

Housing of American Indians on Reservations — Equipment and Fuels

Refrigerators and telephones are two amenities no household can do without, right? Wrong — especially for American Indians living on reservations.

This Brief, one of a series, uses data collected in the 1990 Census of Population and Housing to examine housing characteristics of American Indian households on reservations and their associated trust lands. The term “American Indian households” includes all housing units where the house-holder has identified himself or herself as American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut.

This Brief looks at the degree to which they lacked complete kitchen facilities, telephones, and motor vehicles. It also examines how they heated their homes. The Brief compares them with both American Indian households not living on reservations and all households in the United States.

There are 314 reservations and trust lands in the United States. Trust lands are property associated with a particular American Indian reservation or tribe, held in trust by the Federal Government. In this Brief, the term “reservation” also includes trust lands.

American Indian homes on reservations were much likelier-than-average to lack complete kitchen facilities.

A home is considered to have complete kitchen facilities if it contains a sink with piped water, a range or

cookstove, and a refrigerator. In 1990, only 1 percent of households nationally and 3 percent of American Indian households living off reservations were without one or more of these amenities.

In sharp contrast, about 18 percent of American Indian households on reservations didn’t have complete kitchens. As the graph below shows, this was similar to the national situation of 40 years earlier.

There was a wide variation in conditions among the larger

American Indian Reservation Households Were as Likely to Lack Complete Kitchen Facilities in 1990 as U.S. Households Were in 1950

Percent of households without complete kitchen facilities

American Indian Households on Reservations

1990 18%

United States

1990 1%

1980 2%

1970 3%

1960 Not available

1950 20%

1940 56%

Note: Data for 1940 and 1950 are based on households lacking a refrigerator.



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BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Reservation Recap — Equipment

Percent of American Indian households on reservations who lacked selected amenities, by reservation with 500 or more American Indian households: 1990

	Percent lacking complete kitchen facilities	Percent without a telephone in their home	Percent without a motor vehicle
All reservations and trust lands	17.5	53.4	22.4
Acoma Pueblo and Trust Lands, NM	7.4	30.0	16.8
Blackfeet Reservation, MT	1.7	31.7	13.8
Cattaraugus Reservation, NY	9.6	20.7	22.8
Cheyenne River Reservation, SD	8.7	47.8	26.2
Colorado River Reservation, AZ-CA	1.3	33.4	19.4
Colville Reservation, WA	0.5	27.8	12.6
Crow Reservation and Trust Lands, MT	0.8	54.9	7.7
Devils Lake Sioux Reservation, ND	2.2	57.4	23.0
Eastern Cherokee Reservation, NC	0.5	36.8	15.2
Flathead Reservation, MT	1.7	26.7	9.8
Fort Apache Reservation, AZ	13.1	64.5	41.1
Fort Belknap Reservation and Trust Lands, MT	2.0	43.1	17.8
Fort Berthold Reservation, ND	2.5	43.7	12.8
Fort Hall Reservation and Trust Lands, ID	3.5	30.1	3.1
Fort Peck Reservation, MT	0.1	38.1	15.9
Gila River Reservation, AZ	15.2	77.8	34.5
Hoop Valley Reservation, CA	4.9	35.8	15.7
Hopi Reservation and Trust Lands, AZ	30.6	49.3	24.0
Isleta Pueblo, NM	1.6	18.5	14.6
Jicarilla Apache Reservation, NM	4.7	50.6	15.7
Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation and Trust Lands, WI	0.4	38.0	22.4
Laguna Pueblo and Trust Lands, NM	7.7	26.0	19.9
Lake Traverse (Sisseton) Reservation, ND-SD	0.9	50.5	32.1
Leech Lake Reservation, MN	2.2	31.6	21.6
Menominee Reservation, WI	1.4	27.9	19.2
Mescalero Apache Reservation, NM	0.5	58.4	29.2
Mississippi Choctaw Reservation and Trust Lands, MS	3.9	66.4	19.5
Navajo Reservation and Trust Lands, AZ-NM-UT	44.3	81.6	27.2
Nez Perce Reservation, ID	0.8	30.4	13.0
Northern Cheyenne Reservation and Trust Lands, MT-SD	0.0	61.0	12.3
Oneida (West) Reservation, WI	0.8	17.3	10.5
Osage Reservation, OK	1.1	18.2	8.9
Papago Reservation, AZ	24.8	55.9	47.6
Pascua Yaqui Reservation, AZ	1.1	26.8	34.4
Pine Ridge Reservation and Trust Lands, NE-SD	18.2	58.6	21.5
Red Lake Reservation, MN	4.0	41.0	18.9
Rosebud Reservation and Trust Lands, SD	4.2	56.2	26.2
St. Regis Mohawk Reservation, NY	5.3	15.9	21.8
Salt River Reservation, AZ	13.3	55.1	25.8
San Carlos Reservation, AZ	16.6	83.9	29.6
Standing Rock Reservation, ND-SD	5.1	56.8	29.6
Turtle Mountain Reservation and Trust Lands, ND-SD	4.6	31.8	19.1
Uintah and Ouray Reservation, UT	3.0	49.1	14.0
Warm Springs Reservation and Trust Lands, OR	2.0	31.6	8.6
White Earth Reservation, MN	2.4	35.3	20.4
Wind River Reservation, WY	2.0	49.3	14.1
Yakima Reservation and Trust Lands, WA	0.5	24.1	12.6
Zuni Pueblo, AZ-NM	5.2	32.6	19.4

Data for Smaller Reservations

Due to space constraints, the tables in this Brief have data only for the 48 reservations with 500 or more American Indian households. To obtain data for reservations not shown, call Robert Bonnette (301-763-8553).

reservations (those with 500 or more American Indian households). On one hand was the Navajo Reservation and Trust Lands, AZ-NM-UT, where 44 percent of American Indian households lacked complete kitchen facilities. (The rate also exceeded 20 percent on two other Arizona reservations — the Hopi and Papago). At the other extreme were several reservations where the rate was either equal to or below the U.S. average. The Northern Cheyenne, MT-SD and Fort Peck, MT were two examples. (See table at left.)

On reservations, phoneless households were the rule ...

Remarkably, the majority of American Indian homes on reservations (53 percent) did *not* have a telephone. This was true for only 5 percent of all households nationally. Since most reservations are located outside metropolitan areas, however, a fairer comparison is probably with all nonmetro U.S. households only. Their rate was 9 percent.

As the table at left shows, phonelessness was a relatively widespread condition on each of the larger reservations. Especially bad off were three wholly or partly in Arizona — Gila River, Navajo, and San Carlos. On each one, approximately *three-quarters* of American Indian households were phoneless!

... but vehicleless households were not.

They may not have had a phone at home, but at least most American Indian reservation households could drive to one. Only 22 percent were without a motor vehicle. Nevertheless, this was still higher than the 16 percent of American Indian households not on reservations and the 12 percent of all U.S. households without a vehicle.

Again, rates varied tremendously from one larger reservation to another. On the Fort Apache and Papago Reservations in Arizona, for example, over one-third of American Indian households lacked a vehicle. But on many other reservations, the vehicleless rate for American Indian households was either at or below the U.S. average. These included the Crow Reservation and Trust Lands, MT; Fort Hall Reservation and Trust Lands, ID; Osage Reservation, OK; and Warm Springs Reservation and Trust Lands, OR. (See table on page 2.)

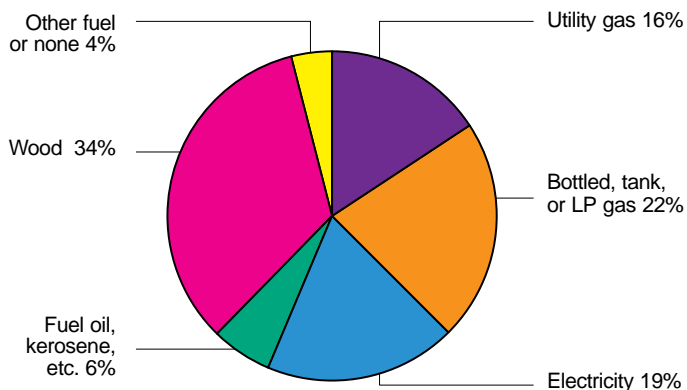
The most commonly used home heating fuel was wood.

Although rarely used nationally, wood was used to heat 1 in every 3 American Indian homes on reservations in 1990. Bottled, tank, or LP gas and electricity, at 22 percent and 19 percent, respectively, were the next most commonly used fuels. Meanwhile, utility gas, the leading fuel nationally, checked in at a meager 16 percent on reservations. (See graph at right.)

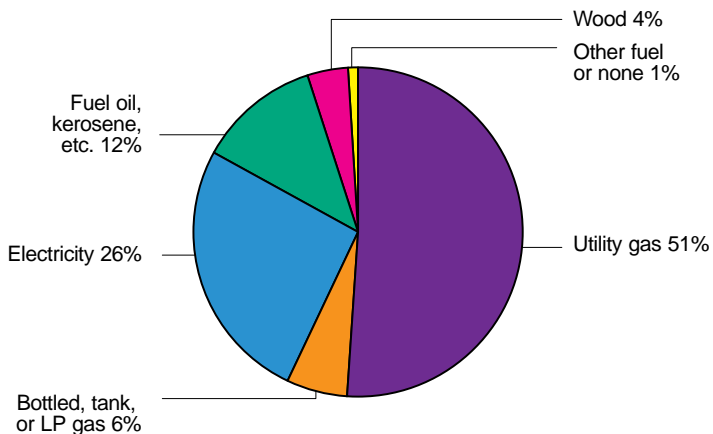
When was wood last used as widely at the national level as it is today on reservations? The answer is sometime before World War II. The Census Bureau didn't collect data on home heating fuel used until the first housing census, taken in 1940. That census revealed that a relatively paltry 23 percent of U.S. households used wood. Wood use subsequently declined to 10 percent in 1950 and has remained a little-used fuel at the national level ever since.

Wood Reigned Supreme as a Heating Fuel on Reservations, But Was Rarely Used Nationally

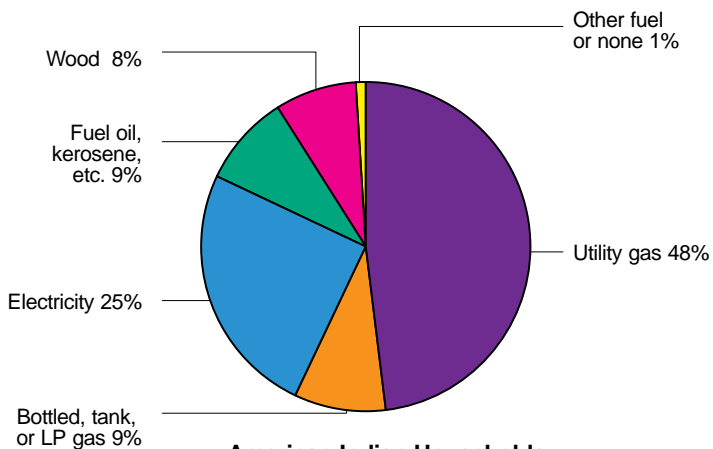
Distribution of occupied housing units, by primary fuel used for house heating: 1990



American Indian Households on Reservations



All U.S. Households



American Indian Households Living Off Reservations

Reservation Recap — Fuels

Fuel American Indian households on reservations were most likely to use as their main home heating source, by reservation with 500 or more American Indian households: 1990 (percent using it is in parenthesis)

All reservations and trust lands

Acoma Pueblo and Trust Lands, NM	Wood (39%), Bgas (31%)
Blackfeet Reservation, MT	Ugas (42%)
Cattaraugus Reservation, NY	Bgas (38%)
Cheyenne River Reservation, SD	Bgas (57%)
Colorado River Reservation, AZ-CA	Elect. (53%)
Colville Reservation, WA	Wood (56%)
Crow Reservation and Trust Lands, MT	Bgas (35%), Ugas (26%), Elect. (25%)
Devils Lake Sioux Reservation, ND	Elect. (46%)
Eastern Cherokee Reservation, NC	Wood (63%)
Flathead Reservation, MT	Elect. (42%)
Fort Apache Reservation, AZ	Bgas (43%), Wood (38%)
Fort Belknap Reservation and Trust Lands, MT	Ugas (34%), Bgas (30%)
Fort Berthold Reservation, ND	Bgas (48%)
Fort Hall Reservation and Trust Lands, ID	Elect. (51%)
Fort Peck Reservation, MT	Ugas (64%)
Gila River Reservation, AZ	Elect. (31%), Bgas (28%)
Hoopa Valley Reservation, CA	Wood (82%)
Hopi Reservation and Trust Lands, AZ	Coal (37%), Wood (33%)
Isleta Pueblo, NM	Ugas (47%)
Jicarilla Apache Reservation, NM	Ugas (79%)
Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation and Trust Lands, WI	Bgas (55%)
Laguna Pueblo and Trust Lands, NM	Ugas (41%), Bgas (29%)
Lake Traverse (Sisseton) Reservation, ND-SD	Elect. (52%)
Leech Lake Reservation, MN	Fuel oil (37%)
Menominee Reservation, WI	Bgas (54%)
Mescalero Apache Reservation, NM	Bgas (62%)
Mississippi Choctaw Reservation and Trust Lands, MS	Bgas (34%), Wood (31%), Elect. (30%)
Navajo Reservation and Trust Lands, AZ-NM-UT	Wood (57%)
Nez Perce Reservation, ID	Wood (48%), Elect. (45%)
Northern Cheyenne Reservation and Trust Lands, MT-SD	Elect. (65%)
Oneida (West) Reservation, WI	Ugas (39%)
Osage Reservation, OK	Ugas (64%)
Papago Reservation, AZ	Wood (38%), Elect. (34%)
Pascua Yaqui Reservation, AZ	Ugas (93%)
Pine Ridge Reservation and Trust Lands, NE-SD	Bgas (60%)
Red Lake Reservation, MN	Elect. (44%), Wood (33%)
Rosebud Reservation and Trust Lands, SD	Bgas (51%)
St. Regis Mohawk Reservation, NY	Fuel oil (74%)
Salt River Reservation, AZ	Elect. (64%)
San Carlos Reservation, AZ	Ugas (34%)
Standing Rock Reservation, ND-SD	Bgas (69%)
Turtle Mountain Reservation and Trust Lands, ND-SD	Bgas (39%), Elect. (33%)
Uintah and Ouray Reservation, UT	Elect. (32%), Bgas (30%)
Warm Springs Reservation and Trust Lands, OR	Elect. (58%)
White Earth Reservation, MN	Fuel oil (38%)
Wind River Reservation, WY	Bgas (42%)
Yakima Reservation and Trust Lands, WA	Elect. (73%)
Zuni Pueblo, AZ-NM	Wood (72%)

Notes:

- If two or more fuels are listed, it means they statistically tied for most commonly used.
- **Bgas** stands for bottled, tank, or LP gas.
- **Ugas** stands for utility gas.
- **Elect.** stands for electricity.
- **Fuel oil** category includes kerosene.

The table at left shows the most commonly used home heating fuel on each of the 48 larger reservations. If two or more fuels are listed, it means they statistically tied for most common.

More information:

Detailed Housing Characteristics, American Indian and Alaska Native Areas, Series 1990 CH-2-1A. For sale by U.S. Government Printing Office. Stock No. 003-024-07623-3. \$44.

Contacts:

Housing of American Indians on reservations —

Robert Bonnette
301-763-8553

Statistical Briefs —
Robert Bernstein
301-457-1221

This Brief is one of a series that presents information of current interest. It examines data from the 1990 census. A complete description of statistical quality and limitations is included in the above-mentioned report.