MINERAL INDUSTRY SURVEYS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES

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MINERAL MARKET REPORT
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THE ASBESTOS INDUSTRY IN 1945.

Asbestos production in the United States in 1945 experienced a substantial gain over 1944, according to the Bureau of Mines, U. S. Dept. of the Interior. As in previous years most of the domestic output consisted of the shorter grades of chrysotile mined in Vermont. Production in 1945 totaled 13,605 short tons compared with 7,558 tons in 1944, a gain of 80 percent. Domestic sales reached 12,252 short tons, a gain of 84 percent over 1944. The domestic producing industry furnished only 3 percent of total consumption in the United States during 1945.

Canada furnished a large part of the United States requirements of shingle stock, paper stock and other of the non-spinning grades. Africa supplied a substantial part of longer grades that were of great importance in the military program, and that will continue in strong demand under peacetime conditions. Woven friction materials particularly for automotive manufacture, and packings and gaskets employed in power-generating plants are among the important uses of the fibers.

Amosite asbestos, used extensively in making 85-percent magnesia and other high-temperature molded insulation, is obtained only in South Africa. Blue asbestos (crocidolite), is obtained chiefly in South Africa although small quantities sometimes originate in Australia.

Tremolite asbestos which is of value for filtering chemicals was mined in Maryland for many years until the deposit was exhausted. Production has now shifted to California and Alaska.

Salient statistics for asbestos in 1944 and 1945 are summarized in the following table.

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Salient statistics of the asbestos industry in the United States, 1944-45
(compiled by D.I. Marsh)

	1944		1945	
	Short tons	Value	Short tons	Value
Domestic asbestos--				
Produced:				
Chrysotile	1/7,166	(2)	13,340	(2)
Amphibole	1/ 392	(2)	265	(2)
Total produced	7,558	(2)	13,605	(2)
Sold or used by producers:				
Chrysotile	1/6,275	1/$373,112	11,987	$413,734
Amphibole	1/ 392	1/ 7,222	265	8,989
Total sold or used by producers	6,667	380,334	12,252	422,723
Imports (unmanufactured)	1/383,049	1/18,542,940	374,199	16,284,915
Exports (unmanufactured)	475	58,983	8,550	837,175
Apparent consumption3/	1/389,241	1/18,864,291	377,901	15,870,463
Imports of asbestos products	(2)	1/ 5,614,243	(2)	7,264,087

1/ Revised figures.
2/ Figures not available.
3/ Quantity sold or used by producers, plus imports, minus exports.

The following table shows domestic production of asbestos during recent years according to varieties.

Asbestos sold or used by producers in the United States, 1941-45, by varieties
(compiled by D.I. Marsh)

	Chrysotile		Amphibole		Total	
	Short tons	Value	Short tons	Value	Short tons	Value
1941	22,439	707,589	1,952	18,164	24,391	725,753
1942	13,373	480,245	2,108	18,612	15,481	498,857
1943	3,900	302,289	2,114	32,526	6,014	334,815
1944	1/6,275	1/373,112	1/ 392	1/ 7,222	6,667	380,334
1945	11,987	413,734	265	8,989	12,252	422,723

1/ Revised figures.

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REVIEW BY STATES

Alaska - Tremolite asbestos was again shipped from the Dahl Creek area, [illegible] River district. A small quantity of long slip-fiber chrysotile also was produced. The deposits of both varieties were worked by the Arctic Circle Exploration Co., Candle, Alaska.

Arizona - The Arizona Chrysotile Asbestos Co. of Globe continued to be the largest producer in the State. Arthur Enders produced both spinning and short fibers at the Reynolds Falls Mine about 50 miles from Globe, Gila County. The Globe Los Angeles Mining Co. (address 724 So. Spring St., Los Angeles 14, Calif.) recovered short fiber from the waste dumps of the Canadian Mine in Gila County. Guy Phillips of Globe and John A. Bacon of Roosevelt, also produced in Gila Co. The entire production of Arizona was of the chrysotile variety. Sales were considerably greater than in 1944.

The mill of Pine Top Asbestos Mines, financed by the Defense Plant Corp., has been acquired by the Globe Asbestos Company, and is said to have begun production in January 1946.

California - The Powhatan Mining Co. (Woodlawn, Baltimore, Md.) produced tremolite asbestos near Castella and Hazel Creek (Sims) Shasta County - shipping point Dunsmuir. Homer E. Fenn also reported sales of tremolite from a deposit near Hazel Creek. Kohler & Chase shipped short-fiber chrysotile from the mine at Monticello, Napa County, but did not produce. Sales in 1945 were considerably smaller than in 1944.

Georgia - The only producer in Georgia in 1945 was the Powhatan Mining Co from its amphibole asbestos property near Dillard, Rabun County.

North Carolina - A deposit of amphibole asbestos in Macon County not far from Dillard which is over the line in Georgia, was worked by the Powhatan Mining Co. of Woodlawn, Baltimore, Md.

Vermont - The Vermont Asbestos Mines Division of the Ruberoid Co. (500 - 5th Ave., New York 18, N. Y.) is operating both the new quarry one mile from the mill, and the old quarry close to the mill site. Both mill and quarries were operated most of the time throughout the winter of 1945-46, as well as during the summer months, but production was limited by a serious shortage of labor. The long fiber obtained in the new quarry has not yet been adapted to spinning purposes, but is being prepared as a high grade shingle fiber. Most of the output is short-fiber chrysotile. Production was far below plant capacity, but was, nevertheless, much greater than in 1944.

MARKET CONDITIONS

Although the Canadian mines were operating virtually at capacity and imports from Africa were uninterrupted market demands threatened to exceed supply. The market for spinning fibers eased somewhat during the early months of 1945 but became stronger toward its close. Decreased requirements because of cancelled war orders were more than compensated by demands from liberated countries for crudes, spinning and shingle fibers. Also there was an increasing demand for fibers of the shorter category to supply the needs of new asbestos cement industries [illegible] overseas countries. A definite shortage of both spinning and shingle fibers developed at the end of the year.

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FUTURE OUTLOOK

The largest tonnages of asbestos are used in the building trades. Asbestos cement products in the form of flat and corrugated sheeting, wallboard, millboard, lumber and roofing shingles are finding wider application at this time because of a lumber shortage. As the building program enlarges during 1946 the demands for such products will so increase that a shortage of cement stock fibers is forecast. Important accessories to the building trades are heat-insulation materials such as pipe and boiler covering. Eighty-five percent magnesia pipecovering and block insulation, air-cell pipecovering made of asbestos paper, cements and other insulating products will doubtless be in heavy demand to supply the needs of new industrial units as well as many new public and private building projects.

A strong demand is in prospect also for the longer fibers applied to textile use. The revivified automobile industry will demand large quantities of woven brake linings and clutch facings, and many woven packings and gaskets will be needed to satisfy the requirements of industrial and power plants. There will of course be a tremendous decline in demand for cable coverings, other Navy uses, and insulation materials for army mobile equipment and aircraft, but it is believed that industrial and construction needs will more than compensate for these losses.

The rehabilitation of asbestos products industries in foreign countries is an important factor in the raw materials situation. In most of the countries where such plants exist there are no asbestos-producing industries. The supplies of raw materials must originate in the long-established centers of production, namely Canada, Africa and Soviet Russia. This condition threatens to increase further the danger of a shortage of supply of certain grades. The U.S.S.R. is a large asbestos producer but with growing industrialization it seems unlikely that large quantities of Russian fibers will be made available to world markets.

FOREIGN TRADE

The following table shows imports of unmanufactured asbestos into the United States in 1944 and 1945. Total imports declined 2 percent in quantity and 12 percent in value. The larger proportional decline in value is due to a falling off in imports of crudes and high-grade mill fibers, and an increase in imports of low-priced short fibers. Imports from Africa declined greatly. Imports from the U.S.S.R. were about the same in 1945 as in 1944, but the fiber received in 1945 was of higher grade.

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Asbestos (unmanufactured) imported for consumption in the United States, 1944-45, by countries and classes

Country	Crude (including blue fiber)		Mill fibers		Short fibers		Total	
	Short tons	Value	Short tons	Value	Short tons	Value	Short tons	Value
1944								
African: Southern Rhodesia	7,966	$1,522,825	---	---	---	---	7,966	$1,522,825
Union of South Africa..	19,196	1,859,982	---	---	---	---	19,196	1,859,982
Bolivia..	15	1,905	---	---	---	---	15	1,905
Canada...	1,528	564,545	145,791	$9,757,627	205,928	$4,720,939	353,247	15,043,111
Chile....	14	1,118	---	---	---	---	14	1,118
U.S.S.R..	---	---	2,610	113,390	---	---	2,610	113,390
United Kingdom..	---	---	1	609	---	---	1	609
	28,719	3,950,375	148,402	9,871,626	205,928	4,720,939	383,049	18,542,940
1945								
African: Southern Rhodesia	2,545	531,501	---	---	---	---	2,545	531,501
Union of South Africa..	13,217	1,363,434	---	---	---	---	13,217	1,363,434
Australia	2	162	---	---	---	---	2	162
Canada...	720	293,858	137,734	9,105,325	217,254	4,813,867	355,708	14,213,050
Cuba.....	11	1,975	---	---	---	---	11	1,975
U.S.S.R.	2,625	174,183	---	---	---	---	2,625	174,183
United Kingdom..	1	610	---	---	---	---	1	610
	19,211	2,365,723	137,734	9,105,325	217,254	4,813,867	374,199	16,284,915

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