

### GEOLOGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES OF THE HAYS QUADRANGLE, VIRGINIA

William S. Henika  
1989

The Hays quadrangle is located in the Appalachian Plateau physiographic province in north-central Dickenson County, Virginia. The quadrangle constitutes an area of approximately 58 square miles which is underlain by sedimentary rocks of Lower to Middle Pennsylvanian age. Topographically the area is characterized by steeply-sloping ridges and V-shaped valleys. The highest points are the 2360-foot contour, or on Neely Ridge in the southwestern part of the area, and the lowest point is located 1160 feet contour on Russell Fork in the northern part of the area. Detailed geologic mapping in the area began in the fall of 1979 with the assistance of Peter S. Frischman and was completed by W. S. Henika during the winter of 1987.

Approximately 1250 feet of Pennsylvanian sandstone, siltstone, shale, coal, and limestone beds are exposed in the area. These rock types belong to the Lee, Norton, and Wise Formations. The boundary between the Lee and the Norton Formations is defined by the top of the highest quartzite sandstone above the base of the Lee. In the northwestern corner of the area along the southeastern slope of Pine Mountain this boundary is at the top of the Bee Rock Sandstone Member. Quartzite sandstone of the Bee Rock is replaced laterally by little sandstone of the McClure Sandstone Member southeastward in the subsurface (cross section A-A').

In previous reports the boundary between the Norton Formation and the overlying Wise Formation was incorrectly mapped as much of Wise County and all of Dickenson County (Whitlock and others, 1967). Earlier workers confined the Gladville Sandstone with stratigraphically lower units in the Norton Formation. In Hays quadrangle the Gladville Sandstone is a white quartz sandstone that is found only on Big Ridge in the Tarpon area and on Neely Ridge along the southern border. The Gladville Sandstone appears to stop northward and cannot be used as a stratigraphic marker. Where the Gladville Sandstone is not present, the base of the Wise Formation has been placed at the base of the Dorchester coal bed.

Four prominent marine fossil zones are present in the Norton and Wise Formations. The lowest zone, exposed along McClure River south of Pickett Gap, about 120 feet below the Lower Banner coal bed, contains shaly limestone brachiopods. A similar zone with limestone nodules is exposed in road cuts along View Ridge in the southeastern part of the quadrangle about 20 feet above the Splash Dam coal. One of the most prominent marine zones occurs approximately 70 feet above the Haggy coal and is believed to be equivalent to the Eagle shale (White, 1893). This shaly zone is well exposed along State Road 604 at Curve Beech Gap where both brachiopod and gastropod shells may be found. Another marine zone near the top of the section is thought to be equivalent to the Cannon limestone (White, 1893). It consists of an 8 to 10 foot zone of fossiliferous shale with limestone nodules and brachiopod shells directly above the Adkinson coal. The zone was exposed in a surface mine highwall northeast of the site of the Bartlett Fire Tower in the northeastern corner of the quadrangle.

The Middleboro syncline and the Russell Fork fault are regionally important structures. The Middleboro syncline across the quadrangle trends in a northeast to southwest direction and generally parallels the course of Pound River to the Russell Fork fault. The syncline reflects the location and geometry of a subsurface tectonic ramp on the Pine Mountain fault which rotated the overlying rocks during thrusting (Rich, 1934; Harris and Miller, 1977). Beds on the northeast limb of the syncline have dips up to 16 degrees toward the southeast (cross section A-A') whereas beds on the southeastern limb have much gentler dips to the northwest, generally less than 5 degrees.

The Russell Fork fault (Oswarth, 1921) has been recognized for many years to be a major strike-slip fault along which differential right lateral movement took place within the Cumberland block above the Pine Mountain fault. Miller (1974) postulated as much as 4 miles of strike slip movement based on stratigraphic evidence from gas well logs. Data from additional drill holes and detailed mapping currently available suggest the strike slip displacement may be less than one mile. The structure appears to be a high angle fault steeply inclined to the southwest, with as much as 250 feet of stratigraphic throw (cross section B-B'). The orientations of mesoscopic structures (kink folds, cleavage, and nodding) along the fault show abundant evidence of compression across the fault zone. There are very few mesoscopic structures observed which support a simple strike-slip interpretation. It appears that the movement involved both dip slip and strike slip and is best described as transpressional.

The Little New Paw fault is similar to, but has a much smaller vertical component of displacement than, the Russell Fork fault. Along this fault zone are also many compressional structures, including a series of folds or subparallel folds in the Sandstone member of the Norton Formation. An imbricate dip slip on this fault, within the quadrangle, appears to be less than 20 feet and the fault movement appears to terminate in the area east of the site of the Bartlett Fire Tower.

The Martha Gap anticline, herein named, was first noted in surface data, and is a broad uplift trending across the southeastern limb of the Middleboro syncline. Mapping along McClure River disclosed this up to 15 degrees around the northwest plunging nose of the anticline. This anticline, and a syncline that trends with Bartlett Lick Creek, appear to parallel the Russell Fork fault. Along Pound River, McClure River, and Russell Fork, strata are inclined toward the Russell Fork fault across a 0.5 mile wide zone. This feature south of the fault, locally exceeding 20 degrees near Pound River. This feature south of the fault may be related to a gently inclined tectonic ramp and detachment surface above the Kennedy coal. A ramp thrust may project the detachment upwards to a shaly zone below the Lower Banner coal. The cleavage, folding, and nodding characteristic of a detachment zone is well exposed in shale below the Lower Banner coal bed along the railroad cuts at Bartlett. Northeastward directed compressional forces, that may have formed the structural features associated with detachment in the Norton Formation may also be responsible for many of the mesoscopic folds that trend at small angles to the Russell Fork fault.

Mineable coal occurs within the Norton and Wise Formations in the Hays quadrangle. Some of the coal beds that are in the lower part of the Norton Formation southeast of McClure River are also present in time equivalent beds of the Lee Formation across the Middleboro syncline in the northwestern part of the area. These coals may not be of mineable thickness due to stratigraphic thinning to the northwest. Wise and Norton Formation coal in the map area is medium- to high-volatile A bituminous (DMB).

Both surface and underground mining methods are used in the area. Mining is currently limited to the Haggy, Splash Dam, and Upper Banner coals. In the past significant amounts of coal were also mined from the Clinwood, Lyons, Dorchester, Norton, Lower Banner, Big Fork, and Kennedy coals.

As part of the geology of southern Virginia (GCHVM) mapping project, the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy geologists are standardizing coal names for coal beds mapped throughout the Cumberland Plateau of southwestern Virginia. The system is based on a standardized Pennsylvania section first described in Wise County. Coal names used in this report have been correlated with the standardized section using surface and subsurface data. Where coal beds have been described using local names in the past, the locally used name is shown in parentheses if it differs from the standardized name.

The oldest and deepest coal described in this report is the Lawrence. Deeper coals, including the Tyler coal, are not economically mineable owing to their great depth, 200 to 1000 feet below the Lawrence, or their discontinuous occurrence across the area. The Lawrence is shown on section A-A' to be within the Lee Formation northwest of State Highway 85, and within the Norton Formation southeast of the highway. The primary Lee/Norton formal contact boundary follows the 8 foot thickness of the Bee Rock sandstone determined from subsurface data (Miller, 1974, Figure 45).

Driller's logs from oil and gas tests suggest that the Lawrence is relatively continuous across the southwestern part of the quadrangle, and may contain 3 to 6 feet of coal at depths of 300 to 1000 feet below the local topographic surface. Drill data also indicate a split in the coal at several localities in the southern part of the area. The Lawrence is currently mined using the longwall method to the southwest in Caney Ridge quadrangle. Projection of the Lawrence toward the northwest, based on drill data, suggests the coal may be terminated beneath the upper quartzite member of the Lee Formation northeast of the Middleboro syncline axis (cross section A-A', Miller, 1974).

The Raven coal bed generally lies from 73 to 170 feet above the Lawrence coal bed and appears to be continuous within a siltstone sequence of the Norton Formation across the southwestern part of the area. It may also be continuous but 250 feet deeper in the area east of the Russell Fork fault. Subsurface data from driller's logs indicate the Raven bed ranges from 1 to 5 feet in thickness and is as much as 400 feet below drainage. The Raven sandstone is mined from outcrops along Russell Fork contained resource thicknesses of 0.8 to 2.1 feet. The Raven may have been mined in a narrow surface mine along the southern bank of Frying Pan Creek at the southern boundary of the quadrangle. Surface and subsurface data suggest that the Raven coal bed is terminated to the northwest beneath the McClure Sandstone member of the Norton Formation. The lowest zone, exposed along McClure River south of Pickett Gap, about 120 feet below the Lower Banner coal bed, contains shaly limestone brachiopods. A similar zone with limestone nodules is exposed in road cuts along View Ridge in the southeastern part of the quadrangle about 20 feet above the Splash Dam coal. One of the most prominent marine zones occurs approximately 70 feet above the Haggy coal and is believed to be equivalent to the Eagle shale (White, 1893). This shaly zone is well exposed along State Road 604 at Curve Beech Gap where both brachiopod and gastropod shells may be found. Another marine zone near the top of the section is thought to be equivalent to the Cannon limestone (White, 1893). It consists of an 8 to 10 foot zone of fossiliferous shale with limestone nodules and brachiopod shells directly above the Adkinson coal. The zone was exposed in a surface mine highwall northeast of the site of the Bartlett Fire Tower in the northeastern corner of the quadrangle.

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The Splash Dam coal bed lies from 70 to 110 feet above the Upper Banner, generally above a 375-foot-thick sandstone sequence. The bed is very persistent and was measured at 70 different locations across the quadrangle. It ranges in thickness from less than 1 foot in the southwestern part of the quadrangle to more than 5 feet in the northeastern part. The bed averaged 2.9 feet in thickness across the quadrangle area but has an average coal resource thickness of 2.5 feet owing to the persistence of one or more shale partings in the coal bed. The coal may be locally split into two benches separated by 10 to 20 feet of shale or sandstone. At some localities a distinctive marine fossil zone is found in shale 20 feet above the Splash Dam coal bed and at other localities the shale zone has been truncated by a discontinuous, channel form sandstone body.

The Splash Dam is the most extensively mined coal bed in the quadrangle. Most of the thick Splash Dam coal was mined from Hays quadrangle, and the history of the Clinchfield Coal Co. mine at Splashdam, but significant reserves may have been left in several large unmined blocks and pillars within the mined area. The Splash Dam was also mined in the Flammang reservoir area, where Giles (1923) misidentified the coal as the Upper Banner bed. The coal occurs in this uniformly from the northwest to the southeast on both sides of the Russell Fork fault.

The Haggy coal occurs 80 to 110 feet above the Splash Dam coal. Like the Splash Dam it is also very persistent across the area and there is a mineable marine fossil zone (Eagle Shale) about 70 feet above the Haggy. Fifty-six sections of the Haggy were measured. They averaged 1.4 feet in thickness with a resource thicknesses of 1.7 feet; 9 were greater than 2.5 feet thick. The Haggy was not extensively mined in the area, but several abandoned drill mines and small surface mines are located in the Hays area. The Haggy and Hays rader coals are particularly well exposed along State Road 611 east of Flammang Dam. The unmined coal was mapped only in an area northeast of Russell Fork where it is about 80 to 120 feet above the Haggy. Southwest of Russell Fork it was recognized as a new driller's log but is not continuous across the area. Hinton Formation area includes the Stony Gap Member at the base. The "Ravencliff" reservoir is equivalent to the Taleory Sandstone Member of the top of the Hinton Formation. Henika (1988) described outcrops along the structural front to the south of this quadrangle. Production from the Ravencliff sand is derived from thin (5 to 12 feet thick) porous zones of 10 to 12 percent porosity in the middle of the 80-foot-thick quartzite of the Taleory sand approximately 2370 to 2570 feet.

The "Wear sand" correspond to siltstone units in the Price Formation also described from outcrop to the south. In one producing well used, Weyr production came from a 26-foot perforated interval in siltstone, at a depth of approximately 4210 to 4250 feet.

Initial production rates for 40 of these wells that had data available ranged from 0.1 to 1240 Mcg/day and averaged 178 Mcg/day. All of the wells were stimulated by fracture or acid treatment or both. Production after stimulation ranged from 39 to 449 Mcg/day and the average for the 93 wells was 113 Mcg/day. Drilling in the area is expected to continue, as new distribution lines are constructed southward from the Nora compressor station.

Shale and siltstone, in the interval between the Lower Banner and Upper Banner coals, may have potential for use in the manufacture of lightweight aggregate. Samples collected from this interval exposed along State Highway 85 about 5 miles east of the boundary between Hays and Prater quadrangles were cited for this use by Johnson and others (1966). Quarzite in the Bee Rock member of the Lee Formation and in the Gladville Sandstone, may be a potential source of nonpolluting aggregate or high silica sand for the glass industry. Fluffy bedded sandstone in the Wise Formation may have some potential as a decorative stone.

Sand, for soil use, was pumped from stream deposits at several localities along Russell Fork near Richfield. The Howard Daniels Sand Company has produced sand for construction use and for traction sand from sites along Russell Fork north of Richfield.

The writer thanks Thomas M. Gattis, Jr., Division of Mineral Resources, for his assistance and support. He also thanks Tom Fulmer, Virginia Resources Company for generally providing drill-hole data for use in this project. Thanks are also extended to Charles J. Saboties, U.S. Forest Service for his cooperation and support of the field work in the Jefferson National Forest.

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**NATURAL GAS**  
Natural gas production in the Hays area is from an extension of the Nora gas field to the south. Drilling records indicate that at least 95 gas wells have been drilled in the Hays quadrangle since 1949. Of the 95 wells recorded, 93 are currently listed as producing and 2 are listed as shut in. Production records indicate that some of the earlier gas wells in this area have been productive for 34 years.

The most productive reservoir in the area has been the Berea "sand" which is a 150-foot siltstone zone at the base of the Mississippian Big Stone Gap Member of the Chattanooga Shale. Outcrop-derived gamma ray logs and petrography of rock samples from the Mississippian-Devonian shale section, exposed to the south of the Hays area along the Allegheny structural front (Dittelsbach and Henika, 1988) indicate the Berea is very fine grained and would be better described as a siliceous siltstone unit. Gas production from the Berea is apparently dependent on fracture permeability and continuous recharge from this zone at depths ranging from approximately 4000 to 5250 feet in the Hays area.

In addition to the Berea, other reservoirs for natural gas include the "Big Lime" ("L" wells), the "Maxon sand" ("S" wells), the "Ravencliff sand" ("D" wells), and the "Wear sand" ("W" wells). All of these have been produced and have been co-mingled with gas from the Berea and the Devonian shale units. All of the productive reservoirs were identified in outcrop using surface-derived, gamma ray logs of measured stratigraphic sections. Porosity of producing reservoirs was calculated by core plotting measurements from individual reservoir and compared to porosity measurements from the Big Lime. Production from this zone (less than 10 foot thick zones) of 10 to 15 percent porosity in the Mississippian Green River Limestone at depths of 3200 to 4000 feet. "Maxon sand" production is derived from relatively thin zones (less than 20 feet thick) of moderate to low porosity (5 to 10 percent) sandstone at depths of 2700 to 3100 feet. The Maxon sandstone is interbedded in the middle and lower part of the Mississippian Hinton Formation area includes the Stony Gap Member at the base. The "Ravencliff" reservoir is equivalent to the Taleory Sandstone Member of the top of the Hinton Formation. Henika (1988) described outcrops along the structural front to the south of this quadrangle. Production from the Ravencliff sand is derived from thin (5 to 12 feet thick) porous zones of 10 to 12 percent porosity in the middle of the 80-foot-thick quartzite of the Taleory sand approximately 2370 to 2570 feet.

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Table. Coal-bed analysis (Virginia Division of Mineral Resources, Economic Section 1983).

Parameter	Range	Average
Volatile Matter	20.3-33.1%	28.9%
Fixed Carbon	42.4-62.1%	45.2%
Ash	2.8-14.3%	13.5%
Total Sulfur	0.6-3.6%	1.4%
Btu/lb.	9560-14,729	12,858

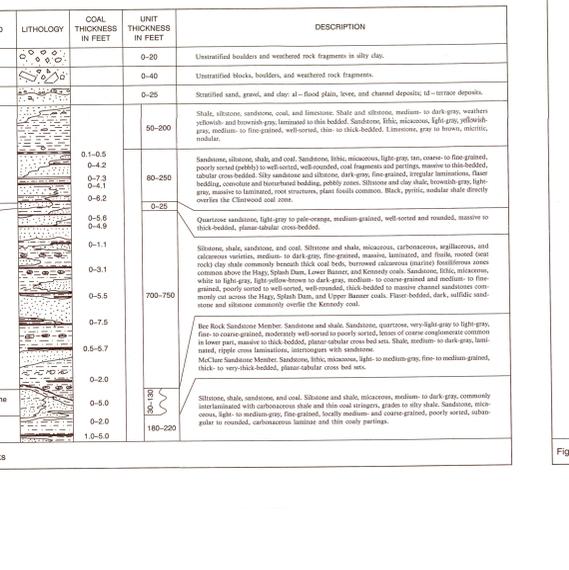


Figure 1. Columnar section of surface rocks

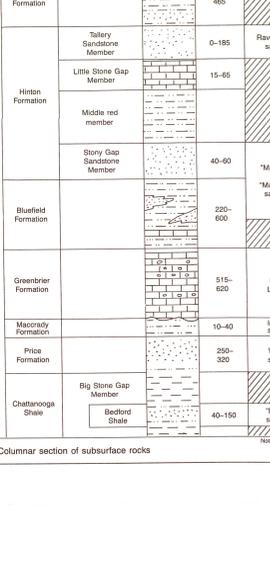
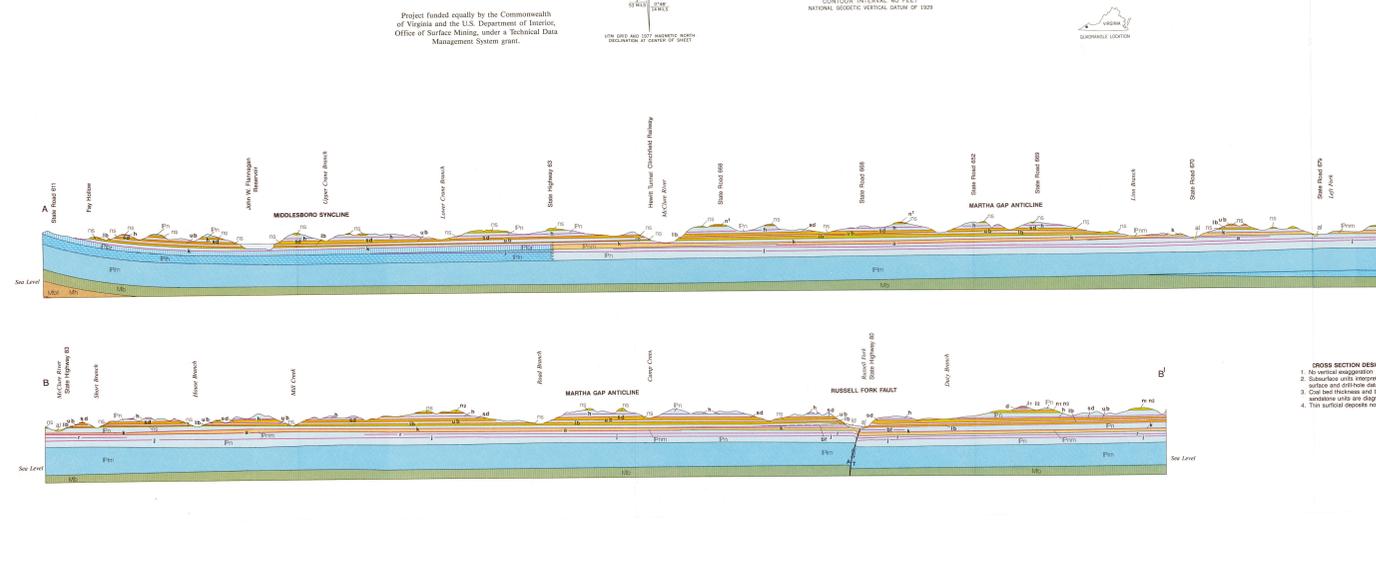


Figure 2. Columnar section of subsurface rocks

Base map from U.S. Geological Survey, 1963, RP 1977  
Hays quadrangle, 7.5 minute series.

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Project funded equally by the Commonwealth of Virginia and the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Geological and Geographical Data Management System grant.