presence of the Mississippi River heavy-mineral suite, these cheniers must have had a significant contribution from the littoral-drift system. It is concluded that much of the chenier plain, other than silt–clay mud swales, was built by onshore migration of sand which acquired its offshore location when sea level occupied a lower position.

A plot of position versus age of the Cameron Parish cheniers indicates that growth of the plain has been slowing down, especially in the western part of the area, and that it may be close to a maximum width. The shoreface slope also may be close to a maximum angle. Both of these inferences suggest that the depositional history of this part of the coast may be essentially over, being replaced—either now or in the near future—by long-term coastal erosion.

VON DREHLE, W. F., Florida State Univ., Tallahassee, Fla.

ANOMALOUS BEACH RIDGES OF SANGAMON (?) AGE

Six large-amplitude ridges, about 35 km in length and 300–1,000 m in width, parallel the mainland of Gulf County, Florida. Associated troughs are from 0.5 to 2.0 m above sea level and have a maximum width of 200 m. The intercoastal waterway cuts the ridges exposing low-angle parallel beds dipping primarily south-southwest at less than 5°. The ridges differ in thickness and each displays 3 distinct zones of laminae. Virtually all bedding appears to be of beach origin, mostly of foreshore type but with some backshore features. Eolian and current bedding is absent.

Study indicates that systematic changes occur between the 3 zones of the ridges. Average-mean grain size and standard deviation decrease upward as skewness and kurtosis increase, a trend observed in profiles taken up the beach face of some Florida panhandle beaches. The ridges are composed mostly of white-quartz sand with humate lenses of decayed organic matter. Bedding and sediment parameters suggest that the ridges are ancient beach deposits, which locally coalesce to form larger ridges. A large cuspate foreland of Holocene age, the St. Joseph Spit, protects the ridges from wave action, thus suggesting a probable minimum Sangamon age for the ridges.

WALLS, R. A., Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, N.C.

LATE DEVONIAN–EARLY MISSISSIPPIAN SUBAQUEOUS DELTAIC FACIES IN PART OF SOUTHEASTERN APPALACHIAN BASIN

Evaluation of subsurface data in a part of the southeastern Appalachian basin permits paleoenvironmental reconstruction of a Late Devonian and/or Early Mississippian deltaic complex.

Electric logs and samples from 114 oil and gas wells were used to construct 21 stratigraphic cross sections through a 6-county area in southwestern Virginia and adjacent Kentucky and West Virginia. The study area covers approximately 2,100 sq mi.

Results obtained from petrographic analyses, grain-size determinations, studies of cross-sectional configurations, and inferred relation to regional paleogeography indicate that there are 3 essentially contemporaneous clastic facies in the study area. These are: siltstone and sandy siltstone (delta front); clayey siltstone (prodelta); and pyritic, carbonaceous black clay shale (offshore marine). Each of the lithofacies represents a different subaqueous environment of a north-northwest-trending progradational deltaic complex.

Siltstones and shales of the study area were deposited in a shallow, euxinic sea probably no deeper than 100 ft. A low-lying drainage area, stable source, and restricted-marine circulation explain the occurrence of predominantly fine-grained deposits. Abundant carbonaceous matter and pyrite imply anaerobic, reducing conditions.

Inadequate physical and paleontologic control and the fact that these facies intertongue laterally raise questions concerning the validity of traditional time-rock units in this area. Considering these facts, it appears unlikely that an exact Devonian-Mississippian boundary can be established in this part of the southeastern Appalachian basin.

WARD, W. C., Louisiana State Univ., New Orleans, La., and M. J. BRADY, Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, Kan.

"HIGH-ENERGY" CARBONATES ON INNER SHELF OF NORTHEASTERN YUCATAN PENINSULA, MEXICO

The Bahama-Banks model, where "high-energy" carbonate-sand bodies are associated with shelf edges or pronounced shelf breaks, is often invoked in the interpretation of ancient limestones, but the Yucatan shelf provides another model which may be pertinent to the analysis of many Gulf Coast Mesozoic carbonates. Off the northeastern Yucatan Peninsula several types of bioclastic and lithoclastic carbonate sands and gravels have been deposited on the inner shelf, and longshore transport has produced a barrier island–lagoon complex adjacent to the coast.

A partly submarine, partly subaerial belt of oolitically coated sand parallels the coast from the Caribbean side of Isla Cancun northward to beyond Isla Blanca. This belt of Holocene ooids is thickest on its landward edge, where coastal dunes accumulate. The carbonate-dune deposits are rapidly lithified, enhancing their chance of preservation and creating topographic features that have profound influence on subsequent subaqueous sedimentation. Effective porosity in these Holocene dune limestones ranges from 26 to 36%.

The oolitic sand passes seaward into uncoated bioclastic and lithoclastic sand gravel. Periodic storm waves wash ooids landward into the muddy lagoon behind the Isla Blanca dune and beach-ridge barrier.

Preservation of the carbonate facies deposited on the inner shelf of northeastern Yucatan would create stratigraphic traps in the most updip carbonate grainstones. Carbonate mudstones of the coastal lagoons would be both permeability barriers and source rocks for hydrocarbons.

WEAVER, L. K., H. F. PIERCE, and C. J. JIRIK, U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Mines, Dallas, Tex.

ESTIMATED COSTS OF PRODUCING PETROLEUM IN GULF OF MEXICO

The objective of this study is to present costs of producing petroleum (oil, condensate, and associated gas) in the Gulf of Mexico. It includes a financial analysis of an offshore operation.

To prepare the financial analysis, a model was derived to show the costs necessary to explore, acquire, develop, produce, and abandon a 5,000-acre block and the estimated income from the sale of the hydrocarbons produced. To establish cost and income guidelines for the model, 7 oil fields in the Gulf of Mexico ranging from 7 to 75 mi from shore and in water 20–130 ft deep were selected for study. A net-profit or loss statement was prepared for each field, and a discounted cash-flow rate of return was calculated.