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Stratigraphy and Structure of West Central Vermont and Adjacent New York

Zen, E-an

New England Intercollegiate Geological Conference (NEIGC)

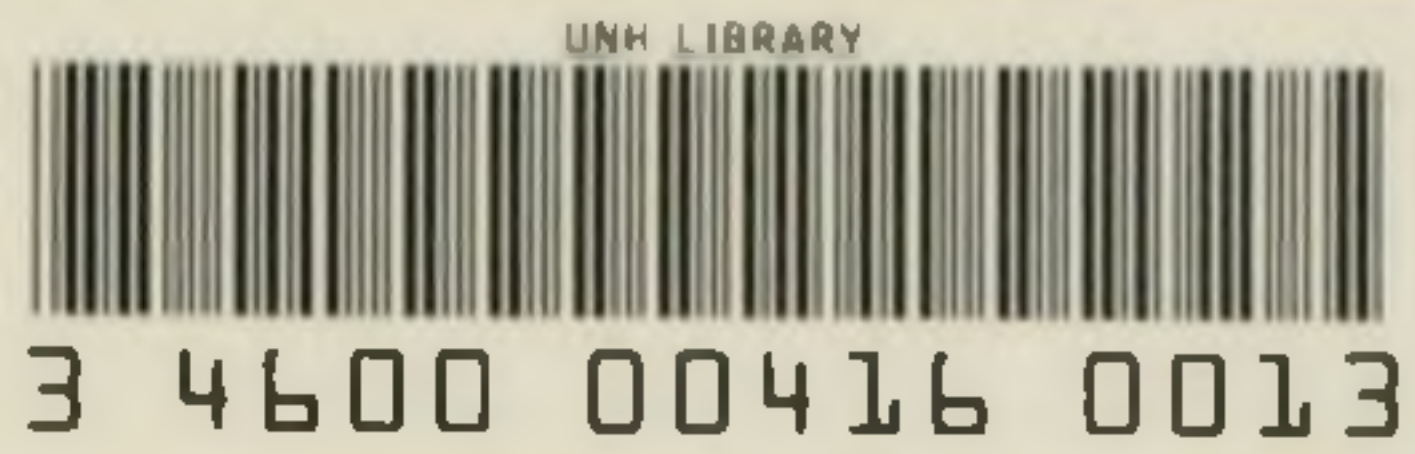
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Statement of Contents	3-11
Trip A and B, Introduction	12
Trip C, Stratigraphy and Structure of West Central Vermont and Adjacent New York	13
Trip D, Rutland, Vermont	14
Trip E, Stratigraphy and Structure of West Central Vermont and Adjacent New York	15
Trip F, Rutland, Vermont	16
Trip G, Rutland, Vermont	17
Trip H, Rutland, Vermont	18
Trip I, Rutland, Vermont	19
Trip J, Rutland, Vermont	20
Trip K, Rutland, Vermont	21
Trip L, Rutland, Vermont	22
Trip M, Rutland, Vermont	23
Trip N, Rutland, Vermont	24
Trip O, Rutland, Vermont	25
Trip P, Rutland, Vermont	26
Trip Q, Rutland, Vermont	27
Trip R, Rutland, Vermont	28
Trip S, Rutland, Vermont	29
Trip T, Rutland, Vermont	30
Trip U, Rutland, Vermont	31
Trip V, Rutland, Vermont	32
Trip W, Rutland, Vermont	33
Trip X, Rutland, Vermont	34
Trip Y, Rutland, Vermont	35
Trip Z, Rutland, Vermont	36
Trip AA, Rutland, Vermont	37
Trip AB, Rutland, Vermont	38
Trip AC, Rutland, Vermont	39
Trip AD, Rutland, Vermont	40
Trip AE, Rutland, Vermont	41
Trip AF, Rutland, Vermont	42
Trip AG, Rutland, Vermont	43
Trip AH, Rutland, Vermont	44
Trip AI, Rutland, Vermont	45
Trip AJ, Rutland, Vermont	46
Trip AK, Rutland, Vermont	47
Trip AL, Rutland, Vermont	48
Trip AM, Rutland, Vermont	49
Trip AN, Rutland, Vermont	50
Trip AO, Rutland, Vermont	51
Trip AP, Rutland, Vermont	52
Trip AQ, Rutland, Vermont	53
Trip AR, Rutland, Vermont	54
Trip AS, Rutland, Vermont	55
Trip AT, Rutland, Vermont	56
Trip AU, Rutland, Vermont	57
Trip AV, Rutland, Vermont	58
Trip AW, Rutland, Vermont	59
Trip AX, Rutland, Vermont	60
Trip AY, Rutland, Vermont	61
Trip AZ, Rutland, Vermont	62
Trip BA, Rutland, Vermont	63
Trip BB, Rutland, Vermont	64
Trip BC, Rutland, Vermont	65
Trip BD, Rutland, Vermont	66
Trip BE, Rutland, Vermont	67
Trip BF, Rutland, Vermont	68
Trip BG, Rutland, Vermont	69
Trip BH, Rutland, Vermont	70
Trip BI, Rutland, Vermont	71
Trip BJ, Rutland, Vermont	72
Trip BK, Rutland, Vermont	73
Trip BL, Rutland, Vermont	74
Trip BM, Rutland, Vermont	75
Trip BN, Rutland, Vermont	76
Trip BO, Rutland, Vermont	77
Trip BP, Rutland, Vermont	78
Trip BQ, Rutland, Vermont	79
Trip BR, Rutland, Vermont	80
Trip BS, Rutland, Vermont	81
Trip BT, Rutland, Vermont	82
Trip BU, Rutland, Vermont	83
Trip BV, Rutland, Vermont	84
Trip BW, Rutland, Vermont	85
Trip BX, Rutland, Vermont	86
Trip BY, Rutland, Vermont	87
Trip BZ, Rutland, Vermont	88
Trip CA, Rutland, Vermont	89
Trip CB, Rutland, Vermont	90
Trip CC, Rutland, Vermont	91
Trip CD, Rutland, Vermont	92
Trip CE, Rutland, Vermont	93
Trip CF, Rutland, Vermont	94
Trip CG, Rutland, Vermont	95
Trip CH, Rutland, Vermont	96
Trip CI, Rutland, Vermont	97
Trip CJ, Rutland, Vermont	98
Trip CK, Rutland, Vermont	99
Trip CL, Rutland, Vermont	100

GUIDEBOOK

for

THE FIFTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

of the

NEW ENGLAND INTERCOLLEGIATE

GEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

STRATIGRAPHY and STRUCTURE

of

WEST CENTRAL VERMONT

and

ADJACENT NEW YORK

E-an Zen, Editor

Rutland, Vermont

October 17-18, 1959

CONTENTS

	Page
Statement of Problem E-an Zen	V
Trips A and I. Stratigraphy and Structure at the north end of the Taconic Range and Adjacent Areas. Leader: E-an Zen.	1
Trip B. Excursions at the North end of the Taconic Range near Sudbury Leader: Marshall Kay.	17
Trip C. Stratigraphy of the Central Champlain Valley Leader: Charles W. Welby.	19
Trip D. Geology of the Marble Deposits near Rutland Leader: George W. Bain	35
Trip E. Economic Geology of Slate Leader: George Theokritoff	43
Trip F. Stratigraphy and Structure of the Coxe Mountain Area, Vermont Leader: P.H. Osberg	45
Trip G.	
Part 1. Stratigraphy and Structure of the Taconic Sequence in the Thorn Hill and Granville quadrangle Leader: George Theokritoff	53
Part 2. Pawlet Quadrangle Leader: Robert Shumaker	59
Part 3. Graptolite Faunas of the northern part of the Taconic Area Leader: William B. N. Berry	61
Trip H. Stratigraphy and Structure in the Vermont Valley and the eastern Taconics between Clarendon and Dorset Leader: James B. Thompson, Jr.	71
Trip I. See Trip A above.	

STRATIGRAPHY AND STRUCTURE OF WEST-CENTRAL VERMONT AND ADJACENT NEW YORK

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

By: E-an Zen

Precambrian gneisses form the core of the Green Mountain anticlinorium in the vicinity of Rutland. These gneisses are overlain unconformably on the west limb of the anticlinorium by fossiliferous Lower Cambrian sedimentary rocks, which pass westward into Middle Ordovician rocks. Except for the basal Mendon series (Brace, 1953), these overlying rocks are largely carbonates and clean quartzites, and the sequence contains no obvious stratigraphic break below the black mid-Trenton phyllite, the "Hortonville formation". This west-dipping and west-facing section is the east limb of the Middlebury Synclinorium, which is the structural complement to the Green Mountain anticlinorium (Cady, 1945). The stratigraphy of the west limb of the Middlebury Synclinorium corresponds to that of the east limb, except that the Upper Cambrian Potsdam formation, rather than Lower Cambrian units, rests directly on the Precambrian of the Adirondack massif with profound unconformity (Rodgers, in Rodgers, et al., 1952, p. 34). The plunge of the Middlebury Synclinorium is to the south.

The east limb of the Middlebury Synclinorium is complicated by two facts. The first is a mid-Trenton regional unconformity, which also marks a distinct departure in the sedimentary regime. The "Hortonville formation", above the unconformity, rests on units as old as the Precambrian gneisses, thus indicating a considerable hiatus. The second complicating fact is the presence of a zone of faults, both reverse and normal, which extends from northwest of Rutland (the Pine Hill thrust, Brace, 1953) at least as far south as the north slope of Dorset Mountain (Thompson, in Rodgers et al., 1952, Pl. 4). In several areas along this zone, Precambrian rocks are brought to the surface, abutting younger units.

In the area extending from the town of Sudbury and south to the Catskill quadrangle (Ruedemann, 1942), New York, the mid-Trenton black slate is overlain by a sequence of fossiliferous Lower Cambrian to Middle Ordovician argillites, with minor arkoses, greywackes, quartzites, and carbonates. These rocks constitute the Taconic sequence and, though lithologically distinct from the carbonate-orthoquartzite sequence of the Middlebury Synclinorium, the sequence is continuous with that of the Synclinorium in metamorphic grade; indeed the "Hortonville formation" appears, in west-central Vermont, to grade upwards into the Taconic sequence lithologically.

Accepting the abundant and well-studied fossil evidence, the Taconic sequence clearly occupies an anomalous position. The two prevalent explanations for this problem are: (1) that the Taconic sequence is in fact in the core of an anticlinorium. A rapid sedimentary facies change is envisaged to account for the lithological contrasts with the Synclinorium sequence, and the "Hortonville formation" is thought to lie unconformably upon the Taconic sequence. Though local complications due to marginal faults and overturning of the structure are allowed, no major displacement of the rocks is thought to exist. At least part of the phyllite of the main Taconic

Range is regarded as younger than, and in normal succession with, the "Hortonville formation" (MacFadyen, 1956). On the other hand, advocates of (2) the Taconic-klippe hypothesis hold that the entire Taconic sequence, including the phyllites of the Taconic Range, had been moved into the present position through a major thrust fault. The site of deposition of these rocks is thought to be in the present Green Mountains or even farther east, where rocks of like nature and perhaps comparable age are found. Deformation and metamorphism of the rocks subsequent to the emplacement then account for the gradational contact between the Taconic and the Synclinorium sequences.

Trips A and I (Zen) will study the detailed stratigraphy and internal structure of the Taconic sequence at its north end, as well as the relations between the two Sequences. Evidence for a Taconic thrust will be presented. Trip G (Theokritoff, Berry, and Shumaker) will demonstrate the continuation of the stratigraphic succession in areas immediately to the south. Recent discoveries of crucial graptolites from this area have done much to elucidate the Ordovician stratigraphy of the Taconic sequence. Trip H (Thompson) will study the relations of the two Sequences in the Wallingford-Danby-Dorset area, as well as of the faulted Precambrian with the younger units. Trip B (Kay) will study some of the structural complications in the Middlebury Synclinorium immediately north of the Taconic sequence, in the area of the Sudbury Thrust which Zen has shown to be structurally an integral part of the Taconic sequence. Trip C (Welby) studies the stratigraphy in the less deformed rocks of the Middlebury Synclinorium, and Trip F (Osberg) studies some stratigraphic and structural problems of the basal Cambrian units in the Green Mountain Front, which in the vicinity of Coxe Mountain is offset several miles to the west, bringing it close to the Taconic rocks. Trips D (Bain) and E (Theokritoff) are largely of economical interest, and are devoted to the study of marble and slate quarries, respectively, in west-central Vermont.

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