

STRATIGRAPHY AND PETROLEUM OCCURRENCE,
GREEN RIVER FORMATION, RED WASH FIELD, UTAH

By

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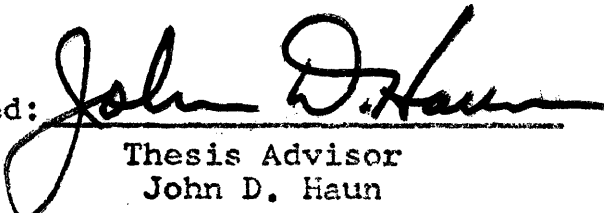
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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty and the Board of Trustees of the Colorado School of Mines in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Science.

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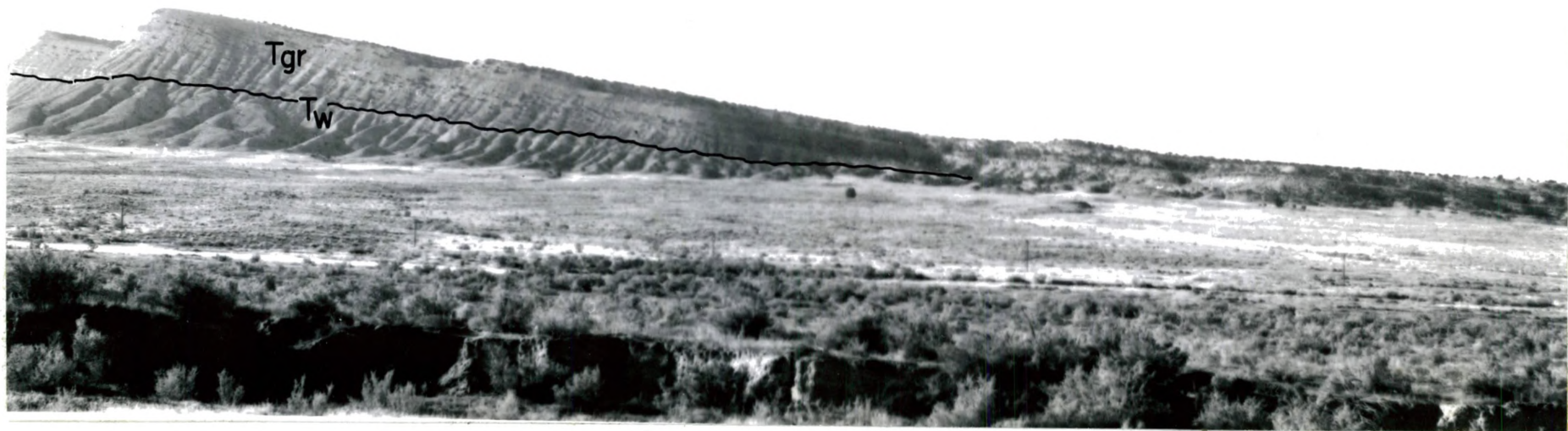
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Raven Ridge, looking south from U. S. Highway 40,
T. 6 S., R. 25 E., Uintah County, Utah.
Tw = Wasatch Formation, Tgr = Green River Formation.

ABSTRACT.

This investigation is concerned with the stratigraphy and sedimentation of the shore phase of the lacustrine lower part of the Green River Formation (Eocene) present in the Red Wash-Raven Ridge area and the origin and accumulation of petroleum. The area is located in the northeastern part of the Uinta Basin, where the trend of the basin axis changes from east-northeast to southeast. North and northeast of the axis, the Eocene formations are well exposed and constitute Raven Ridge. South of the axis, the Green River Formation dips gently north and northwest. A minor anticlinal nose in the main Red Wash area plunges northwesterly.

The Green River Formation has an average thickness of 3000 feet. The thickness decreases from more than 4000 feet in the southwest to almost zero in the north as a result of depositional thinning and interfingering with the underlying Wasatch Formation and overlying Uinta Formation. Time stratigraphic delineation of five major intervals, defined

at Raven Ridge and extended into the subsurface, reveals three, or possibly four, major facies. These facies are (respectively from north to south): a variegated shale facies, assigned to the Wasatch Formation or to the Uinta Formation; a sandstone facies; an ostracodal limestone facies; and a black shale facies. These facies represent respectively the fluvial, nearshore, offshore and axial lacustrine environments. In the upper portion of the Green River Formation the ostracodal limestone and black shale facies are replaced by the marlstone and oil shale facies. There are detailed differences in the lithologies of each major facies within the stratigraphic units. Changes of facies boundaries with time, show that the Green River Formation contains a transgressive sequence followed by a regressive sequence of deposition. Facies distribution in each major stratigraphic interval indicates that the regional shoreline orientation was west-northwest and that it remained stable throughout Green River deposition. Shoreline orientation, indicated by ripple marks in Raven Ridge outcrops, is west-southwest, is a local deviation from the general shoreline orientation, and cannot be correlated with subsurface trends of sandstone bodies.

An isopach map of the lower part of the Green River Formation indicates thickening toward the center of the

former lake and local thickening in the sandstone facies in the Red Wash area. The sandstone facies is interpreted as having been deposited in a deltaic environment. Detailed studies were made of the lower part of the Lower Green River Formation (Douglas Creek Member) where the sandstone facies is extensively developed and where more data are available. Sandstone isolith patterns, detailed electric log cross sections, and the sequence of sedimentary structures exhibited in cores, suggest the presence of two delta types: (1) a bar-finger or deep-water delta in the West Red Wash-Wonsits Valley area, with branches in the Brennan Bottom and Horseshoe Bend areas, characterized by continuous sandstone reservoirs; and (2) a shoal-water delta of the main part and eastern part of the Red Wash-Walker Hollow area, characterized by complicated interlensing of sandstones and numerous shale intercalations. Porosities and permeabilities are generally higher in the shoal-water sandstones than in the bar-finger sandstones. Intensive small-scale burrows are present in the intercalated shales and in the interdistributary bay environments.

In the upper portion of the lower part of the Green River Formation (Garden Gulch Member) sandstone beds are very thick and are restricted to the northernmost part of the basin. They constitute the southern extremity of a

cusate delta which was deposited when the lake was at its maximum stage of transgression. Paleocurrent data, based on 81 observations of cross-stratification, indicate the sandstones at Mormon Gap (in Raven Ridge) form a separate bar-finger deposit that prograded from a more easterly source.

Oil occurs primarily in the sandstone facies of the lowermost part of the Green River Formation. Its entrapment is facilitated by the lenticular nature of deltaic sandstone reservoirs. Each lens is a separate reservoir with its own pressure system and oil-water contact. Gas is produced with the oil, but also occurs in separate reservoirs in the eastern part of the Red Wash field. Variation of oil types in the area is related to local changes in depositional environment. The stratigraphic position of oil occurrence, the nature of the reservoirs, and the facies control of oil type, indicate the oil is of very local origin and has no genetic relationship with oil-shale kerogens.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Location and Accessibility.	1
Methods and Materials of Study.	3
Field Mapping.	3
Subsurface Mapping	4
Previous Work	5
Acknowledgments	8
General Geology.	10
Regional Geologic Setting	10
General Geology of the Raven Ridge-Red Wash Area.	13
General Stratigraphy of Green River Formation.	19
Regional Aspect	19
Green River Formation in Raven Ridge-Red Wash Area.	24
Stratigraphic Unit 1	32
Stratigraphic Unit 2	39

	Page
Stratigraphic Unit 3	45
Stratigraphic Unit 4	50
Stratigraphic Unit 5	56
Summary of Stratigraphic Units.	58
Sandstone Facies of the Lower Part of the Green River Formation.	62
Thickness of the Lower Part of the Green River Formation	65
Detailed Stratigraphy of the "K" Zones.	67
The West Red Wash-Wonsits Valley Deltaic Deposit	68
The Main Red Wash-Walker Hollow Deltaic Deposit.	78
Mormon Gap Deltaic Deposit	85
Summary of Depositional History	93
Interval "L" (plate 11).	94
Interval "K"-3 (plate 12).	95
Interval "K"-2 (plate 13).	96
Interval "K"-1 (plate 14).	96
Interval "J"-2 (plate 15).	97
Interval "J"-1 (plate 16).	98
Interval "I"-2 (plate 17).	98
Interval "I"-1 (plate 18).	99
Interval "H" (plate 19).	99

	Page
The Occurrence of Petroleum.	102
General Remarks	102
The Reservoir	104
Entrapment of Petroleum	107
Crude Oil Characteristics	110
Production and Reserves	115
Summary and Conclusions.	117
Bibliography	121

ILLUSTRATIONS

Plate	Page
1. Geologic map of Raven Ridge area	In pocket
2. Stratigraphic diagram of the Green River Formation along Raven Ridge.	In pocket
3. Electric log diagram of the Green River Formation across Red Wash-Wonsits Valley area.	In pocket
4. Isopach map of the Green River Formation in Red Wash-Raven Ridge area.	25
5. Facies distribution and paleocurrents of stratigraphic Unit 1.	37
6. Facies distribution and paleocurrents of stratigraphic Unit 2.	43
7. Facies distribution and paleocurrents of stratigraphic Unit 3.	49
8. Facies distribution and paleocurrents of stratigraphic Unit 4.	55
9. Facies distribution map of stratigraphic Unit 5	59
10. Isopach map of lower part of the Green River Formation (stratigraphic Units 2 and 3) in Red Wash-Raven Ridge area.	66

Plate	Page
11. Sandstone isolith map of the "L" zone. . . .	In pocket
12. Sandstone isolith map of the "K"-3 zone. . . .	In pocket
13. Sandstone isolith map of the "K"-2 zone. . . .	In pocket
14. Sandstone isolith map of the "K"-1 zone. . . .	In pocket
15. Sandstone isolith map of the "J"-2 zone. . . .	In pocket
16. Sandstone isolith map of the "J"-1 zone. . . .	In pocket
17. Sandstone isolith map of the "I"-2 zone. . . .	In pocket
18. Sandstone isolith map of the "I"-1 zone. . . .	In pocket
19. Sandstone isolith map of the "H" zone. . . .	In pocket
20. Detailed stratigraphic diagram of the "K" zones in west Red Wash-Wonsits Valley area .	In pocket
21. Detailed sedimentary structure sequences from the deep-water deltaic deposit. . . .	In pocket
22. Detailed sedimentary structure sequences from the shoal-water deltaic deposit	In pocket
23. Detailed N-S stratigraphic diagrams of the "K"- "L" zones of the Red Wash-Walker Hollow areas	In pocket
24. Detailed NE-SW stratigraphic diagrams of the "K"- "L" zones in Red Wash-Walker Hollow areas	In pocket
25. Detailed stratigraphic diagram of the "J"- "L" zones along Raven Ridge.	In pocket
26. E-W electric log cross section through Red Wash-Raven Ridge areas	In pocket
27. E-W electric log cross section through McLish and Bend Units.	In pocket

Plate	Page
28. N-S electric log cross section through Horseshoe Bend-Wonsits Valley areas.	In pocket
29. N-S electric log cross section through McLish, Red Wash, and White River Units.	In pocket
30. N-S electric log cross section through Walker Hollow-Red Wash Units	In pocket

LIST OF FIGURES

Frontispiece: Raven Ridge, from U. S. Highway 40.

Figure	Page
1. Map of Red Wash-Raven Ridge area showing accessibility and main topographic features.	2
2. Regional tectonic setting of Red Wash-Raven Ridge area	11
3. Ostracodal limestone of the Green River Formation forming sharp hogbacks along Raven Ridge.	17
4. Panoramic view of Raven Ridge near Utah Highway 45 showing the change in strike of the lower Green River Formation	17
5. Outcrop of a typical lenticular sandstone of the Wasatch Formation	21
6. Photomicrograph of ostracodal limestone in stratigraphic Unit 1, showing ostracod shells embedded in a sparry cement	21
7. Photomicrograph of a sandstone showing rounded quartz grains "floating" in a carbonate cement	38
8. Outcrop of a typical algal head embedded in greenish gray shale.	38

Figure	Page
9. Small-scale burrow structure in a shale-siltstone sequence	70
10. A slump structure in shale-siltstone sequence.	70
11. "Flaser structure" or lenticular laminations with small-scale burrow structures	71
12. High-angle cross-laminations in sandstone.	71
13. Scour-and-fill associated with cross-stratification in sandstone.	72
14. Convolute laminations in shale-siltstone sequence	72
15. Core showing flaser structure with small-scale burrowing.	73
16. Clay fragments at the base of a channel sand	73
17. Current ripple-laminations in the upper part of a channel sand	74
18. Mottling in green shale due to large scale burrowing.	74
19. Photomicrograph of orthoquartzite sandstone showing a closed texture with tight packing.	82
20. Photomicrograph of orthoquartzite sandstone showing an open texture ("floating grains")	82
21. Large-scale planar cross-stratification with an erosional surface on top followed by granule beds with ripple-laminations.	84
22. Limonite concretions in a massive structureless sandstone topping a sequence.	84

Figure	Page
23. A typical sequence of sedimentary structures in the "K"-1 sandstone, showing ripple-laminations at the base grading upward into massive structureless to trough-shaped cross-stratified beds at the top	86
24. Outcrop of silty shale showing small-scale burrows at the base of "K"-1 zone.	87
25. Outcrop of the "K"-1 sandstone showing a lense of granules, pebbles and vertebrate bones.	87
26. Distortional features in the "K"-1 sandstone	88
27. Domed ostracodal limestone bed of the "K"-2 zone, showing a core of the underlying shale	88
28. Planar cross-stratification in the "J"-2 sandstone.	89
29. Small scale trough-shaped cross-lamination in the "J"-2 sandstone with an apparent planar cross section.	89
30. Paleocurrent direction of the "K"-1 and "J"-2 sandstone bodies at Mormon Gap (based on 81 poles of cross-stratification)	91
31. Curves of correlation indices of crude oils from the Green River Formation, Uinta Basin.	113

Table

1. Stratigraphic subdivisions of the Green River Formation in the Red Wash-Raven Ridge area	27
2. Time-stratigraphic subdivision of the Green River Formation in the Red Wash-Raven Ridge area	30
3. Production data and reserves of the Red Wash field	116

	Page
Appendices	
Appendix A. Photographic Illustrations of Sedimentary Structures in Core Samples, Green River Formation, Red Wash Field, Utah	134
Appendix B. Detailed Field Description of Measured Sections.	151