But let us take a broader look at the problem of assets.

TABLE 8-1.—*The share of national saving in changes in national wealth and combined net worth, period totals: 1897 to 1949*

Period	Change in wealth (1)	Change in combined net worth (2)	Saving (3)	Share of saving in change in (percent)— Wealth (4)	Net worth (5)
	Billions	*Billions*	*Billions*		
1897-1900	$19	----------	$8	42	----------
1901-12	77	$103	45	58	44
1913-22	169	216	87	51	40
1923-29	105	227	112	107	49
1930-33	−109	−206	−20	18	10
1934-39	65	69	11	17	16
1940-45	175	264	35	20	13
1946-49	328	357	170	52	48
1901-49	810	1,030	439	54	43
1897-1949	830	----------	447	54	----------

Source: R. W. Goldsmith, "A Study of Savings in the United States," vol. I, p. 194, 1955.

This table reveals the increases in national wealth and net worth from 1897 to 1949. Assets seem to rise in all periods except in 1930–33 when there was a substantial deflation, As a general rule, savings account for roughly one-half of the increase in wealth, but there are important exceptions: 1930–33, 1934–39, 1940–45. Where savings are not the explanation, the major factor is of course the increase in the price level. The explanation of the greater rise of national net worth than wealth is given as follows by Goldsmith: [64]

While national wealth changes essentially reflect three factors only—cumulated domestic saving, changes in the prices of tangible assets, and, though much less importantly, the net foreign balance—combined national net worth shows in addition the effects of realized capital gains and losses, and of unrealized appreciation or depreciation due to changes in the prices of equity securities. Combined national net worth is, furthermore, affected by certain duplications, such as the inclusion of the market value of corporate stock and the balance sheet value of participations in unincorporated business enterprises, first in the calculation of the net worth of the owners and then again in that of the balance sheet value of the equity of corporations and unincorporated businesses. Combined national net worth may therefore be expected to show wider fluctuations, at least in absolute terms, than national wealth, with the result that cumulated saving accounts for a smaller proportion of changes in the former than in the latter.

[64] Ibid., pp. 194–195.