police officials point out, with good reason, that the ease with which an unattended automobile can be started by a teen-ager is directly connected with the number of automobile thefts by this group.

Included in the problem of adult education is the need to convince the automobile manufacturer of the importance of correcting mechanical defects to make the automobile more theft proof. The statistics examined revealed a striking fact that cannot be ignored if automobile thefts are to be radically reduced. Certain types of automobiles were selected simply because they are easy to steal. In contrast, the automobiles which were most theft proof were found to be stolen less frequently, even though they may have been more attractive to the teen-ager on other scores. Making an automobile theft proof to a greater degree than they now are involves certain mechanical improvements which can only be undertaken by the manufacturers. If the manufacturers will not install these devices voluntarily, the state legislatures should be prevailed upon to pass statutes which will require the installation of the devices as a matter of law. As certain statutes made certain mechanical improvements mandatory in order to reduce automobile accidents, so can theft-proofing reduce auto-

mobile theft. The resulting savings to law enforcement bodies in time, personnel and funds will provide more effective law enforcement for other types of crime. A sealed ignition that completely protects all the terminals from being jumped or by-passed, or a switch that automatically locks the motor when the key is removed are suggested improvements.

It has been suggested by officials that the insurance companies include in their policies covering automobiles a clause stating that they will not be liable for loss due to theft if the vehicle is stolen while the keys had been left in the ignition. This clause to be printed in large, heavy type in order to impress upon the automobile owner the importance of removing the keys from the ignition when he leaves his automobile. It is believed that this could be an effective deterrent to the person who says "Who cares? I am insured," forgetting the fact that he is placing temptation in front of immature people--often leading to tragic consequences. Such acts are reflected in the higher premium rate which is not only passed on to the lazy, careless individual, but also to the prudent, careful individual.

The passage of a Uniform Title Act by all states would be very effective in deterring the professional automobile thief. At the present time there are still thirteen states that do not have a Title Act. Two of the thirteen have passed legislation which will become effective later this year. The remaining

eleven constitute a haven where the professional can obtain fraudulent bills of sale and resell the stolen automobile in titled states, making law enforcement more difficult for the latter.

While these recommendations are not expected to provide a "cure all", a conscientious effort on the part of all the agencies involved in bringing this program into effect should be followed by a material decrease in automobile thefts, especially among one important group, the teen-agers. The resulting reduction in opportunities may prevent some teen-agers from committing the first offense, and, by so doing, permit them to mature into useful citizens devoid of any criminal stigma.

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# APPENDIX I

## MAKES AND YEARS OF STOLEN AUTOS, JANUARY 1953 <sup>13</sup>

Make of Auto	Pre War	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	Tot-als
Buick	13	2	5	5	10	15	5	6			61
Cadillac	1	1	2				1	2			7
Checker Cab						1	4	1			6
Chevrolet	7	2	7	6	10	7	15	19	1		74
Chrysler	2	1	5	1	1	1	2	1			14
DeSoto	1	1	4			2	1	2	1		12
Dodge		10	10	1		4	2		3		30
Ford	9	2	4	6	90	49	13	7	2		182
Frazier			1	2							3
Hudson	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2			10
Kaiser			3	2	4	1	11				22
Lincoln		2			1	1	2	1	1		8
Mercury	1	4	1	2	36	24	9	15	2		94
Nash	2	1		1		1	7	9			21
Oldsmobile	3	3	1	8	13	24	22	3	2		79
Packard				1	1	2					4
Plymouth	7	9	18	14	4	3	3	1	2		61
Pontiac	3	2	1	5	4	7	6	3	1		32
Studebaker			3	2	2		2	1			10
Yellow Cab					1		2	1			4
Willys				1		1	1	1			4
Chevrolet T						2		1			3
Diamond TT		1									1
Dodge T								1			1
Int'l T	2	1	1	1	1						6
Int'l Trailer	1										1
Trailmobile			1								1
CMC T				1							1
Others											
Totals	53	43	68	60	179	146	110	77	16		752

<sup>13</sup> Source: January Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department.



MAKES AND YEARS OF STOLEN AUTOS, FEBRUARY 1953 <sup>14</sup>

Make of Auto	Pre War	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	Tot-als
Buick	8	3	8	2	10	13	5	4			53
Cadillac			1		1	1		1	2		6
Checker Cab						2	3	1			6
Chevrolet	9	2	4	6	14	16	14	15	1		81
Chrysler	3	5	8		1				1		18
DeSoto	2	2	4	2	1	2		1			14
Dodge	3	8	15	2	1	3	3	2	1		38
Ford	3	1	5	3	79	40	6	6	5		148
Frazier			1	1	2						4
Hudson		1	2		1	4	1	1			10
Kaiser			1	1	2	2	7				13
Lincoln					4		2	1	1		8
Mercury	4		2		38	19	19	6	2		90
Nash		1	1				4	1			7
Oldsmobile	4	2	1	14	24	48	32	5	1		131
Packard	3			5		1	2	1			12
Plymouth	3	25	24	7	2	2	6	5			14
Pontiac	2		1		7	9	7	5			31
Studebaker	2			3	1	1		1			8
Yellow Cab				1			3	1			5
Willys							1				1
Chevrolet T			1				1				2
Diamond TT											0
Dodge T								1			1
Int'l T	1		1	1		2	2	1			8
Int'l Trailer											0
Trailmobile											0
GMC T			1				1		1		3
Others					2		4	4			10
Totals	47	50	81	48	190	165	123	63	15		782

<sup>14</sup> Source: February Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department.

# MAKES AND YEARS OF STOLEN AUTOS, MARCH 1953<sup>15</sup>

Make of Auto	Pre War	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	Totals
Buick	29	12	13	5	8	17	11	11	2		108
Cadillac	2			2	2	1		6			13
Checker Cab						1	3	1			5
Chevrolet		4	4	14	14	14	15	13	10		88
Chrysler	1	6	6	1		2		1			17
DeSoto	1	1	9	1	1	3					16
Dodge	1	14	14	4		1	1		1		36
Ford	3	1	8	2	66	50	17	4	4		155
Frazier			1	2	1						4
Hudson			1				1	1			3
Kaiser			3	5	1	2	5	1			17
Lincoln					5	1	1				7
Mercury	2	1		1	39	25	17	22	5		112
Nash	2				1	1	5	1			10
Oldsmobile	2		2	10	10	41	16	6	2		89
Packard	1		2	3	2		1	2			11
Plymouth	2	13	21	16	4	5	7		2		70
Pontiac	1		4		9	8	8	4	3		37
Studebaker	1		3	4	1	1	2	1			13
Yellow Cab							2	1			3
Willis							1				1
Chevrolet T											0
Diamond TT											0
Dodge T											0
Int'l T											0
Int'l Trailer					1						1
Trailmobile											0
GMC T				2			1				3
Others			2	1	1		1	3	1		9
Totals	48	52	93	73	166	173	115	78	30		828

<sup>15</sup> Source: March Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department.

# MAKES AND YEARS OF STOLEN AUTOS, APRIL 1953 <sup>16</sup>

Make of Auto	Pre War	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	Totals
Buick	9	3	12	8	19	16	9	4			81
Cadillac	1		1	2	4	1	1	1			11
Checker Cab						1	2				3
Chevrolet	2	1	3	6	11	18	19	18	8		86
Chrysler		2	8				2	2			15
DeSoto	1	3	2		1		1	1			9
Dodge	6	9	11	4	2	4		5			42
Ford	6	3	5	4	102	60	6	6	6		198
Frazier			1	3			1				5
Hudson		2	1	2	2	1	2	2	1		13
Kaiser			5	10	1		11	1			28
Lincoln			1		13	2					16
Mercury	1	1	3	2	47	30	18	6	13		121
Nash		1		1		1	5				8
Oldsmobile			3	10	23	41	28	2	3		110
Packard	1				1		1				3
Plymouth	3	10	9	8	5	2	4	4			45
Pontiac	2	1	2	2	12	9	15	5			48
Studebaker			2	2	1			1			6
Yellow Cab				1			1	1			3
Willys						1					1
Chevrolet T				2	1		2		1		6
Diamond TT											0
Dodge T			1		1						2
Int'l T			2								2
Int'l Trailer					1		1				2
Trailmobile											0
GMC T											0
Others	1	1	2	4	3	6	7	1			25
Totals	33	37	74	71	250	193	136	60	35		889

16 Source: April Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department.

# MAKES AND YEARS OF STOLEN AUTOS, MAY 1953<sup>17</sup>

Make of Auto	Pre War	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	Totals
Buick	7	9	10	4	7	17	10	3	4		71
Cadillac	2	1		2	1	4	2	2	2		16
Checker Cab							3				3
Chevrolet	4	5	3	11	11	28	29	22	10		123
Chrysler	1	3	3	2	3	1	3	3	2		21
DeSoto	2	4	4			1		1	1		13
Dodge	1	7	17	1	1	1	1	5	1		35
Ford	5	5	3	6	70	40	4	7	3		143
Frazier			3	2							5
Hudson					2	2	1	1	3		9
Kaiser			5	7	1		7	1			21
Lincoln	1	1			1			1			4
Mercury		2	2	3	27	40	21	8	8		111
Nash			2	2	1	3	1	7			16
Oldsmobile	2	1	1	13	16	26	21	10	9		99
Packard	1	1		1			1				4
Plymouth	3	10	23	6	2	5	2	2	3		56
Pontiac	2	1	2	2	5	3	7	12	1		35
Studebaker			2	1	2	2		2			9
Yellow Cab							3	1			4
Willlys								1			1
Chevrolet T		1	1				1	1			4
Diamond TT											0
Dodge T	1							1			2
Int'l T					1						1
Int'l Trailer		1		1							2
Trailmobile											0
GMC T								1			1
Others	1	2	5	1	6			1			16
Totals	33	54	86	66	156	173	117	93	47		825

<sup>17</sup> Source: May Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department.

MAKES AND YEARS OF STOLEN AUTOS, JUNE 1953<sup>18</sup>

Make of Auto	Pre War	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	Totals
Buick	5	8	9	11	12	17	7	8	7		84
Cadillac	1			1	3	2	3	2	2		14
Checker Cab											0
Chevrolet	6		2	9	12	12	14	11	7		73
Chrysler	1	2	4			2	1		1		11
DeSoto			1	1		1	1	1	1		6
Dodge	2	5	7		3	2		2	4		27
Ford	3	1	3	4	50	28	3	8	5		105
Frazier			1	1							2
Hudson			1	1	3	1	3	1	1		11
Kaiser			1		1		4				6
Lincoln					5	1			1		7
Mercury		2	1		20	11	17	5	4		60
Nash	1	2	1	2			4	3			13
Oldsmobile	1	1	1	8	10	25	14	5	5		70
Packard					1		1	1			3
Plymouth	3	17	13	8	2		3	2	3		51
Pontiac	2	1	1	3	5	9	7	5	2		35
Studebaker	1		1	1	1	1		1			6
Yellow Cab							5				5
Willys				1			3				4
Chevrolet T											0
Diamond TT											0
Dodge T											0
Int'l T											0
Int'l Trailer								1			1
Trailmobile											0
GMC T					1	1					2
Others	1	1	2	3		1	3	1			13
Totals	27	40	49	55	130	114	94	57	43		609

<sup>18</sup> Source: June Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department.

# MAKES AND YEARS OF STOLEN AUTOS, JULY 1953<sup>19</sup>

Make of Auto	Pre War	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	Totals
Buick	5	4	7	8	12	11	7	4	11		61
Cadillac			1		1		1	3	2		8
Checker Cab							2				2
Chevrolet	3	3	3	2	9	16	39	12	13		95
Chrysler	1	1	3		1			1	3		10
DeSoto	1	1	4	1	1	11		11	1		13
Dodge		4	11	3	1	5	2		1		27
Ford	5	2		1	53	24	18	12	11		126
Frazier			2	1							3
Hudson	1			1	3	1	4				10
Kaiser			1	3	3	1	7	1			16
Lincoln					7	1					8
Mercury	1	2	2	2	16	11	7	8	7		56
Nash	2			2		1		2	1		8
Oldsmobile	2	1	1	6	19	37	20	7	5		98
Packard								1			1
Plymouth	2	8	9	1	5	3		6	4		38
Pontiac	1	2	1	1	4	2	5	1	4		21
Studebaker			2	1		5		2	1		11
Yellow Cab						1	1				2
Willys				1		1					2
Chevrolet T											0
Diamond TT								1			1
Dodge T											0
Int'l T	2	1		1		3		1			8
Int'l Trailer											0
Trailmobile											0
GMC T								1			1
Others	1			2		3	2	4	1		13
Totals	28	29	47	37	135	128	110	69	56		639

<sup>19</sup> Source: July Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department.

# MAKES AND YEARS OF STOLEN AUTOS, AUGUST 1953 <sup>20</sup>

Make of Auto	Pre War	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	Totals
Buick	6	4	5	6	10	20	9	7	7		74
Cadillac		1	2		1	6	3				13
Checker Cab						1	2		1		4
Chevrolet	3	2	9	5	21	20	10	14	18		102
Chrysler		3	1	1		1	1		1		8
DeSoto		1		2	1	1	2				7
Dodge	1	6	5	2	4	5	4		6		33
Ford	3	3	1	4	54	30	10	8	14		127
Frazier			3	2	1		1				7
Hudson			2	1	1	2	1	1			8
Kaiser			1		5		3				9
Lincoln			2		4		1		3		10
Mercury			4	1	18	20	8	6	10		67
Nash	1		1		2	1	1	2	3		11
Oldsmobile	3	1	3	4	16	24	17	2	13		83
Packard				1	1	1					3
Plymouth	1	4	16	3	1		1	1	6		33
Pontiac	4		2	3	9	6	7	2	2		35
Studebaker			2	3	1			1			7
Yellow Cab											0
Willys		1		2	1						4
Chevrolet T			2	2							4
Diamond TT		1									1
Dodge T				1	1				1		3
Int'l T		1					1				2
Int'l Trailer											0
Trailmobile											
MC T					1		2				3
Others	2		3	2	3	2	1	2	1		16
Totals	24	28	64	45	156	140	85	46	86		674

20 Source: August Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department

# MAKES AND YEARS OF STOLEN AUTOS, SEPTEMBER 1953 <sup>21</sup>

Make of Auto	Pre War	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	Totals
Buick	6	4	5	5	8	20	11	7	11		77
Cadillac			1	1	1	2	2		2		9
Checker Cab						1					1
Chevrolet	4	1	3	8	19	17	20	13	15		100
Chrysler		4	2		1	3			4		14
DeSoto	1		1						2		4
Dodge	3	3	7	1		1	2	3	8		28
Ford	1	2	4	5	55	45	19	5	21		157
Frazier				1							1
Hudson					1	2			1		4
Kaiser			2	5			6	1			14
Lincoln			1		9		2	2	7		21
Mercury	1		2	4	23	21	16	12	23		102
Nash				1				4	3		8
Oldsmobile		1	5	9	24	32	20	9	11		111
Packard		2		1	1						4
Plymouth	5	14	9	7	2	2	4	1	7		51
Pontiac		1		5	2	7	6	4	1		26
Studebaker	1		1	2		4					8
Yellow Cab							1				1
Willys					1	1	2				4
Chevrolet T											0
Diamond TT							1				1
Dodge T											0
Int'l T							1	2			3
Int'l Trailer											0
Trailmobile											0
Others				5	1	3	6	3	6		24
AMC T			1								1
Totals	22	32	44	60	148	161	119	66	122		774

21 Source: September Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department.



## MAKES AND YEARS OF STOLEN AUTOS, OCTOBER 1953 22

Make of Auto	Pre War	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	Totals
Buick	6	1	7	9	14	6	6	10	19		68
Cadillac		2	2		4	2	2	4	3		19
Checker Cab						1	2				3
Chevrolet	2		5	7	10	12	7	16	14		73
Chrysler	2	3	1			3	1		2		12
DeSoto		1	3	3		1	1		3		12
Dodge	4	7	13	3		5	3	2	6		43
Ford	3	1	1	5	45	32	11	3	13		114
Frazier				3							3
Hudson				2		2			2		6
Kaiser			1	6	4	1	9	2			23
Lincoln					5			1	2		8
Mercury			4	2	54	49	41	22	50		222
Nash											0
Oldsmobile	2	1	2	8	19	21	20	11	13		97
Packard							1				1
Plymouth	1	6	16	10	4	6	2	2	7		54
Pontiac	4	1	2	2	5	6	5	4	7		36
Studebaker				2	1	3	2		3		11
Yellow Cab							1				1
Willys						1					1
Chevrolet T	1	1							2		4
Diamond TT											0
Dodge T											0
Int'l T	1	1		2		1					5
Trailmobile											0
Int'l Trailer											0
GMC T											0
Others	2	1		2							5
Totals	28	26	57	66	165	152	114	77	136		821

22 Source: October Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department.

## MAKES AND YEARS OF STOLEN AUTOS, NOVEMBER 1953 23

Make of Auto	Pre War	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	Totals
Buick	2	5	5	4	7	15	11	9	13		71
Cadillac	1		1	1	1	2	2	3	5		16
Checker Cab											0
Chevrolet	5		5	4	9	15	11	20	23		92
Chrysler		2	5	2	1		2	2	1		15
DeSoto		3	2	2	1	2	1	1	2		14
Dodge	1	4	9	1	1	2		1	1		20
Ford	5	4	4	3	66	49	9	18	19		177
Frazier			1		1						2
Hudson					1				2		3
Kaiser			1	1	2	2	11				17
Lincoln							2	4	2		8
Mercury		1		1	27	19	16	18	34		116
Nash					1	3	4	7	3		18
Oldsmobile		2	1	9	13	48	25	8	11		117
Packard				1			3	3	1		8
Plymouth	3	8	11	2	2	3	6	3	2	1	41
Pontiac	2	2			3	7	7	4	2		27
Studebaker			1	2		1	1	4	1		10
Yellow Cab							1	3			4
Villys			1	1				1			3
Chevrolet T							1	2	1		4
Diamond TT			1			1					2
Dodge T	1				1						2
Int'l T		1									1
Int'l Trailer											0
Trailmobile											0
GMC T	2			1							3
Others		1	1	4	3	5	1	3	3		21
Totals	22	33	49	39	140	174	115	113	126	1	812

23 Source: November Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department.

# MAKES AND YEARS OF STOLEN AUTOS, DECEMBER 1953<sup>24</sup>

Make of Auto	Pre War	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	Tot-als
Buick	3	4	4	8	4	14	21	7	11		76
Cadillac			1	3			1	3	4		12
Checker Cab						1	2	1			4
Chevrolet		4	3	10	13	13	17	14	26		100
Chrysler				1	1	2	2	1	1		8
DeSoto		1	3	4					1		9
Dodge	2	3	7	4	1	1	5	2	2		27
Ford	2	1	1	1	83	44	16	6	14		168
Frazier			2	2			1				5
Hudson			1	5	1	3		2	1		13
Kaiser			4	3	2	1	8	2			20
Lincoln					6	2		1	1		10
Mercury			2	1	36	27	25	17	31	1	140
Nash	1							1	3		5
Oldsmobile			1	6	22	34	26	5	14		108
Packard		1									1
Plymouth	1	14	13	6	7	3	4	1	8	2	59
Pontiac	1	1	3	2	4	6	4	3	5		28
Studebaker			4	1	1	1	2		1		10
Yellow Cab							1	3	1		5
Willys				1		1					2
Chevrolet T		1	1					1			3
Diamond TT											0
Dodge T				1				1			2
Int'l T	1		1	1	1						4
Int'l Trailer											0
Trailmobile											0
GMC T								1			1
Others						2	2	2	2		8
Totals	10	30	51	60	182	155	137	74	126	3	823

<sup>24</sup> Source: December Monthly Reports, Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department.

## APPENDIX II

### MOTOR VEHICLES REGISTERED, BY STATE AND CITY; STOLEN AND RECOVERED, BY CITY OF CHICAGO, 1914-1953<sup>25</sup>

Year	State License	City License	Stolen	Recovered
1914	146,192	36,824	1,415	1,263
1915	196,542	45,818	2,185	1,763
1916	263,360	63,173	3,295	2,336
1917	354,032	78,564	3,285	2,439
1918	400,535	77,738	2,611	1,954
1919	489,358	97,895	4,447	4,224
1920	579,666	112,068	5,974	4,340
1921	672,407	169,923	6,799	4,501
1922	789,997	209,660	3,906	3,919
1923	976,899	261,254	2,831	2,831
1924	1,132,482	308,797	5,567	4,038
1925	1,269,780	339,840	8,228	5,965
1926	1,376,649	369,868	12,793	9,616
1927	1,445,110	388,426	11,434	10,487
1928	1,510,185	416,369	10,638	8,929
1929	1,621,143	460,736	9,924	7,905
1930	1,644,505	464,655	11,279	8,425
1931	1,618,581	481,164	35,145	28,033
1932	1,498,772	449,427	34,789	31,011
1933	1,468,009	416,670	27,891	24,457
1934	1,468,696	417,920	12,164	12,176
1935	1,539,038	449,252	6,440	6,351
1936	1,674,055	520,003	4,001	4,033
1937	1,783,831	565,815	3,312	3,470
1938	1,797,205	567,009	3,655	3,578
1939	1,866,804	575,945	3,511	3,599
1940	1,944,143	610,407	3,502	3,538
1941	2,067,517	646,710	3,947	3,914

<sup>25</sup> Source: Records Stolen Auto Section, Chicago Police Department

## APPENDIX II (continued)

MOTOR VEHICLES REGISTERED, BY STATE AND CITY; STOLEN AND  
RECOVERED, BY CITY OF CHICAGO, 1914-1953<sup>25</sup>

Year	State License	City License	Stolen	Recovered
1942	1,990,881	605,405	3,417	3,583
1943	1,822,718	522,237	3,096	3,183
1944	1,743,940	487,998	3,589	3,741
1945	1,741,985	482,230	4,317	4,466
1946	1,884,565	512,055	3,384	3,613
1947	1,967,364	580,799	3,391	3,426
1948	2,252,408	641,003	4,013	3,952
1949	2,443,375	707,282	4,660	4,559
1950	2,676,233	782,938	5,510	5,263
1951	2,814,147	814,547	7,287	7,014
1952	2,863,735	803,499	8,464	8,227
1953	2,981,350	830,559	7,880	7,181

25 Source: Records Stolen Auto Section, Chicago  
Police Department

The totals of State and City registrations do not include transfers, dealers' plates, etc. The State totals include about 13 per cent trucks, while the City totals include about 9 per cent trucks.