

correlatives represent fluvial sandbelts oriented parallel to the early Appalachian Mountains. The Breathitt Group represents short alluvial wedges prograding to the Lee sandbelts where the Breathitt rivers became tributaries to the Lee rivers (Fig. 62). The Lee rivers flowed to the southwest to Georgia where they encountered Breathitt-like alluvial wedges and deltas prograding to the north from the Ouachita orogenic belt (in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia). The Lee rivers were deflected by these clastic wedges and flowed to the west (Figs. 62). The sediment introduced by the Ouachita clastic wedges was deposited as an oversteepened delta in the Ouachita Trough, a remnant ocean basin (Fig. 62). Flysch (turbidites) and slump blocks were deposited (Jackfork Group) in the deeper parts of the basin. Rivers farther west (represented by the Caseyville etc.) were oriented parallel to the Appalachian trend as well, but may have flowed directly into the Ouachita Trough without major course changes.

#### CONEMAUGH AND MONONGAHELA FORMATIONS

The Breathitt Group is succeeded by the Conemaugh (Late Pennsylvanian), which consists of thin coals, abundant red beds, and pedogenic flint clays. Its features indicate a higher rate of weathering, either due to climatological changes or to a more upland environment. The occurrence of

several well-developed marine beds in the Conemaugh (Brush Creek and Ames Limestones) seems to preclude an upland interpretation. Other paleobotanical, geochemical, and sedimentological studies also indicate a climatic change for the Conemaugh (several studies are included in the symposium volume edited by Phillips and Cecil, 1985). Marine incursions into the Conemaugh came from the north in Ohio and Pennsylvania, rather than from the west and south during most of the Early and Middle Pennsylvanian (Presley, 1979).

The Monongahela is similar to the Breathitt Group except that the limestones are thicker and more common in the Monongahela, and some are fresh-water limestones (Presley, 1979). Marine incursions come from the north, as during Conemaugh deposition. A return to less weathered conditions may indicate a return to a slightly wetter climate, though not as wet as during Breathitt deposition (climate is discussed in Phillips and Cecil, 1985). The Monongahela represents an assortment of deltaic and related environments.

#### CONCLUSIONS

As important as the Carboniferous rocks are to the Central Appalachian region, little information on certain aspects of their geology has been available. This dissertation provides information to fill part of this gap.

A stratigraphic and structural framework is developed through the use of the very large stratigraphic data base available from the mineral industry and geological surveys. This data base is used to construct a series of cross sections through the Central Appalachian basin. The conclusions of the study based on the framework are as follows.

(1) Stratigraphic Correlations:--The Mississippian rocks of the Central Appalachian basin are easily integrated into a regional framework (Fig. 11). The rocks of Pennsylvanian age, however, are difficult to correlate regionally because lithologies that comprise the coal-bearing sequence are frequently repeated. The comparison of closely spaced subsurface and surface information in the regional cross sections shows that certain marine-shale members can be recognized over a large area. These members prove to be useful stratigraphic markers for the Breathitt and are used as key stratigraphic beds in the construction of a three-dimensional stratigraphic framework for the basin (Fig. 19, 41). Quartzose sandstone lenses of the Lee Formation are also useful as stratigraphic markers for the Pennsylvanian-age rocks (Fig. 19). Moreover, certain new, informal stratigraphic terms are introduced (Table 1).

(2) Development of Depositional Models:--The framework is analyzed to determine the validity of existing basin models

and to formulate new models to explain the depositional basin in detail. A commonly used model for Carboniferous sedimentation in the southern Appalachians is that popularized by Ferm and Cavaroc (1969). This model, referred to here as the Lee-Newman Barrier Shoreline model, ascribes the Mississippian marine rocks as time-equivalents of the Pennsylvanian "terrestrial" rocks (Figs. 4, 5, 55).

The long-postulated regional "Mississippian-Pennsylvanian" unconformity between the two systems, however, is an element that contradicts Ferm and Cavaroc's model because the unconformity decouples the two systems. In this dissertation, analysis of the cross sections indicates (a) systematic truncation of units below a possible unconformity surface; (b) topographic relief on this surface; (c) a difference in attitude of rocks above and below the surface; and (d) onlap of overlying strata over the surface. These features support the presence of a regional unconformity. Biostratigraphic analysis of existing data also supports the regional unconformity and demonstrates that the rocks above and below it are of different ages. These relationships are augmented by further analysis which shows that this unconformity was formed during the Early Pennsylvanian, and not at the Mississippian-Pennsylvanian boundary.

(3) Basin Model:--The Central Appalachian Tabular-Erosion model, is herein developed to explain the deposition of the the Carboniferous rocks of the Central Appalachian basin. In this model, the unconformity surface is illustrated by contour maps (Figs. 38, 39). The progressive erosion of mid-Carboniferous rocks below the unconformity toward the edge of the basin is described (Fig. 37), and a sequential overstep on the unconformity of Early Pennsylvanian rocks on older formations toward the basin margin is demonstrated (Fig. 40). Certain significant details are of regional importance.

The analysis of the cross sections reveal that four belt-shaped lenses of quartzose sandstone of the Lee Formation occur within the onlapping Early and Middle Pennsylvanian sequence (Breathitt Group). These sandstone belts, oriented northeast-southwest appear to be largely restricted to the northwestern side of the laterally equivalent coal-bearing clastic wedge of the Breathitt Group (Figs. 45-48). The gradients and measurements of cross beds of the sandstones indicates a dominant paleoflow to the southwest, parallel to the belts. A fluvial model (Fig. 59) is deduced to fit the features recognized in the basin. In this model, the sandbelts represent deposition of a trunk stream flowing to the southwest (Fig. 62), with smaller

tributaries carrying sediment from the Appalachian highlands flowing toward the trunk streams.

(4) Structural Analysis:--A structural framework based on the cross sections as well as a structural contour map of the Fire Clay coal bed shows that the Mississippian and older rocks of the basin dip to the southeast. However, Pennsylvanian rocks occur in a broadly synclinal feature called the Eastern Kentucky Regional Syncline which trends northeast. Contrary to the Mississippian rocks the Pennsylvanian strata southeast of the syncline dip to the northwest. This difference in dip is explained by uplift of the basinal part of the Carboniferous wedge of rocks during the Alleghenian orogeny.

In addition, a newly discovered subsurface fault, the Dorton-Hellier fault, is identified in eastern Kentucky. The displacement of the Early Pennsylvanian unconformity surface and underlying strata indicate a vertical throw of several hundred feet for this normal? fault.

Examination of sediment packages results in information regarding basin development. During the Late Devonian, clastics derived from the northeast filled a basin subsiding to the east. In Early Mississippian times, clastic influx from the northeast continued, however, the basin subsided only slightly to the east. Mid-Mississippian times were characterized by carbonate deposition with very reduced

clastic input; basinal subsidence was minimal. During Late Mississippian times, clastics prograded from the east and basin subsidence to the southeast began. This Late Mississippian trend continued through the end of the Carboniferous and was interrupted only once during the Early Pennsylvanian when uplift produced the Early Pennsylvanian unconformity.

Clastic deposition and reduced subsidence during the Late Devonian and Early Mississippian mark the final stages of the Acadian orogeny. Carbonate-platform formation during mid-Mississippian time represents a period of quiescence whereas Late Mississippian and Pennsylvanian clastic progradation and basin subsidence reflect increasing development of the Alleghenian orogeny.

(5) Tectonic Analysis:--A tectonic analysis of the stratigraphic framework indicates that a mid- and late Carboniferous basin developed in three phases: each phase resulted in a northwestward shift of the basin (Fig. 24). The regional unconformity developed between the first two basinal phases. The basins were probably formed as a result of emplacement of thrust loads on the crust. The unconformity, produced between two periods of thrust emplacement, may have been formed by uplift caused by the relaxation of stresses in the crust (Fig. 43).

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