

UPPER DEVONIAN STRATIGRAPHY AND PALEONTOLOGY OF SOUTHWESTERN
NEW YORK STATE (ERIE, CHAUTAUQUA AND CATTARAUGUS COUNTIES)

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Upper Devonian rocks in southwestern New York State consist of about 2500 feet of largely detrital material associated with the Catskill Clastic Wedge. During Late Devonian time, clastic sediment gradually spread westward and northwestward across New York State and Pennsylvania, eventually filling the epeiric seas that occupied the Appalachian Trough and adjacent areas.

There is some disagreement as to the exact boundaries that mark the base and top of the Upper Devonian in southwestern New York State but the present writer includes all strata from the base of the Genesee Member of Genesee Formation to the top of the Cattaraugus Formation (Cooper et al., 1942; Rickard, 1964). The overlying Knapp Conglomerate is considered to be Lower Mississippian (Holland, 1959).

Some authors have subdivided Upper Devonian strata into two series, an earlier Senecan and a later Chautauquan. Although there may be some paleontological evidence (especially cephalopods) to suggest this, the present writer does not see strong justification for such a division in southwestern New York State and therefore assigns all Upper Devonian units to a single series, the Chautauquan.

Within the Chautauquan Series, three groups are recognized (Tesmer, 1955), in ascending order the Seneca (600 feet), Arkwright (1250 feet) and Conewango (650 feet). The boundaries between these groups are based upon lithologic changes and facies differences that are persistent throughout the three counties of southwestern New York, namely Erie (Buehler and Tesmer, 1963), Chautauqua (Tesmer, 1963) and Cattaraugus. The Seneca Group extends from the base of the Genesee Member of the Genesee Formation to the top of the Hanover Member of the Java Formation. The Arkwright Group includes strata from the base of the Dunkirk Member of the Canadaway Formation to the top of the Ellicott Member of the Chadakoin Formation. Locally assigned to the Conewango Group is the Cattaraugus Formation. It includes redbeds, conglomerates and coarse buff sandstones interbedded with marine siltstones and shales.

The Seneca Group includes in ascending order the Genesee, Sonyea, West Falls, and Java Formations. These units are largely gray and black shales although a few limestone and siltstone beds also occur. Although the Genesee Formation varies only from about 10 to 20 feet in thickness, various members have been recognized including the Genesee Shale (2 inches to 2 feet of black shale), Penn Yan Shale (9 inches of dark gray shale) [deWitt and Colton, 1959], Genundewa Limestone (2 inches to 2 feet of light to dark gray limestone) and West River Shale (8 to 14) feet of gray shale. The Genundewa and West River Members include numerous species of conodonts and fish but the faunal content of the thin Genesee and Penn Yan Members is less well known in Erie County.

The Sonyea Formation (Colton and deWitt, 1958) is divided into an older Middlesex Shale and younger Cashaqua Shale Member. The 6 to 8 feet of black Middlesex shales contain some conodonts and the 35 to 75 feet of gray Cashaqua shales have a modest molluscan fauna including several species of the cephalopod *Manticoceras*.

The next youngest unit is the West Falls Formation (Colton, 1956; de Witt, 1956; Pepper, de Witt and Colton, 1956) consisting of an older Rhinestreet Shale (150 to 195 feet of black shale), Angola Shale (220 to 340 feet of mostly light gray shale with some interbedded dark gray shale, thin limestones and calcareous siltstones) and younger Nunda Siltstone (0 to 25 feet of light gray siltstone) Member. The Rhinestreet has a very rich conodont (Youngquist, Hibbard and Reimann, 1948) and fish (Carter, 1945) fauna, including several species of *Dinichthys* while the gray Angola shales have an entirely different faunal assemblage, almost all mollusks (Clarke, 1904). The faunal content of the Nunda Siltstone Member, limited to eastern Erie County, is as yet unknown locally.

The Java Formation (Pepper and deWitt, 1950; deWitt and Colton, 1953; deWitt, 1960) is divided into an older Pipe Creek and a younger Hanover Member. The Pipe Creek contains from one to two feet of black shale with some carbonized plant remains and conodonts. In the 85 to 95 feet of Hanover, some conodonts and mollusks have been collected. The Hanover is largely composed of gray shales but also includes some interbedded dark gray shales and thin limestones, as well as several zones of calcareous nodules. It is similar in appearance to the older Angola Shale Member of the West Falls Formation.

The Arkwright Group (Tesmer, 1955) includes an older Canadaway and younger Chadakoin Formations. These units consist of black and gray shales interbedded with an increasing percentage of gray siltstone toward the top of the group. Seven members are recognized in the Canadaway Formation of Chautauqua County, the Dunkirk (oldest), South Wales (Pepper and deWitt, 1951), Gowanda, Laona, Westfield, Shumla and Northeast (youngest). The Dunkirk Shale is composed of about 40 feet of black shale containing a few carbonized plants and conodonts. The overlying South Wales Member includes from 60 to 80 feet of interbedded gray and black shales with a limited faunal and floral content similar to the underlying Dunkirk Shale Member. Above the South Wales are found from 120 to 230 feet of mostly gray shales and siltstones with some black shale beds, assigned to the Gowanda Member. Although Gowanda fossils are not numerous nor widely distributed stratigraphically, a considerable number of species have been collected, largely mollusks and conodonts. The faunal assemblage and accompanying lithologies are quite like the older Angola Member of the West Falls Formation and the Hanover Member of the Java Formation. This marks the last appearance of the "Naples Fauna" of Clarke (1904).

The Laona Siltstone Member of the Canadaway Formation contains many species introduced for the first time in southwestern New York State. These include the brachiopods *Ambocoelia gregaria*, *Athyris angelica*, *Camarotoechia contracta* and *Tylothyris mesacostalis* as well

as the pelecypod *Mytilarca chemungensis*. The Laona attains a maximum thickness of about 25 feet of mostly gray siltstone and is essentially confined to Chautauqua County.

Above the Laona Siltstone one finds the Westfield Shale Member of the Canadaway Formation, comprised of 100 to 220 feet of gray shales with a few interbedded gray siltstones. These strata are largely barren of megafossils but a few brachiopods, plant stems and conodonts have been collected. The next youngest Shumla Siltstone Member has a nearly identical appearance to the older Laona Siltstone but is almost always barren except for scattered conodonts (Hass, 1958). The Shumla lenses as did the Laona, reaching a maximum thickness of about 35 feet. It is also essentially limited to Chautauqua County.

The thickest member of the Canadaway Formation is the uppermost Northeast Shale Member, varying from about 400 to 600 feet, and containing gray shales with considerable percentages of interbedded gray siltstones, particularly toward the top of the unit and in an eastward direction. In Cattaraugus County, where the Laona and Shumla Siltstone Members are not present, the nearly identical Gowanda, Westfield and Northeast Shale Members merge to form a very thick, undifferentiated sequence of gray shale beds with a fair percentage of interbedded gray siltstones. The Northeast Shale Member is often quite barren near the base of the unit, but the upper part of the member contains numerous specimens of *Ambocoelia gregaria*, *Camarotoechia contracta*, *Chonetes* spp., *Cyrtospirifer* spp., bryozoans and crinoid columnals.

In Chautauqua County, the Chadakoin Formation (Caster, 1934) contains an older Dexterville and a younger Ellicott Member. Both members are interbedded gray shales and siltstones, often nearly identical in appearance. The Dexterville Member, however, can be recognized by the presence of an index fossil, the brachiopod *Pugnoides duplicatus*, which is confined to this unit. In Cattaraugus County where *Pugnoides duplicatus* is nearly completely absent, the Chadakoin Formation is not differentiated into members. The Chadakoin Formation is about 250 feet thick, the Dexterville including the lower 100 feet, where recognized. Fossils are quite abundant in the Chadakoin (Caster, 1934) and various groups are represented, particularly bryozoans, brachiopods, pelecypods and conodonts. Many of the species were first introduced to the area during Laona times when a similar environment must have prevailed.

Much work remains to be done on the Conewango Group, which is locally the Cattaraugus Formation. This formation exhibits great variations in lithology, ranging from typical marine gray shales and siltstones through near-shore coarse buff sandstones and conglomerates to non-marine red shales, siltstones and sandstones. Total thickness is about 650 feet, within which there are many sandstone-conglomerate lenses. These lenses cannot be distinguished from one another in the field and must be separated by careful plotting as to geographic location and elevation. It is hoped that eventually the Cattaraugus Formation may be divided into an appropriate number of formal members (Tesmer, 1958) but presently the Cattaraugus is largely undifferentiated,

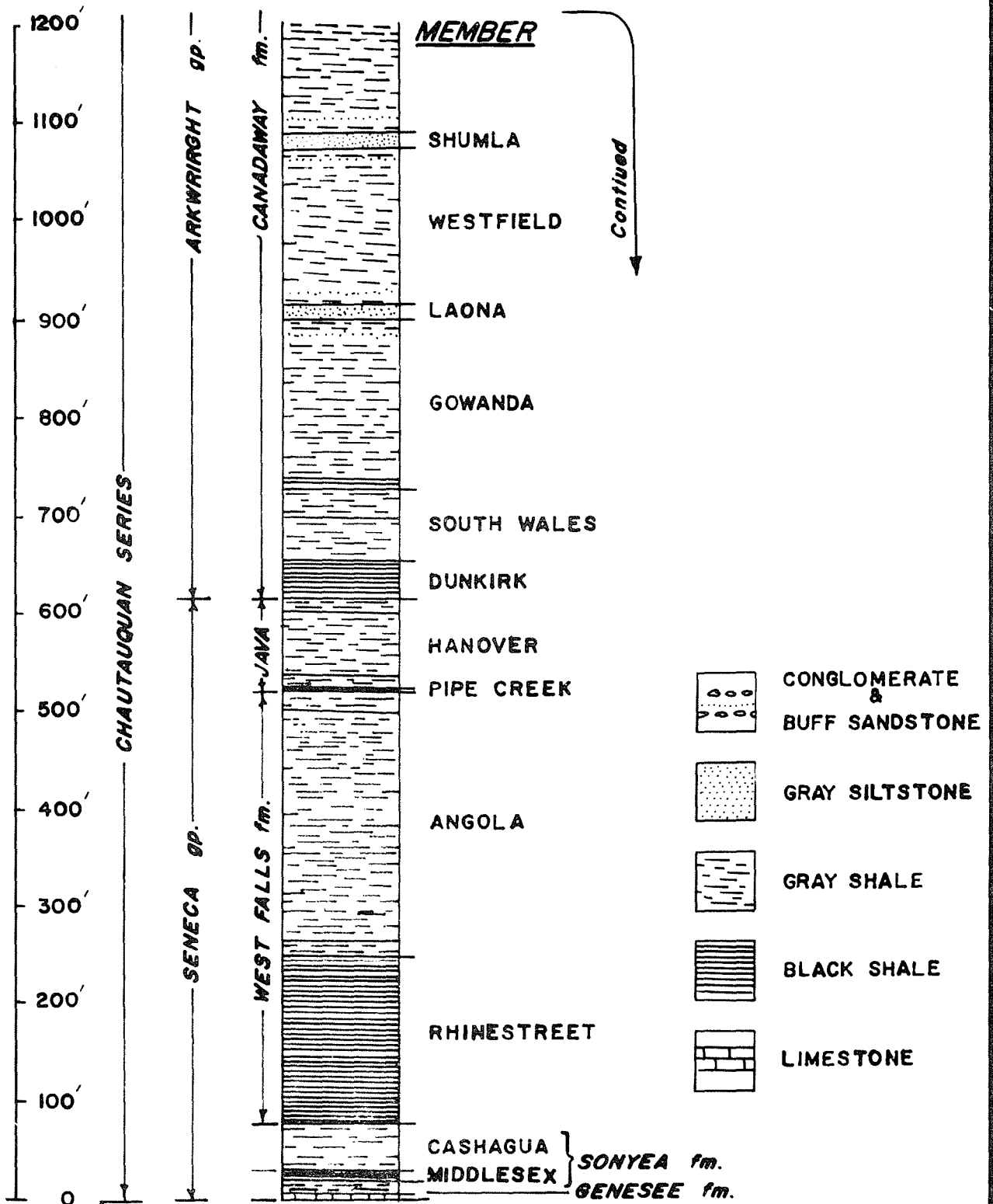
particularly in Cattaraugus County, its type locality. Faunal content is somewhat similar to the underlying Chadakoin Formation but several new genera are introduced, notably the pelecypod *Ptychopteria* (Butts, 1903; Chadwick, 1935). Some of the conglomerate lenses likely to be retained as members include the Panama, Pope Hollow, Salamanca and Wolf Creek.

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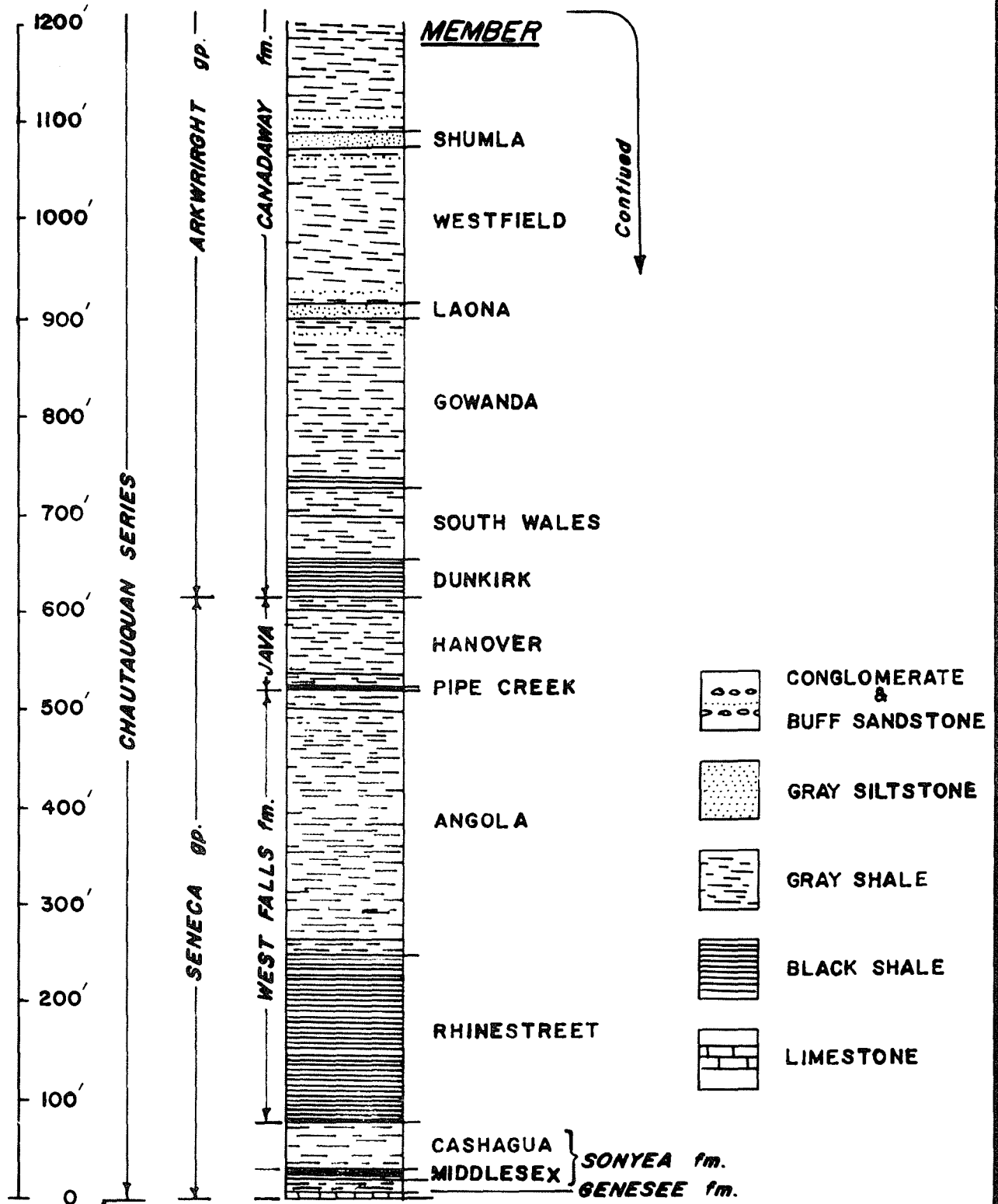
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Generalized Stratigraphic Column for the Upper Devonian of SW New York State



Tesmer Figure 1

Generalized Stratigraphic Column for the Upper Devonian of SW New York State



Tesmer Figure 1

Tesmer Figure 1 (cont'd)

