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STRATIGRAPHY, STRUCTURE, SEDIMENTOLOGY, AND NATURAL GAS
POTENTIAL OF THE LOWER CRETACEOUS MANNVILLE GROUP IN THE
LEISMER AREA, NORTHEASTERN ALBERTA.

BY



JAMES H.T. RIDDELL

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY

Edmonton, Alberta
SPRING 1993



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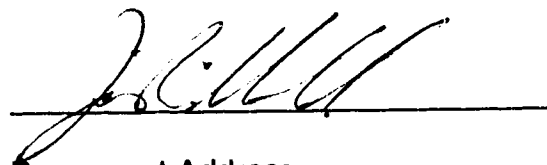
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. G. ...", written above a horizontal line.

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Abstract

Some 1300 square miles and 450 well cores and geophysical logs have been studied, outlining current reserves of natural gas and possible further accumulations of same from the Lower Cretaceous Clearwater Formation and McMurray Formation of the Mannville Group. The McMurray Formation consists of an interpreted progression of fluvial to marginal marine deposits representing transgression of the Bullhead sea within a well defined paleovalley. The most significant natural gas reserves are found in Upper McMurray deposits where distributary channels feeding northwestern prograding shorelines have completely eroded the muds of the Middle McMurray, leaving continuous reservoir throughout the McMurray Formation. The Clearwater Formation is interpreted as northward prograding nearshore bars trapping natural gas stratigraphically to the north, and structurally to the east, primarily by the North-South trending salt collapse structure originating within the Elk Point Group. 18 maps and 9 cross-sections detail the stratigraphy, structure, and natural gas potential in the study area.

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Introduction

The Lower Cretaceous Mannville Group in Northeastern Alberta contains an estimated 909 billion barrels of bitumen (See Table 1; Keith et al., 1987.), mostly uneconomical to produce with conventional methods. It is the relatively high price of enhanced oil recovery methods currently in practice that has inhibited exploitation. The major portion of this bitumen is found in the McMurray Formation, a highly complex unit which unconformably overlies Devonian strata. The main objective of this thesis is related to evaluating the natural gas which coexists with heavy oil in the McMurray Formation, the Wabiskaw Member of the Clearwater Formation, and also in selected horizons stratigraphically higher within the Clearwater Formation. The study area comprises 1300 square miles and was evaluated by using both core and geophysical logs for over 450 wells in the area which average 400 m total depth.

The depositional history of the Clearwater Formation including the Wabiskaw Member, appears to be relatively simple to reconstruct, however, the McMurray Formation has proven highly complex. Previous authors have interpreted the McMurray Formation as fluvial, deltaic, estuarine, and shallow marine depositional

Area	Deposit	Area Extent 103 ha	Mean Pay m	Bitumen in place 109m3	100 bb1s
Athabasca	McMurray/Wabiskaw	4,680	34	144	909
	Grand Rapids	689	7	7	43
	Grosmont/Nisku	4,666	10	61	383
				212	1,335
Cold Lake	Grand Rapids	1,603	7	20	123
	Clearwater	561	12	11	67
Peace River	McMurray/Wabiskaw	666	5	4	25
	Bullhead/Gething	987	9	35	215
	Debolt/Shunda	228	20	12	75
				7	47
				19	122

Table 1. Bitumen Reserves of Alberta's Oil Sands
(modified after Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board, 1985)

units. (Stewart, 1963; Flach, 1984; Mossop, 1980; Carrigy, 1971; Pemberton et al, 1982; Ranger and Pemberton, 1988; Rennie, 1987). This thesis provides an original interpretation within the study area combining some of the previously developed ideas into an original, more refined reconstruction of the McMurray Formation. Major emphasis has been placed upon interpreting the uppermost McMurray Formation as it holds the immediate economic importance.

Major geologic features in the study area include structure caused by salt collapse within the underlying Elk Point Group, subsidence of the Peace River Arch, erosion of the Paleozoic unconformity, and the characteristic southwesterly dip of the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin.

Combining this structure with the depositional model provides a strong predictive tool for mapping and developing natural gas reserves. This thesis will document the generation and evaluation of potential plays within the actively explored area; the immediate result being an exploration and development strategy for the two most attractive prospects.

Study Area

The Athabasca oil sands have an areal extent of 4.68 million hectares and a bitumen content of over 909 billion barrels, by far the largest single accumulation of hydrocarbons in Alberta and possibly the world. (see Table 1). An active natural gas exploration area within the boundaries of the deposit is the focus of this thesis. The study area encompasses townships 76 through 79 and ranges 3 through 11 West of the fourth meridian, (Figure 1.); within which are the Leismer, Chard, Hardy and Graham natural gas fields. The data available are sufficient for the purposes of this study and, because it is an active exploration area, will continue to rapidly expand. The first substantial interest in the area occurred in the late 1960's and after a ten year lapse, has steadily increased. In 1989 alone, over 45 wells were drilled; one can see how quickly the database is growing and consequently, how our understanding of the geology is evolving. The database includes all wells drilled in the area before the 1989-90 winter drilling season. Wells drilled after that, due to the one year confidentiality privilege extended to the operators of the wells, were unavailable for inspection. The study makes use of information gained from approximately 475 wells, of which over 90% were drilled after 1975. The

Location Map

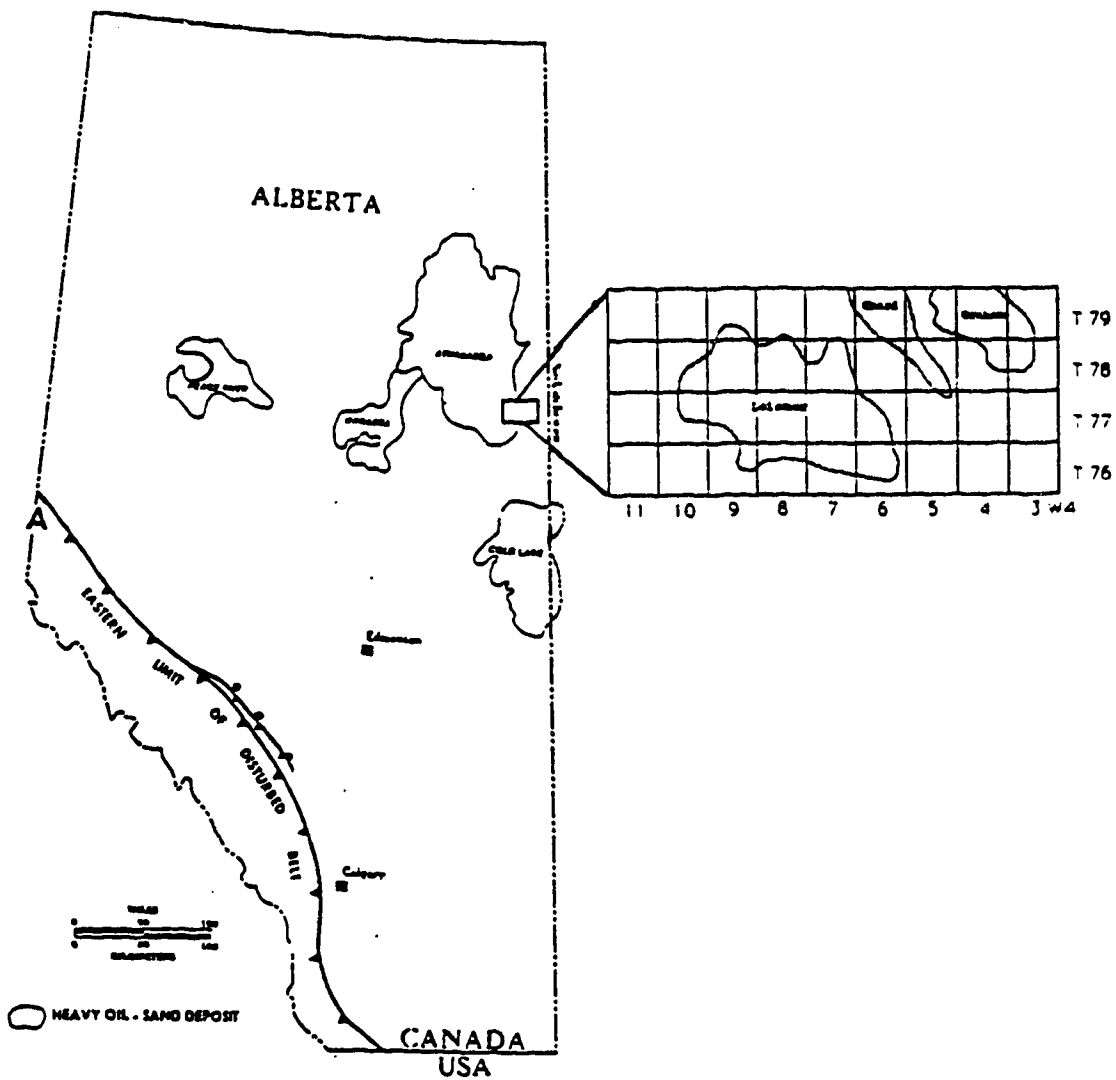


Figure 1. Map of Alberta showing major Cretaceous oil sands deposits. Inset - study area showing major gas accumulations. (modified after Moshier and Waples, 1985)

few wells drilled in the late 1960's provide only spontaneous potential and resistivity logs. Post 1975 wells, however have a comprehensive complement of logs including the spontaneous potential, resistivity, and compensated neutron formation density logs. In addition to this extensive geophysical database, 105 wells have been cored within the Mannville Group from which a representative suite have been examined. Seismic and outcrop observations were also incorporated but to a limited extent.

Stratigraphy

Within the study area the Mannville Group consists of the lowermost McMurray Formation which is directly overlain by the the Clearwater Formation and its' lowermost Wabiskaw Member. This in turn is overlain by the Grand Rapids Formation. The Mannville group is bounded unconformably above by the Joli Fou Formation and below by the angular Sub-Cretaceous unconformity (Figure 2). The deposition of the Manville Group is in response to transgression of the Boreal sea over the erosional unconformity of the underlying Devonian strata. The Athabasca Channel formed in response to the salt solution and subsequent collapse in the underlying

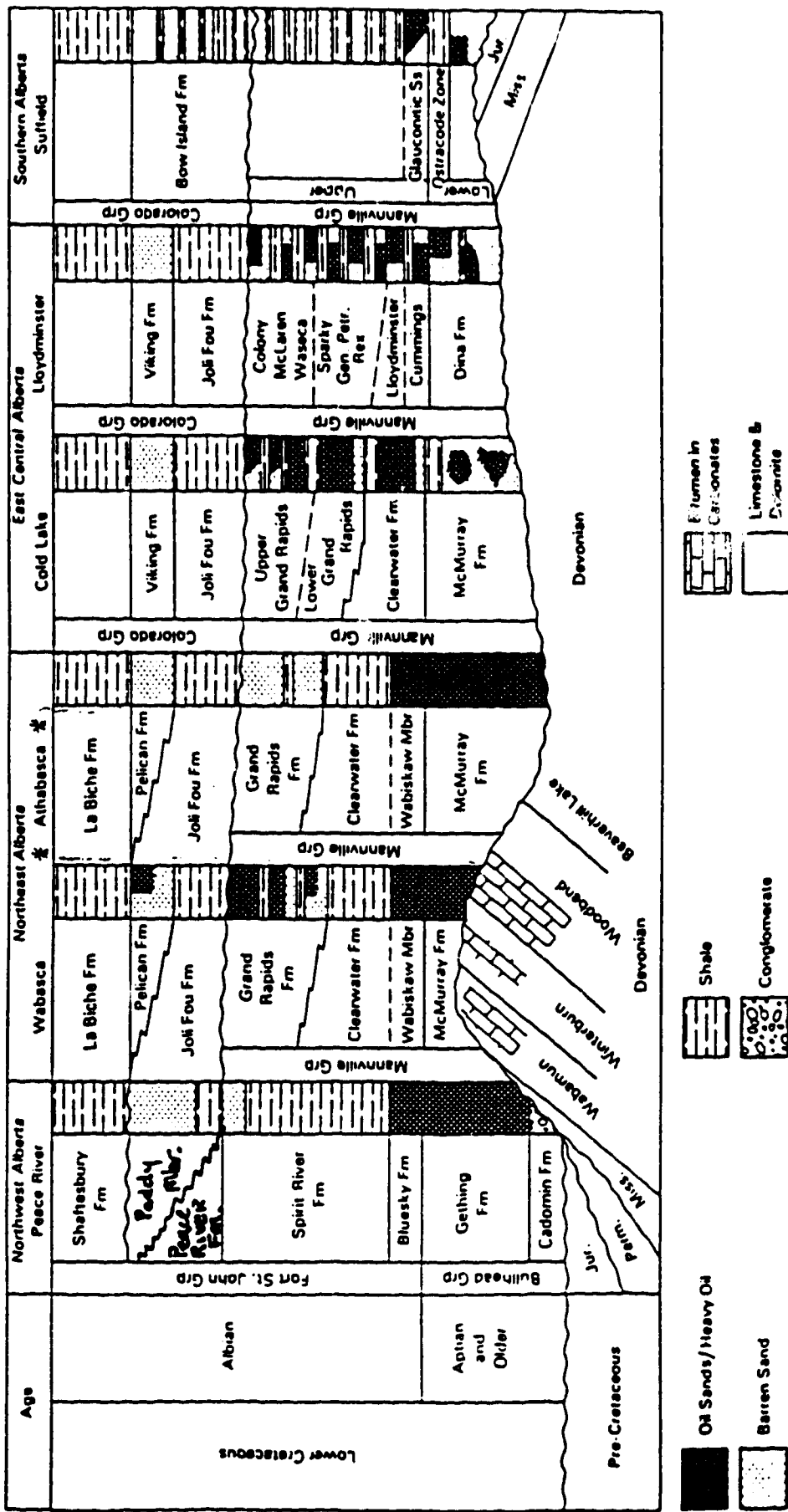


Figure 2. Regional stratigraphy of the Lower Cretaceous of Alberta. (modified after Keith et al, 1987)

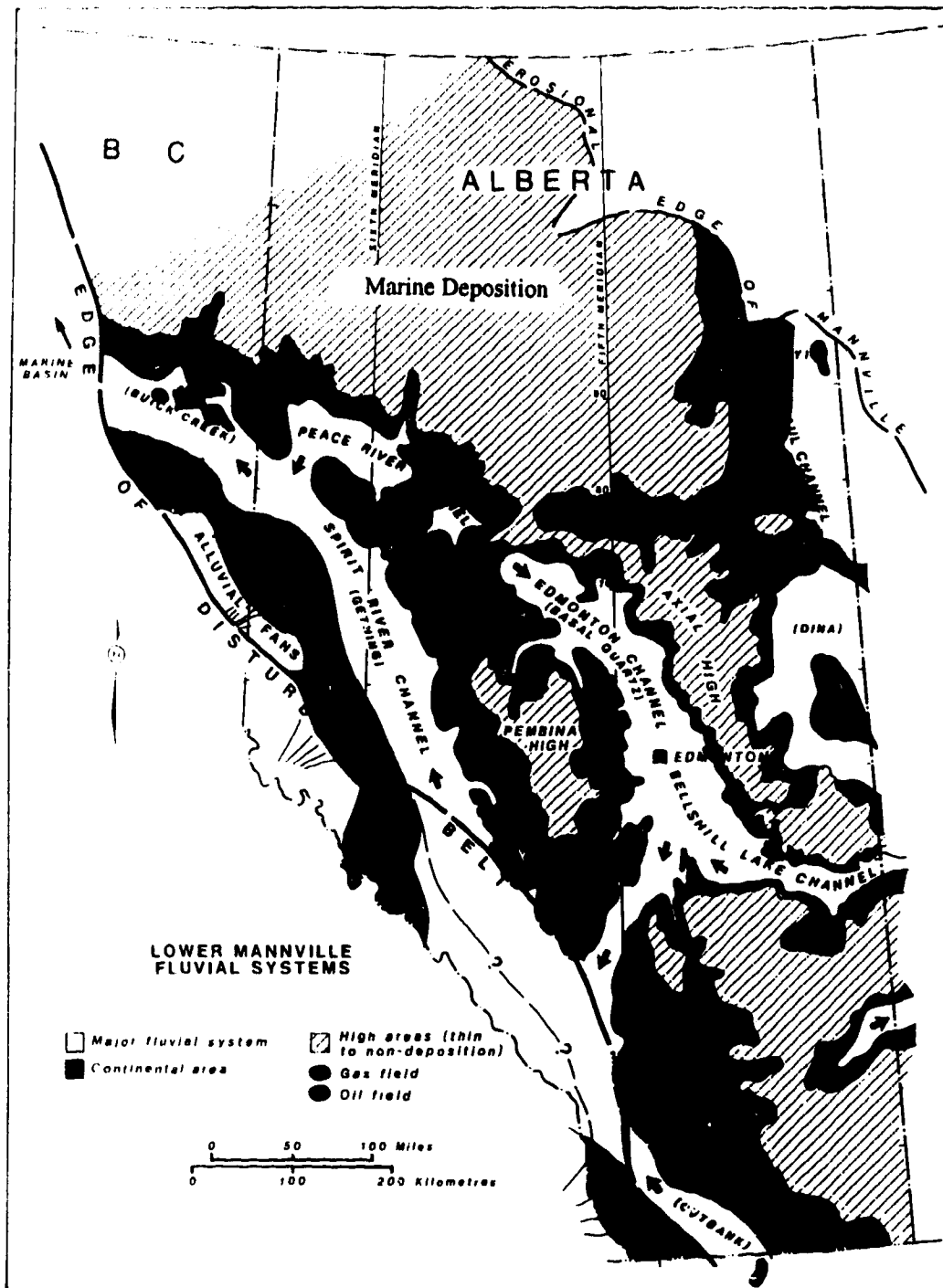


Figure 3. Paleogeography of the Lower Mannville fluvial systems; The first phase of Mannville Group deposition. (modified after Master's, 1985)

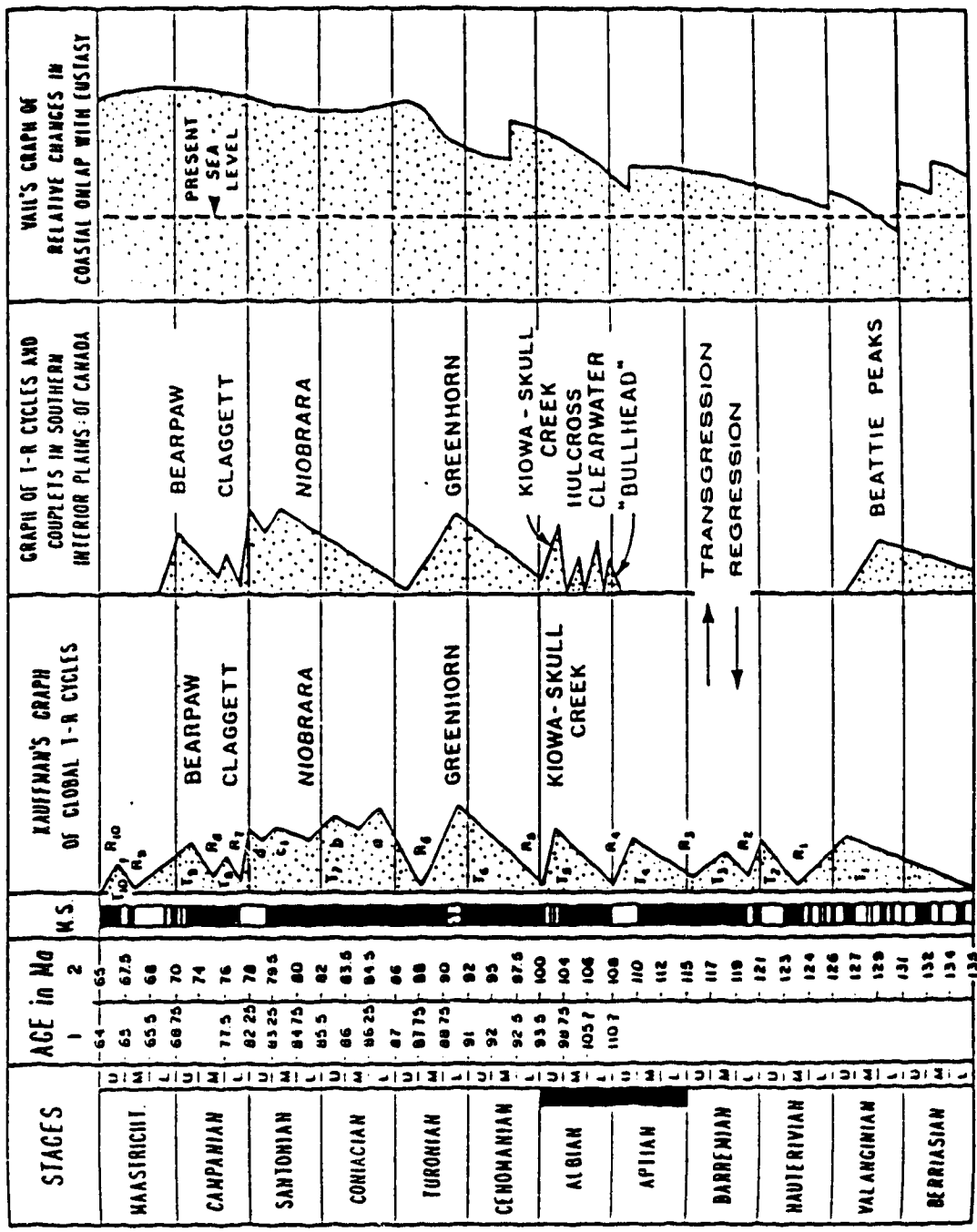


Figure 4. Global and Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin Transgressive - Regressive Cycles (modified after Caldwell, 1984)

Elk Point Group which will be discussed in greater detail later. The Athabasca channel is bounded by Devonian highlands to the west and south, and Precambrian basement to the east. The evolution of the basement has reversed the predominant southward drainage of the area south of township 92 to join drainage patterns that were draining to the northwest into the Cretaceous Interior Seaway (Flach and Mossop, 1985). This Early Cretaceous high is thought to be an extension of the Peace River Arch which reacted to Neocomian uplift of the Precambrian shield to the northeast (Christopher, 1980). These fluvial systems incised the Pre-Cretaceous unconformity surface creating a high relief area of up to 120 m (Flach, 1984; Figure 3). Lowermost McMurray Formation deposits are correlative with more southeasterly Dina Formation deposits near Lloydminster (Christopher, 1980). During Albian time, a major rise in sea level created the Cretaceous interior seaway, also referred to as the Bullhead Sea (Figure 4), which corresponds to the deposition of the McMurray Formation. It is this resulting interaction between the northeasterly draining fluvial system and the southwestern transgression of the Bullhead sea that provided the unique characteristics of the resulting middle McMurray Formation estuarine deposition (Figure 5). The Upper McMurray Formation was deposited as the

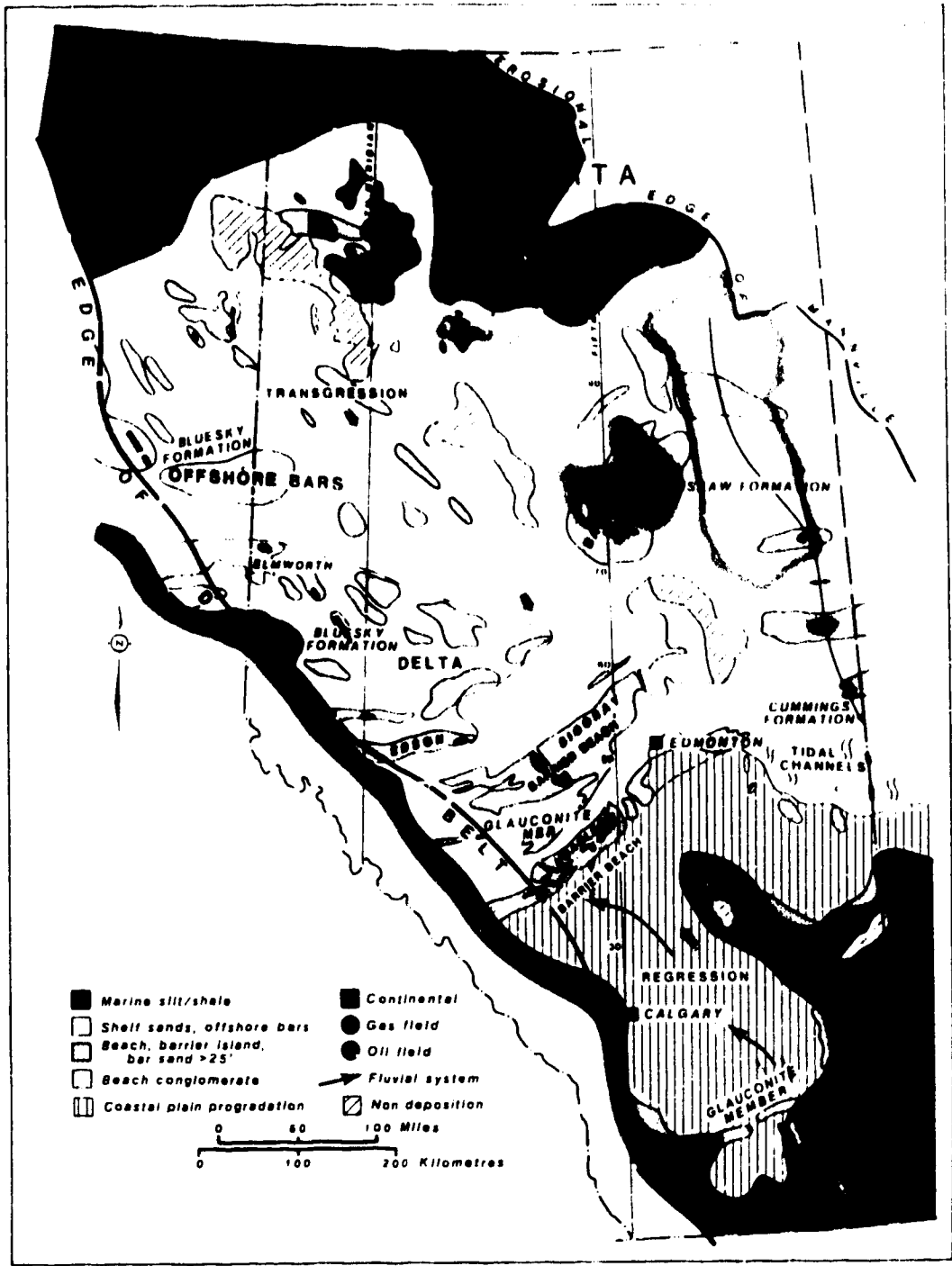


Figure 7. Paleogeography during initial transgression of the Clearwater Sea. (modified after Masters, 1985)

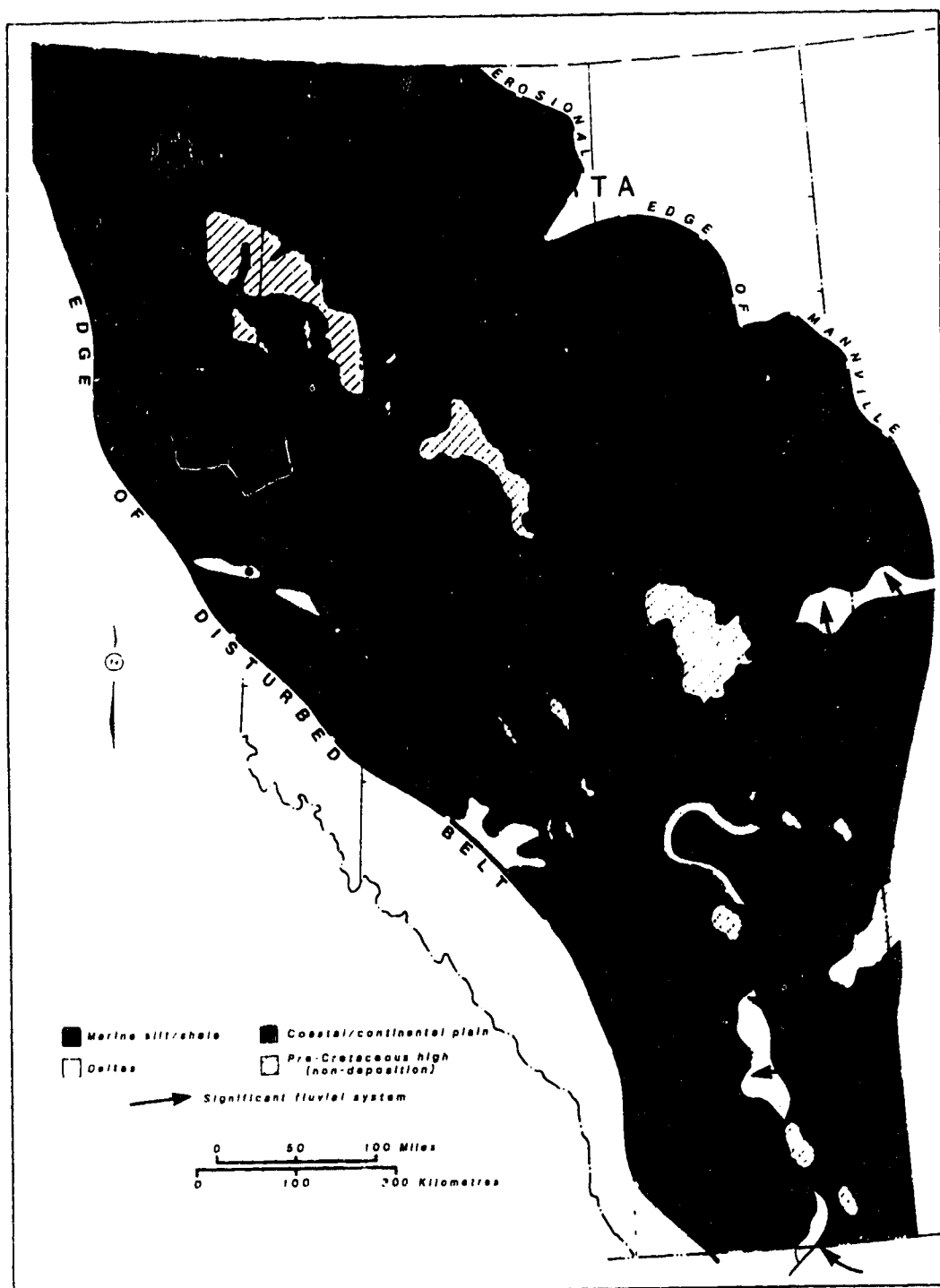


Figure 6. Paleogeography during Upper McMurray time.
(modified after Masters, 1985)

fluvial systems' depocenters begin to again prograde over the Middle McMurray Formation resulting in the distributary channels and associated facies of the Upper McMurray Formation (Figure 6). With renewed transgression in the early Albian (Figure 4), the area is submerged by the Clearwater Sea and in response, the Wabiskaw member of the overlying Clearwater Formation was deposited (Figures 7 and 8).

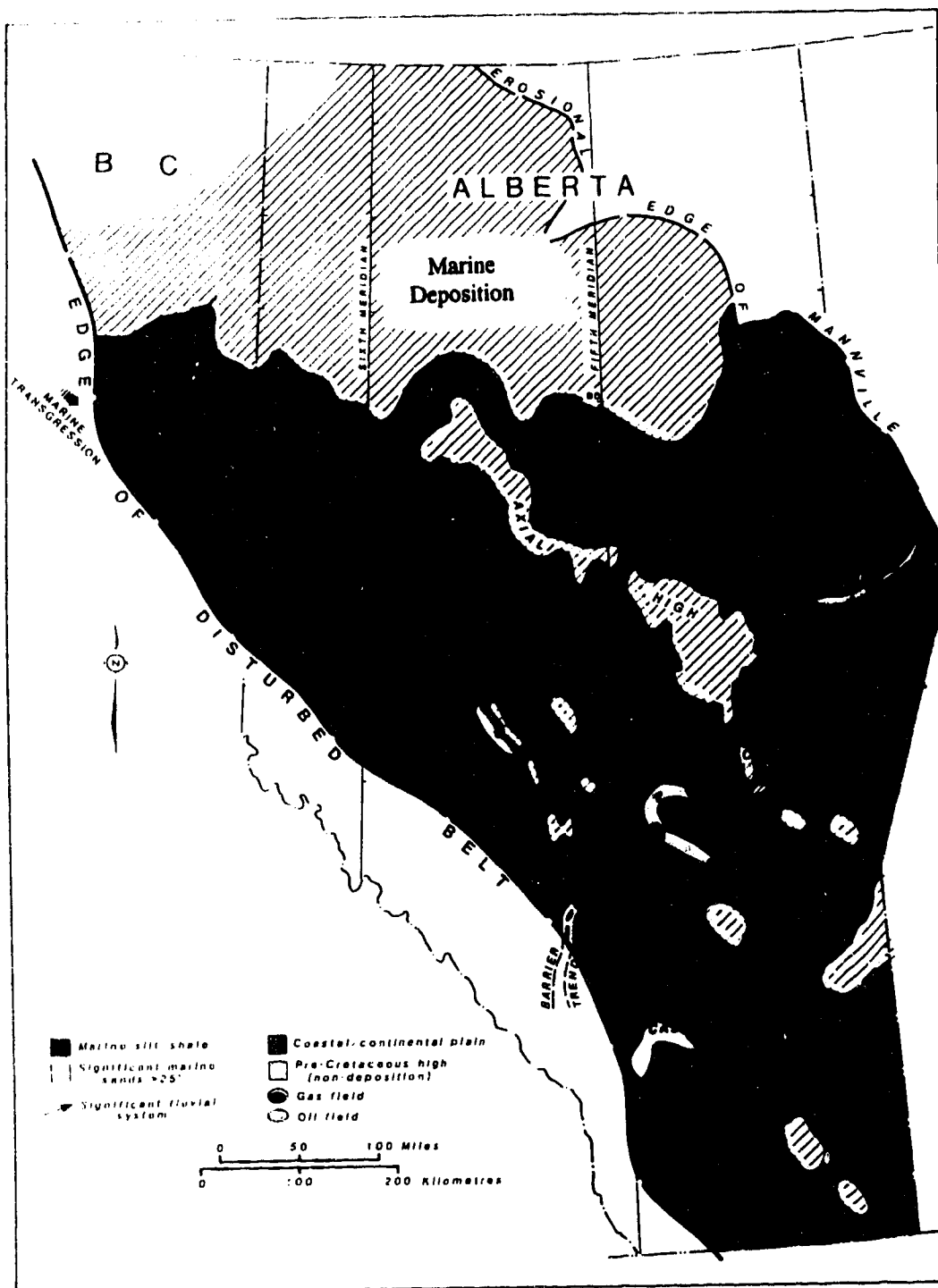


Figure 5. Paleogeography during middle McMurray time.
(modified after Masters, 1985)

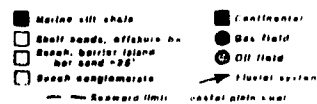
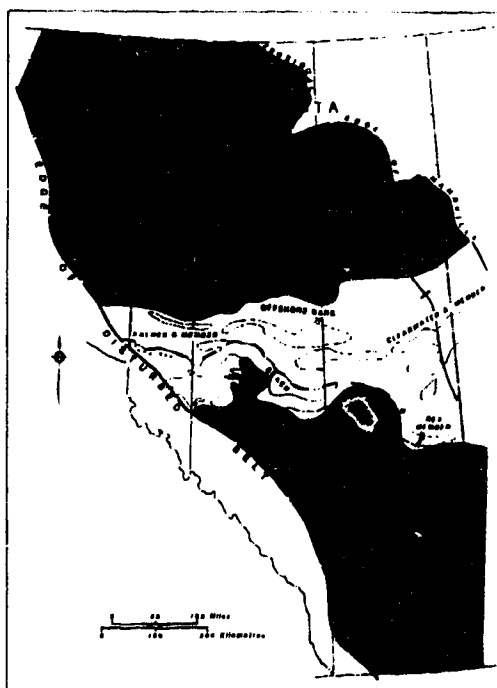
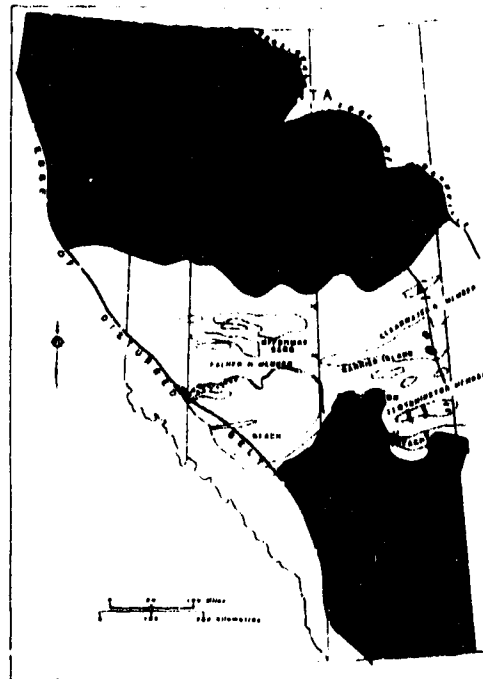


Figure 8.

- a) Initial paleogeography during Clearwater time. (after Masters, 1984)
- b) Paleogeography during Clearwater 'B' deposition. (after Masters, 1984)
- c) Paleogeography during Clearwater 'A' deposition. (modified after Masters, 1985)

General Geology

The McMurray Formation is clearly the depositional response to the transgression of the Bullhead Sea. As previously discussed, The Athabasca Channel is well defined and easily mapped on a regional scale. Deposition of the McMurray Formation has been divided into (Figure 9) the lower, middle, and upper members (Carrigy, 1966; Mossop and Flach, 1983; Keith et al., 1987). It is important to note that what is termed "Upper McMurray" by one geologist in the northwest might be time equivalent to the "Middle McMurray Formation" in the southeast where this study takes place (Rennie, 1987). In the study area, the main paleovalley formed on the SubCretaceous Unconformity is filled through a progression from fluvial deposits to estuarine deposits. Upon filling of the paleovalley, further fluvial systems spread across the area feeding clastic shoreline systems to the northwest. These fluvial deposits are stratigraphically equivalent to the upper McMurray Formation marine shoreline deposits found to the northwest (Rennie, 1987). This system was subsequently flooded by the rise of the Clearwater Sea and the subsequent deposition of the northward prograding barrier bar systems referred to as the Clearwater 'C', 'B', and 'A' members in ascending chronostratigraphic

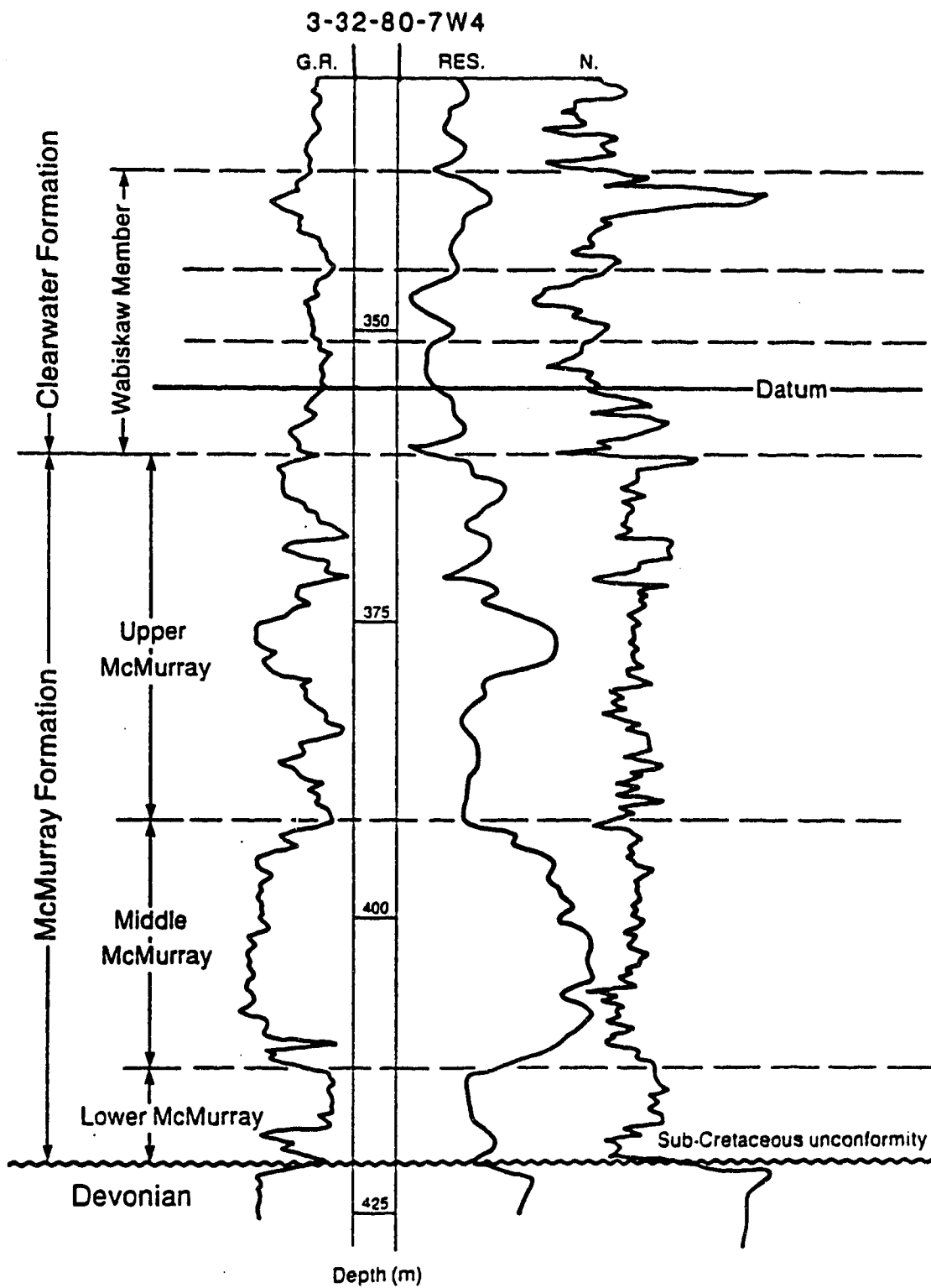


Figure 9. Type well subdividing McMurray Fm. in study area. (modified after Keith et al, 1987)

order. (Maher, 1989)

The type wells shown in Figures 9, 10, and 11 can be viewed in order to correlate the log picks in this study with others. As with all subsurface studies, internal consistency of stratigraphic correlations is of prime importance. These picks correspond with those of recent studies of the McMurray Formation to the northwest and the Clearwater Formation picks in the study by Maher, (1989). The Clearwater 'A' and Clearwater 'B' are the first and second major sand packages from the top respectively. The top of the Wabiskaw Member is picked as a relative low on the resistivity log, and represents a pervasive regional indicator. The McMurray Formation is then considered to be the first sand underlying the Wabiskaw Member, generally associated with a significant resistivity increase. The logs show a particularly good spontaneous potential response to gas in the Clearwater 'B' sands; with a small, but distinct, decrease of 5 mv at the gas/water interface in clean sands. The presence of gas throughout the interval is detected by the neutron-density crossover, although some instances were found where this criteria was not met as gas was produced from zones without crossover. These data were all considered to be quite reliably correlatable, markers which

McMurray Fm. Type Well

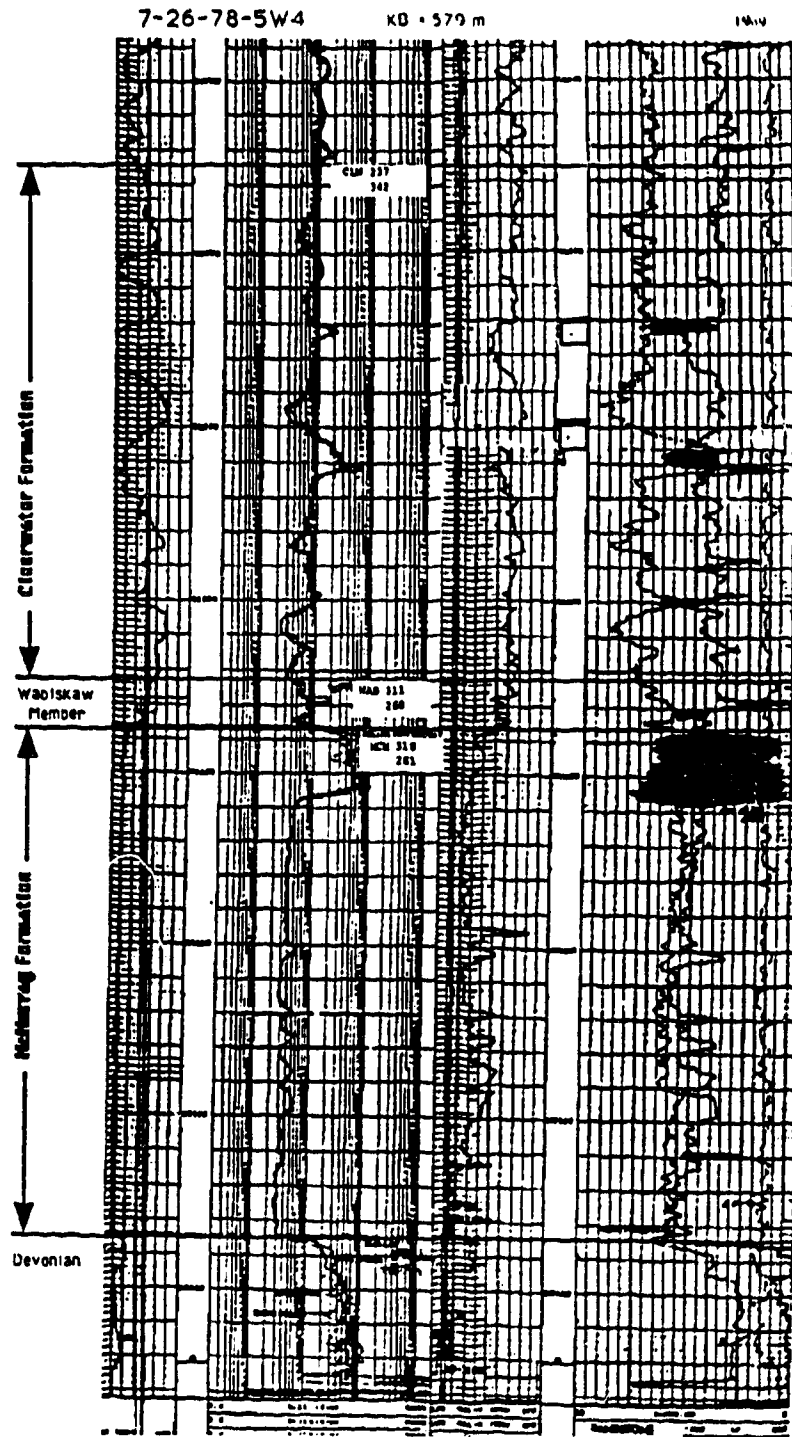


Figure 10. McMurray Formation type well showing typical tops.

Clearwater Fm. Type Well

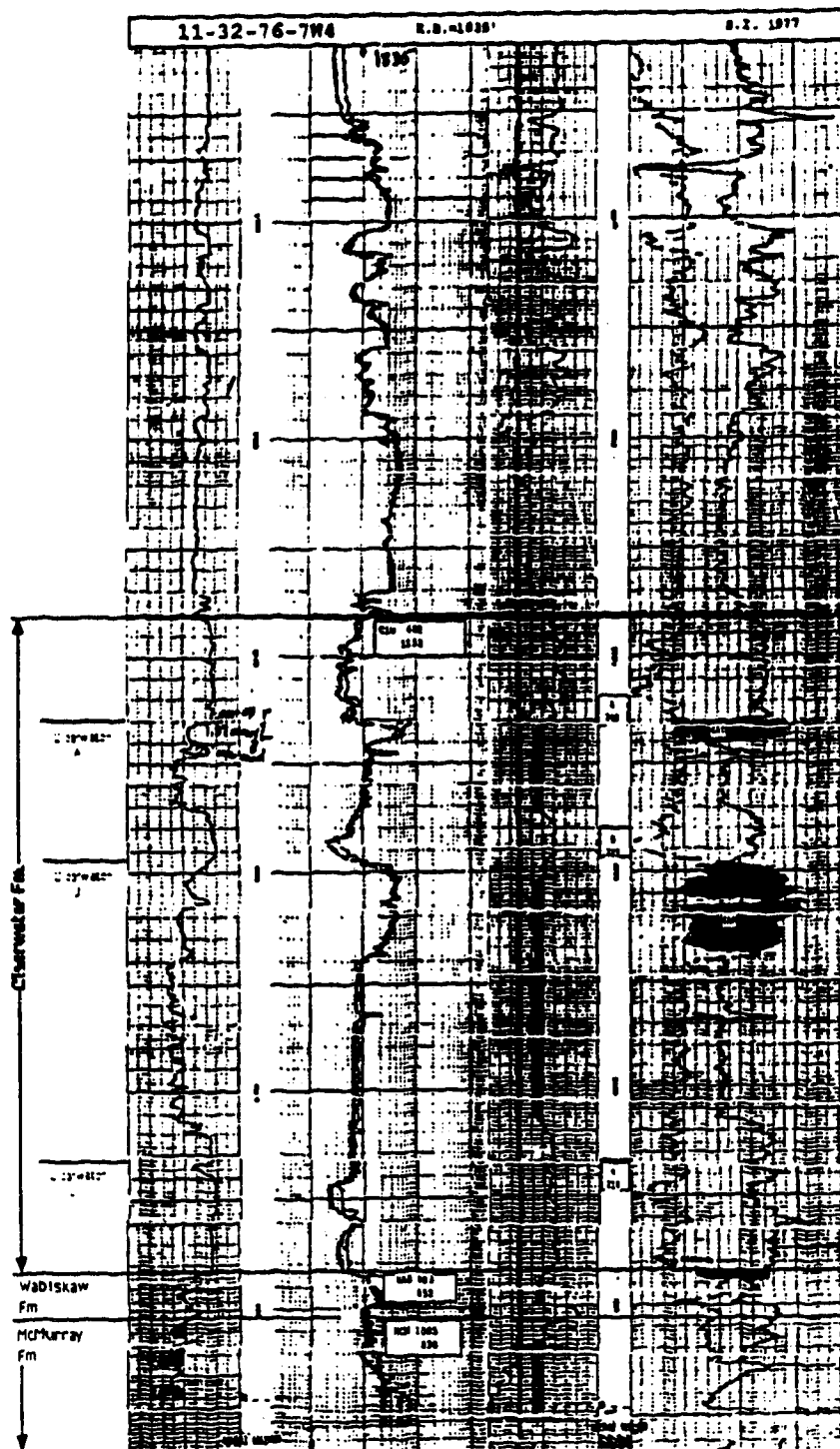


Figure 11. Clearwater Formation type well showing sand tops.

coincide to other studies, as well as, the Energy Resources Conservation Board's mineral rights interval designations.

McMurray Formation Facies Interpretation

Facies A : Interdistributary Mud / Levee Facies

This facies is comprised of light grey coloured mud deposited from suspension when currents have waned to the point where suspended material is no longer in equilibrium with current strength. Because of the varying pulses of flow energy, some thin bands of coarser material may be found associated within this facies. The facies is punctuated by syneresis cracks, characteristic of the fluctuating salinity of the system. *Planolites* are the most dominant of the abundant traces found in this facies, *Asterosoma*, *Skolithos*, *Arenicolites*, and *Diplocraterion* traces are also present in low proportions. Root traces that have been biodegraded to coal as well as siderite clasts can also be found (Figures 13a and 13b). No reservoir potential exists in this facies.

Facies B : Crevasse Splay Sands

Crevasse splay sand facies are comprised of trough cross-bedded and planar bedded, fine grained sands; no biogenic structures were found. This facies was deposited in response to channel currents branching out of the main channel and rapidly becoming unconfined,

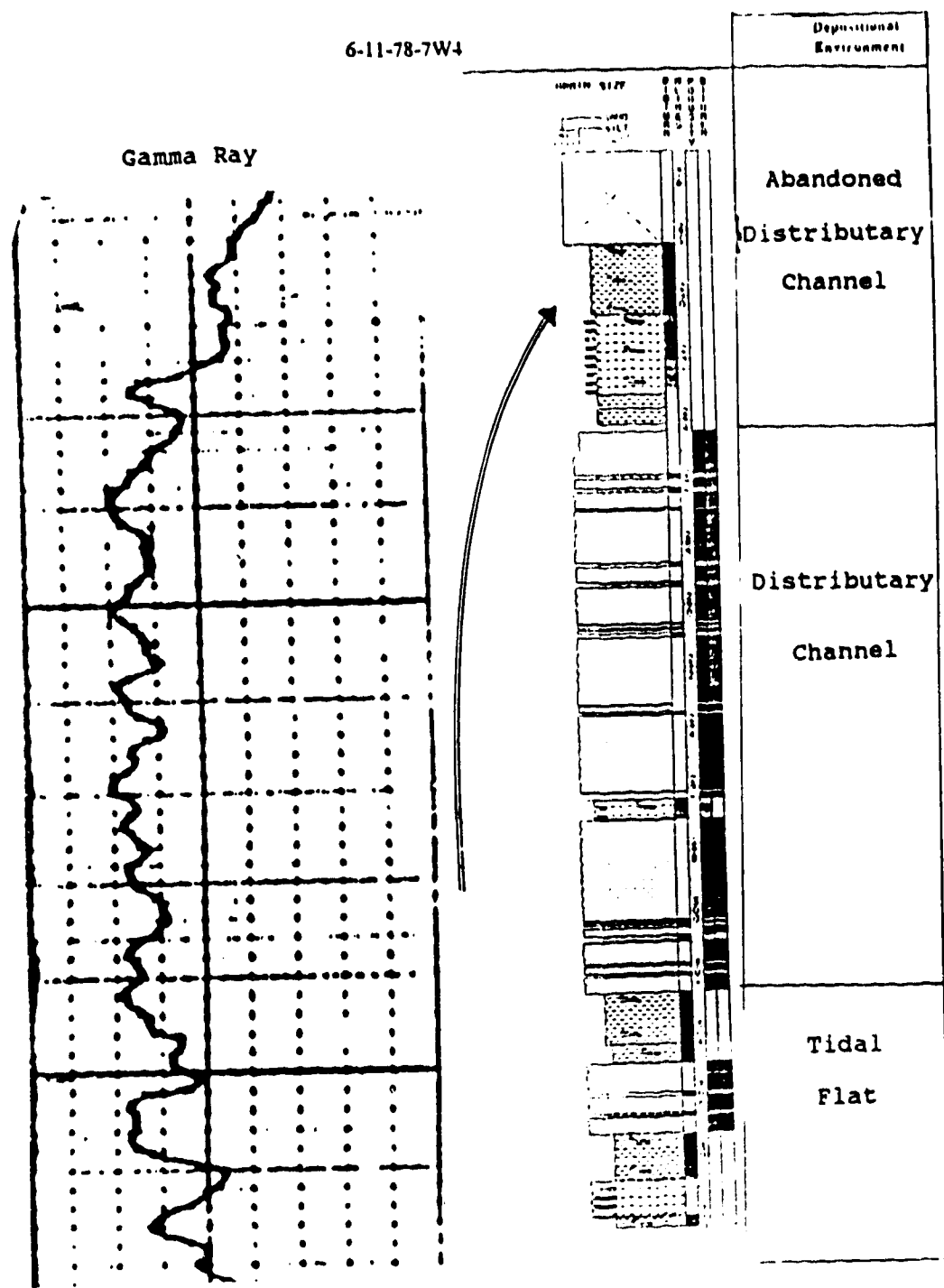
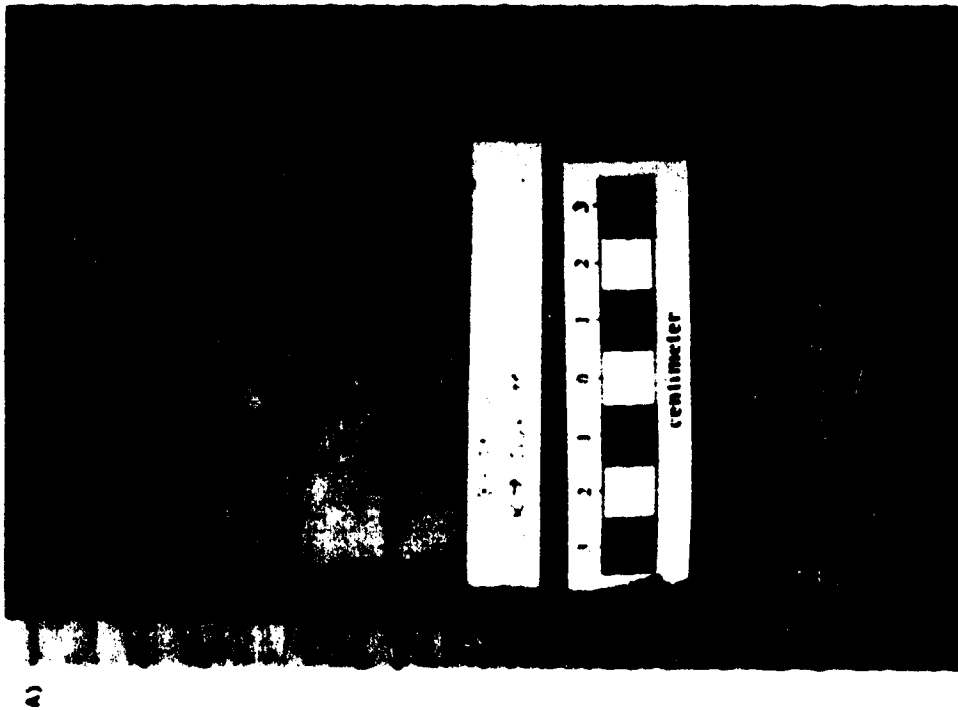


Figure 12. Log-Core correlation of Upper McMurray Formation



a)

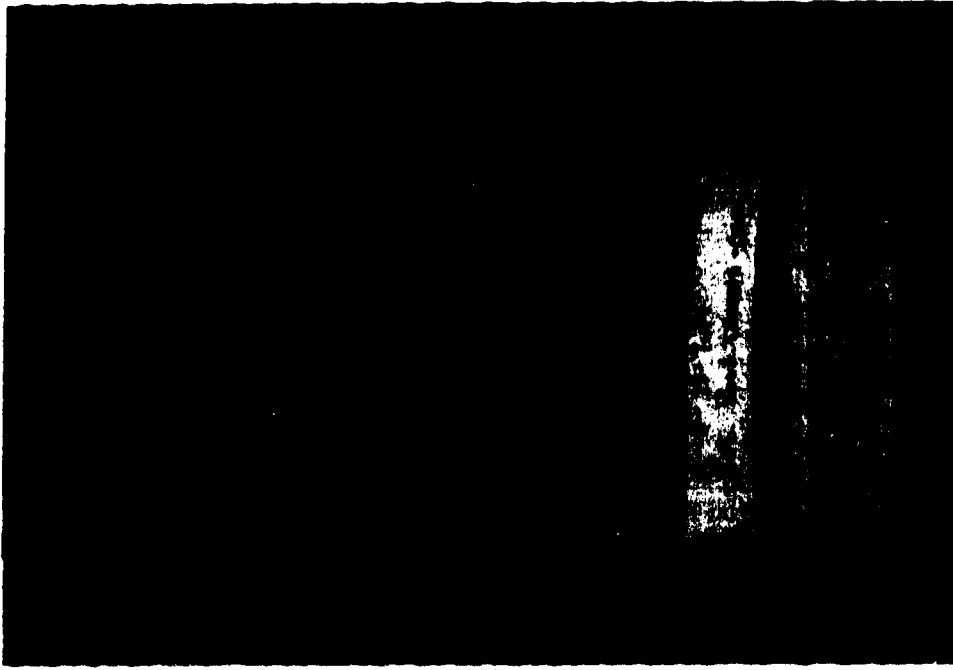


Figure 13a) siderite clast in well 11-8-79-7W @ 309.5 m. Interdistributary Bay Facies.
 Figure 13b) Root trace replaced by coal; well 11-8-79-7W @ 306.5 m. Interdistributary Bay Facies.

resulting in rapid waning of the flow. The coarsening-up sequences are similar to distributary mouth bars but on a smaller scale. Crevasse splay sands, although porous and permeable, are not considered to be exploration targets due to limited lateral continuity and low recoverable gas reserves.

Facies C : Crevasse Splay Silt and Mud

The crevasse splay silts and muds are the lowermost member of the crevasse splay sequence. Small scale ripples can be found in the coarser sediments, although most of the deposits are planar laminated, interbedded silts and muds. The finest sediments exhibit *Planolites* and also display syneresis cracks (Figure 14a). The crevasse splay silts and muds are not reservoir facies.

Facies D : Abandoned Distributary Channel Facies

Abandoned distributary channel facies consist of interbedded mud, sand and silt and overlies the Upper Channel Fill Sand Facies. This further upward decrease in grain size is a reflection of decreasing flow energy related to channel abandonment. The facies is planar laminated and displays the ichnogenera *Planolites* and *Skolithos*. (Figure 14b). The facies is characterized by root traces, syneresis cracks, and

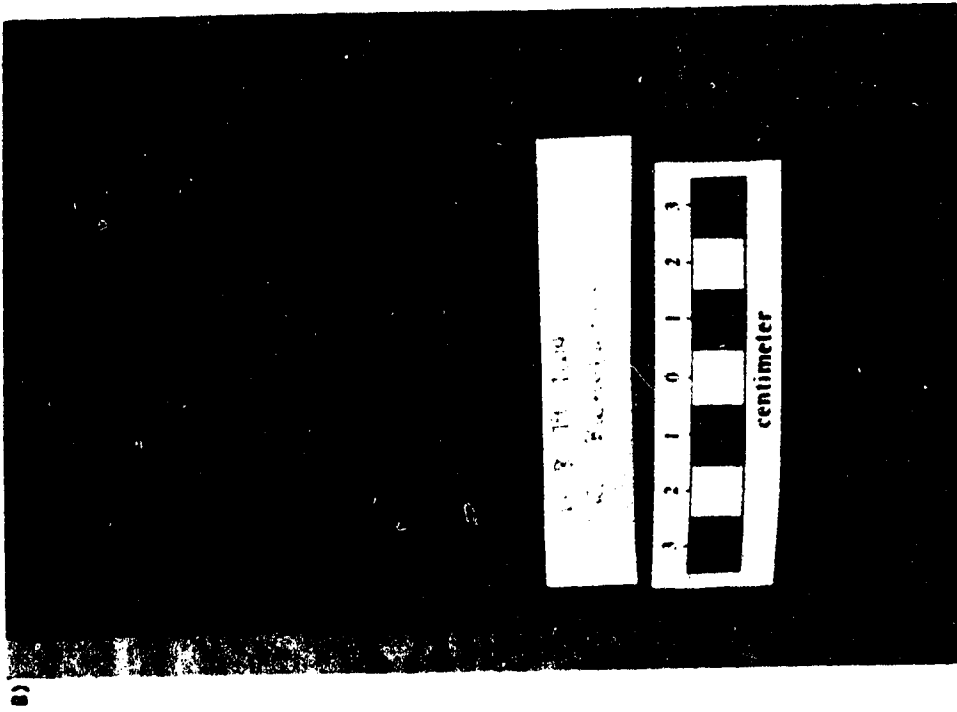
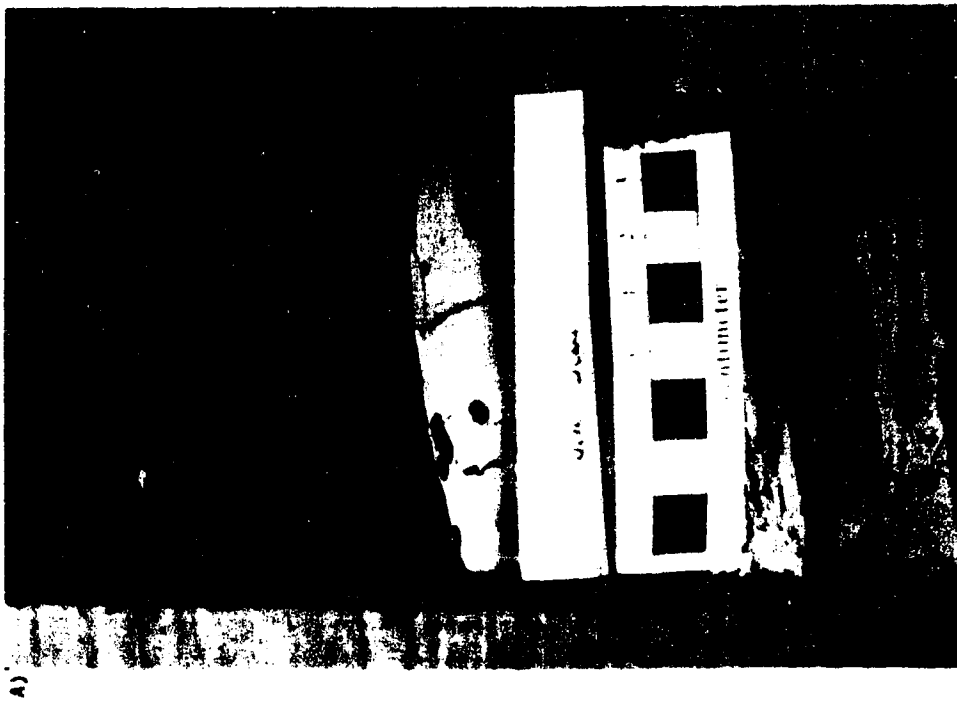


Figure 14a) Syneresis cracks, scour surface, Plenoites, Crevasse Splay Silt / Mud Facies
Figure 14b) Bioturbation; Plenoites, Skolithos, well 11-8-79-744 Abandoned Estuarine Channel Facies.

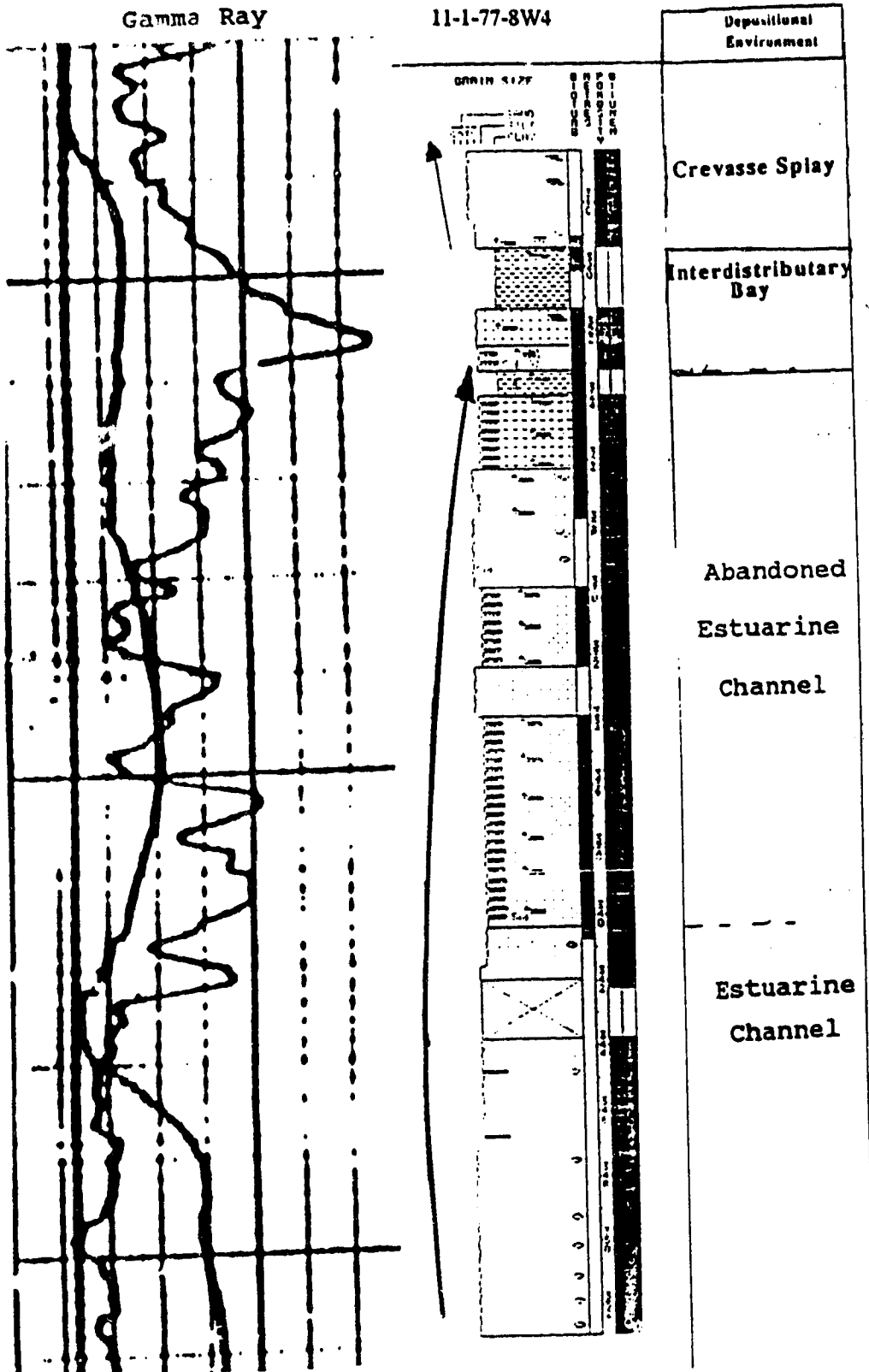


Figure 15. Log-Core correlation of Upper-Middle McMurray Formation.

siderite clasts; violent soft-sediment deformation is present in response to rapid flooding and dewatering of the clays (Figures 16a and 16b). The overall fining upwards is found to be gradational with overlying muds. No reservoir potential is assigned to this facies.

Facies E : Upper Distributary Channel Fill

The Upper Channel Fill Facies is the uppermost sand in the channel fill sequence. It is a well sorted, fine to very fine grained sand. Ripple structures reflect the upwardly waning current throughout the channel fill sequence as does the increasing abundance of clay drapes. Biogenic structures are absent in the sand. This facies, although slightly less desirable than the lower channel fill facies, is considered a good reservoir rock.

Facies F : Intermediate Distributary Channel Fill

The intermediate channel fill is a well sorted, trough cross-bedded, fine grained sand. This facies overlies the Basal Channel Fill facies in the channel fill sequence. The facies lacks biogenic structures and clay drapes averaging 3-20 mm are found. It is considered a superb reservoir rock.

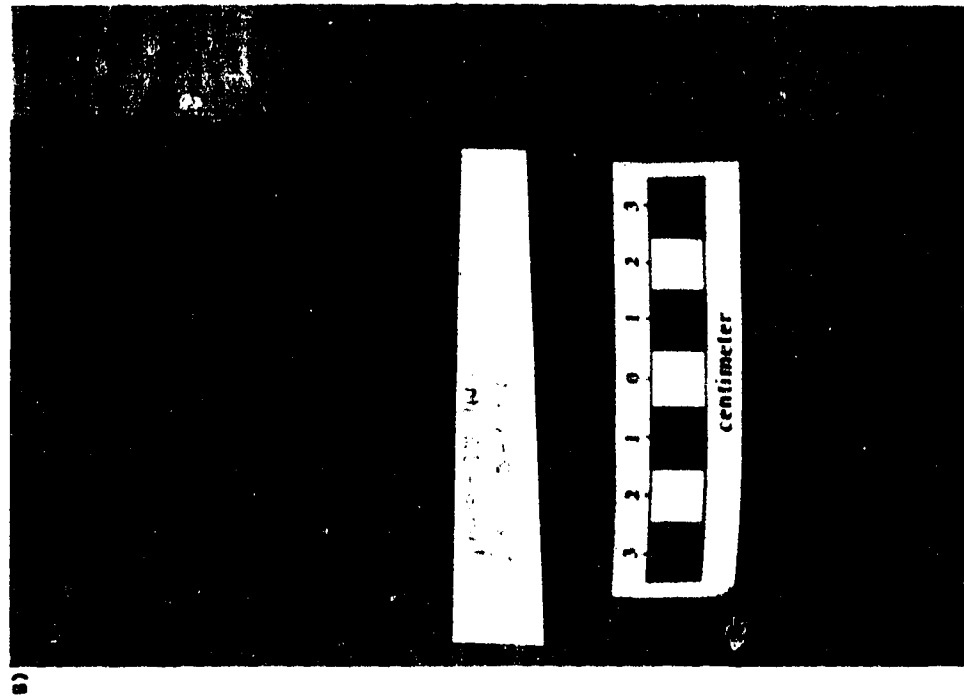
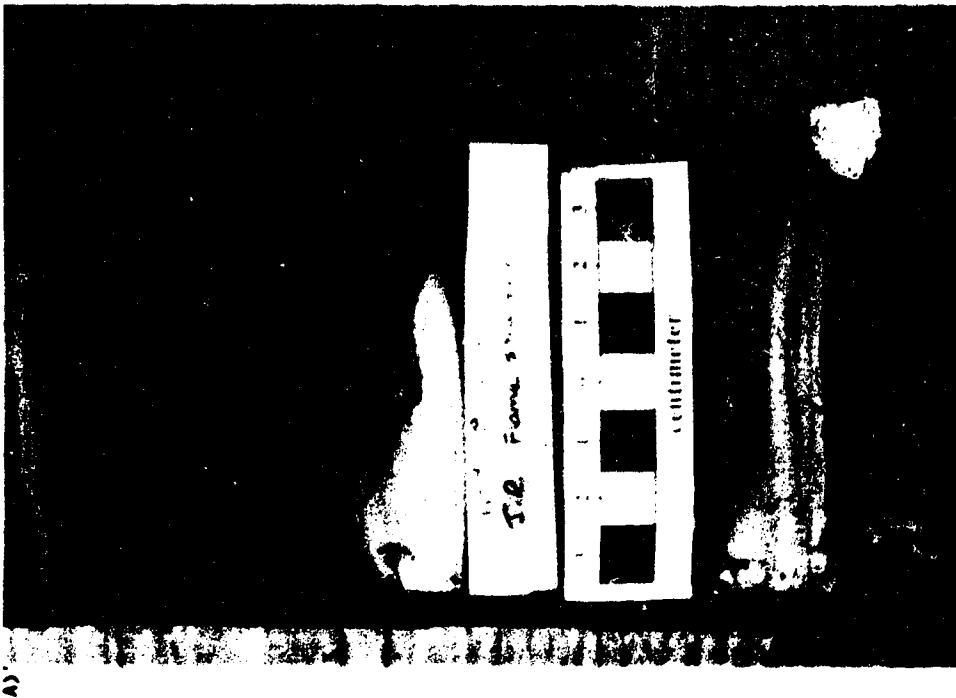


Figure 16a) Flame structure @ 307.8 m; well 11-8-79-7M. Abandoned Estuarine Channel Facies.
 Figure 16b) Soft-Sediment Deformation @ 308 m; well 11-8-79-7M. Abandoned Estuarine Channel Facies.

Facies G : Basal Distributary Channel Fill

The basal channel fill is a well sorted, planar bedded, medium - fine grained sand. Rip-up clasts are occasionally observed and biogenic structures are absent from this facies, It overlies the Massive Channel Fill, (when present). The facies is an excellent reservoir rock.

Facies H :Massive Basal Distributary Channel Fill

This facies is a well sorted, medium grained sand that lacks any apparent structure. It appears to be the lowermost channel fill, but is not always present. Rip-up clasts are commonly present. Biogenic structures are absent and the facies is considered excellent reservoir rock.

Facies I : Delta Marsh / Tidal Flats

The delta marsh consists of interbedded mud, sand and silt, punctuated by small tidal creek deposits. The facies is planar laminated and displays some burrowing. *Planolites* is the most dominant trace found in this facies, *Asterosoma*, *Skolithos*, *Arenicolites*, and *Diplocraterion* are also present in low densities. Rooting has occurred where subaerial exposure has allowed vegetation to grow. Root traces that have been transformed to coal, and siderite clasts are also

McMurray Fm. Sedimentary Facies

Facies	Lithology	Sedimentary Structures	Biogenic Structures	Log Signature
A: Interdistributary Bay Muds	light grey mud small discontinuous silt lenses, organics/coal silt/clastic clasts.	suspension deposition planar laminated small ripples in sands Syneresis cracks	<i>Planolites</i> abundant, <i>Diplocraterion</i> <i>Asterosoma</i> , <i>Stollthos</i> , <i>Arenicolites</i> , Root Traces,	shale with small, erratic sands, generally coarsen upwards
B: Crevasse Splay Sands	fine grained sand	trough x-beds; planar bedding occasionally	none	coarsening upwards
C: Crevasse Splay silts and mud	interbedded silt and light grey mud	some small scale ripples mud-planar laminated	<i>Planolites</i>	coarsening upwards
D: Abandoned Distributary Channel Facies	interbedded mud/silt organics/coal silt/clastic clasts.	planar laminated Syneresis cracks mud is suspension deposition	<i>Planolites</i> , <i>Stollthos</i> , <i>Asterosoma</i> , <i>Arenicolites</i> <i>Diplocraterion</i> , Root Traces	fining upwards
E: Upper Distributary Channel Fill	fine - very fine grained sand well sorted	small scale current ripples clay drapes	none	fining upwards
F: Intermediate Distributary Channel Fill	fine grained sand well sorted	trough x-bedded clay drapes	none	fining upwards
G: Basal Distributary Channel Fill	medium - fine grained sand well sorted	planar bedded rip-up clasts	none	fining upwards
H: Massive Basal Distributary Channel Fill	medium grained sand well sorted	massive rip-up clasts	none	fining upwards
I: Delta Marsh / Tidal Flats	interbedded mud Silt / Sand organics/coal silt/clastic clasts.	mud-planar laminated Syneresis cracks sand-ripples	<i>Planolites</i> , <i>Stollthos</i> , <i>Asterosoma</i> , <i>Arenicolites</i> <i>Diplocraterion</i> , Root Traces	shale with small, erratic sands, generally coarsen upwards

Table 2. Summary of McMurray Fm. Sedimentary Facies

observed. The facies contains abundant syneresis cracks, characteristic of the fluctuating flooding and evaporation in the system. The tidal creek deposits are less than 5 m in thickness and show fining up profiles with the same biogenic characteristics as the surrounding finer grained deposits. The delta marsh deposits are of little economic importance as reservoir qualities are poor to nonexistent.

Facies J : Abandoned Estuarine Channel Facies

Abandoned estuarine channel facies consist of interbedded mud, sand and silt and overlies the Upper Channel Fill Sand Facies. This further upward decrease in grain size is a reflection of decreasing flow energy related to channel abandonment. The facies is planar laminated and exhibits the following trace fossils; *Planolites*, *Skolithos*, *Asterosoma*, *Diploctaterion*, and *Arenicolites*, as well as, the presence of root traces, syneresis cracks, and siderite clasts. The overall fining upwards is found to be gradational with overlying muds and underlying sands.

Facies K : Upper Estuarine Channel Fill

The upper estuarine channel fill facies is the uppermost sand in the channel fill sequence. It is a

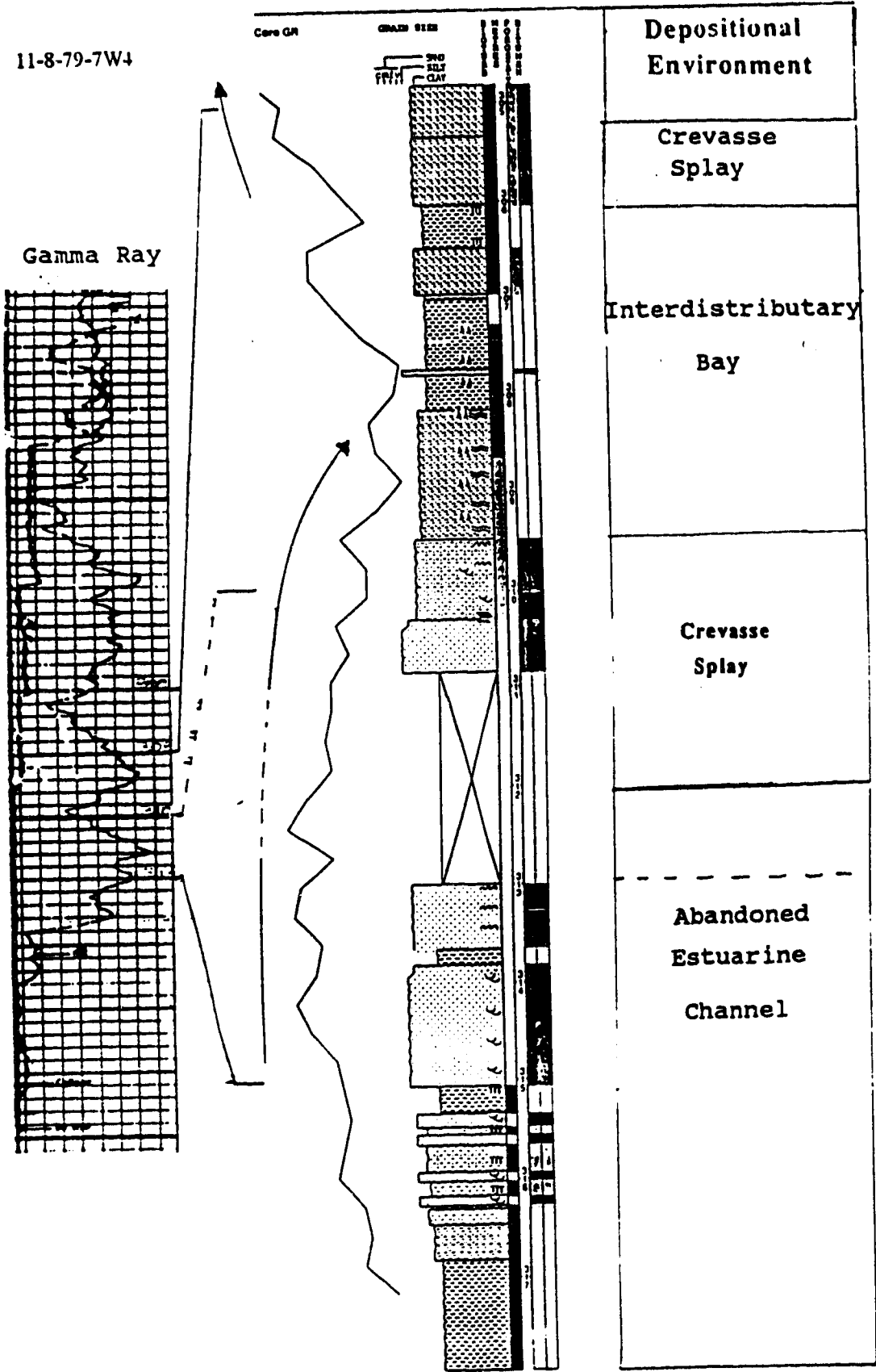


Figure 17. Log-Core correlation of Middle McMurray Formation

well sorted, fine to very fine grained sand. Ripple structures reflect the upwardly waning current throughout the channel fill sequence as does the increasing abundance and thickening of shale breaks. Prograding ripple sets are a common occurrence (Figure 18a), a few *Palaeophycus* are seen in the sand and *Planolites* can be found to have penetrated the larger shale breaks. The estuarine channels are found to contain considerably higher occurrences of biogenic components. This facies, although slightly less desirable than the lower channel fill facies, is considered a good reservoir rock.

Facies L : Intermediate Estuarine Channel Fill

The intermediate estuarine channel fill is a well sorted, trough cross-bedded, fine grained sand. The presence of mud-couplets and tidal bundles are evidence of tidal influence (Figures 18b and 20a). These tidal bundles are the main differentiating tool between distributary channels and estuarine channels (Smith, 1988). This facies overlies the Basal Channel Fill facies in the channel fill sequence. This facies lacks biogenic structures and clay drapes averaging 3-20 mm are found. It is an excellent reservoir rock.

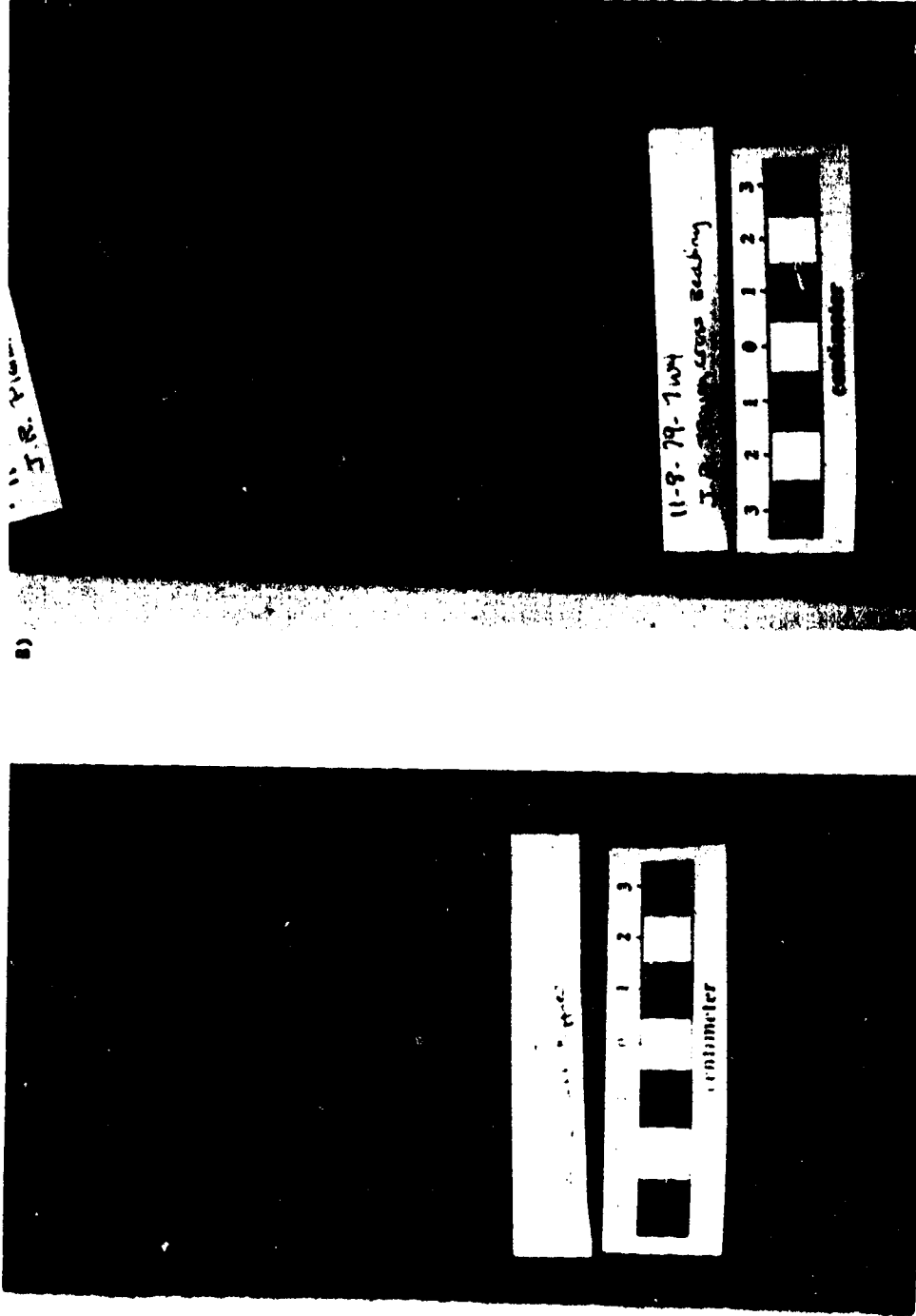


Figure 18a) Prograding small-scale ripples ~ 313 m; well 11-8-79-7M4. Upper Estuarine Channel Fill Facies
 Figure 18b) Small scale ripples, wave & tidal influence?, trough x-beds above ~ 314.5 m; well 11-8-79-7M4.
 Intermediate Estuarine Channel Fill Facies

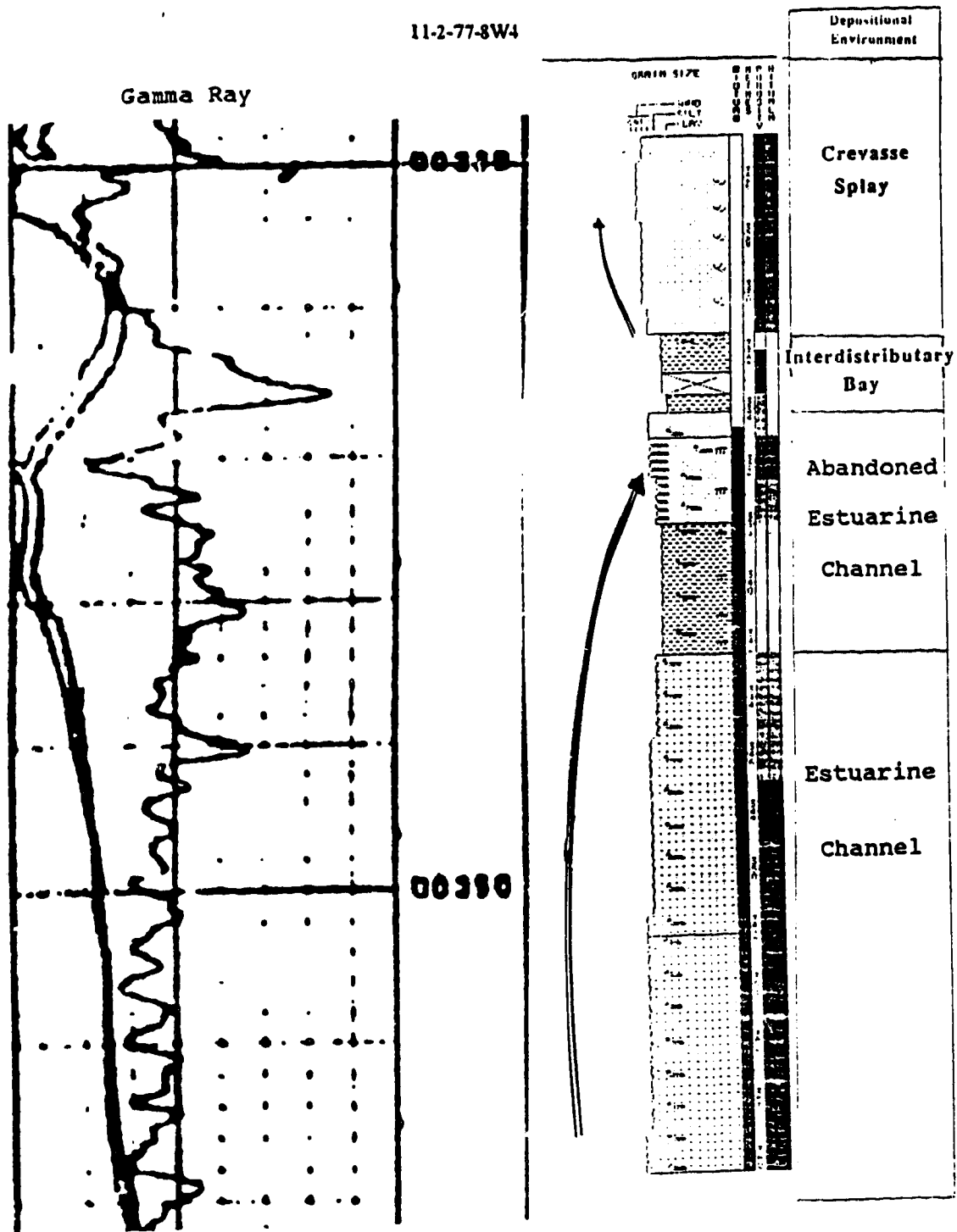


Figure 19. Log-Core correlation of Upper McMurray Formation

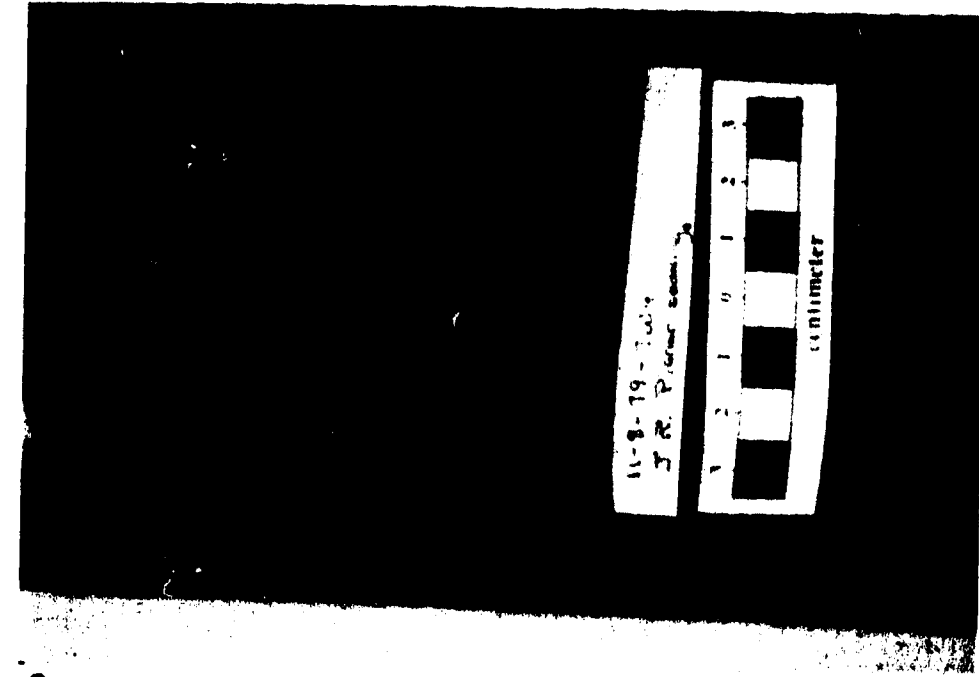
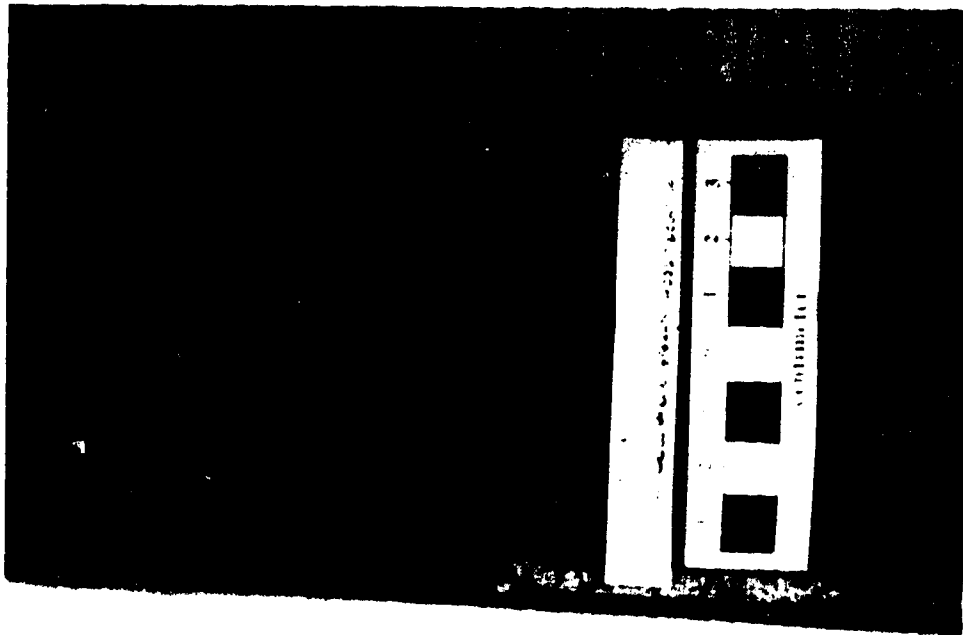


Figure 20a) Trough x - bedding @ 315 m; tidal influence Well 11-8-79-706. Intermediate Estuarine Channel Fill
 Figure 20b) Planar bedding @ 317 m; tidal influence Well 11-8-79-706. Basal Estuarine Channel Fill

Facies M : Basal Estuarine Channel Fill

The basal channel fill is a well sorted, planar bedded, medium - fine grained sand (Figure 20b). There is the impression that tidal processes have influenced deposition, reactivation surfaces and some subordinate flow structures were observed. Constantly varying flow structures are prevalent. Rip-up clasts are occasionally seen in addition to siderite nodules; biogenic structures are absent from this facies. When present, it overlies the massive channel fill. The facies is an excellent reservoir rock.

Facies N : Massive Basal Estuarine Channel Fill

This facies is a well sorted, medium grained sands that lacks any apparent structure. It appears to be the lowermost channel fill, but is not always present. Rip-up clasts are commonly present and lag deposits, although not observed in this study, would be expected. Biogenic structures are absent and the facies is considered excellent reservoir rock.

Facies O : Fluvial Facies

The fluvial facies described is the lowermost deposit of the McMurray Formation and is often not deposited. When present, it follows the typical fining upwards sequence displaying corresponding

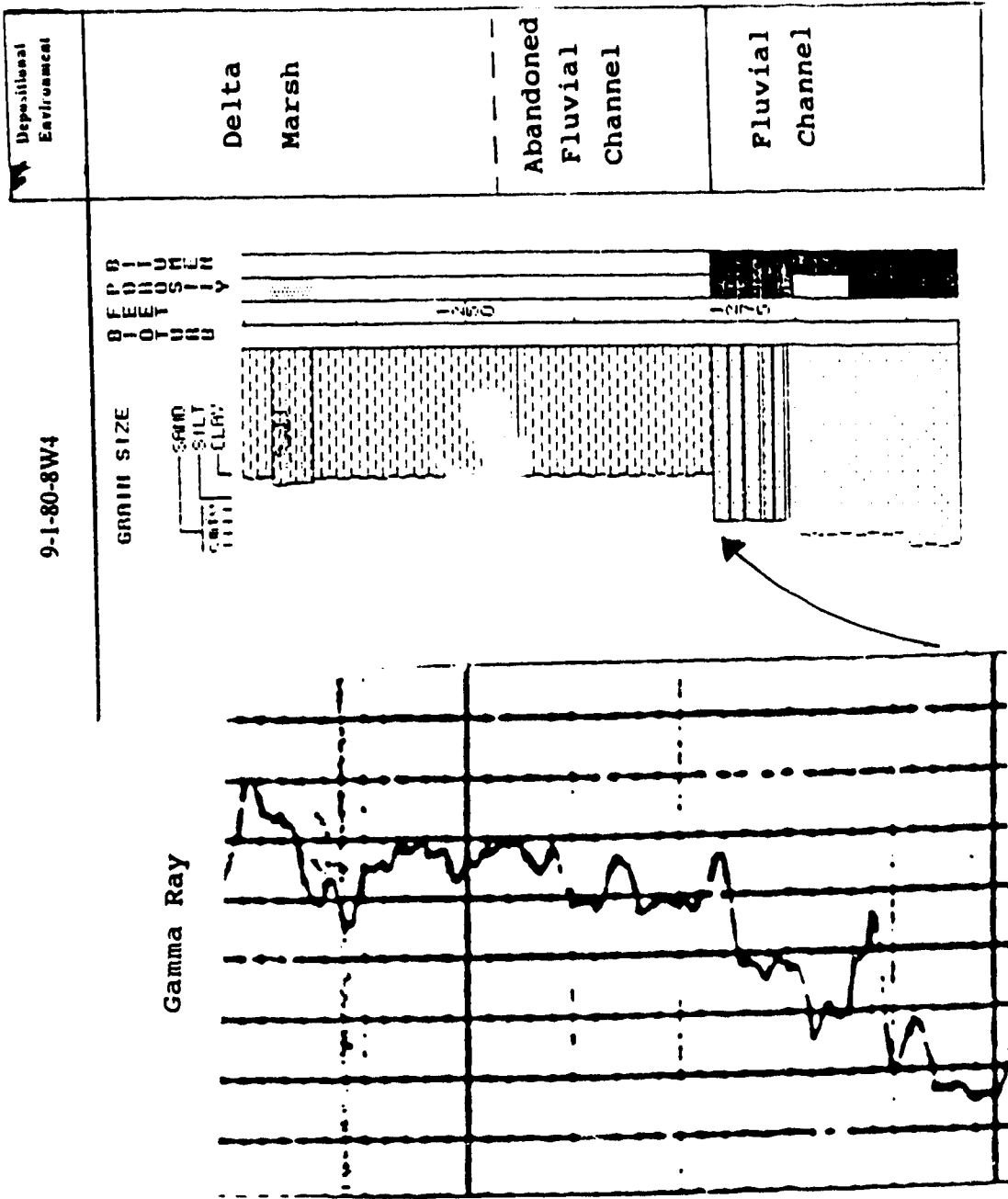


Figure 21. Log-Core correlation of Lower McMurray Formation

structure and grain size trend for a decreasing flow energy deposit. To briefly describe it, there is a transition from a lag deposit, to planar bedded sands, to cross-bedded sands, to small scale ripples, to planar laminations and finally the uppermost unit is a mud deposited from suspension; grain size decreasing constantly upwards. This sequence, of course, is commonly interrupted and missing some sections. The core chosen to represent this progression unfortunately is saturated to the extent that recognition of decreasing flow regime structures is disguised. The grain size in the 9-1-80-8W4 core does show the traditional transition from fine grained sand, to very fine grained sand, to silt and finally the suspension mud cap. A few rip-up mud clasts are also seen in the core. Although this unit has reservoir potential, it is generally not at a sufficient structural elevation to reservoir natural gas.

McMurray Fm. Sedimentary Facies (Con't)

Facies	Lithology	Sedimentary Structures	Biogenic Structures	Log Signature
J: Abandoned Estuarine Channel Facies	Interbedded mud/silt organics/coal siderite clasts.	Planar laminated Synereals cracks mud is suspension deposition	Planolites, Skolithos, Asterosoma, Arenicolites Diplocraterion, Root Traces	fining upwards
K: Upper Estuarine Channel Fill	fine - very fine grained sand shale breaks organics in troughs	small scale current ripples, shale breaks prograding ripples combined flow ripples tidal bundles	sand-Paleophycus shale-Planolites	fining upwards
L: Intermediate Estuarine Channel Fill	fine grained sand well sorted	trough x-bedded tidal bundles clay drapes rip-up clasts	sand-Paleophycus shale-Planolites	fining upwards
M: Basal Estuarine Channel Fill	medium - fine grained sand siderite nodules	planar bedded rip-up clasts constantly varying flow	none	fining upwards
N: Massive Basal Estuarine Channel Fill	medium grained sand siderite nodules	massive rip-up clasts	none	fining upwards
O: Fluvial Facies	fining upwards sequence from m.g. sand to mud siderite and organics near top of sequence	waning flow from planar bedding to small scale ripples and suspension deposition. rip-ups in lower units	bioturbation near top of sequence Planolites, Skolithos, Asterosoma, Arenicolites Diplocraterion, Root Traces	fining upwards

Table 3. Summary of McMurray Fm. Sedimentary Facies (Con't)

Clearwater Formation Facies Interpretation

Facies P : Marine Shale

This facies is comprised of light grey coloured mud deposited from suspension when energy has waned to the point where suspended sediment is no longer in equilibrium with flow energy. The marine shale deposit is massive in appearance, and is devoid of biogenic structures at a visual level. The facies holds no reservoir potential.

Facies Q : Nearshore Bar Facies

This facies is a sequence of fining upwards cycles. The sands are well sorted, and grade from fine grained sand to silt. The unit is devoid of biogenic or sedimentary structures, appearing massive in core. The facies is an excellent reservoir rock.

Facies R : Wabiskaw Transgressive Lag

The Wabiskaw Member of the Clearwater Formation is a fine grained glauconitic sand devoid of sedimentary structures. What appeared to be large *Skolithos* or perhaps *Macronichnus* were present. The facies, because of its maximum thickness of 4 m sand in the study area, is a relatively insignificant exploration target, despite good reservoir qualities.

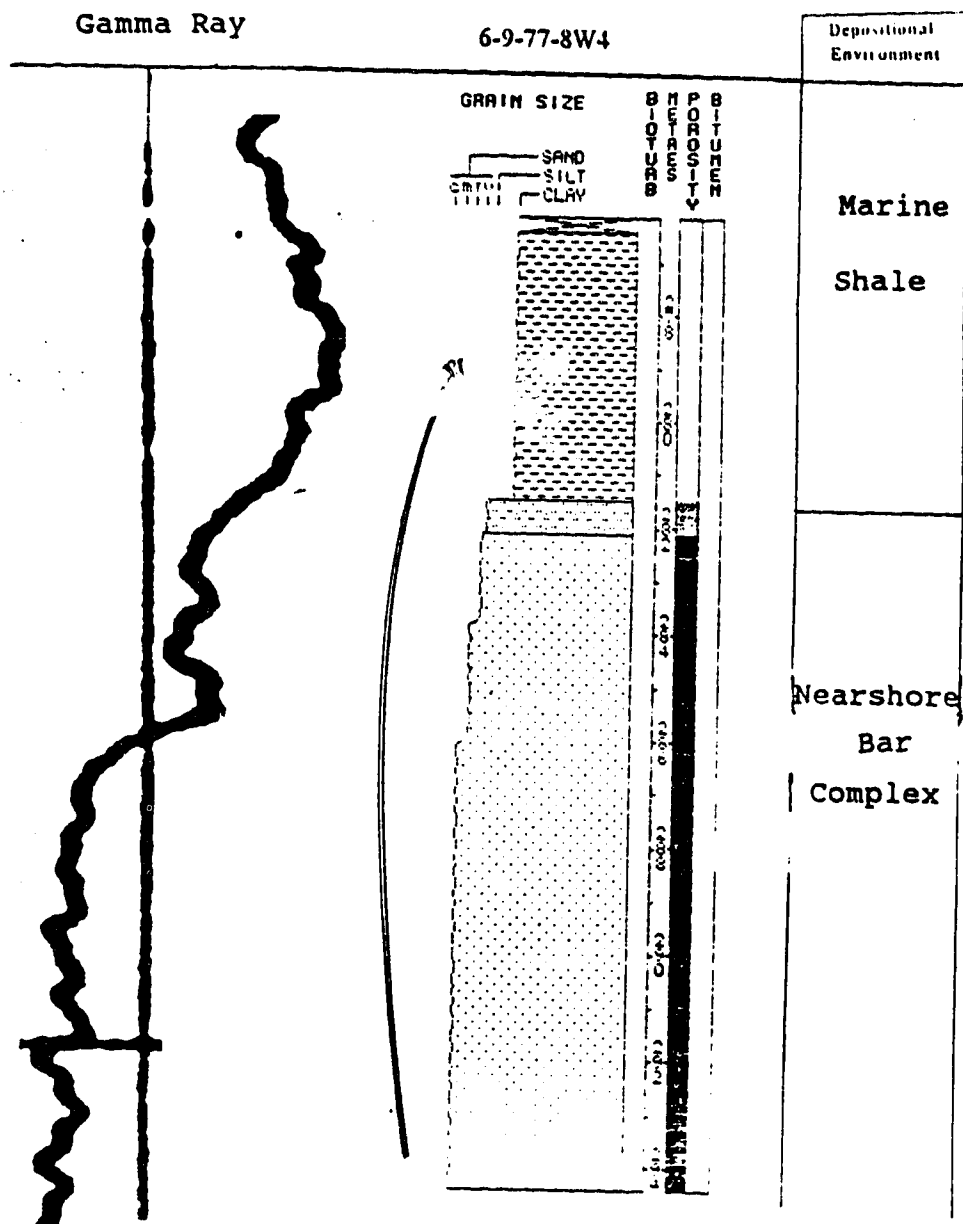


Figure 22. Log-Core correlation of Clearwater 'B' Sand

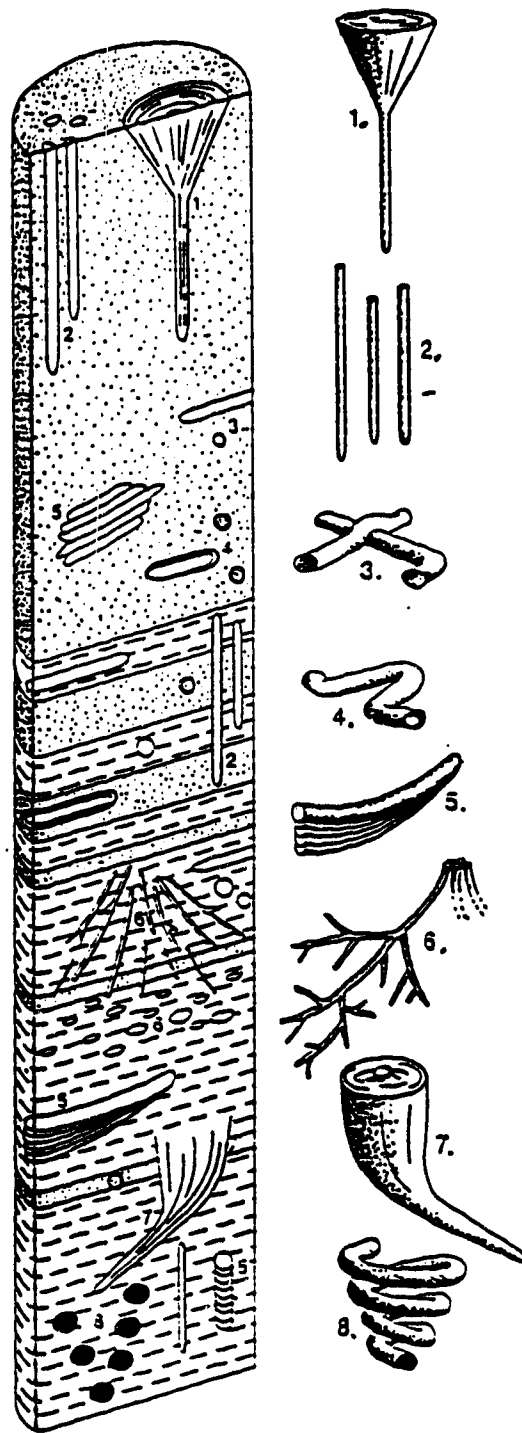
Clearwater Fm. Sedimentary Facies

Facies	Lithology	Sedimentary Structures	Biogenic Structures	Log Signature
P:Marine Shale	gy muds	massive	none	less dense mud signature on gamma ray
Q:Nearshore Bar Facies	gradational fining upwards sequence f.9 Ss - silt	massive	none	fining upwards
R:Habitakaw Transgressive Lag	green, glauconite sand	massive	Skolithos? Macronichnus?	?

Table 4. Summary of Clearwater Fm. Sedimentary Facies

Ichnology

This section will focus on the ichnological aspects of the McMurray Formation; the Clearwater Formation is lacking significant ichnologic record. Trace fossils are a valuable tool for aiding in the interpretation of the McMurray Formation. They are generally found in the fine grained silts and muds in the form of *Skolithos*, *Arenicolites*, *Diplocraterion*, *Asterosoma*, and *Planolites* (Figures 24, 25, and 26). A study by Mattison (1987), to the northwest, interpreted to be further basinward, found an ichnological suite indicating a Middle McMurray Formation estuarine environment with increasing marine influence upwards, capped by fully marine Upper McMurray Formation deposits. Mattison found the most common traces to be *Planolites*, *Palaeophycus*, *Cylindricnus*, *Teichichnus*, and *Skolithos*; less commonly were *Ophiomorpha*, *Berguaria*, *Thalassinoides*, *Conichnus*, *Conostichus*, *Asterosoma*, *Monocraterion*, *Rosellia*, and *Gyrolithes*. Ranger and Pemberton (1988), investigated an area to the south at Primrose, once again finding Middle McMurray Formation estuarine deposits. They found a brackish water suite comprised of *Skolithos*, *Planolites*, *Cylindricnus*, in the sands and also *Teichichnus* in the shale; special mention of their



- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. <i>Monocraterion</i> | 5. <i>Teichichnus</i> |
| 2. <i>Skolithos</i> | 6. <i>Chondrites</i> |
| 3. <i>Planolites</i> | 7. <i>Rosselia</i> |
| 4. <i>Palaeophycus</i> | 8. <i>Gyrolithes</i> |

Figure 23 McMurray Formation impoverished Marine Trace Assemblage. (modified after Wightman et al., 1987)

abundance yet low diversity and small size is made to emphasize the stressed marine influence (Ranger and Pemberton, 1988). As Pemberton et al., (1987), stated, the names of the individual traces are not as important as the general characteristics of the assemblage; a) low diversity, high intensity; b) typical marine traces of *Cruziana* and *Skolithos* Ichnofacies; c) non-specialized feeding patterns; and d) vertical and horizontal ichnofossils common to both *Cruziana* and *Skolithos* ichnofacies are characteristic of the impoverished marine assemblage and is utilized as another tool for interpreting depositional environment.

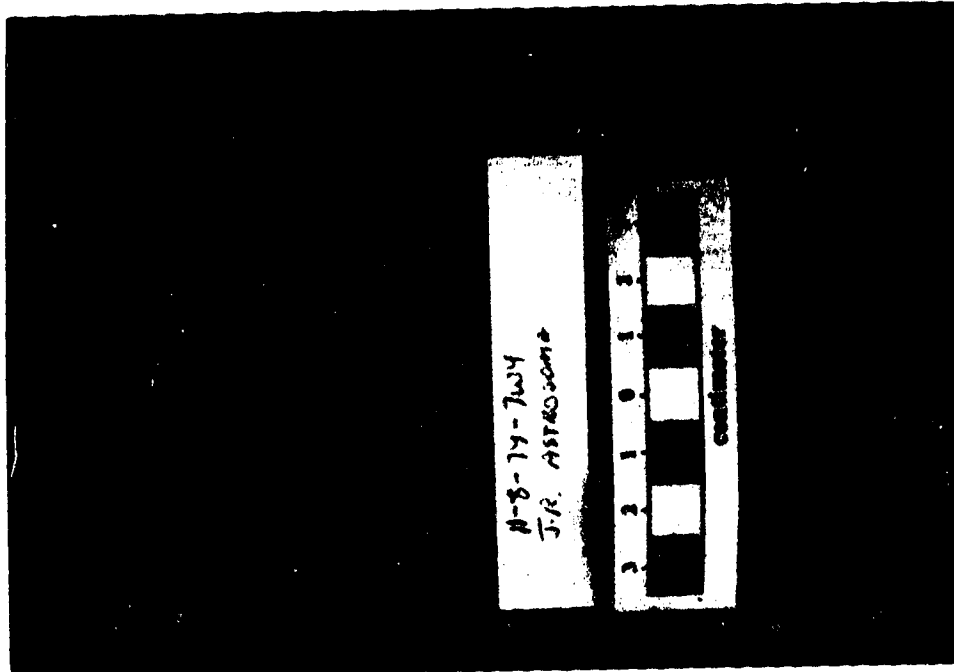
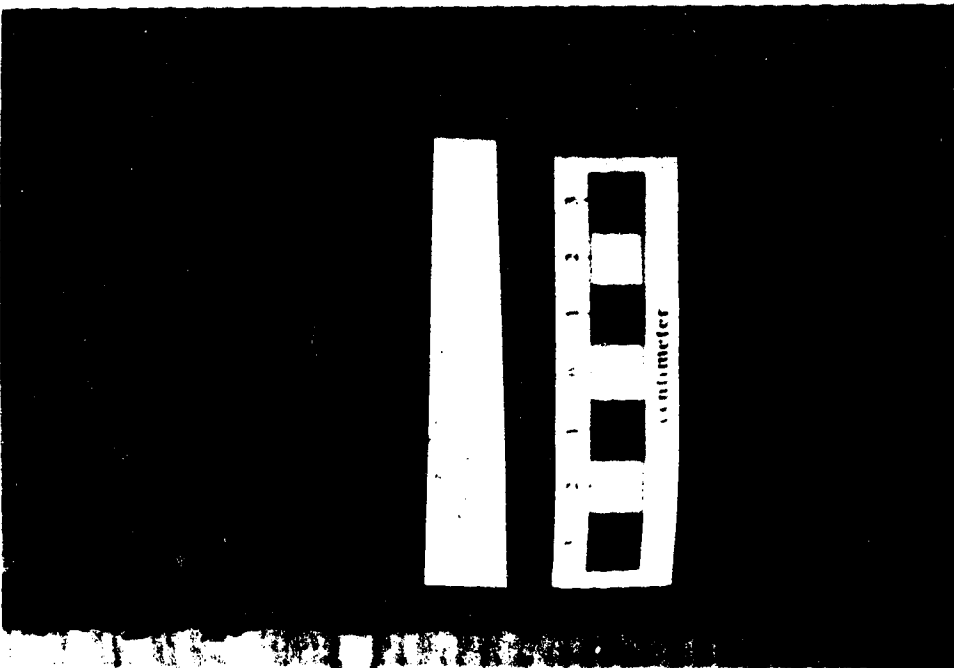
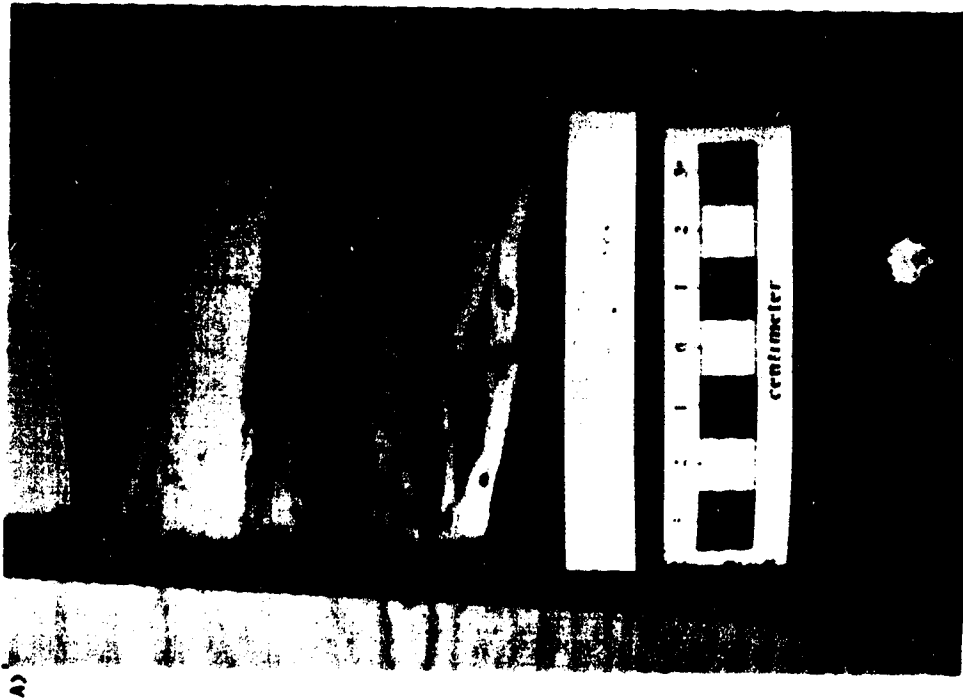
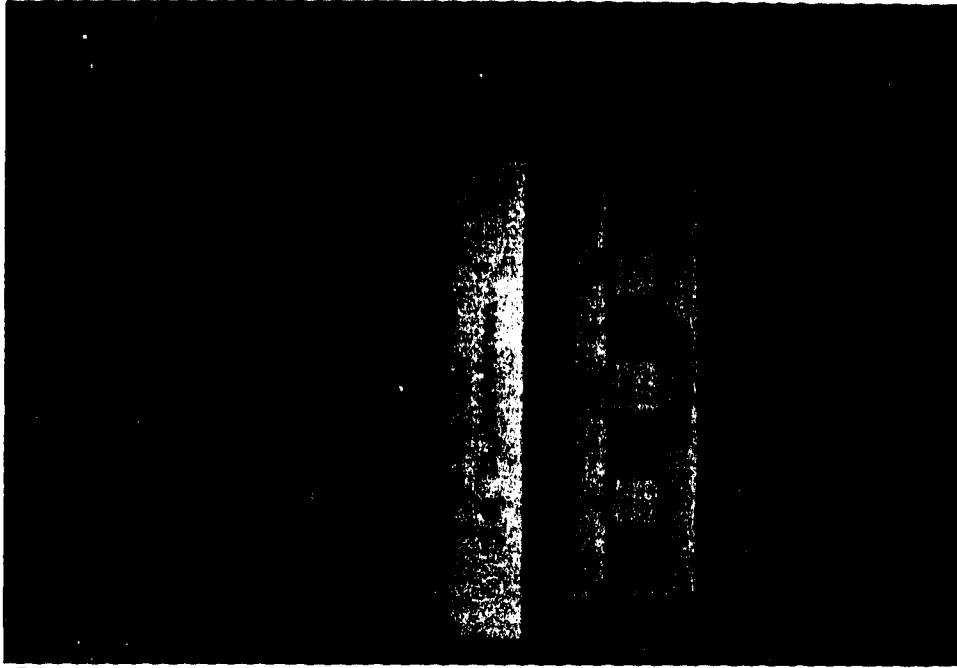


Figure 24a) skolithos ~ 307 m; Well 11-8-79-704. Interdistributary Bay Facies.
Figure 24b) Asterosoma ~ 308 m; Well 11-8-79-704. Interdistributary Bay Facies.



A)



B)

Figure 25a) Planolites - 307.25 m; Well 11-8-79-746. Interdistributary Bay Facies.
Figure 25b) Diplocraterion? - 307.75 m; Well 11-8-79-746. Interdistributary Bay Facies.

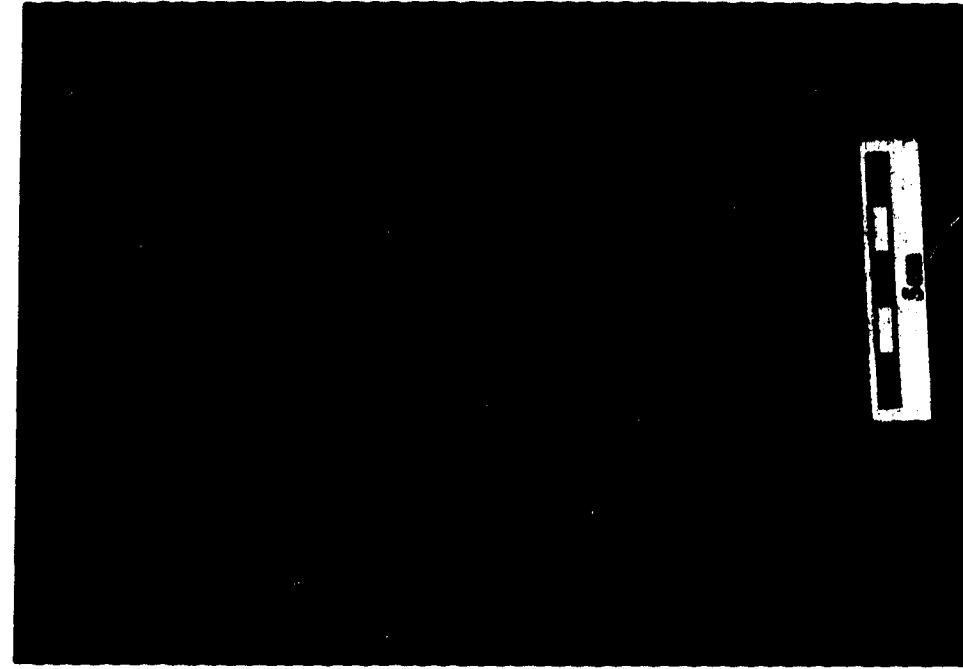


Figure 26a) Diplocraterion - Highhill outcrop. Abandoned Esturine Channel Facies.
Figure 26b) Diplocraterion- Alternate View Highhill outcrop. Abandoned Esturine Channel Facies.

Depositional Environment

The McMurray Formation was deposited in a highly complex and diverse environment. In observing the cross-sections E-E', and F-F' (Figure 48-51), one can appreciate its variability. The sections are both datumed stratigraphically on the base of the lowermost marine unit of the Clearwater Formation, which is thought to be a regionally correlatable isochron. The depositional environment of the McMurray Formation has been divided into three genetic units based upon these environmental interpretations (Carrigy, 1959).

Lower McMurray Formation

The lower McMurray Formation was deposited by fluvial processes filling the topographic lows developed on the Paleozoic unconformity (Flach, 1984; Figure 19). It is characterized by fining upwards log signatures resulting from waning of depositional energy upwards indicative of fluvial facies as represented by the decreasing grain size and progressive trend to lower flow regime sedimentary structures. The presence of rhizoliths and a general lack of marine ichnofossils suggest that it is a continental deposit. This interpretation is consistent with other studies in the

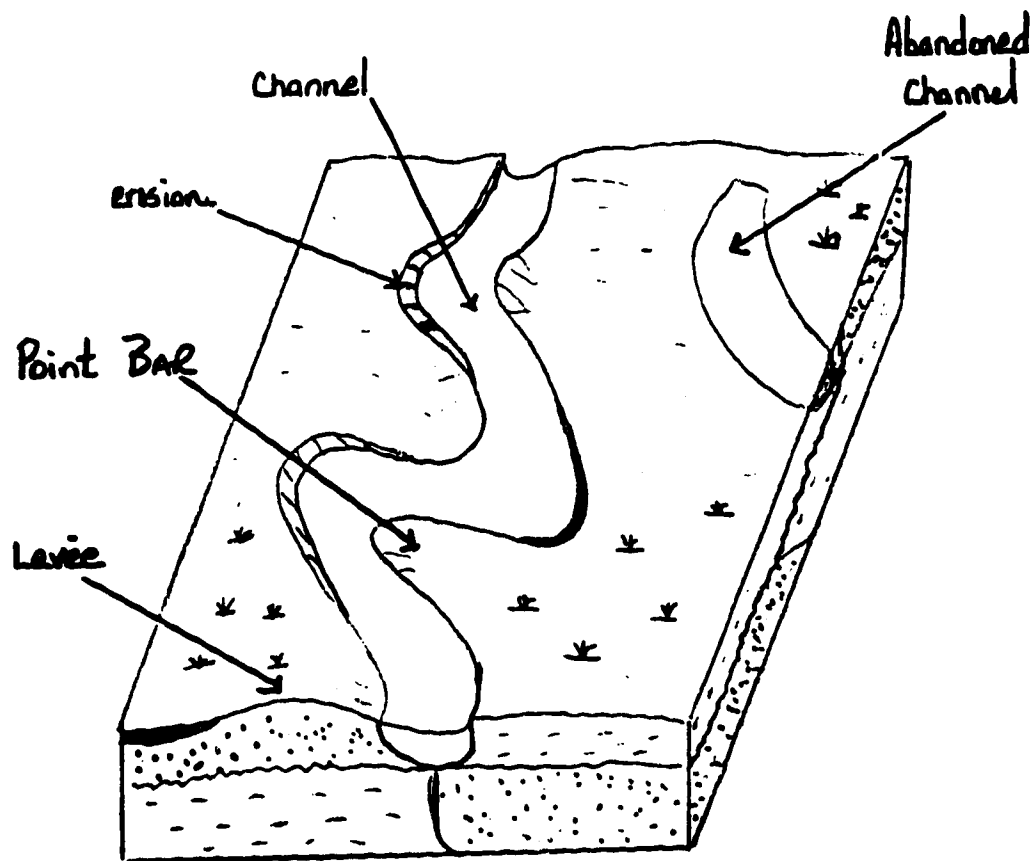


Figure 27. Depositional Model of the Lower McMurray Formation.

same area (Carrigy, 1973; Flach, 1977; Flach and Mossop, 1985). These fluvial systems in the study area, are interpreted as having flowed to the northeast in the undisturbed zone, and to the southeast in the disturbed zone.

Middle McMurray Formation

Middle McMurray Formation time marked the onset of transgression of the Bullhead Sea. In response to this sea-level rise, an estuarine environment formed consisting of tidal flats and tidal channels, along with marine conditions to the northwest (Figures 28 and 29). Deposition within the study area kept pace with the rise throughout middle McMurray time. This environment was, like all McMurray Formation environments, highly variable and dynamic. The tidal flat deposits are generally massive muds and planar laminated silts and muds. Bioturbation is prevalent as are rhizoliths and siderite clasts. Rapid salinity changes controlled by flooding of fresh water and high evaporation rates are interpreted to have occurred as evidenced by syneresis cracks (Wightman *et al.*, 1987). The high density and low diversity of the trace suite indicates a marginal marine brackish environment. Within the actual estuarine channel deposits, tidal influence is represented by

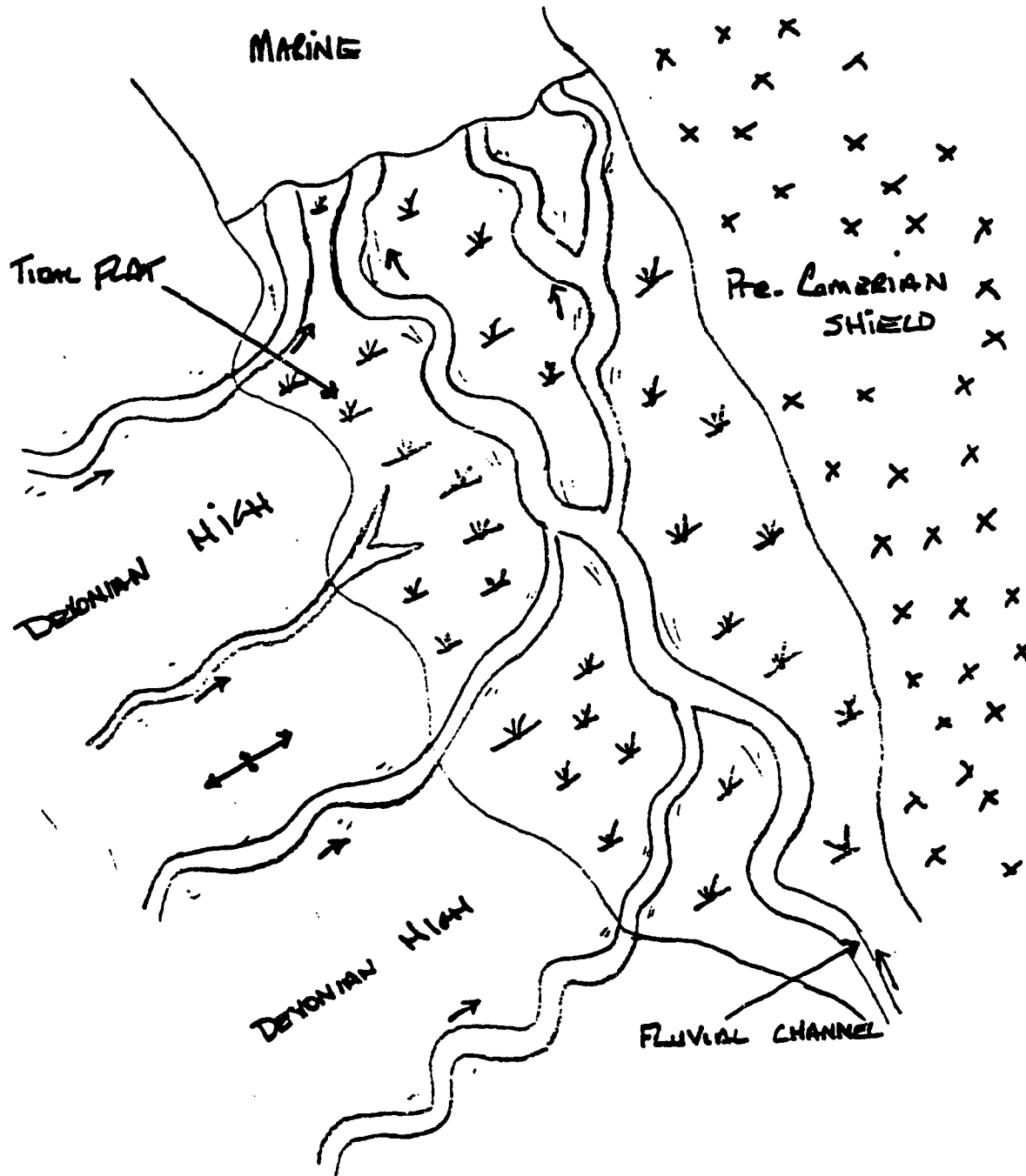


Figure 28. Lower-Middle McMurray Formation; Tidal Flat.

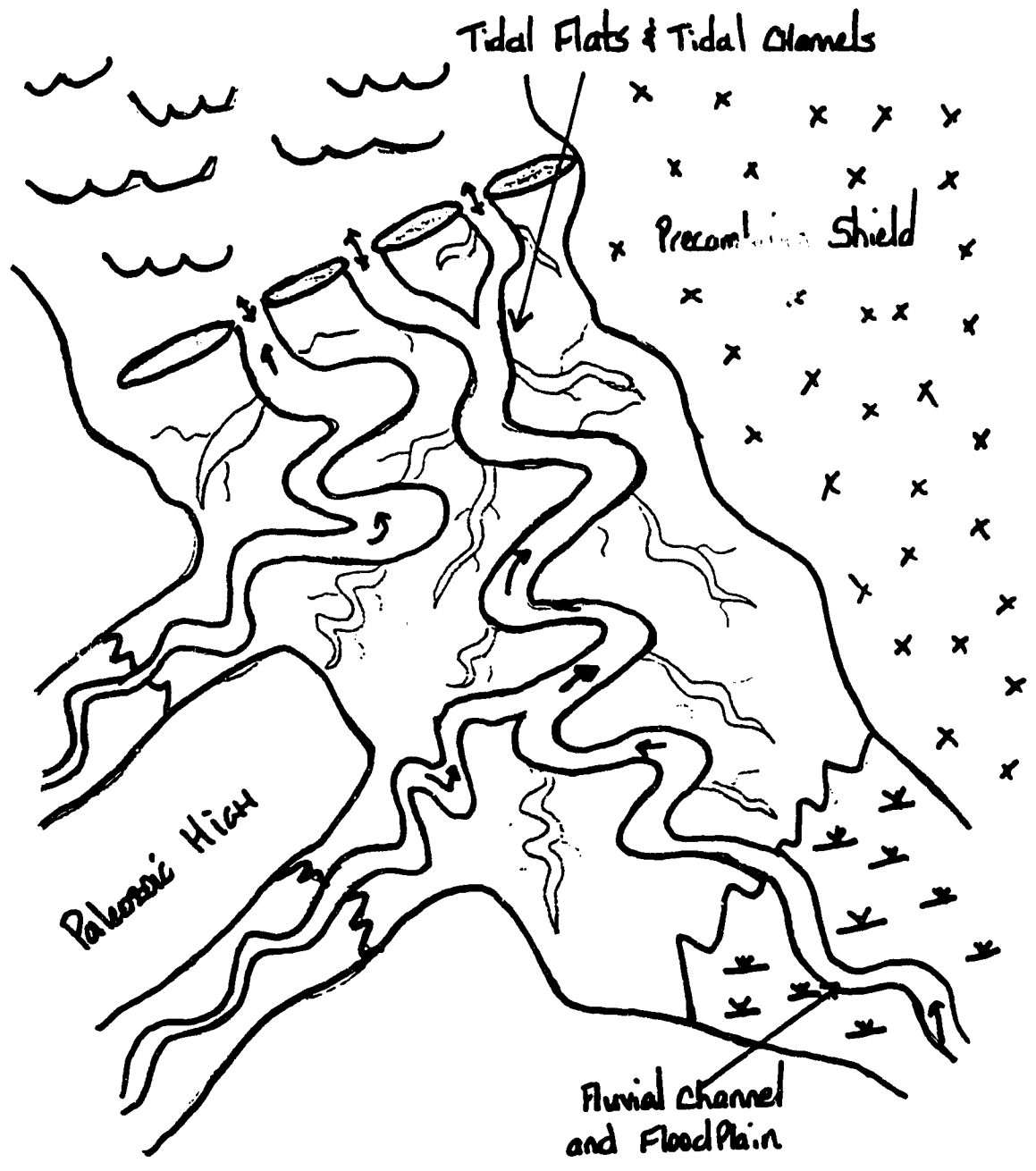


Figure 29. Depositional Model; Middle McMurray Formation.

tidal bundles and mud couplets, along with varying flow energy structures and reactivation surfaces. Within the Highhill outcrop, located on the Highhill river, a tributary of the Clearwater River approximately 60 miles east of Fort McMurray (Figures 31-34), this tidal relationship is easily seen. The estuarine channel facies commonly erodes the underlying fluvial and tidal flat deposits (Figure 30). The tidal influence is well documented by the tidal bundles and reactivation surfaces implying bi-directional flow (Pemberton *personal comm.*, 1991).

Upper McMurray Formation

Upper McMurray Formation sediments continue to conform to Walther's law; the environment of the Middle McMurray Formation has shifted to the northwest as the underlying sediments have filled in the estuarine environment. So while the estuarine environment still exists to the northwest, the adjacent distributary channel system and associated flood plain have moved from the southeast into the study area (Figure 35). The environment consists of distributary channels trending northwest-southeast, and associated flood plain deposits of crevasse splays and interdistributary bays. The interdistributary bays are characterized by rooting,

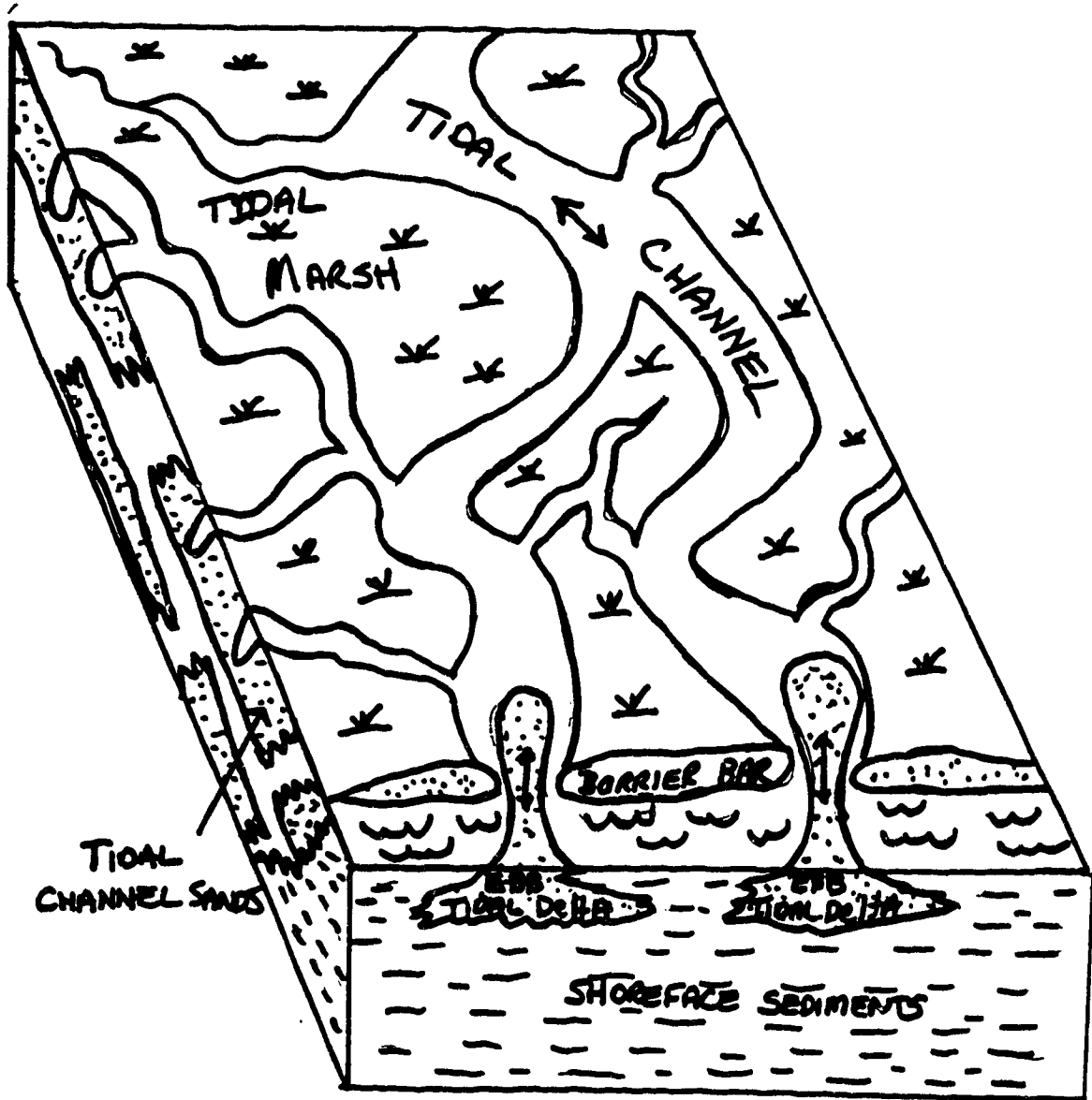


Figure 30. Tide Dominated Estuarine Environment.
(Modified after Hayes, 1976)



Figure 31a) Highhill Outcrop - On the Highhill River tributary of the Clearwater River; 65 mi. East of Fort McMurray.

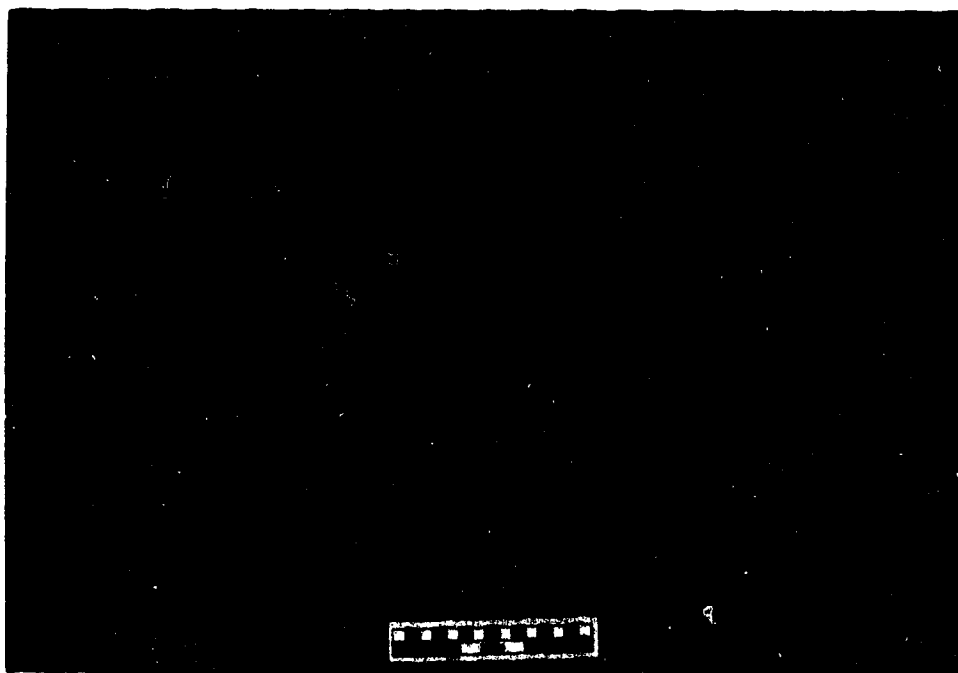


Figure 31b) Tidal bundles - Intermediate Estuarine Channel Fill.

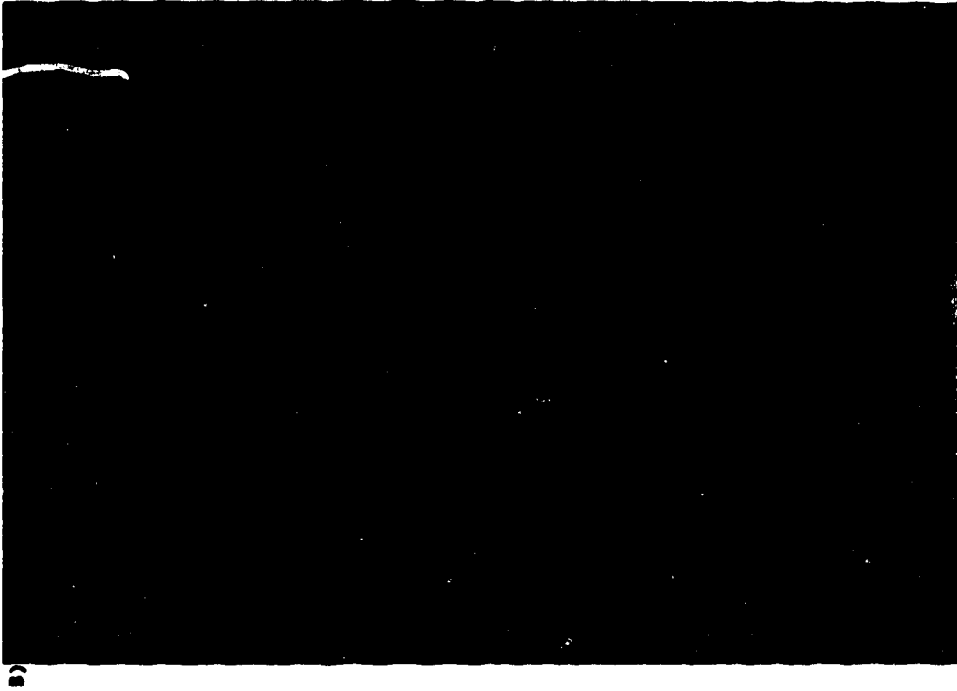
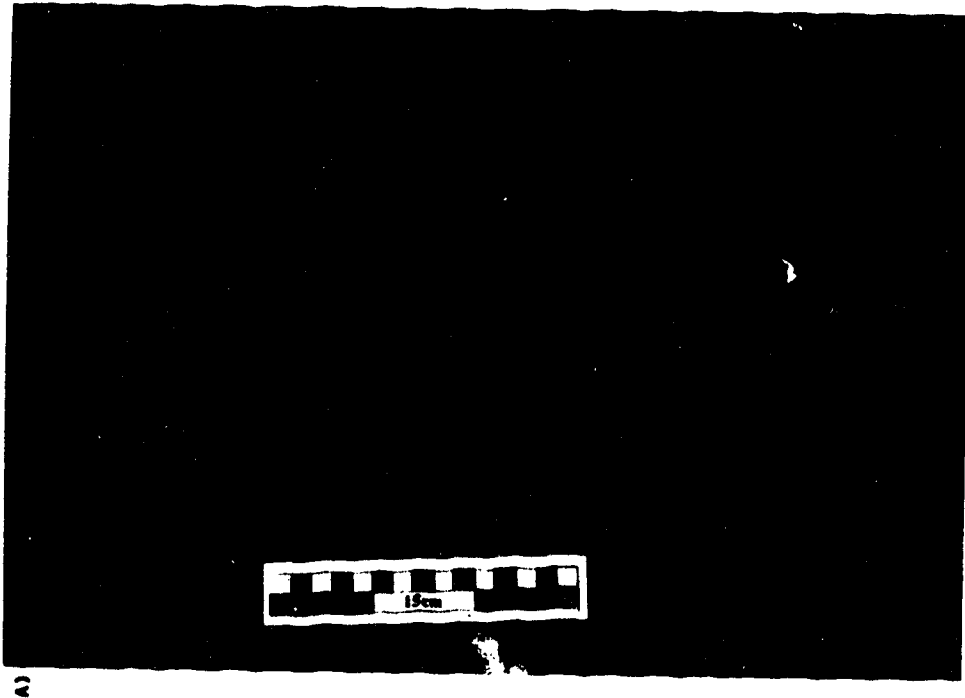


Figure 32a) Blow-up of tidal Bundles - Intermediate Estuarine Channel Fill.
Figure 32b) Tidal bundles, siderite clast - Intermediate Estuarine Channel Fill.



A)



B)

Figure 33a) Tidal Bundles - Intermediate Estuarine Channel Fill.
Figure 33b) skolithos - tidal Bundles Intermediate Estuarine Channel Fill.

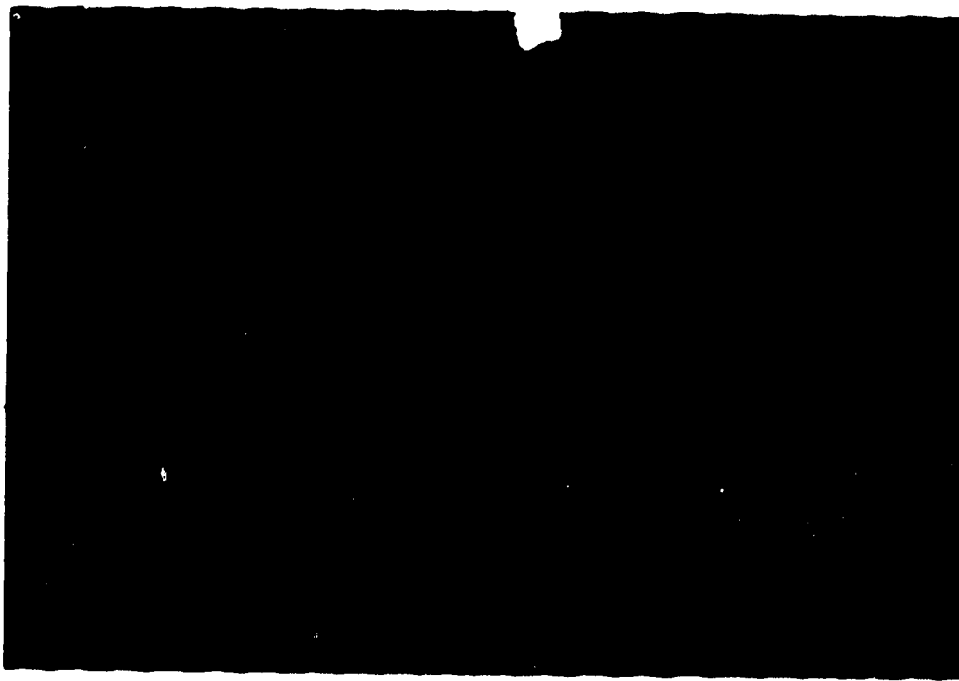


Figure 34a) Tidal bundles, siderite clasts, organics in toe-sets Upper Estuarine Channel Fill.

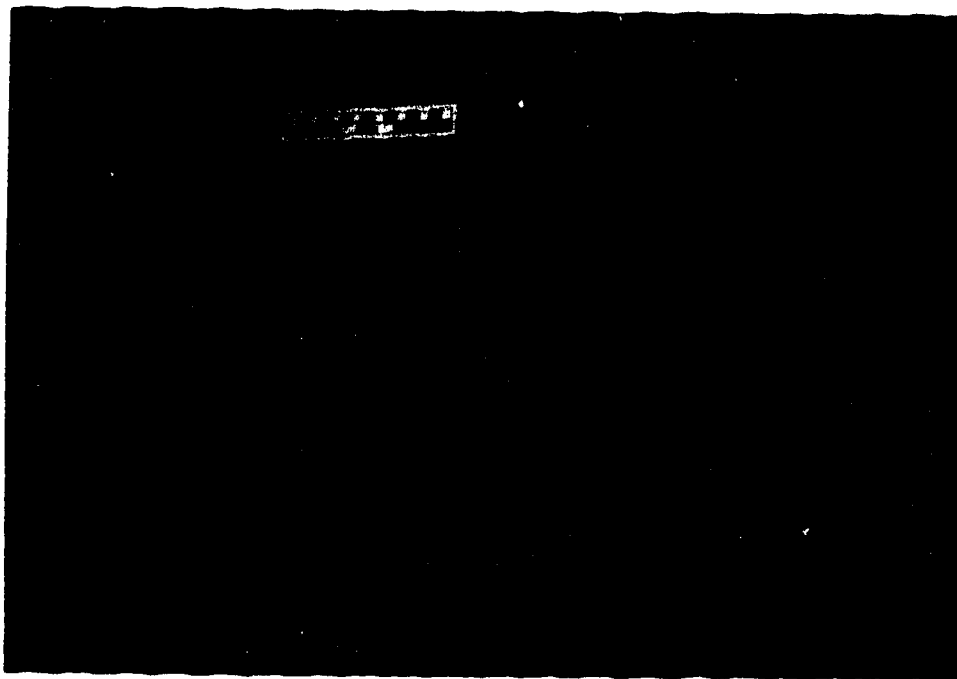


Figure 34b) Tidal bundles, siderite clasts, organics in toe-sets, mud lenses. Upper Estuarine Channel Fill.

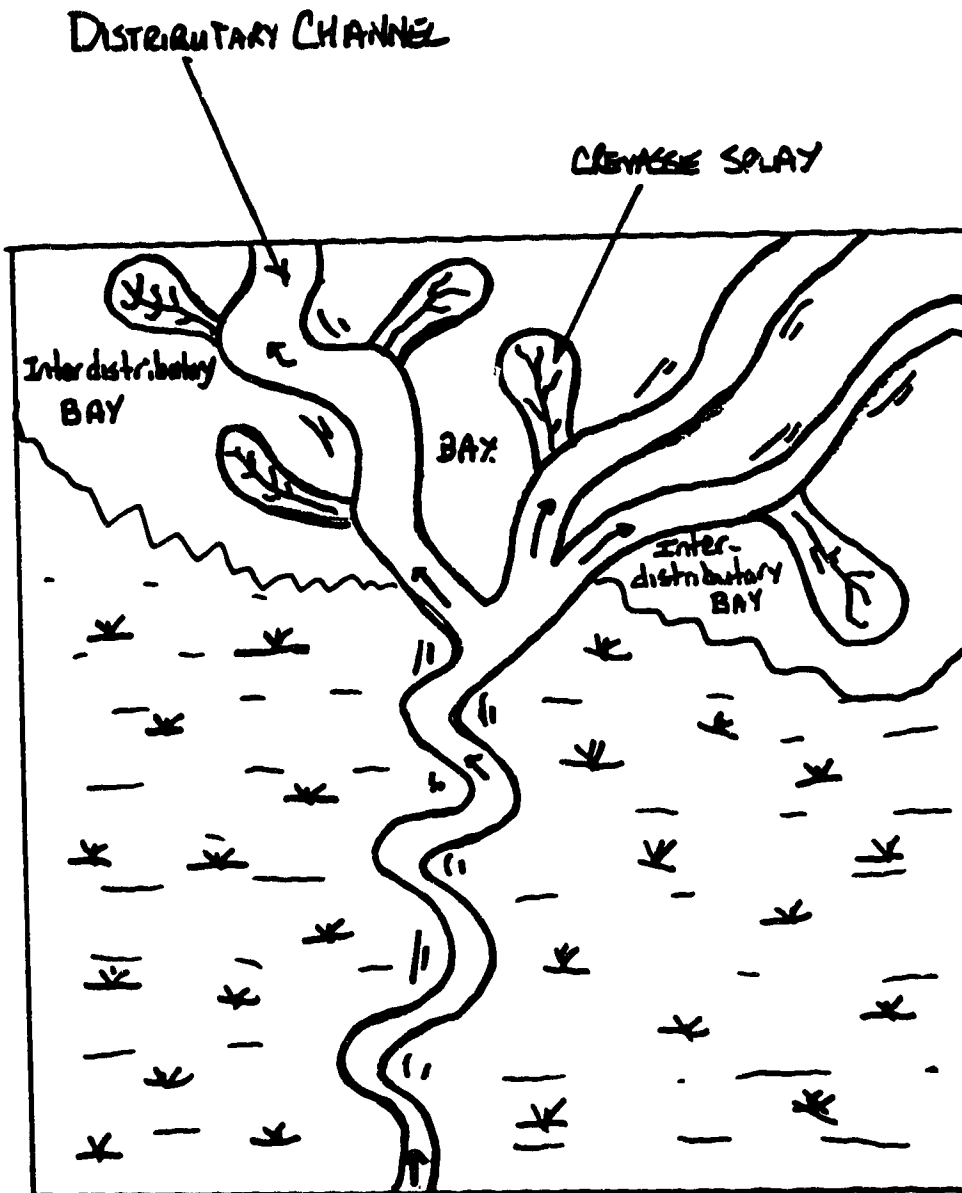


Figure 35. Depositional Model; Upper McMurray Formation.

bioturbation, syneresis cracks, and siderite clasts within a generally massive mud or planar laminated silt and mud. Adjacent crevasse splays are generally less than 6 m thick; these coarsening upwards sequences are created by flow breaking out of the main channel and rapidly becoming unconfined (Figure 36). The distributary channels highlighting the Upper McMurray Formation drained northwesterly to the associated estuarine and associated marine environment. Distinguishing between the estuarine facies and distributary facies on logs is virtually impossible, although in core, the absence of tidal structures and reduced biogenic activity is quite definitive. The environment produces sand distributions equally as uncorrelatable as underlying McMurray Formation deposits leaving exploration largely to chance (Figure 63).

Clearwater Formation

The Clearwater Formation was deposited in response to the transgression of the Clearwater Sea. The lowermost Wabiskaw Member is a glauconitic sand interpreted to be a transgressive lag deposit formed as the study area was drowned by the rising sea. There are two main Clearwater sand deposits within the study area; the Clearwater 'A' and the Clearwater 'B' (Maher, 1989;

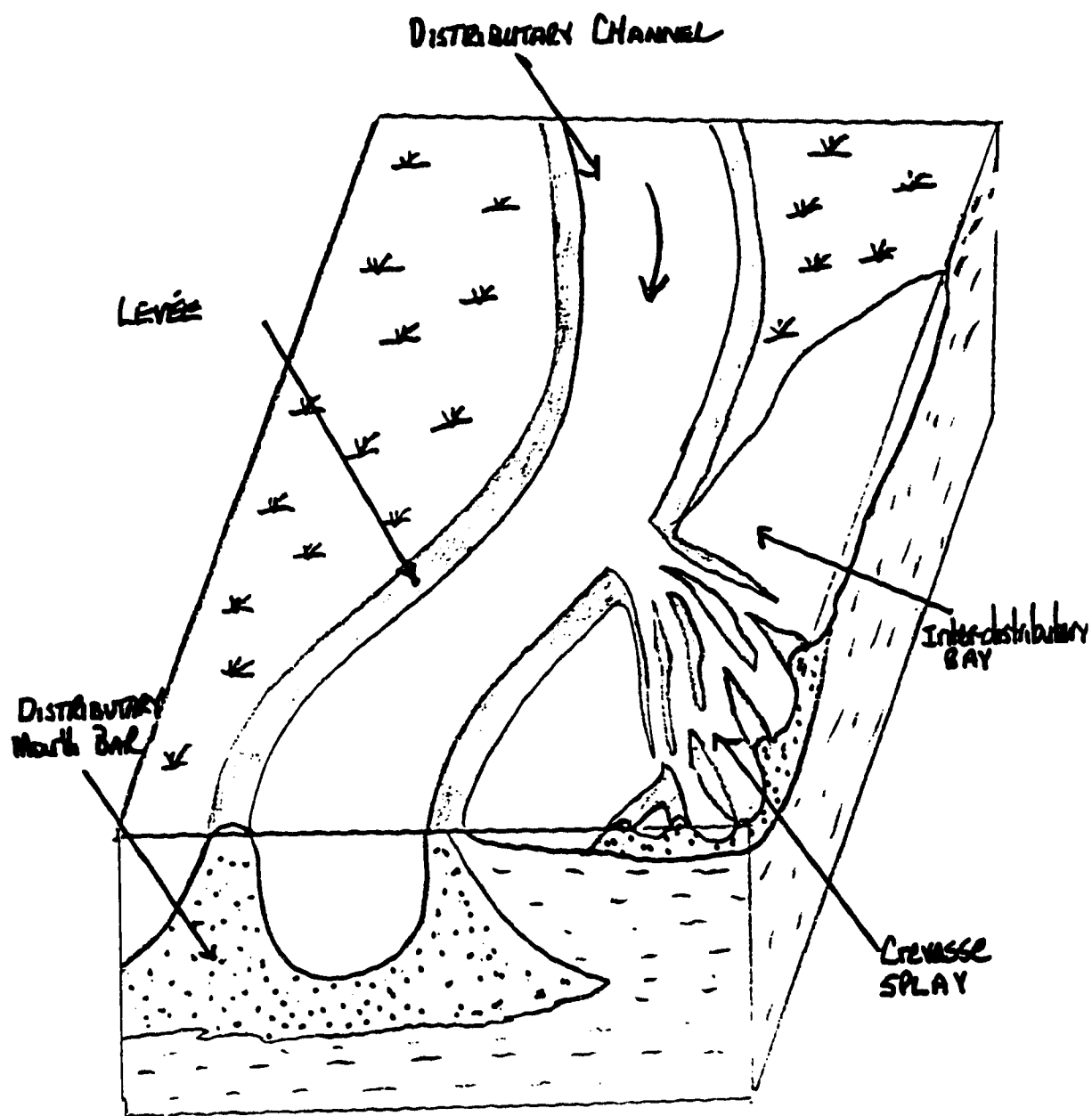


Figure 36. Tidal Flat Depositional Environment

Figure 59 and 60). The main Clearwater 'B' sand is found covering the majority of the southwest portion of the study area while the Clearwater 'A' sand covers only the northern edge of the area. Both sands were interpreted by Maher (1989), as nearshore barrier bar complexes which prograded northward (Figure 37). The sands are massive fining upwards sequences with no sedimentary or biogenic structures to help with interpretation. They are indeed continuous accross large areas, as shown in section D-D' (Figure 47), and are a substantial reservoir in the study area.

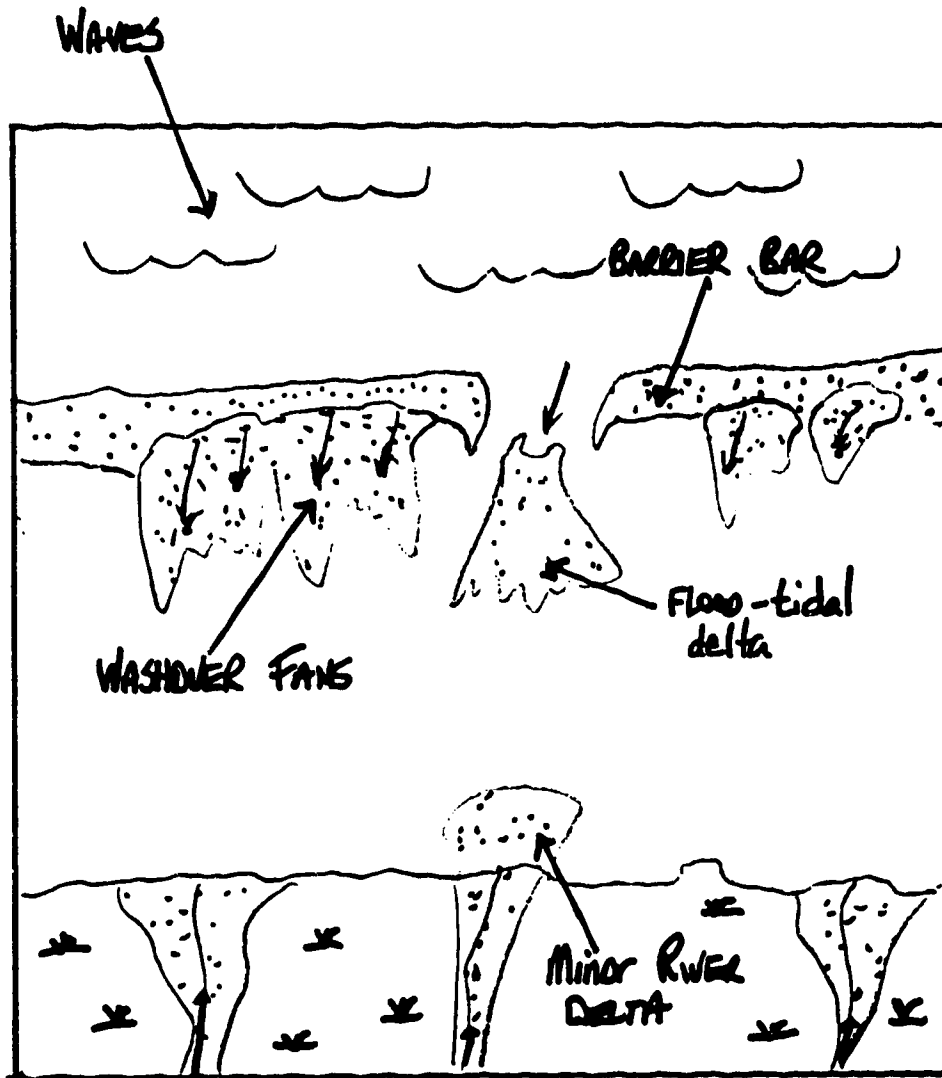


Figure 37. Clearwater Formation Depositional Model.
Wave-Dominated Micro-Tidal Barrier Bar.

Structural Regime

The structure in the study area is particularly complex because of the unique interaction of a variety of different forces. The study area has been divided into two structural regimes along a North - South trend located approximately in the middle of range 6W4. The eastern side is referred to as the disturbed, or collapse zone and the western side is termed the undisturbed zone. There are four main factors influencing structure in the area;

- a) Erosion of the Pre-Cretaceous unconformity
- b) Peace River Arch tectonics
- c) Regional Dip
- d) Salt Collapse

All of these factors contribute to the overall structural style in the study area with salt collapse being the dominant element in the disturbed zone. The other factors are more important in interpreting the structural style in the undisturbed zone. It is the interrelationship between these factors that complicates the interpretation. Each of the above elements will be discussed individually to provide information on the degree and manner of its influence, as well as the timing of the event.

SubCretaceous Unconformity Erosion

The remarkable topography of the Paleozoic unconformity surface is a result of the erosion by fluvial systems. The extensive relief of over 120 m on the unconformity surface can best be seen by examining Figure 57 (SubCretaceous Unconformity Map), along with cross sections C.2 (Figure 43) or C.3 (Figure 44) in the undisturbed zone. The evidence to support the predepositional existence of this structure lies in Figure 62 (McMurray Formation Isopach Map), showing the thickest portions of the McMurray Formation corresponding with the lows of the unconformity in the undisturbed zone.

This erosional system can be interpreted to have drained to the northeast leaving corresponding highs and lows parallel to flow. This trend is really only seen, and probably only remains, on the undisturbed side of the study area. The salt collapse events on the disturbed side have obscured any evidence of a southwestern-northeastern drainage trend, replacing them with northwestern-southeastern oriented collapse structures and further erosion along and within the subsequent structure. The relief shown by the northwestern-southeastern trending lows of the Devonian unconformity surface, (Figure 57), is evidence of

drainage to the northwest. The erosional element in the disturbed zone is really quite trivial in relation to the collapse structures.

Influence of The Peace River Arch

The Peace River Arch, although hundreds of miles to the northwest, still influenced depositional conditions within the study area. Initially, it produced relief extending into the area which controlled drainage patterns. Secondly, its subsidence during the Laramide orogeny provided a slight thickening of the Mannville along the western edge of the study area (Christopher, 1980); (Figures 58, 61, 62). It should be noted that the underlying topography still greatly influenced sedimentation in the undisturbed Zone through Clearwater time.

Regional Dip

The characteristic southwesterly dip of the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin is present in the undisturbed zone of the study area (Figure 43). This gently dipping structure existed until being interrupted by the salt collapse which, combined with the regional dip, formed the trapping mechanism for the Athabasca Oil Sands

Deposit. In addition to this, it provided the necessary conditions for migration of gas from the basin into the fields we find today (Moshier et al., 1985).

Salt Collapse Structure

The dominant structural element in the study area is the salt collapse structure created by salt solution of the Middle Devonian Elk Point Group and subsequent collapse of the overlying Beaverhill Lake Group. (Hume, 1947; Carrigy, 1959; Stewart, 1963; Martin and Jamin, 1963; Flach, 1984; Keith et al., 1987) This feature is considered to be the main contributing factor in trapping the entire Athabasca Oil Sands Deposit (Vigrass, 1966). The main collapse is found to run north-south along the boundary between ranges 6W4 and 7W4 through townships 79 and 78 before turning slightly to the southeast and leaving the study area at the boundary between ranges 5W4 and 6W4 (Figure 57). As previously mentioned, this structure divides the study area into a disturbed zone to the east, and an undisturbed zone to the west.

There is still some question as to the timing of the salt collapse. It is the nature of the event and lack of deep well control, combined with the other structural elements in the area that make a more precise

assessment impossible. The collapse structure was initiated after Devonian time as evidenced by the seismic section (Figure 38), which shows the unconformity surface paralleling the immediately underlying reflector within the Devonian, probably the basal boundary of the Beaverhill Lake. This feature suggests that the structure at the unconformity surface cannot simply be erosional but that it must be attributed to some structural event. This indicates that salt collapse must have predated deposition of the McMurray Formation. The general thickening of the entire McMurray Formation on the disturbed side also shows this (Figure 62). Moving up-section into the Clearwater Formation, the same structural pattern can be seen (Figure 52). Post-McMurray Formation deposition collapse can be seen by comparing the Clearwater Formation isopach map (Figure 58) and structure map (Figure 52). A general taming of relief has occurred reducing maximum relief to 65 m, compared with over 120 m maximum relief on the Devonian unconformity surface, although Clearwater topography still mimics pre-McMurray Formation topography. It is proposed that the similarities in structure through time to the end of Clearwater deposition are a result of a combination of compaction of the thickest deposits within the paleo-lows, and continued salt collapse. To summarize, salt collapse had its greatest effect before

and during deposition of the McMurray Formation, although it did continue to a lesser extent throughout Clearwater Time (Figures 52 and 54). A further review of the seismic section (Figure 38) shows this relationship of thickening deposits in the lows created by salt collapse, and the effect it had on the eventual structure in the area. The existence of post Clearwater deposition structure could be attributed to compaction, but in light of the shallow depth of the lower Mannville, continued salt collapse is the preferred explanation.

There are a number of explanations for the occurrence of the salt collapse. The main characteristics of each of the explanations are that the removal of Muskeg Formation salt resulted in collapse that has influenced subsequent deposition and hydrocarbon migration and trapping (Vigrass, 1966). The most prominent explanations are:

- a) differential/partial dissolution,
- b) preferential dissolution along fault planes/fracture patterns (McPhee, 1991),
- c) solution controlled by underlying Keg River reefs

It should be noted that the very limited number of wells penetrating the Muskeg Formation hinder the ability to

provide the answer to what caused the salt collapse. The first possible explanation is that Muskeg Formation salt was removed east of the study area, and no salt was removed west of the collapse structure. The implication is that the groundwater dissolving the salt preferentially followed northwest-southeast trending paths resulting in the collapse which also trends in this direction. The second possibility is that recharge from the subcrop of the Muskeg to the northeast flowed southwest till it intercepted fault or fracture systems trending northwest-southeast resulting in flow along these vertical systems and subsequent collapse along these trends. (Don McPhee, *personal communication* 1991)

The last explanation involves dissolution of the Muskeg Formation around underlying insoluble Winnipegosis Formation reefs. This appears to be the case in the seismic section (Figure 38) and a particularly good example is found in well 10-27-81-4W4 where all but 10 m of the Muskeg Formation has been removed from above a relatively thick Winnipegosis reef. The deposition of the Muskeg Formation was thickest in the lows surrounding the Keg River reefs and thus its removal would be greatest in these lows. This suggests that the Cretaceous structure could be indirectly controlled by the distribution of Keg River reefs. It could be more than coincidence that the northwest-southeast trend of

the Cretaceous structure in the disturbed zone is the same as the probable trend of the Keg River reefs along the Devonian paleoshoreline.

Regardless of its cause, the removal of the Muskeg Fm. evaporites is responsible for the structure which is the dominant factor in the accumulation of hydrocarbons. The structure, created by the salt collapse, trends northwest-southeast, and represents an exploration strategy for the disturbed zone of the study area.

Conclusion

The four contributing elements of the structural regime in the study area are ranked in order of importance;

- 1) Salt Collapse,
- 2) Regional Dip,
- 3) Erosion of SubCretaceous Unconformity,
- 4) Subsidence of Peace River Arch,

Structure is the main trapping mechanism for hydrocarbons in the area and therefore a comprehensive understanding is necessary for exploration in the area. The two separate structural regimes should be mapped specifically with two theories in mind. The first is to map the undisturbed zone with highs and lows trending

northeast-southwest; the second is to map the disturbed zone with trends at right angles to the undisturbed zone, along a northeast-southwest path.

Hydrocarbon Potential

There are really six main reservoir facies with economic potential within the Lower Mannville;

- 1) McMurray Formation
 - a) Estuarine Channel
 - b) Distributary Channels
 - c) Crevasse Splays
 - d) Fluvial deposits

- 2) Clearwater Formation
 - a) Clearwater 'A' sand
 - b) Clearwater 'B' sand

McMurray Formation

In the McMurray Formation, each of the interpreted channel, crevasse splay, and fluvial facies successions have excellent porosity and permeability. However, each succession is somewhat discontinuous. To further limit the reservoir facies, the lowermost fluvial facies can, for the most part be ignored as commercial hydrocarbons

are generally not found that low within the section.

Two main types of hydrocarbons exist within the study area; heavy oil and natural gas. The Athabasca heavy oil deposit covers the western two thirds of the study area. As previously eluded to, regional dip combined with the major salt collapse have combined to create the structural trap responsible for its accumulation. Moshier and Waples (1985), concluded that underlying sediments of the Devonian could not have generated the enormous volume of hydrocarbons found within this deposit. They speculated an up-dip migration of hydrocarbons from within the Deep Basin, which were then biodegraded in place. Due to the depth, the only means for extraction with current technology is in-situ recovery by steam injection, although researchers are investigating a large number of differing options in search of a step change in extraction costs. Possible future means of extraction include electric heating, in-situ combustion, horizontal drilling and extraction, and surfactant or polymer flooding. Estuarine and distributary channel sand facies successions will be the main economic alternatives for production of the heavy oil.

The McMurray Formation also holds potential for natural gas reserves within the study area. In todays economy, this is the only viable economic resource.

Natural gas has already undergone one major exploration and development phase, although further potential remains. Natural gas pay thicknesses can exceed 15 m, at pressures of over 300 psi. with porosity in excess of 30%. These make attractive shallow gas prospects for thrifty explorers. Trending from west to east across the study area, the gas is underlain by heavy oil, water and heavy oil, or water only (Figure 39). Whether the gas is associated with the migration of the heavy oil or is a secondary migration is yet to be determined. [Note that gas in the western portion of the study area lies above the heavy oil within continuous sands suggesting simultaneous migration of oil and gas or subsequent replacement of original gas caps.] Gas accumulation is found in structural highs (Figure 69), within Chard, Graham, Newby and Leismer gas fields; none of which are considered to be single continuous pools (Figure 50). The gas is further controlled by stratigraphy; the thickest gas pays are found in the channel sands (Figure 48) although economic proportions are also in the crevasse splay deposits of the Upper McMurray. Exploration plays for natural gas are aimed at finding the combination of structural highs coupled with distributary channel sands of the Upper McMurray Formation.

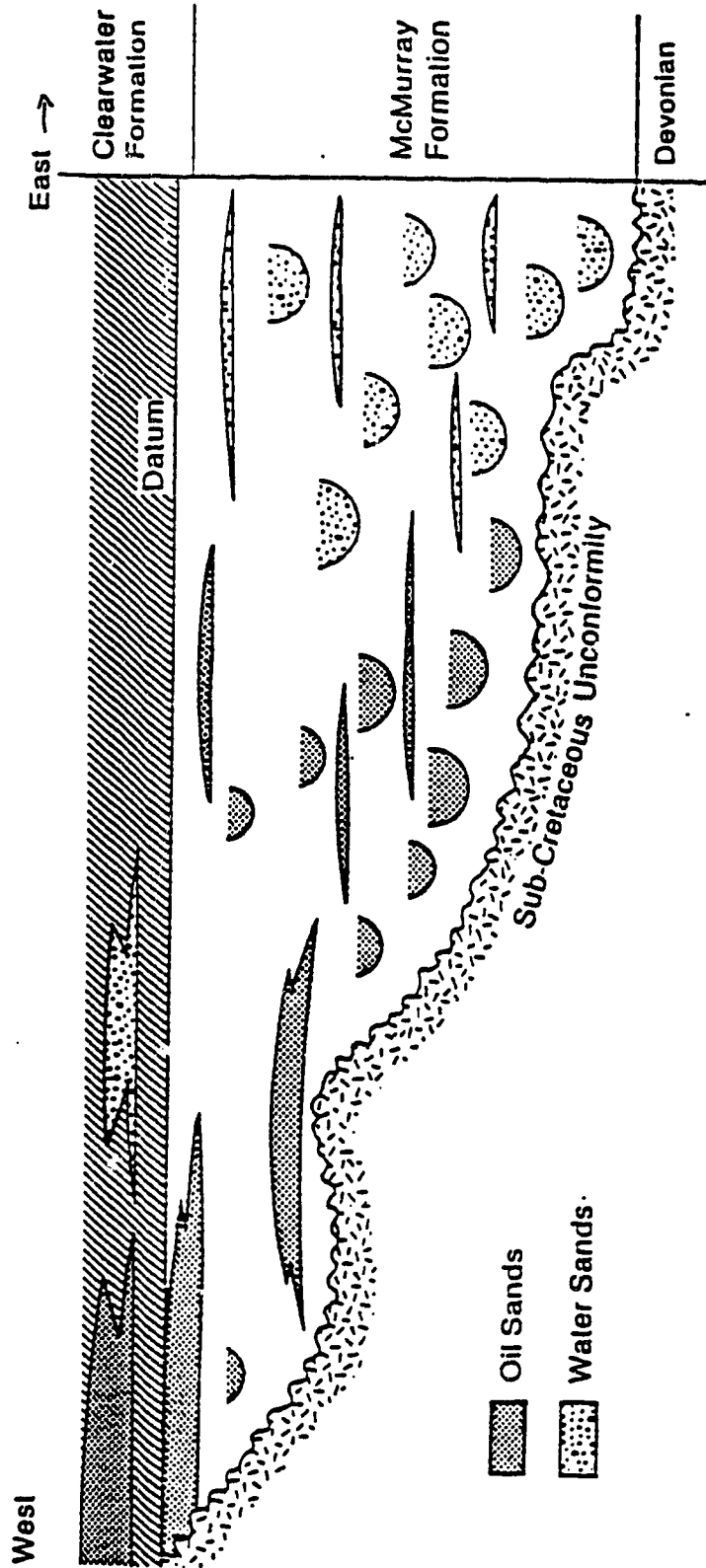


Figure 39. West-East trend from gas/H₂O/H.O.- gas/H₂O/H.O.- gas/H₂O.
(modified after Wightman et al., 1987)

Clearwater Formation

The Clearwater Formation is devoid of any heavy oil potential but it does possess large reserves of natural gas. The Clearwater 'A' has small accumulations of natural gas created by very subtle structural closures (Figure 64). Although it is an excellent reservoir, it does not display a major up-dip structural closure. Clearwater 'C' stratigraphic levels show comparable gas reserves to the Clearwater 'A' (Figure 66), although the limiting factor controlling the Clearwater 'C' is lack of reservoir rock with any lateral extent. The lowermost Wabiskaw Member is also a reservoir within the study area, although it does not occur in sand thicknesses over 4 m. It is commonly associated with McMurray gas wells and can easily be produced in conjunction with the underlying McMurray Fm. gas.

The most economic Clearwater Formation play in the area is the Clearwater 'B' sand within the Leismer Field. Unfortunately the majority of petroleum and natural gas rights for the main Leismer Field have already been purchased. Some crown land is still available, possibly extending the field boundaries. The trapping mechanism is a combination of structure created by the main collapse across the area and stratigraphic closure of the bar complex with marine shales to the

north (Figure 65) Significant gas volumes, (202 BCF), have been produced from the field between 1979 and 1989, with fourth quarter 1989 production exceeding 6 BCF.

To Summarize, The Upper McMurray Formation and the Clearwater 'B' Formation are the main exploration targets within the study area.

Economics

Two areas were chosen as potential development prospects based on the enclosed maps; structure, reservoir facies, and gas shows in surrounding wells were all used as criterion for these choices. These are merely two examples and by no means represent all the development potential in the study area.

The plays are best summarized in the reserve calculations and location maps in Figures 40 and 41. Approximate development costs per MCF of gas are provided, although the true economics of the play would need to evaluate the timing and cost of the capital investment. These general approximations are considered to clearly justify further study even at today's low natural gas prices.

Economic Potential : Leismer Field Extension

DHT = 23° C = 73° F = 533° Rankine

$$Q = (43,560 * A * h * \emptyset) (T_a / T_g) [(P_g / 14.4 * Z_g) - P_a / 14.4 * Z_a]$$

Where:

Q = ft³ reserves @ S.T.P. (60° F, 14.4 psi.

43,560 = converts acres to ft²

A = area in acres

h = gas pay(ft)

\emptyset = effective porosity

T_a = formation Temperature(° Rankine)(= 460° + °F)

P_g = formation pressure, psi.

P_a = abandonment pressure

Z_g = compressibility factor @ formation T and P.

Z_a = compressibility factor @ abandonment T and P

Assume : avg. gas pay Clearwater 'B' = 4 m;

$$Q/\text{sec} = 43,560 * 632 * 13 * .33 * (520/533) * [(256/14.4 * .97) - (100/14.4 * .99)]$$

$$= 1.30 \text{ BCF/sec @ } P_a = 100 \text{ psi.}$$

$$= 1.71 \text{ BCF/sec @ } P_a = 50 \text{ psi.}$$

$$= 2.00 \text{ BCF/sec @ } P_a = 14.4 \text{ psi.}$$

$$13 \text{ Sections } * 1.30 \text{ BCF/sec} = 16.9 \text{ BCF}$$

$$* 1.71 \text{ BCF/sec} = 22.2 \text{ BCF}$$

$$* 2.00 \text{ BCF/sec} = 26.0 \text{ BCF}$$

Assume : avg. gas pay McMurray Formation = 4 m

$$Q/\text{sec} = 43,560 * 632 * 13 * .33 * (520/533) * [(301/14.4 * .97) - (100/14.4 * .99)]$$

$$= 1.68 \text{ BCF/sec @ } P_a = 100 \text{ psi.}$$

$$= 2.08 \text{ BCF/sec @ } P_a = 50 \text{ psi.}$$

$$= 2.37 \text{ BCF/sec @ } P_a = 14.4 \text{ psi.}$$

$$10 \text{ Sections } * 1.68 \text{ BCF/sec} = 16.8 \text{ BCF}$$

$$* 2.08 \text{ BCF/sec} = 20.8 \text{ BCF}$$

$$* 2.37 \text{ BCF/sec} = 23.7 \text{ BCF}$$

Costs:

a) Seismic - 10 miles @ \$7,000/mi. = \$70,000

b) Land - @ \$50/ha. = \$294,400

c) Wells - 6 @ \$125,000/well = \$750,000

d) Gathering system - 12 mi. @ \$150,000/mi. = \$1,800,000

e) Compression - \$3,000,000 for 10 MMCF/d

TOTAL = \$5,914,400

Successful proposal finding cost incl. dev. = 5,914,400/43 BCF

= \$.14 / MCF

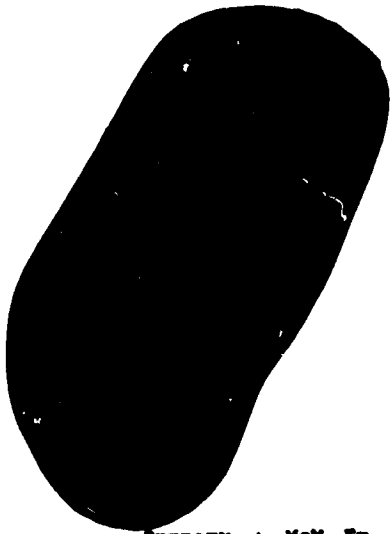
All values approximated

Summary : Reserves = 33.7 BCF - 49.7 BCF

Costs: a) Seismic - 10 miles @ \$7,000/mi. = \$70,000
 b) Land - 3328 ha. @ \$50/ha. + 2560 ha. @ \$50/ha. = \$294,400
 c) Wells - 6 @ \$125,000/well = \$750,000
 d) Gathering system - 12 mi. @ \$150,000/mi. = \$1,800,000
 e) Compression - 3,000,000 for 10 MMCF/d

TOTAL = \$3,914,400

All values approximated



Summary : McM Fm. Reserves = 1.68 BCF/sec @ $P_a=100$ psi
 = 2.08 BCF/sec @ $P_a= 50$ psi.
 = 2.37 BCF/sec @ $P_a=14.4$ psi.
 10 Sections @ 1.68 BCF/sec = 16.8 BCF
 @ 2.08 BCF/sec = 20.8 BCF
 @ 2.37 BCF/sec = 23.7 BCF

- - proposed well location
- - Nova Pipeline
- - gathering system
- - Nova meter station
- ▲ - proposed compressor station

Figure 40a) Leismer Field: McMurray Formation Development Outline

Leismer Field Extension : Clearwater 'B'



Summary : CLW 'B' Reserves = 1.30 BCF/sec @ $P_a=100$ psi.
= 1.71 BCF/sec @ $P_a= 50$ psi.
= 2.00 BCF/sec @ $P_a=14.4$ psi.
13 Sections @ 1.30 BCF/sec = 16.9 BCF
@ 1.71 BCF/sec = 22.2 BCF
@ 2.00 BCF/sec = 26.0 BCF

- - proposed well location
- - Nova Pipeline
- - gathering system
- - Nova meter station
- - proposed compressor station

Figure 40b) Leismer Field:Clearwater Formation Development Outline

Leismer Field Extension

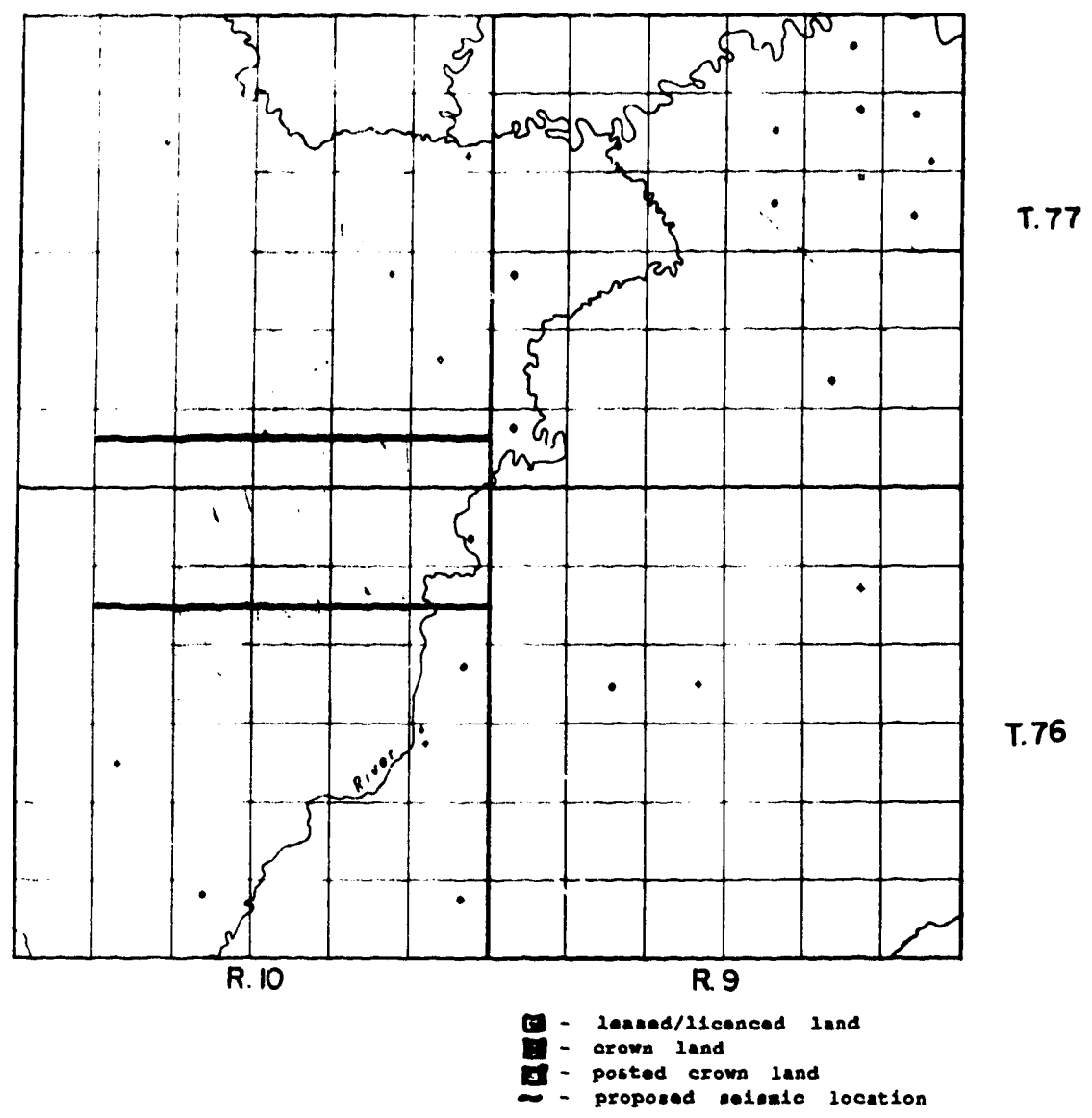


Figure 40c) Leismer Field Extension Base Map

**Economic Potential : McMurray Formation - Graham Field
Extension**

BHT = 23° C = 73° F = 533° Rankine

$$Q = (43,560 \cdot A \cdot h \cdot \emptyset) (T_g / T_g) [(P_g / 14.4 \cdot Z_g) - P_a / 14.4 \cdot Z_a]$$

Where:

Q = ft³ reserves @ S.T.P. (60° F, 14.4 psi.

43,560 = converts acres to ft²

A = area in acres

h = gas pay(ft)

∅ = effective porosity

T_g = formation Temperature (° Rankine) (= 460° + °F)

P_g = formation pressure, psi.

P_a = abandonment pressure

Z_g = compressibility factor @ formation T and P.

Z_a = compressibility factor @ abandonment T and P

Assume : avg. gas pay = 8 m;

$$Q/\text{sec} = 43,560 \cdot 632 \cdot 26 \cdot .33 \cdot (520/533) \cdot [(241/14.4 \cdot .97) - (100/14.4 \cdot .99)]$$

$$= 2.36 \text{ BCF/sec @ } P_a = 100 \text{ psi.}$$

$$= 3.17 \text{ BCF/sec @ } P_a = 50 \text{ psi.}$$

$$= 3.75 \text{ BCF/sec @ } P_a = 14.4 \text{ psi.}$$

17 Sections * 2.36 BCF/sec = 40.12 BCF
 * 3.17 BCF/sec = 53.90 BCF
 * 3.75 BCF/sec = 63.75 BCF

Costs:

a) Seismic - 12 miles @ \$7,000/mi. = \$84,000

b) Land - 4352 ha. @ \$70/ha. = \$304,640

c) Wells - 11 @ \$125,000/well = \$1,375,000

d) Gathering system - 14 mi. @ \$150,000/mi. = \$2,100,000

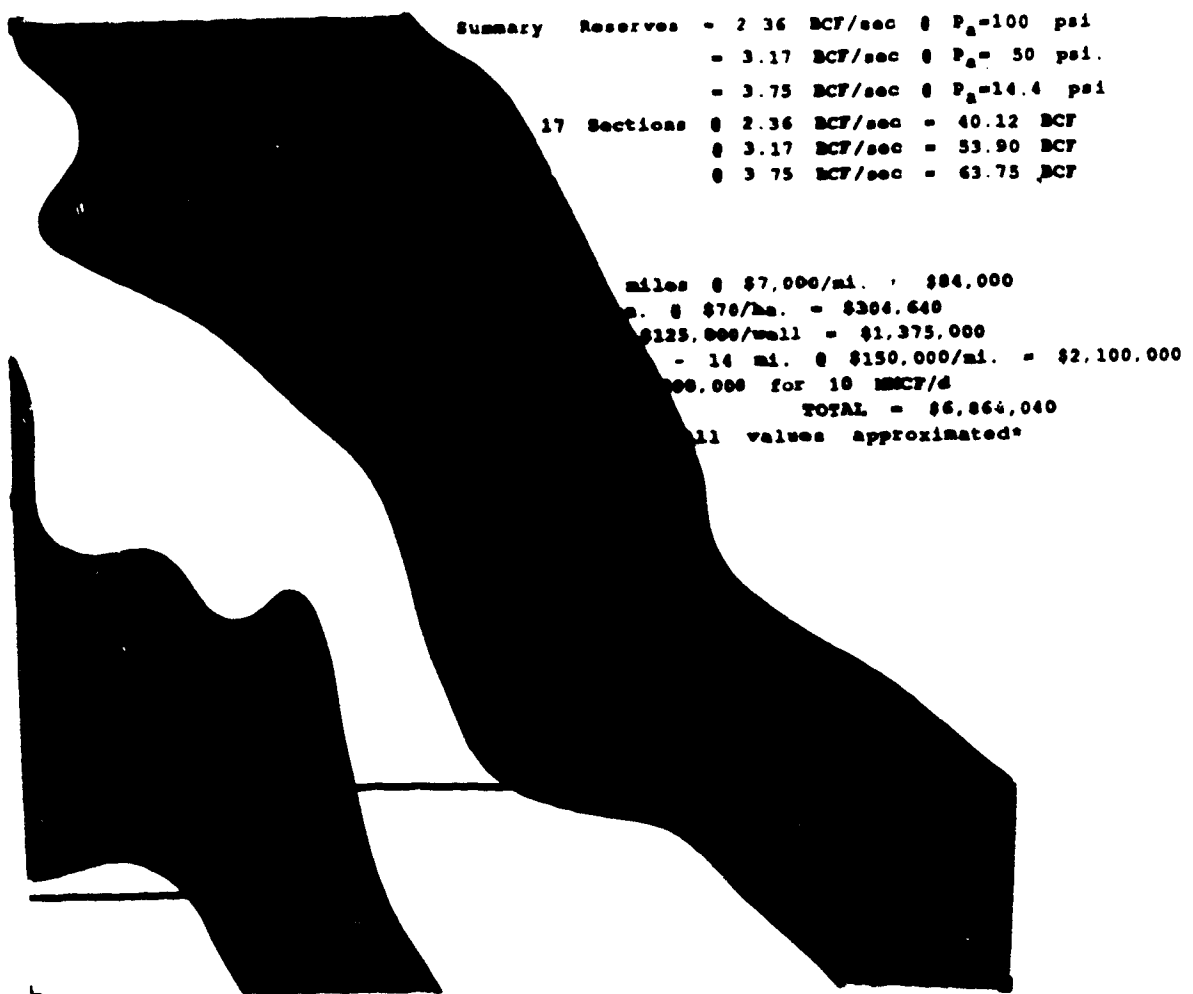
e) Compression - 3,000,000 for 10 MMCF/d

TOTAL = \$6,864,040

Successful proposal finding cost incl. dev. = 6,864,040/54 BCF
 = \$.13 / MCF

All values approximated

Graham Field Extension: Development Outline



Summary Reserves = 2.36 BCF/sec @ $P_a=100$ psi
 = 3.17 BCF/sec @ $P_a=50$ psi.
 = 3.75 BCF/sec @ $P_a=14.4$ psi
 17 Sections @ 2.36 BCF/sec = 40.12 BCF
 @ 3.17 BCF/sec = 53.90 BCF
 @ 3.75 BCF/sec = 63.75 BCF

miles @ \$7,000/mi. = \$84,000
 @ \$70/ha. = \$364,640
 @ \$125,000/well = \$1,375,000
 - 14 mi. @ \$150,000/mi. = \$2,100,000
 @ \$100,000 for 10 MMCF/d
TOTAL = \$6,864,040
 All values approximated*

- - proposed well location
- - Nova Pipeline
- - gathering system
- - Nova meter station
- ▲ - proposed compressor station

Figure 4(a) Graham Field Extension Development Outline

Graham Field Extension

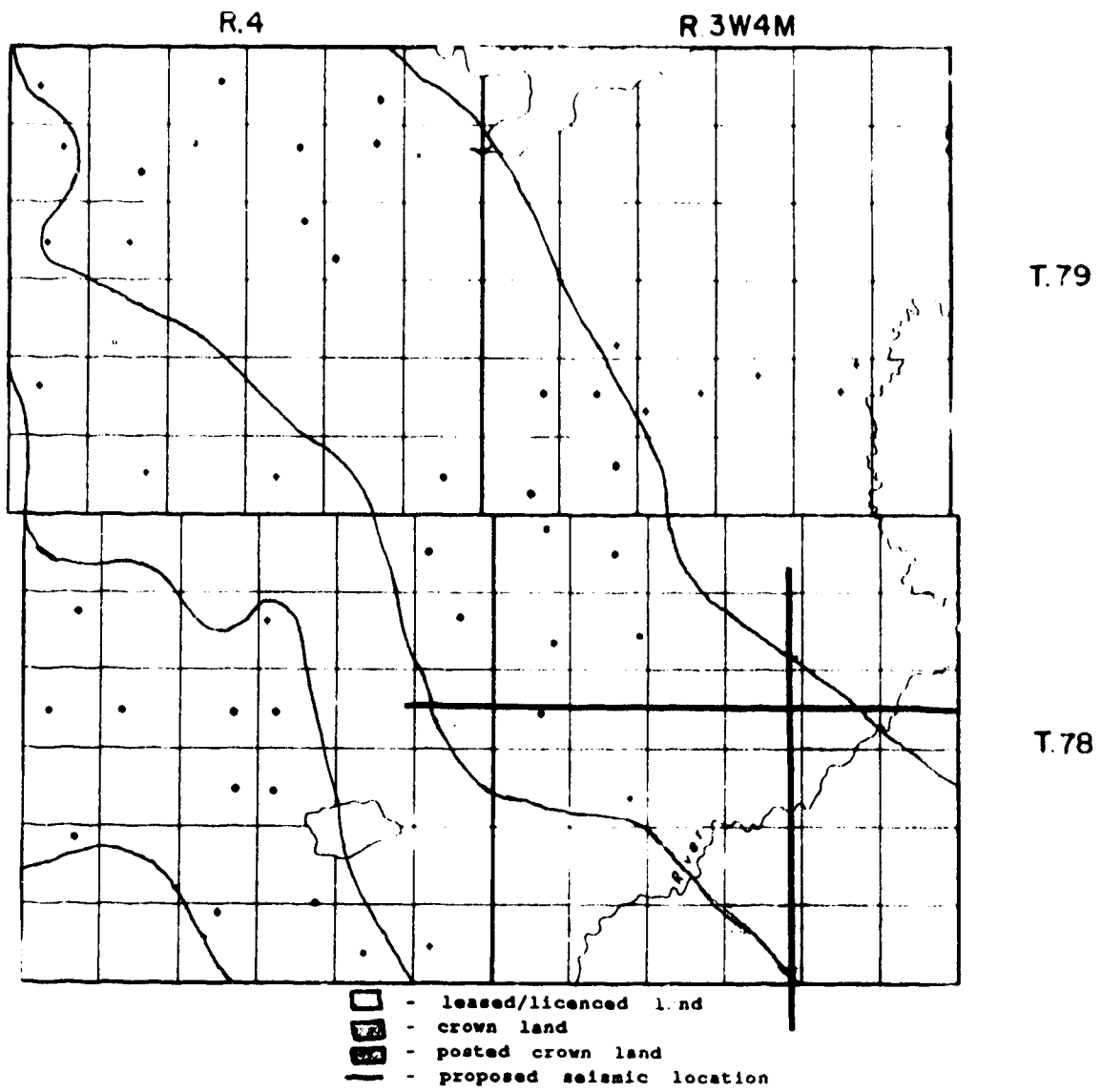


Figure 41b) Graham Field Extension base map

Graham Field Extension

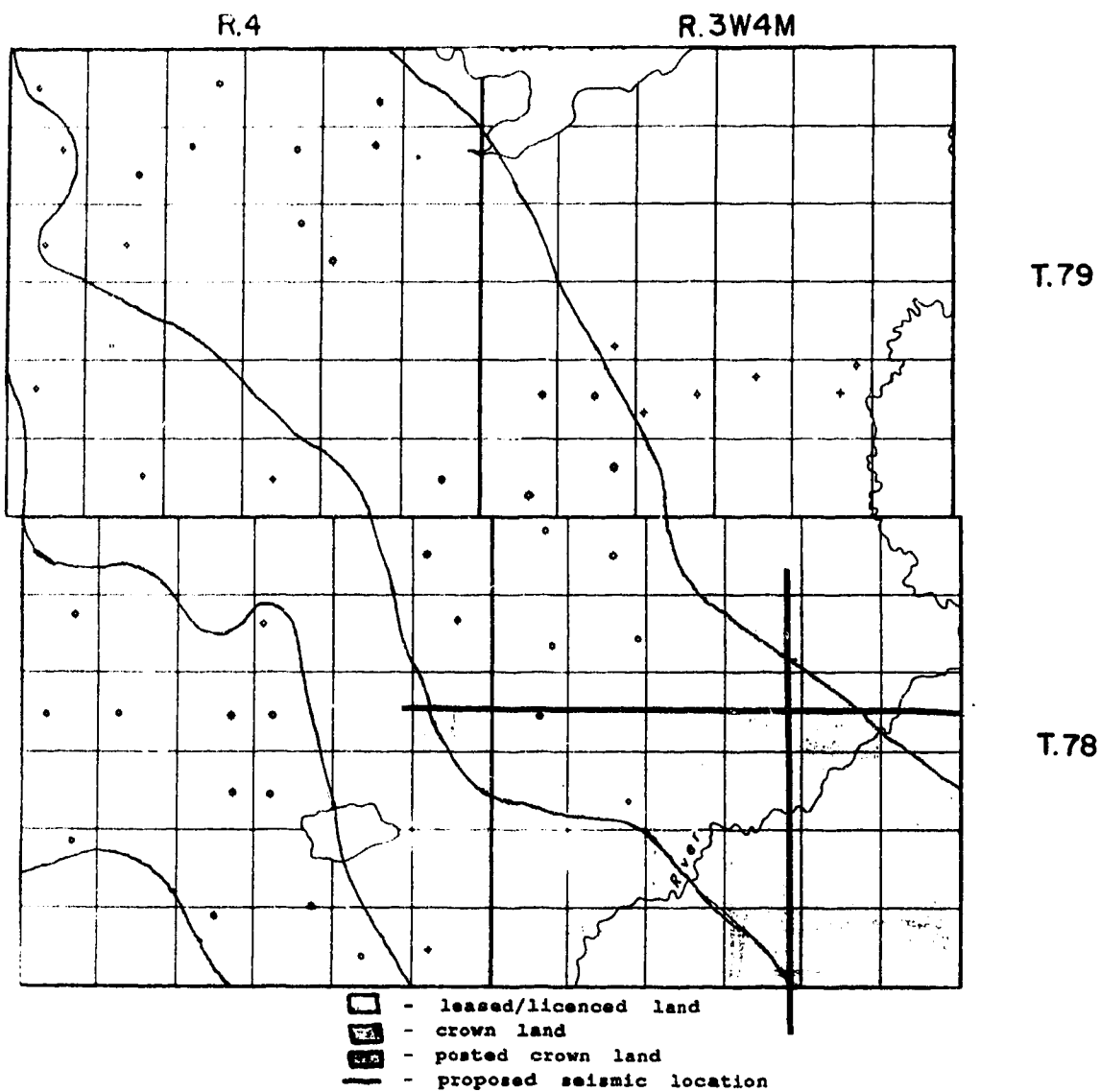


Figure 41 b) Graham Field Extension base map

Summary

- 1) The McMurray Formation is the depositional response to the transgression of the Bullhead sea into a well defined paleovalley informally termed the Athabasca Channel.
- 2) The Clearwater Formation was deposited during transgression of the Clearwater Sea.
- 3) McMurray Formation strata in the study area are subdivided into lower, middle, and upper units corresponding to deposition within fluvial, estuarine, and distributary environments respectively.
- 4) Clearwater Formation Strata in the study area are comprised of the lowermost Wabiskaw Member transgressive lag, and a succession of northward prograding nearshore bar complexes referred to as Clearwater 'A'- 'C' sands from top to bottom.
- 5) Structure is controlled by erosion of the Paleozoic Unconformity, regional dip, Peace River Arch subsidence, and salt collapse.
- 6) These structural elements have created linear highs and lows trending northeast-southwest in the

undisturbed zone; and linear highs and lows trending north-south in the disturbed zone. These two structural zones are divided by the major north-south trending salt collapse.

- 7) Heavy oil and natural gas are of economic importance within the study area. A trend from gas-heavy oil contacts, to gas-water-heavy oil contacts, to gas-water contacts is found to exist from west to east across the study area. Present economic conditions leave only the natural gas as a development target.
- 8) Highest Potential Reservoir rocks with economic potential in the study area are the McMurray Formation channels and the Clearwater 'B' sand.
- 9) Gas distribution is controlled by the linear trending highs and lows in the McMurray Formation; the major salt collapse coupled with facies distribution is responsible for heavy oil and the main Leismer Field gas accumulation.
- 10) Economics for two possible play configurations are presented with reserves of 40-64 BCF to be developed for the gross consideration of \$6,864,040 at Graham, or \$.14/MCF if successful; and 34-50 BCF to be developed for \$5,914,400 gross, or \$.13/MCF if successful at Leismer.

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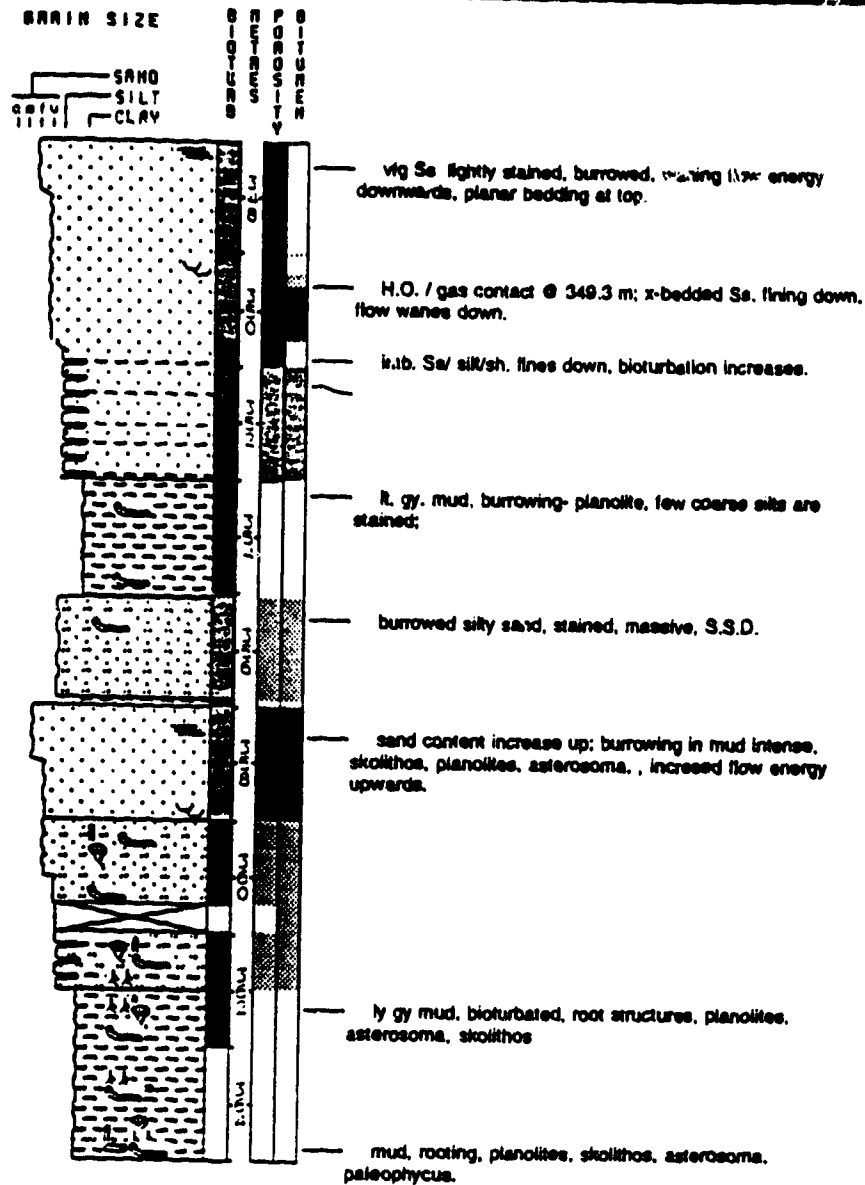
APPENDIX A**Core Descriptions****MCMURRAY CORES**

1. 10-8-79-8W4
2. 10-14-76-7W4
3. 10-23-76-8W4
4. 11-1-77-8W4
5. 11-2-77-8W8
6. 11-8-79-8W4
7. 11-8-79-6W4
8. 11-8-79-7W4
9. 3-1-77-5W4
10. 5-16-79-5W4
11. 6-11-78-7W4
12. 8-17-78-7W4
13. 9-1-80-8W4

CLEARWATER CORES

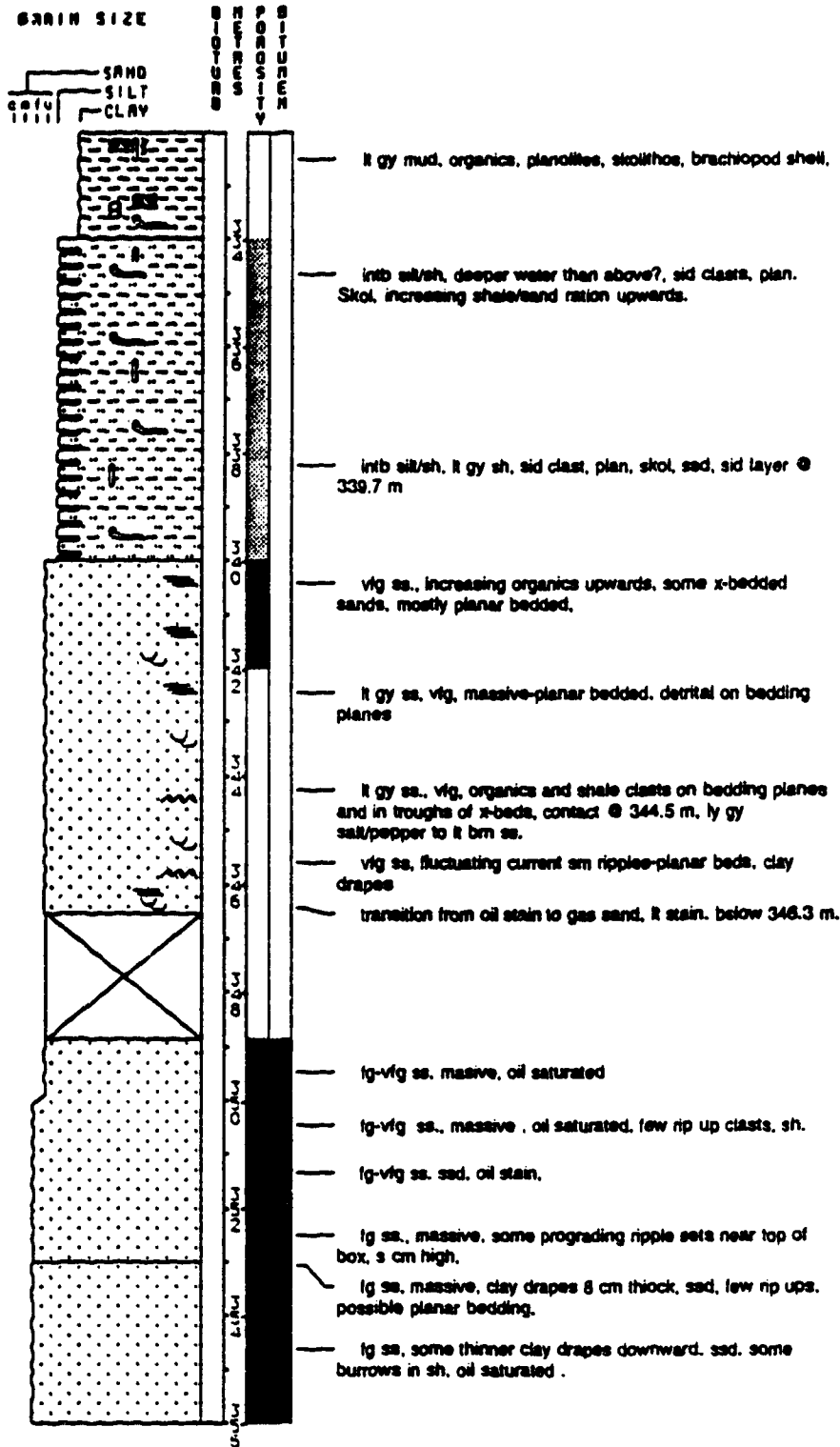
14. 11-34-77-8W4
15. 6-22-77-8W4
16. 6-9-77-8W4

PEH PCEJ LEISMER OU 10-8-79-8
10-8-79-8w4



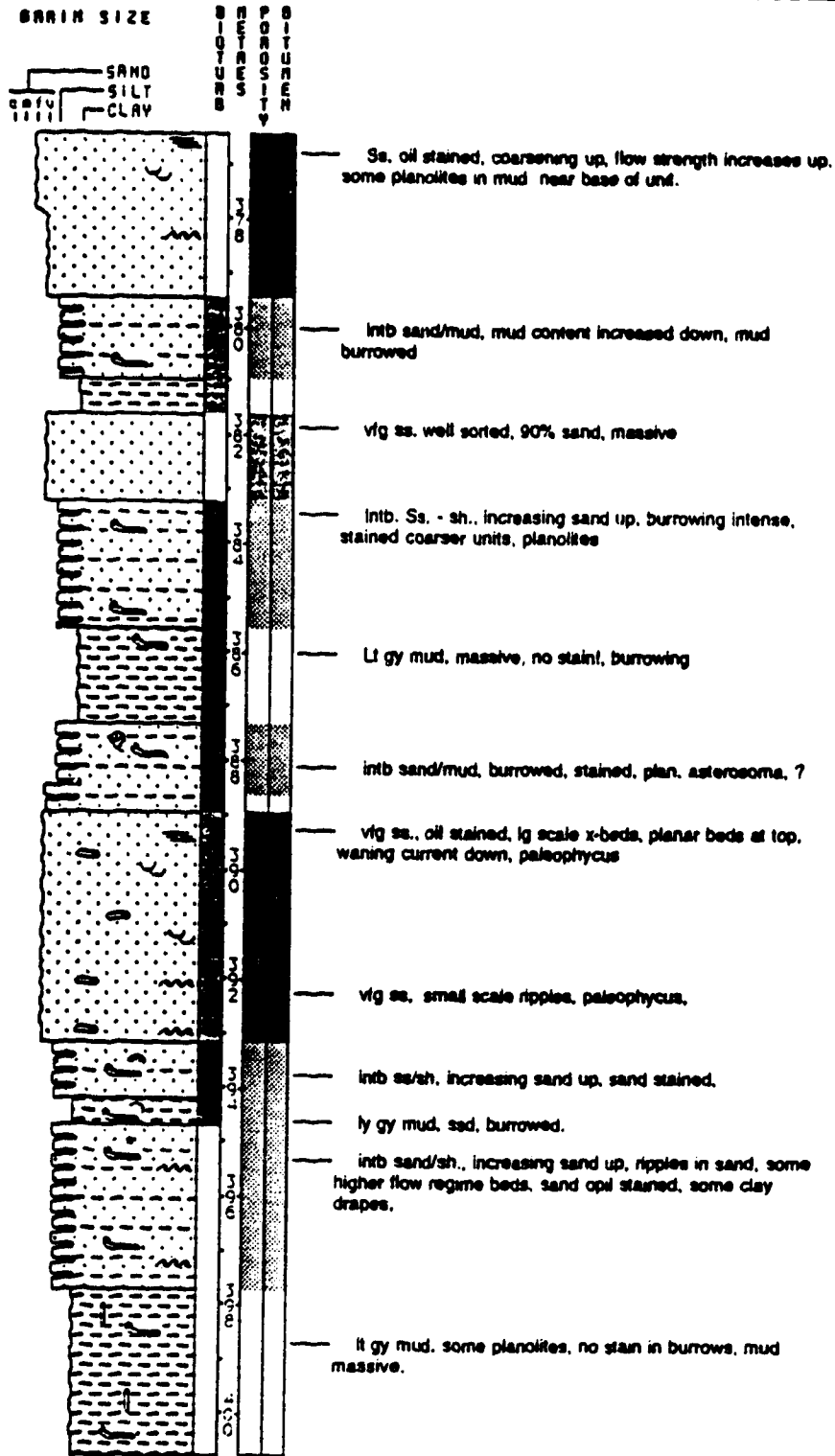
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10-14-76-7w4

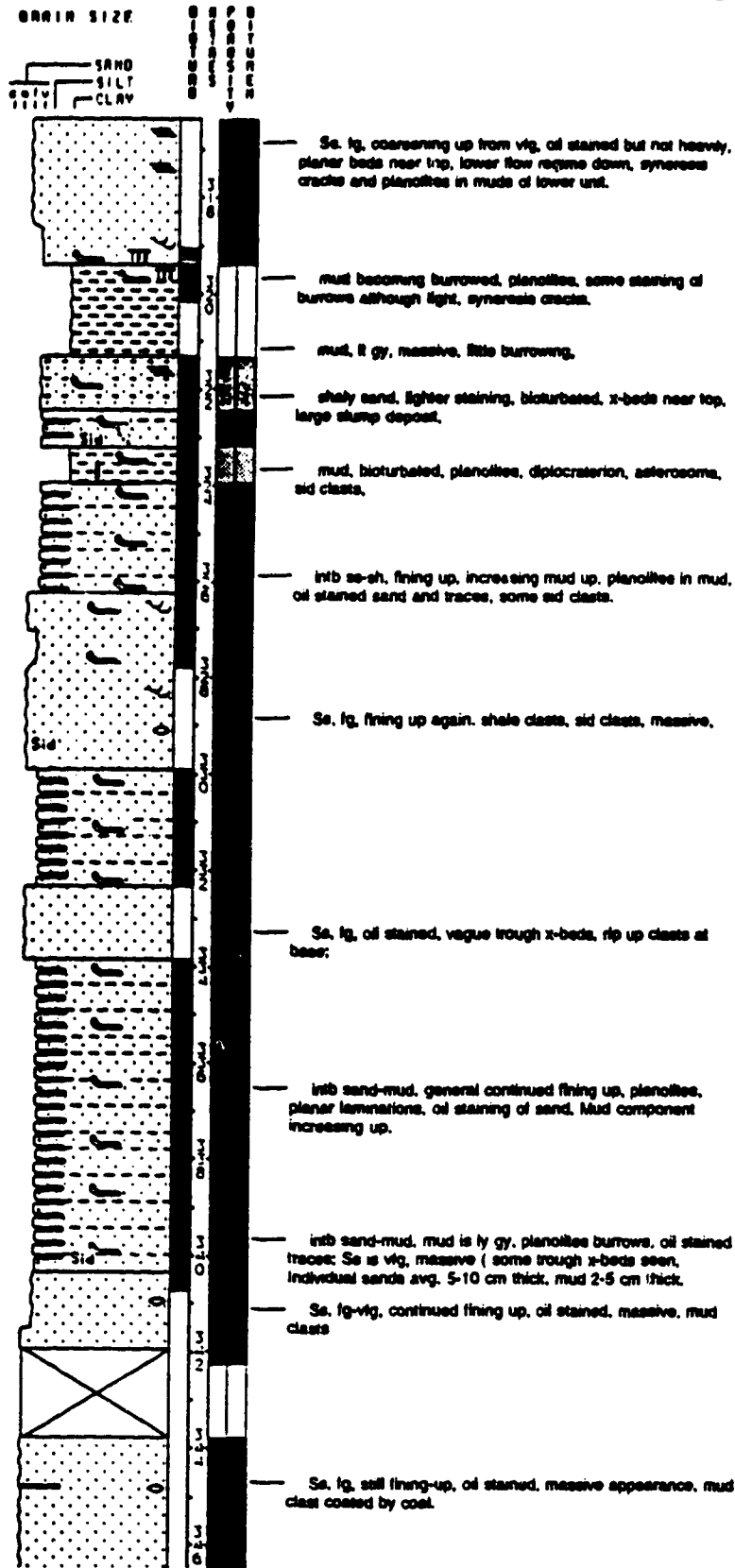


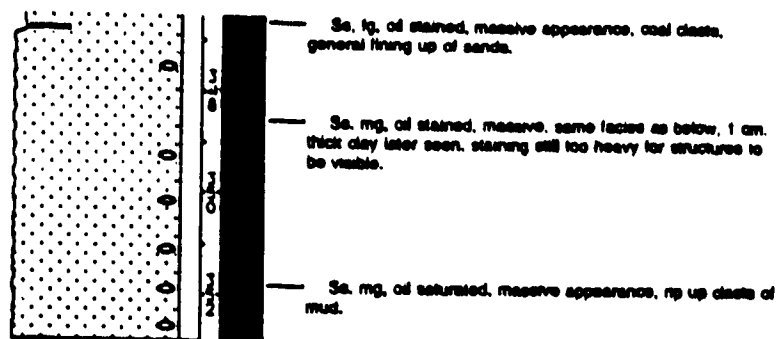
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10-23-76-8w4



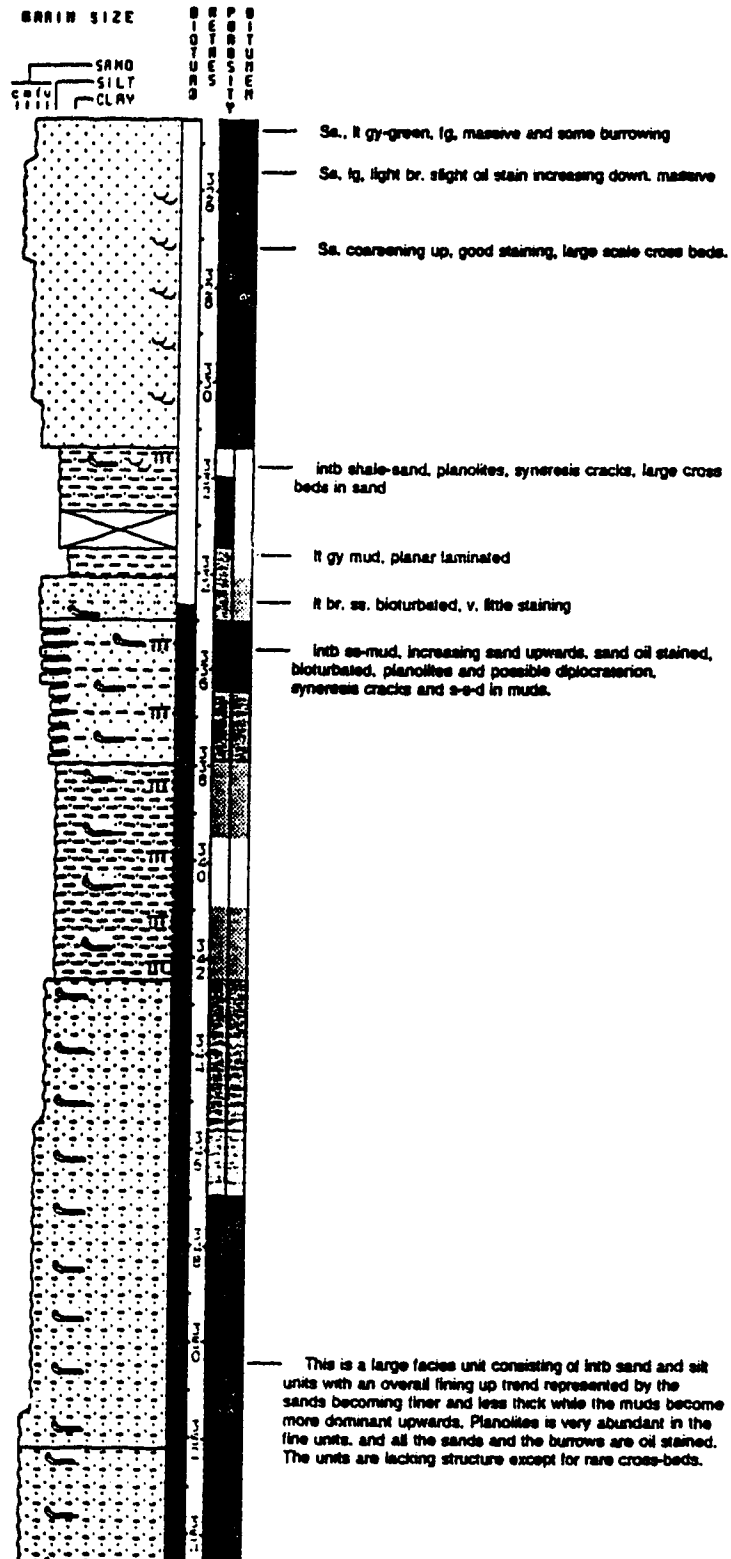
NOME NB LEISMER 11-1
11-01-077-00w4

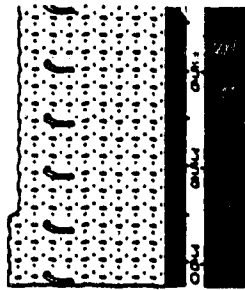




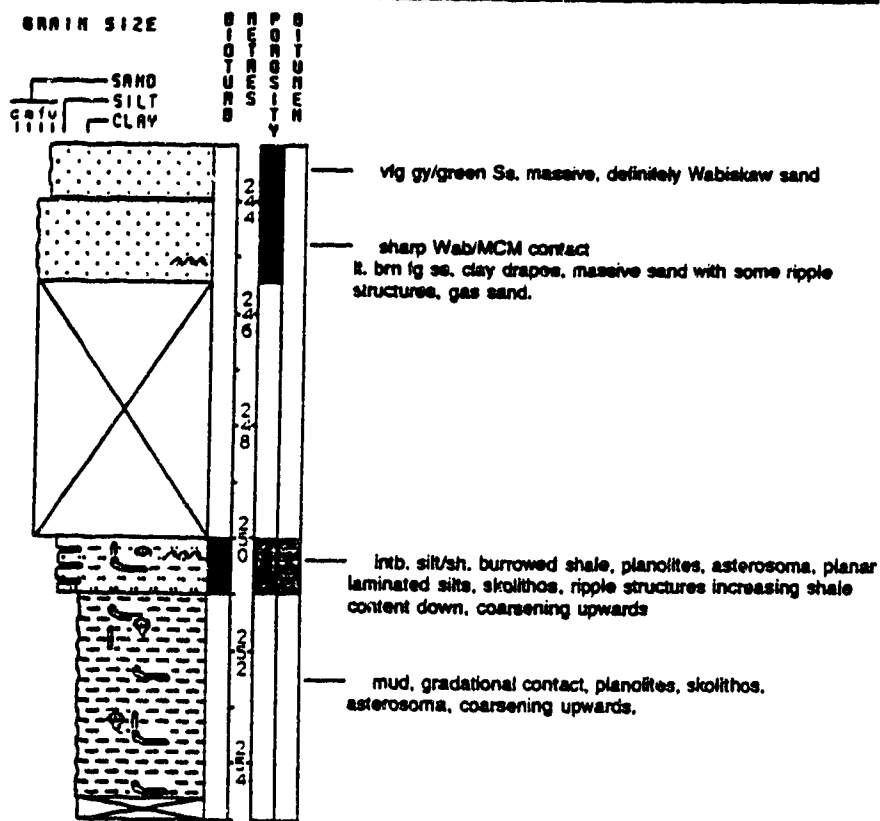
HOME LEISMER 11-2

11-02-077-08w4

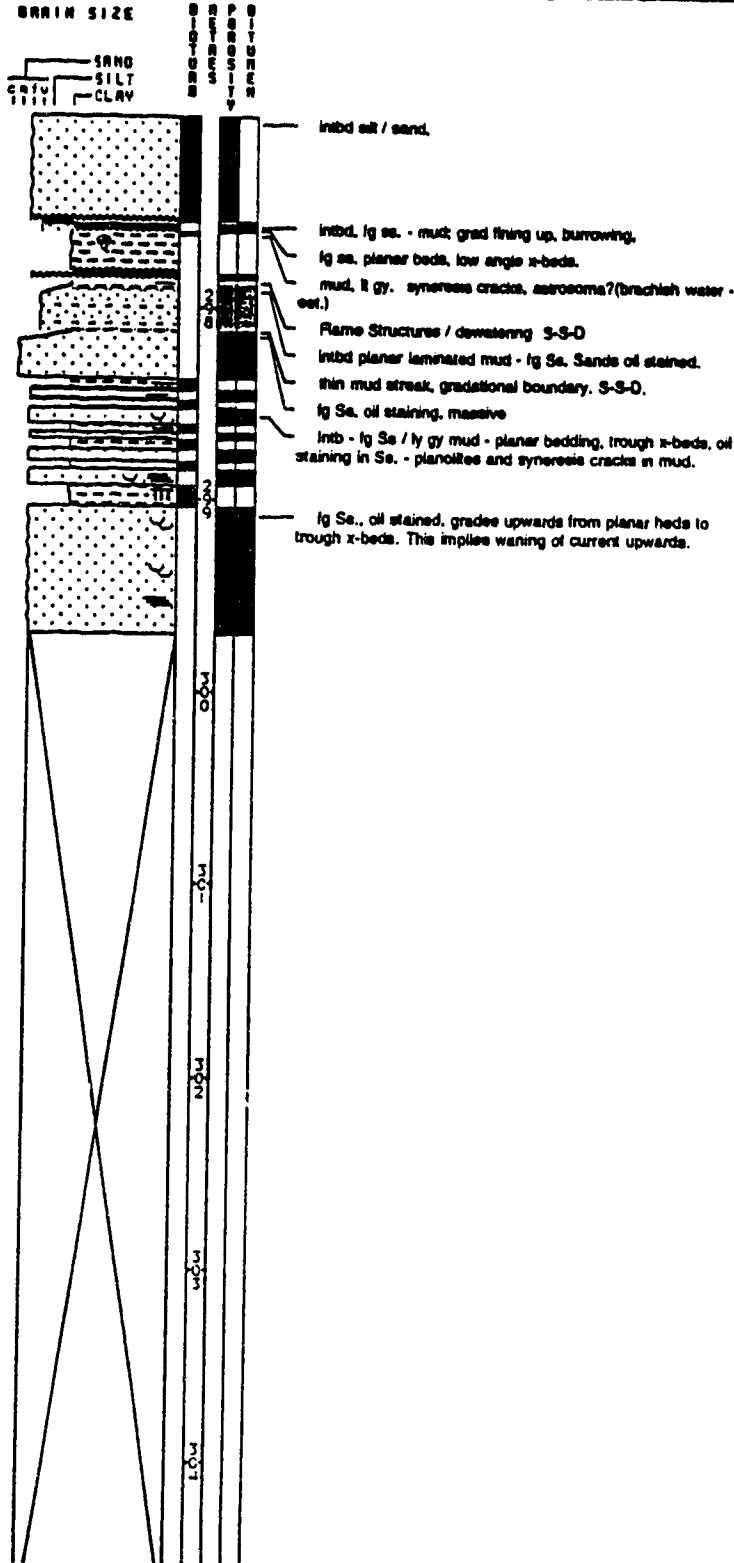


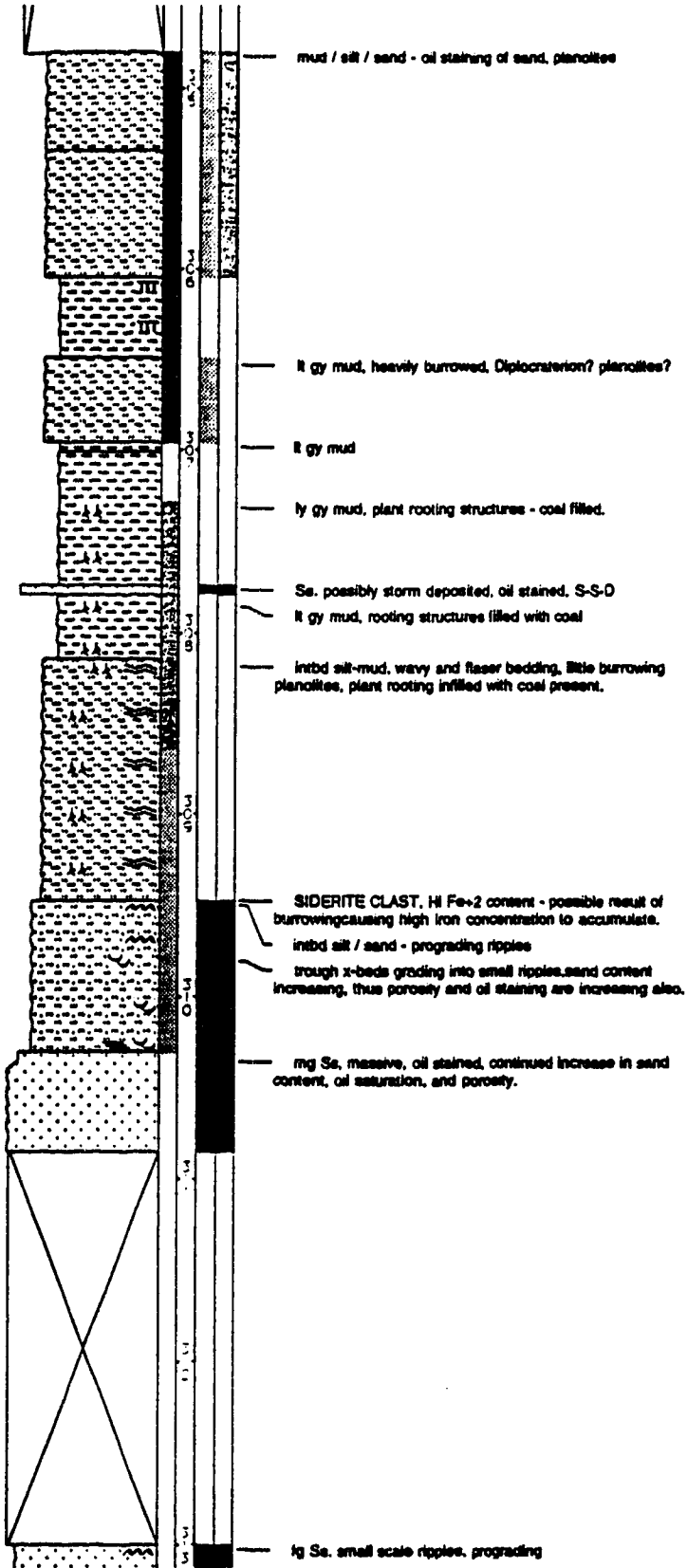


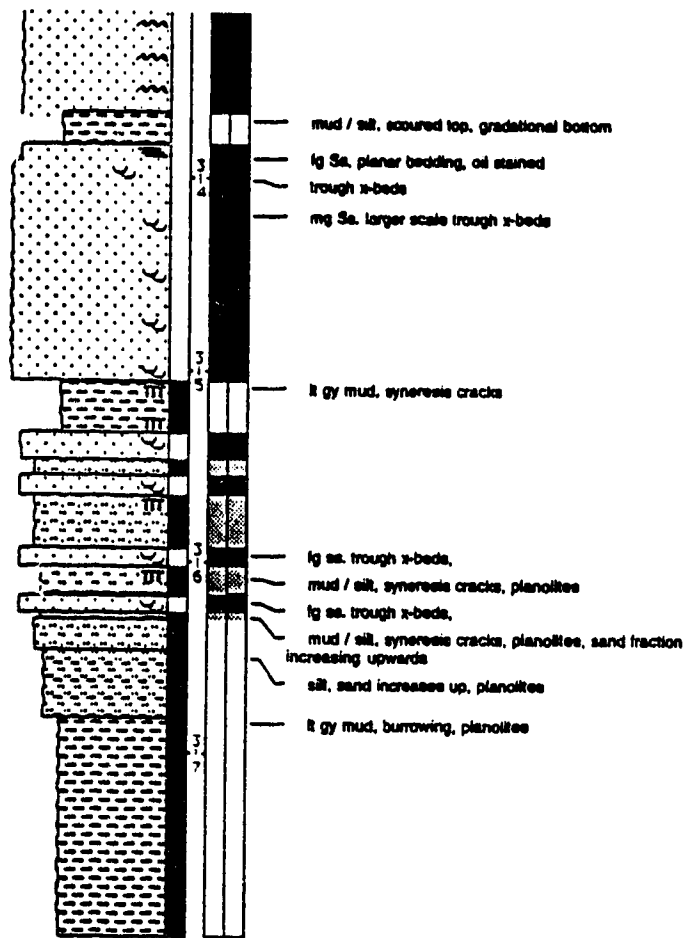
PEH PCEJ Cherd OU 11-8-79-6
 11-8-79-6w4



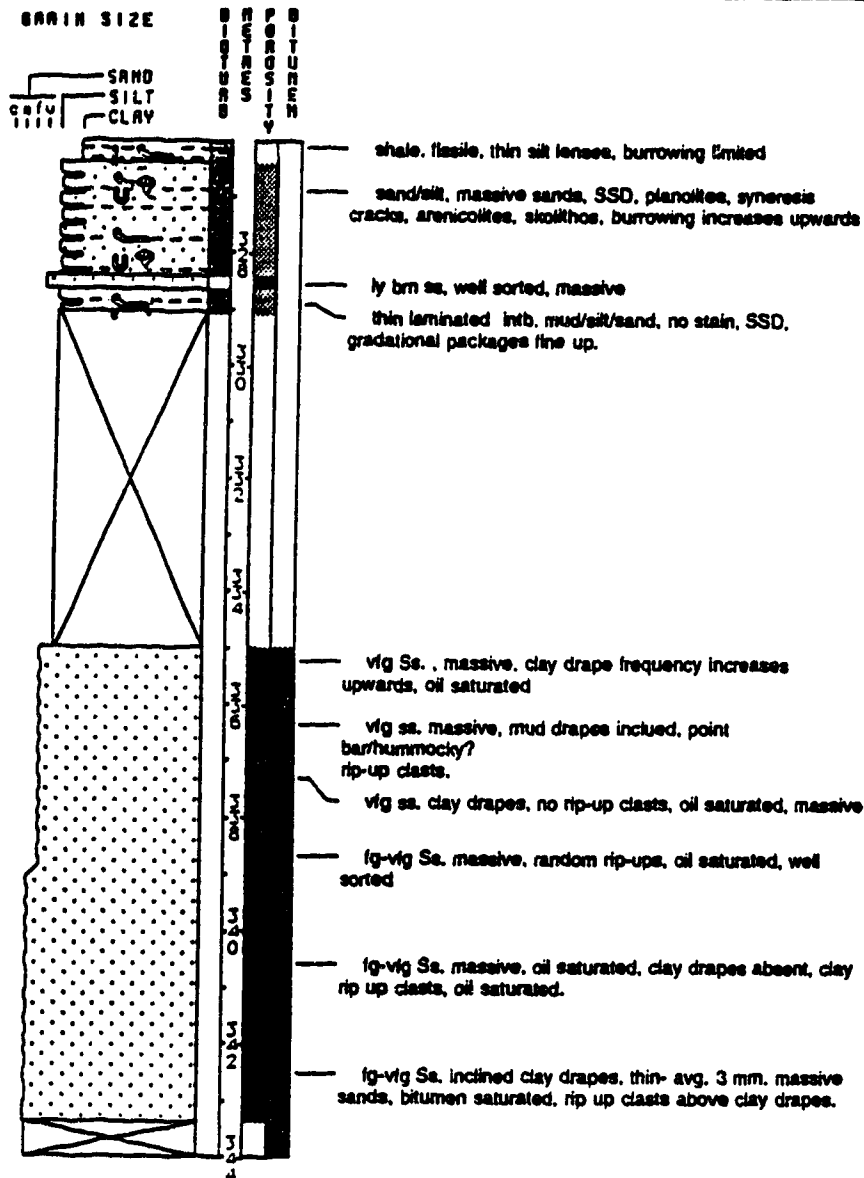
PEN PCEJ Leismer 11-8
11-8-79-7w4



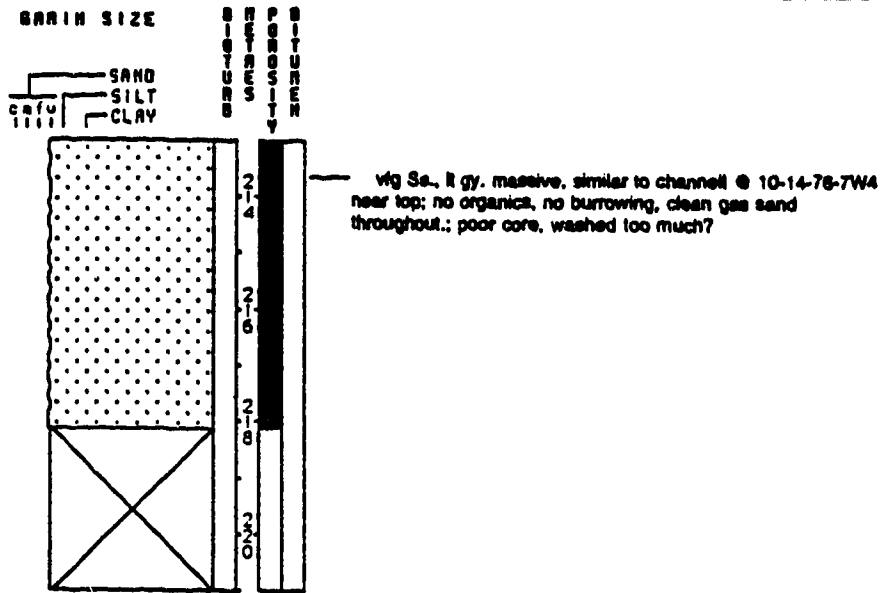




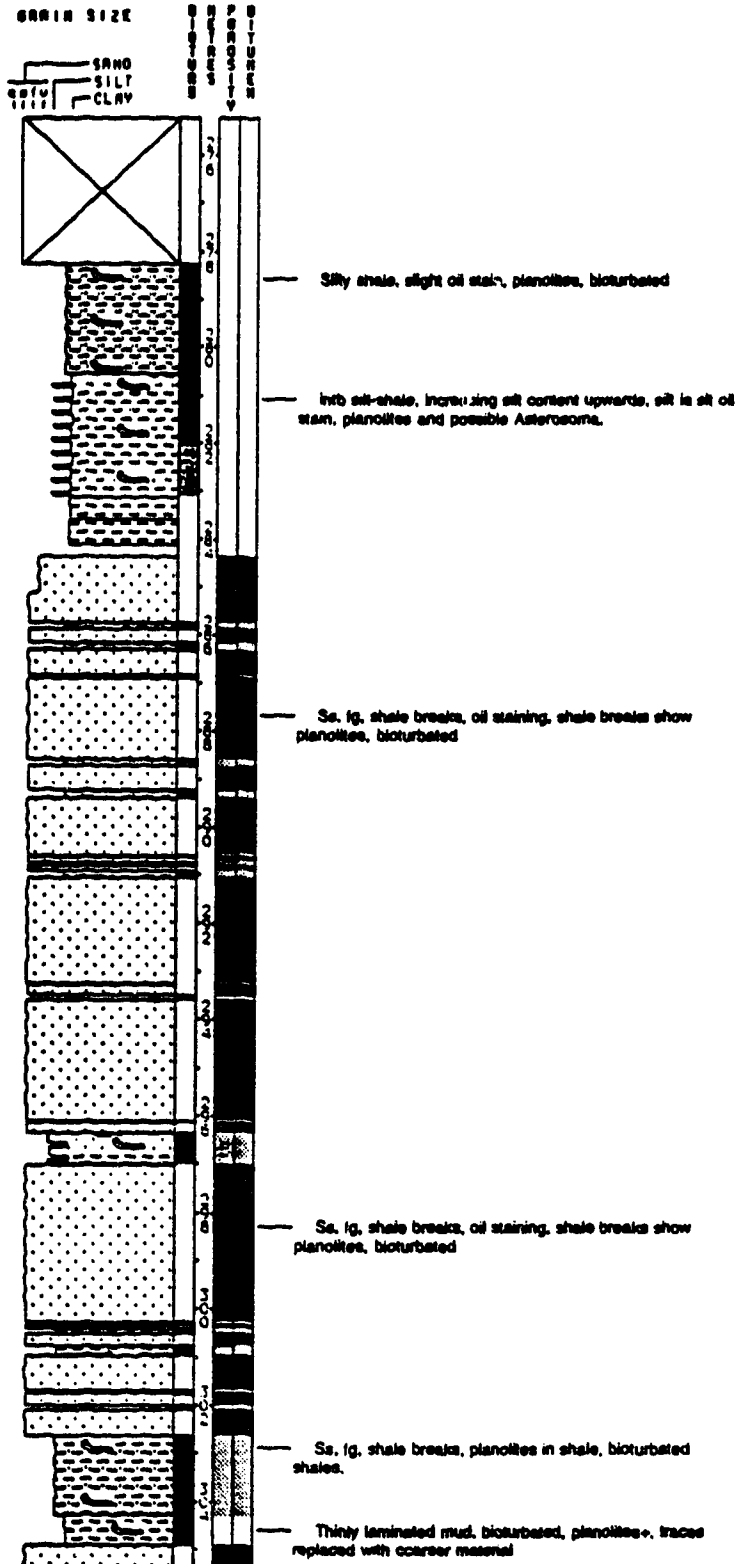
CWWE Leismer 3-1-77-5
3-1-77-5w4

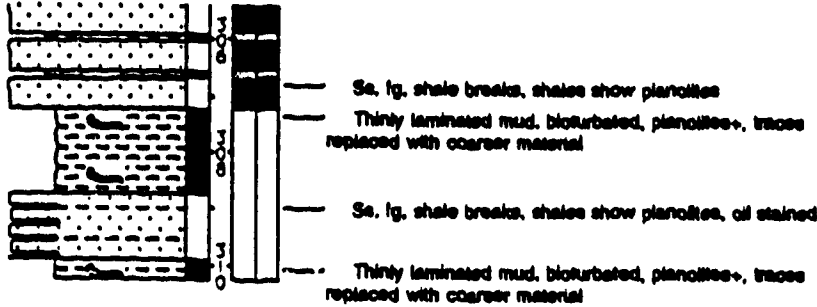


ICGR CHRD 5-16
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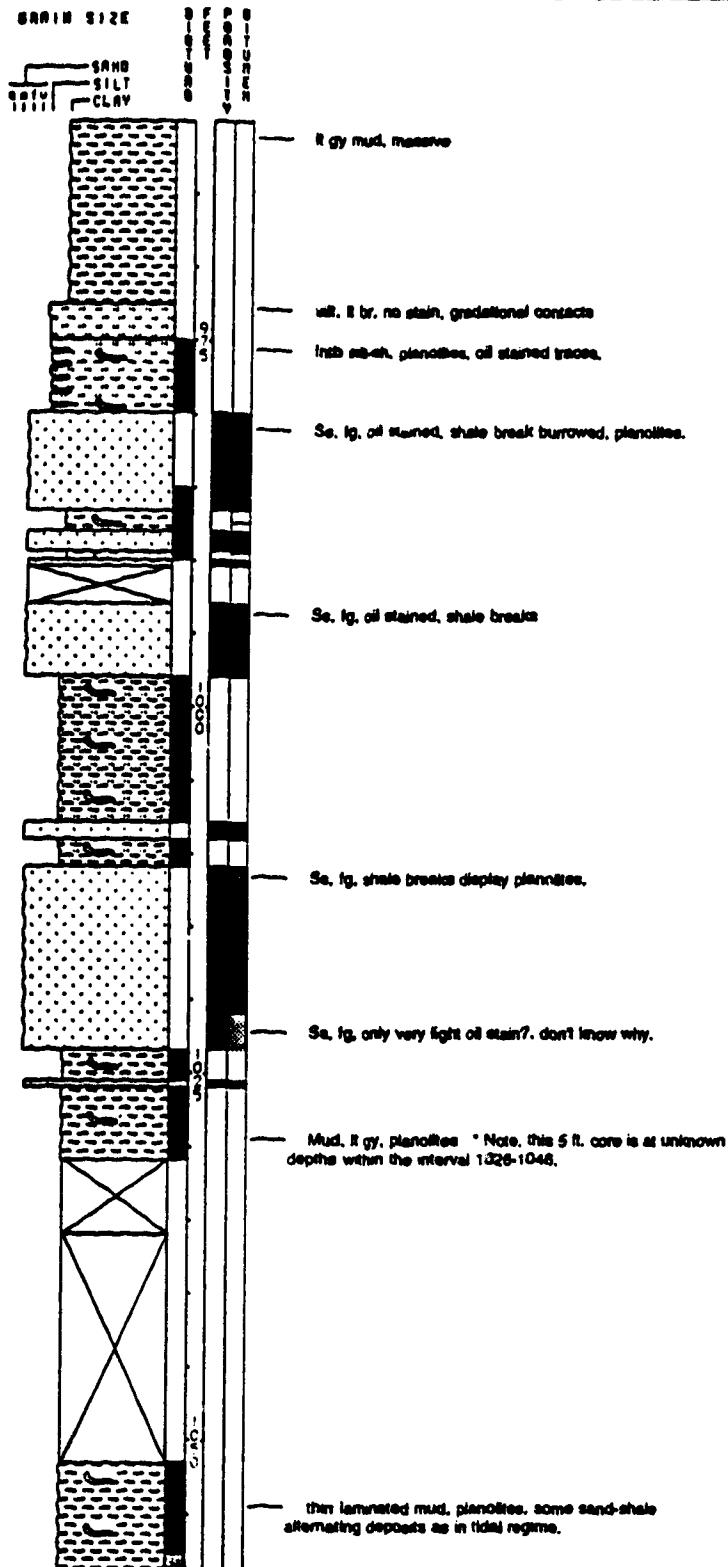


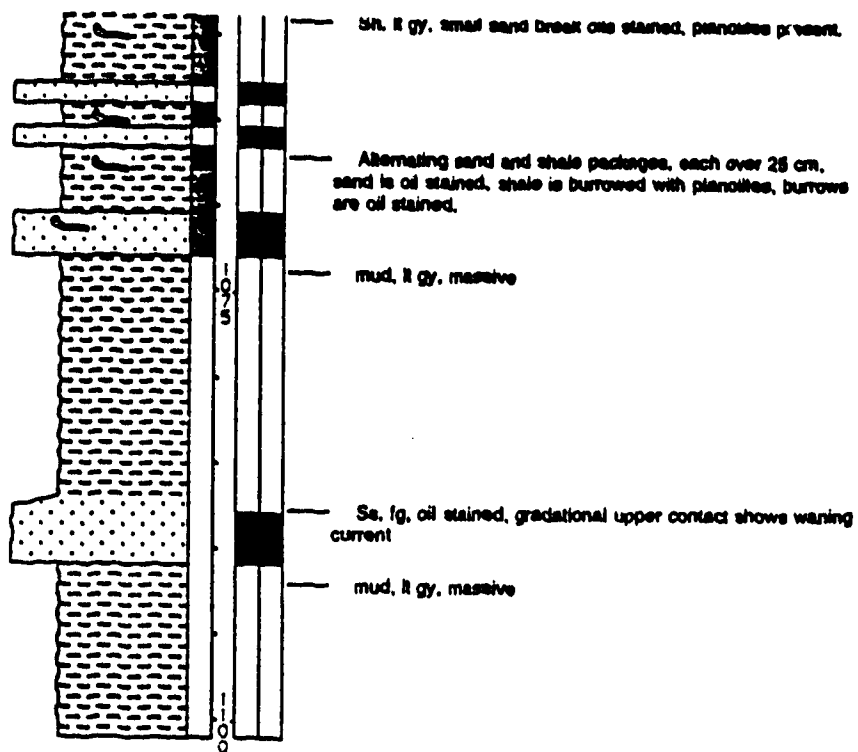
HOME LEISMER 6-11
06-11-78-07w4



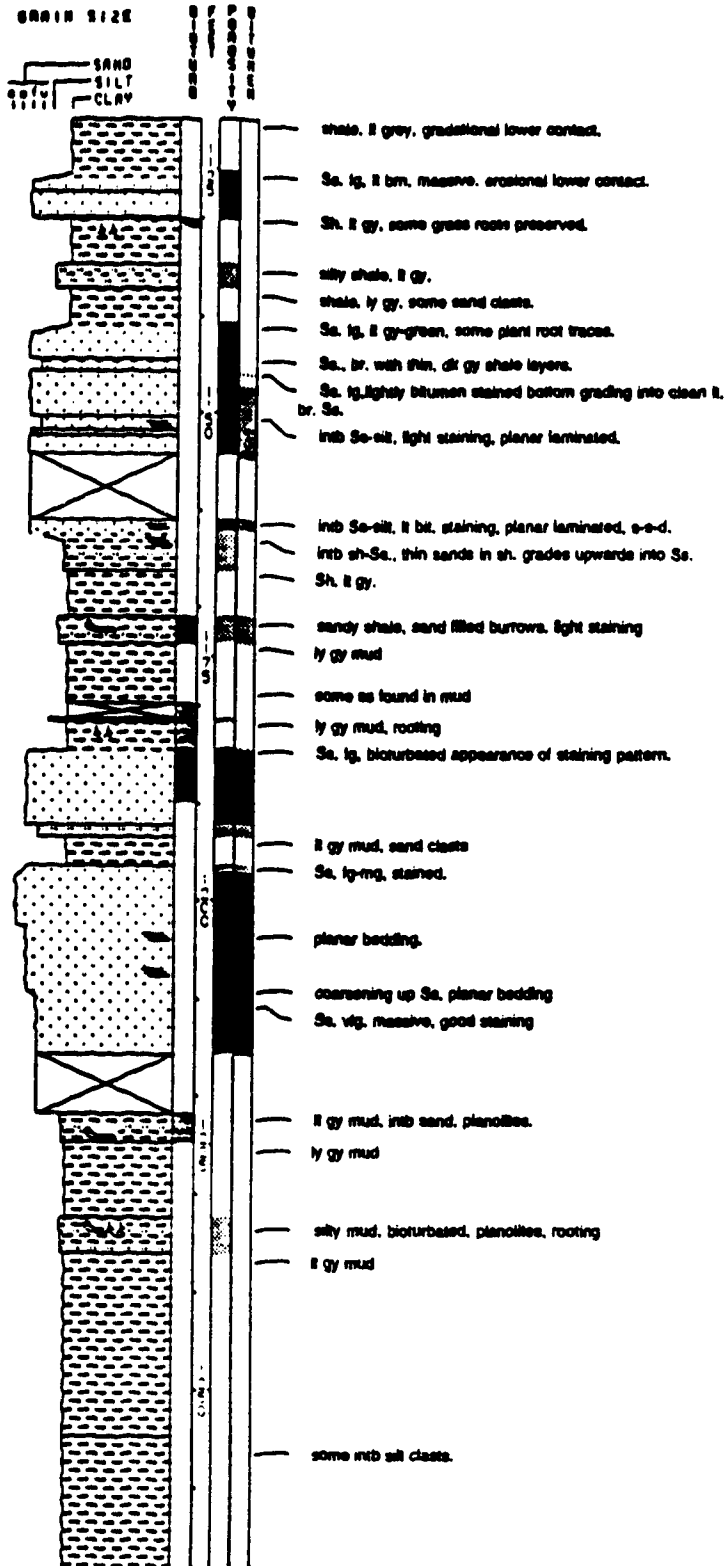


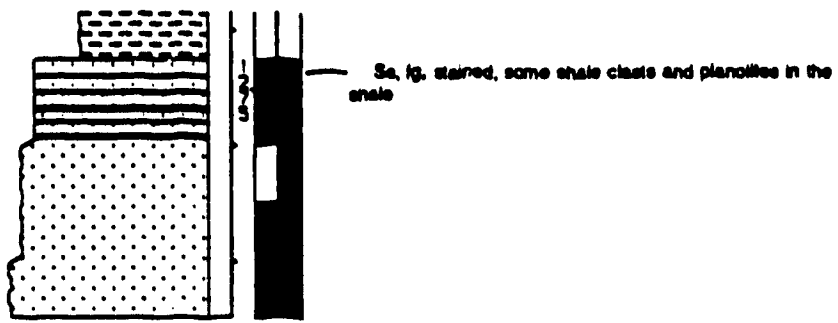
R O CORP LEISMER 8-17-78-7
 88-17-078-07W4





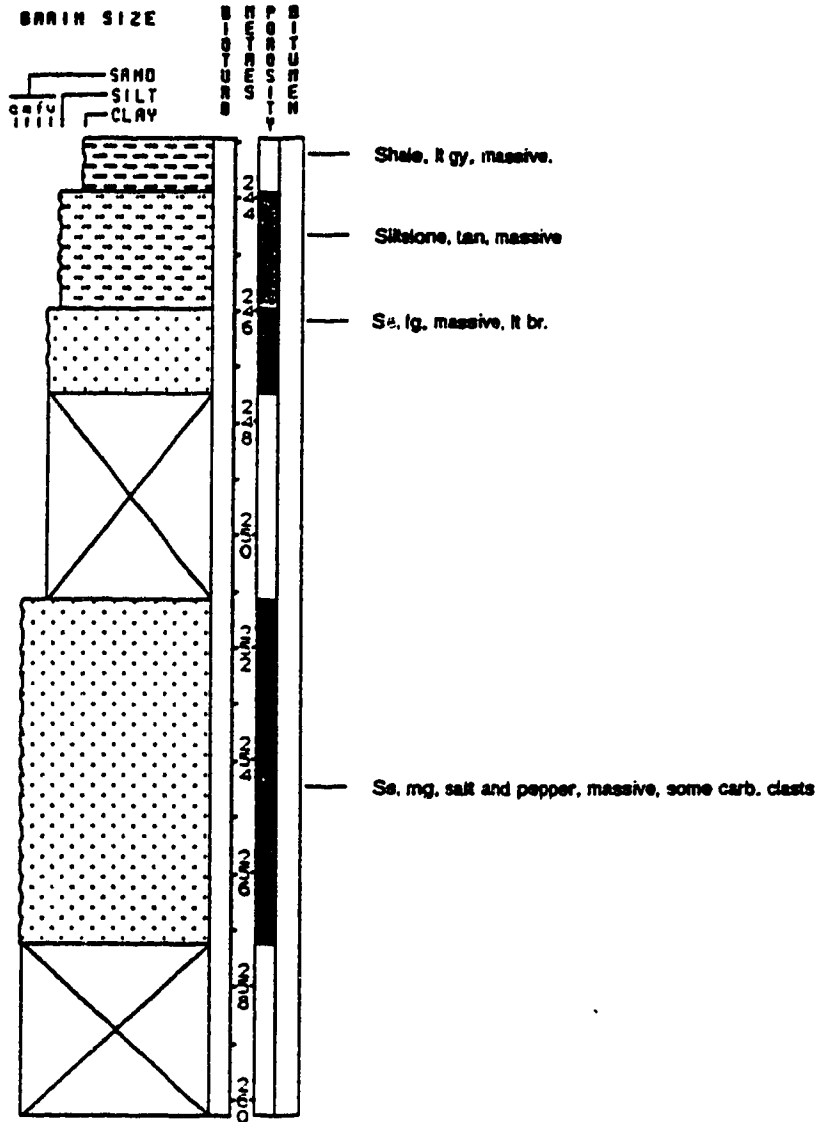
ROC CORP. PONY CREEK 9-1 80-8
 R G CORP. PONY CREEK 9-1-80-8
 09-01-080-08WU-4





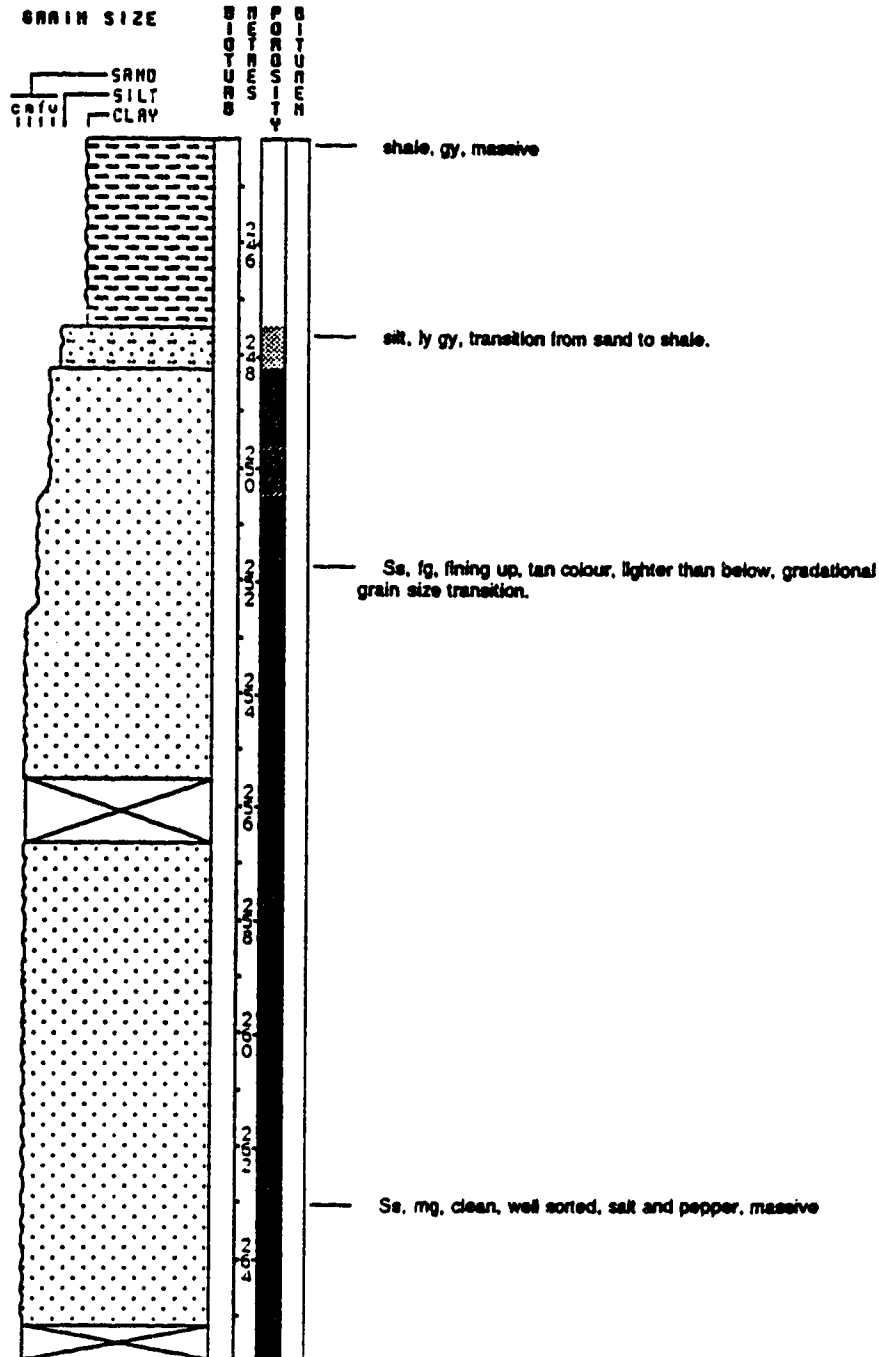
AMOCO A-6 LEISMER 11-34

11-34-077-08W4

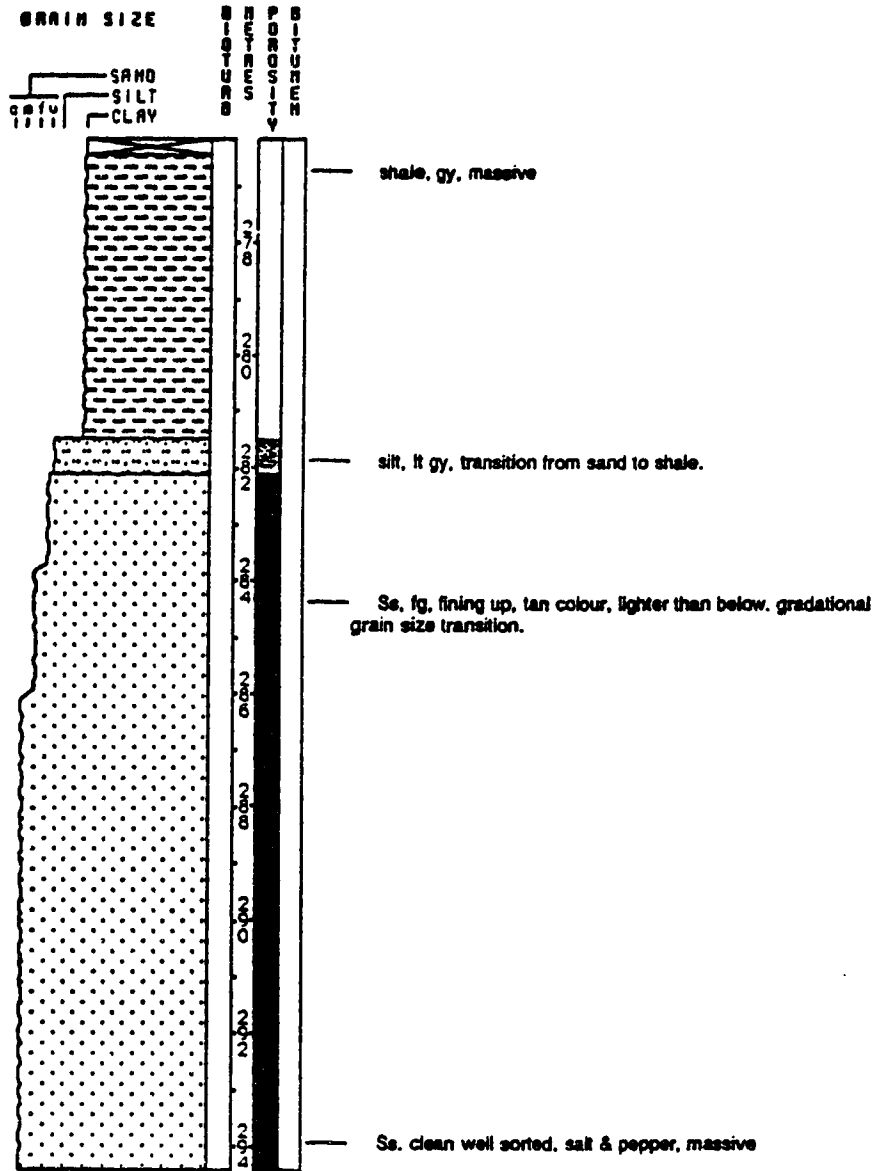


AMOCO A-7LEISMER 6-22

06-22-077-08w4



AMOCO A-5 LEISMER 6-9
06-09-077-08w4



Appendix B

Thesis Data

- Clearwater Fm. Structure
- Clearwater 'A' Structure
- Clearwater 'B' Structure
- Wabiskaw Member Structure
- McMurray Fm. Structure
- SubCretaceous Unconformity Structure
- Clearwater Fm. Isopach
- Clearwater 'A' ; Top 5 m Ss./Sh. Ratio
- Clearwater 'B' ; Top 15 m Ss./Sh. Ratio
- Wabiskaw Member Isopach
- McMurray Fm. Isopach
- McMurray Fm. ; Top 15 m Ss./Sh. Ratio
- Clearwater 'A' Net Pay
- Clearwater 'B' Net Pay
- Clearwater 'C' Net Pay
- Clearwater Fm. Net Pay
- Wabiskaw Member Net Pay
- McMurray Fm. Net Pay

Appendix C

Cross-Sections

- Figure 42 C.1 - Cross-Section Location Map.
- Figure 43 C.2 - Section A - A' : Dip Section Of Study Area.
- Figure 44 C.3 - Section B - B' : Strike Section In Undisturbed Zone.
- Figure 45 C.4 - Section C - C' : Strike Section In Collapse Zone.
- Figure 46 C.5 - Section D - D' : Structure Of Clearwater B' Sand in Leismer Field.
- Figure 47 C.6 - Section D - D' : Stratigraphic Section Through Leismer Field.
- Figure 48 C.7 - Section E - E' : Structure Of McMurray Fm. Through Chard Field.
- Figure 49 C.8 - Section E - E' : Stratigraphic Section Through Chard Field.
- Figure 50 C.9 - Section F - F' : Structure Of McMurray Formation Through Graham Field.
- Figure 51 C.10- Section F - F' : Stratigraphic Section Through Graham Field.

Appendix D

Thesis Maps

Structure Maps

- Figure 52 D.1 - Clearwater Fm. Structure Map
Figure 53 D.2 - Clearwater 'A' Structure Map
Figure 54 D.3 - Clearwater 'B' Structure Map
Figure 55 D.4 - Wabiskaw Member Structure Map
Figure 56 D.5 - McMurray Fm. Structure Map
Figure 57 D.6 - SubCretaceous Unconformity Structure

Isopach and Facies Maps

- Figure 58 D.7 - Clearwater Fm. Isopach Map
Figure 59 D.8 - Clearwater 'A'; Top 5 m Ss./Sh. Ratio Map
Figure 60 D.9 - Clearwater 'B'; Top 15 m Ss./Sh. Ratio
Figure 61 D.10 - Wabiskaw Member Isopach Map
Figure 62 D.11 - McMurray Fm. Isopach Map
Figure 63 D.12 - McMurray Fm.; Top 15 m Ss./Sh. Ratio

Net Pay Maps

- Figure 64 D.13 - Clearwater 'A' Net Pay Map
Figure 65 D.14 - Clearwater 'B' Net Pay Map
Figure 66 D.15 - Clearwater 'C' Net Pay Map
Figure 67 D.16 - Clearwater Fm. Net Pay Map
Figure 68 D.17 - Wabiskaw Member Net Pay Map
Figure 69 D.18 - McMurray Fm. Net Pay Map