

# Appendix D

Estimated Primary Energy Consumption in the  
United States, Selected Years, 1635-1945

---

# Estimated Primary Energy Consumption in the United States, Selected Years, 1635-1945

**Table D1. Estimated Primary Energy Consumption in the United States, Selected Years, 1635–1945 (Quadrillion Btu)**

	Fossil Fuels				Renewable Energy			Electricity Net Imports <sup>b</sup>	Total
	Coal	Natural Gas	Petroleum	Total	Conventional Hydroelectric Power	Biomass	Total		
						Wood <sup>a</sup>			
1635 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	(s)	(s)	--	(s)
1645 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	0.001	0.001	--	0.001
1655 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.002	.002	--	.002
1665 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.005	.005	--	.005
1675 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.007	.007	--	.007
1685 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.009	.009	--	.009
1695 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.014	.014	--	.014
1705 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.022	.022	--	.022
1715 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.037	.037	--	.037
1725 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.056	.056	--	.056
1735 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.080	.080	--	.080
1745 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.112	.112	--	.112
1755 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.155	.155	--	.155
1765 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.200	.200	--	.200
1775 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.249	.249	--	.249
1785 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.310	.310	--	.310
1795 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.402	.402	--	.402
1805 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.537	.537	--	.537
1815 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.714	.714	--	.714
1825 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	.960	.960	--	.960
1835 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	1.305	1.305	--	1.305
1845 .....	NA	--	--	NA	--	1.757	1.757	--	1.757
1850 .....	0.219	--	--	0.219	--	2.138	2.138	--	2.357
1855 .....	.421	--	--	.421	--	2.389	2.389	--	2.810
1860 .....	.518	--	0.003	.521	--	2.641	2.641	--	3.162
1865 .....	.632	--	.010	.642	--	2.767	2.767	--	3.409
1870 .....	1.048	--	.011	1.059	--	2.893	2.893	--	3.952
1875 .....	1.440	--	.011	1.451	--	2.872	2.872	--	4.323
1880 .....	2.054	--	.096	2.150	--	2.851	2.851	--	5.001
1885 .....	2.840	0.082	.040	2.962	--	2.683	2.683	--	5.645
1890 .....	4.062	.257	.156	4.475	0.022	2.515	2.537	--	7.012
1895 .....	4.950	.147	.168	5.265	.090	2.306	2.396	--	7.661
1900 .....	6.841	.252	.229	7.322	.250	2.015	2.265	--	9.587
1905 .....	10.001	.372	.610	10.983	.386	1.843	2.229	--	13.212
1910 .....	12.714	.540	1.007	14.261	.539	1.765	2.304	--	16.565
1915 .....	13.294	.673	1.418	15.385	.659	1.688	2.347	0.002	17.734
1920 .....	15.504	.813	2.676	18.993	.738	1.610	2.348	.003	21.344
1925 .....	14.706	1.191	4.280	20.177	.668	1.533	2.201	.004	22.382
1930 .....	13.639	1.932	5.897	21.468	.752	1.455	2.207	.005	23.680
1935 .....	10.634	1.919	5.675	18.228	.806	1.397	2.203	.005	20.436
1940 .....	12.535	2.665	7.760	22.960	.880	1.358	2.238	.007	25.205
1945 .....	15.972	3.871	10.110	29.953	1.442	<sup>a</sup> 1.261	2.703	.009	32.665

<sup>a</sup> There is a discontinuity in the "Wood" time series between 1945 (in this table) and 1949 (in Table 10.1). Through 1945, data are for fuelwood only; beginning in 1949, data are for wood and wood-derived fuels.

<sup>b</sup> Electricity transmitted across U.S. borders. Net imports equal imports minus exports.

NA=Not available. -- =Not applicable. (s)=Less than 0.5 trillion Btu.

Notes: • For years not shown, data are not available. • See Tables 1.3 and 10.1 for continuation of these data series beginning in 1949. • See Note, "Geographic Coverage of Statistics for 1635–1945," at end of section.

Sources: • **Fossil Fuels:** *Energy in the American Economy, 1850–1975*, Table VII. • **Conventional Hydroelectric Power:** *Energy in the American Economy, 1850–1975*, Table II. • **Wood:** 1635–1845—U.S. Department of Agriculture,

Circular No. 641, *Fuel Wood Used in the United States 1630–1930*, February 1942. This source estimates fuelwood consumption in cords per decade, which were converted to Btu using the conversion factor of 20 million Btu per cord. The annual average value for each decade was assigned to the fifth year of the decade on the assumption that annual use was likely to increase during any given decade and the average annual value was more likely to reflect mid-decade yearly consumption than use at either the beginning or end of the decade. Values thus begin in 1635 and are plotted at 10-year intervals. 1850–1945—*Energy in the American Economy, 1850–1975*, Table VII. • **Electricity Net Imports:** *Energy in the American Economy, 1850–1975*, Tables I and VI. Electricity net imports are assumed to equal hydroelectric consumption minus hydroelectric production (data are converted to Btu by multiplying by 3,412 Btu per kilowatthour).

**Note. Geographic Coverage of Statistics for 1635–1945.**

Table D1 presents estimates of U.S. energy consumption by energy source for a period that begins a century and a half before the original 13 colonies formed a political union and continues through the decades during which the United States was still expanding territorially. The question thus arises, what exactly is meant by “U.S. consumption” of an energy source for those years when the United States did not formally exist or consisted of less territory than is now encompassed by the 50 states and the District of Columbia?

The documents used to assemble the estimates, and (as far as possible) the sources of those documents, were reviewed carefully for clues to geographic coverage. For most energy sources, the extent of coverage expanded more rapidly than the nation, defined as all the official states and the District of Columbia. Estimates or measurements of consumption of each energy source generally appear to follow settlement patterns. That is, they were made for areas of the continent that were settled enough to have economically significant consumption even though those areas were not to become states for years. The wood data series, for example, begins in 1635 and includes 12 of the original colonies (excepting Georgia), as well as Maine, Vermont, and the area that would become the District of Columbia. By the time the series reaches 1810, the rest of the continental states are all included, although the last of the 48 states to achieve statehood did not do so until 1912. Likewise, the coal data series begins in 1850 but includes consumption in areas, such as Utah and Washington (state), which were significant coal producing regions but had not yet attained statehood. (Note: No data were available on state-level historical coal consumption. The coal data shown in Table D1 through 1945 describe *apparent* consumption, i.e., production plus imports minus exports. The geographic coverage for coal was therefore based on a tally of coal-*producing* states listed in various historical issues of *Minerals Yearbook*. It is likely that coal was consumed in states where it was not mined in significant quantities.)

By energy source, the extent of coverage can be summarized as follows:

- Coal—35 coal-producing states by 1885.
- Natural Gas—All 48 contiguous states, the District of Columbia, and Alaska by 1885.
- Petroleum—All 48 contiguous states, the District of Columbia, and Alaska by 1885.
- Conventional Hydroelectric Power—Coverage for 1890 and 1895 is uncertain, but probably the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia. Coverage for 1900–1945 is the 48 contiguous states, and the District of Columbia.
- Wood—All 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia by 1810.