

Ideas on the evolution of the Appalachian Orogen before the Wilson Cycle

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No thorough grasp of a subject can be gained unless the history of its development is clearly appreciated. Before the wide acceptance of continental drift and the Wilson Cycle for orogenic development, the protolith of the Appalachian Orogen was a geosyncline. The nature of geosynclines, their developmental patterns, and their positions with respect to continents and oceans were controversial and enigmatic topics. Few agreed on fundamental concerns such as reasons for initiation, causes of subsidence, siting, basement relationships,

and controls of ensuing mountain building.

The Appalachian Orogen is the world's type geosyncline. Before the advent of plate tectonics, the main ideas on mountain building in North America emanated from the Appalachian example.

The history of ideas is traced from the time of Hall (1850's) and Dana (1870's) to Schuchert (1920's), Kay (1950's), and finally Wilson (1960's).