

cates that such lineaments probably represent anomalous zones of increased fracture permeability about 400 ft (120 m) wide at the surface. Gas wells located near short photolineaments oriented N60°W to N30°E and especially N60°W to N0°E had significantly higher initial open flows (both before and after stimulation) than wells located near other photolineaments. Gas wells also had significantly higher initial open flows when located in high-density areas of N60°W to N30°E photolineaments. Within lineament density zones exceeding 2.0 mi/sq mi (3.2 km/2.6 sq km), 71 and 100% of randomly located gas wells would have exceeded 100 Mcf/day before stimulation and after stimulation respectively. Gas wells located near class 1 (most certain) photolineaments had higher initial open flows than wells near class 2 or 3 (less certain) photolineaments. Wells located within 0.25 mi (0.4 km) of a class 1 photolineament oriented N60°W to N30°E had significantly higher initial open flows than more distant wells. Landsat lineaments appear to be poor locations for gas wells, for they do not overlap the areas of high gas production.

Certain water-well parameters are also associated with initial gas well yield. Water wells located within areas of high initial gas flow (over 100 Mcf/day after stimulation) have significantly higher bicarbonate and nitrate concentrations than wells in areas of low gas production. Optimum sites for high-yielding gas wells would be near water wells having at least 470 mg/l bicarbonate or at least 1.75 mg/l nitrate. Initial yields before stimulation were significantly greater for gas wells near high-yielding water wells compared to gas wells near low-yielding water wells; however, this trend is probably not useful for gas exploration, for it does not apply for initial gas flows after stimulation.

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Suggested Origin for Gas in Eastern Devonian Shales

Kerogen of the Chattanooga Shale in eastern Tennessee and adjacent areas is known to be of predominantly terrestrial origin. The Chattanooga Shale may be viewed as a high-ash, low-rank coal. Recent detailed studies of peat from The Everglades of Florida have led to the observation that the rate at which cellulose is degraded is reduced as the mineral content increases. Knowing of the contribution of terrestrial plant material to the sediments that later became the Chattanooga Shale (which is 75 to 85% mineral matter), we believe that those sediments probably contained an accumulation of cellulose. Slow, anaerobic degradation of that cellulose by methanogenic bacteria would be expected to result in the formation of methane that would then dissolve in other organic components of the sediment. Only in those regions where the contribution of aquatically derived organic detritus to the sediment was significant would appreciable amounts of ethane, propane, and higher gaseous hydrocarbons be expected, perhaps as products of low-temperature thermal processes.

These considerations suggest that study of the composition of kerogen in the Chattanooga Shale and its correlatives could delineate those regions of the eastern Devonian shales most likely to be the best sources of methane.

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Gas-Bearing Ohio Shale along Lake Erie—Stratigraphy, Petrology, and Sedimentology

Increased interest in low-yield gas-bearing strata has led to reexamination of the Ohio Shale in the vicinity of Lake Erie where it has had a history of marginal commercial production for over a century.

These strata thin depositional westward from a maximum of 2,000 ft (600 m) at the Pennsylvania border to less than 600 ft (180 m) near Sandusky where they are truncated by erosion on the Findlay arch.

Common lithotopes are black and gray shale, siltstones, and rare carbonate rocks. Black shales are most abundant in the west where gray shales and siltstones are rare. In the east, gray shales and siltstones constitute 75% of the section and the remainder is mainly black shale and minor carbonate rocks.

Thin-section petrology revealed that the black shale commonly contains, by volume, less than 20% silt-size quartz and feldspar, 30 to 60% clay and mica, and 15 to 35% organic material. Gray shale commonly contains less than 30% silt-size quartz and feldspar, 50 to 90% clay and mica, and less than 10% organic material. Much of the silt is concentrated in discrete laminae a few grains thick.

Production records are related to facies distribution to provide an exploration tool.

Cross sections and paleocurrents indicate that the Upper Devonian prodeltaic muds and turbidite siltstones were deposited episodically in a euxinic basin.

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Fracture Pattern in Outcrop of Gas-Producing Devonian (Ohio) Shale in Northeastern Ohio

Data on more than 22,000 fracture traces within the Upper Devonian and Lower Mississippian strata exposed in northeastern Ohio reveal two pervasive fracture sets. One set, the master shear set, is a double set of fractures intersecting at an angle of 27°, with an average median orientation of N51°W. The smooth, clean fracture planes with occasional rib markings indicate that this set resulted from shear stresses. The other set, the subsidiary tensional set, consistently trends at 90° to the master shears.

These two sets may be extended as far south as central Pennsylvania and as far east as southeastern New York state, thus defining the fracture pattern of the northern Appalachian basin. The regional fracture pattern is one of a radial set of fractures (master shears) accompanied by a concentric pattern of perpendicular fractures (subsidiary tensional set).

Because of the stress conditions necessary to produce this fracture system, it is believed that the fractures were formed during two distinct structural episodes: the master shears developed during an earlier period of compressional basin formation, and the subsidiary tensional set developed during a later period of tensional relax-

ation.

Other major fracture sets are well developed in isolated areas of Cuyahoga County. Superimposed on the major fracture sets is a random, fine-scale fracture network which constitutes 50.8% of all fractures.

The major fracture sets conceivably provide pathways for the migration of natural gas. In northeastern Ohio, the only commercial production of natural gas is in areas of apparently increased fracture intensity.

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Pyrolysis of Eastern Gas Shales—Effects of Temperature and Atmosphere

Shale samples from well cores from Christian County, Kentucky, and Effingham, Henderson, and Tazewell Counties, Illinois, were studied for the noncondensable (at room temperature) hydrocarbon gases produced during pyrolysis. The data show a direct correlation of the total hydrocarbon gas (C_1 to C_5) yield from the shale pyrolyzed at 600°C to the organic carbon content of the shale and relations of the gas released from specially "canned" core sections at room temperature to the organic carbon content and to the total porosity of the shale.

The composition of the noncondensable hydrocarbon gases was studied on selected black-shale samples with stepwise increases in temperature. The formation of alkanes is favored over alkenes at low temperature. Alkenes, C_1 , and C_2 species from thermal cracking are positively identified when the shale has been heated to above 120°C, if other conditions remain constant.

The effect of the pyrolysis atmosphere on the yield of light hydrocarbons (C_1 to C_8), acetaldehyde, acetone, carbon monoxide, and carbon dioxide during thermal degradation of selected gram-sized black-shale samples was studied also. The effects of varying the amount of oxygen in the pyrolysis atmosphere have been monitored. The yield of an individual hydrocarbon generally increases until the oxygen content of the pyrolysis atmosphere reaches 10%. Above 10% oxygen there is a slight decrease in yield. The yield of carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide increases directly with the increase of oxygen content of the pyrolysis atmosphere.

Data derived from this study may improve our understanding of the potential for gas production and the prediction of gas production from the eastern black shale. It may also provide information useful for controlling the quality of the gas produced by shale pyrolysis.

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Regional Coalification Patterns in Eastern Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, Maryland, and Southern Pennsylvania

An isoreflectance map, based on the average maximum reflectance of the vitrinite macerals, was compiled

from 329 coal samples from Kentucky (75 samples), Virginia (14 samples), West Virginia (200 samples), Ohio (10 samples), Maryland (15 samples), and southern Pennsylvania (15 samples). This map shows that coalification increases toward the Allegheny Front (or in west-to-east and northwest-to-southeast directions) in the northern part of the Appalachian coal basin. The dry-ash-free fixed carbon contents of the coals show the same general trends.

The isoreflectance map shows that the rank increases to a maximum in two directions: (1) from Ohio eastward to the Allegheny Front in southern Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Mineral County, West Virginia; and (2) from Ohio and northeastern Kentucky to the central part of McDowell County, West Virginia. This increase in rank can be attributed to the eastward thickening of the strata, but the major factor in the coalification was probably the increase of thermal activity and temperatures coupled with the Appalachian orogeny.

An attempt to determine the temperatures of coalification by using the level of metamorphism of P. J. Hood showed that the temperatures during the effective times for coalification were approximately 85 to 90°C near the northwestern boundary of the coalfield and approximately 180°C in central McDowell County where the highest reflectance of 1.80% R_{max} occurred.

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Exploration Strategy for Unconventional Natural Gas Resource—Devonian Shales

Exploration rationales, exploration techniques, and prospects are the key elements of EGSP's ideal exploration strategy for the Devonian shales of the Appalachian, Illinois, and Michigan basins. An exploration rationale is a theory of how several known or suspected geologic circumstances may combine to create a favorable environment for the generation and accumulation of producible hydrocarbons. The unconventional nature of the Devonian shales as a natural gas resource demands shale-specific rationales. These are characterized by a hypothesized geologic mechanism for the creation of a natural fracture system, because fracture permeability is essential to shale production. Although fractures are a necessity, they alone are not sufficient. Hence, shale-specific rationales include supporting information on black shale thickness, kerogen content, thermal maturity, reported shows, production history, etc. Exploration rationales are area-specific, but generally not site-specific. Prospect development is the process by which site-specific prospects issue from area-specific rationales. Exploration techniques are the means employed, short of drilling, to evaluate rationales and optimize local geologic factors in site selection.

The development of seven exploration prospects associated with the Newman Ridge and Greendale synclines in eastern Tennessee and southwestern Virginia illustrates EGSP's exploration strategy.

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Middle and Upper Devonian Stratigraphy in North-