# GEOLOGY OF THE PENNSYLVANIAN SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

**GEOLOGIC ATLAS 2** 

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Prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey.

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Cordaite and Sigillaria trees modified from drawings by Jerry Jenkins in Plant Fossils of West Virginia, 1978, by William H. Gillespie and others, West Virginia Geological and Eco-

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### INTRODUCTION

In the 1970's, the U.S. Geological Survey recognized the need for basic data on Georgia coal in order to determine Georgia's contribution to U.S. energy resource potential. A coal investigation program was begun in 1977. The objectives were to: determine the quality, quantity, and distribution of coal resources in Georgia, with emphasis on the correlation and continuity of coal beds; and to determine the areal extent, thickness, chemical composition, rank, and lateral changes in the coal beds by collecting, interpreting, and computerizing surface and subsurface statigraphic and analytical data. Special attention was to be given to delineating metallurgical and steam coal deposits. An integral part of the entire study was to be the determination of the areal extent, thickness, and lithic variations of the coal-bearing strata, the depositional controls and systems, and the post-depositional structural features.

The efforts of earlier workers in the area were invaluable in expediting the present study, and effort was made to use all previous work. Two publications proved to be of particular value: S.W. McCallie's A Preliminary Report on the Coal Deposits of Georgia (1904); and V.H. Johnson's Coal Deposits on Sand and Lookout Mountains, Dade and Walker Counties, Georgia (1946). In addition, the works of W.C. Culbertson (1963), and Wilson, Jewell, and Luther (1956) were used in developing stratigraphic nomenclature. The many other works in the "Selected References" pertain to various aspects of the geology of the Pennsylvanian System in Georgia. However, all of the data on the maps are "original" in the sense that none was taken from previous work without having been checked in the field. The distribution of rock units and structural interpretations are based entirely on the author's observations. Locations for many of the coal outcrops and abandoned mines were gleaned from the literature; but all were located in the field, plotted with horizontal and vertical control, and described.

The maps in this atlas show the distribution of rock units, the major structural features, and the precise locations of coal outcrops, coal mines (underground and surface), selected core holes drilled by the U.S. Bureau of Mines (BM designation) and by the Georgia Power Company (GP designation). The sample locations for coal-quality analyses and map data stations are tied to information stored in, and retrievable from, the U.S. Geological Survey's National Coal Resources Data System (NCRDS). The locations of all these features are tied vertically and horizontally to the 7.5minute topographic maps which serve as an excellent base. The maps are of such a scale (1:24,000) that they can readily be used for mineral-resource evaluation and planning.

Two other parts of the study have been published separately, and are designed to be used in conjunction with this atlas. Each publication gives details of a par ticular aspect of the study: Quality of Coal Resources Underlying Sand and Lookout Mountains, Georgia and Alabama and Analyses of Coal from Northwest Georgia by Coleman, Crawford, and Medlin, 1986.

The following text presents a brief summary of this

### STRATIGRAPHY

The stratigraphic nomenclature used in this report is modified from that of Culbertson (1963), and Wilson, Jewell, and Luther (1956). Coal-bed designations are modified from those of Johnson (1946). Coal bed correlations are shown in Table 1.

### **MISSISSIPPIAN Pennington Formation**

The upper part of the Pennington consists of dark gray, silty shale and siltstone which contain marine invertebrate fossils; at one locality well-preserved plant fossils are mixed with marine invertebrates. Laterally, the shale and siltstone intertongue with sandstone, which is generally fine- to medium-grained, thin- to medium-bedded and commonly crossbedded (planar). These sandstones are usually lenticular, and 10 to 25 feet thick, but in places they are more than 100 feet thick. Massive beds of quartz-pebble conglomerate, several tens of feet thick, are common.

The very uppermost Pennington generally consists of an interbedded sequence of: gray, calcareous siltstone (up to 35 feet thick), massive, with blocky to spheroidal weathering; impure, iron-rich (sideritic) limestone beds generally less than 2 feet thick, but laterally persistent; greenish gray to maroon shales; and fine-grained sandstones. All of these lithologies, with a total thickness of 50 to 65 feet, contain marine invertebrates.

### MISSISSIPPIAN - PENNSYLVANIAN BOUNDARY

The Mississippian - Pennsylvanian boundary is placed at the contact between the Pennington Formation and the Raccoon Mountain Member of the Gizzard Formation. The Pennington - Raccoon Mountain boundary was placed below the lowermost coal bed and above the uppermost carbonate bed containing abundant marine invertebrate fossils. These lithologic criteria allowed the boundary to be picked within a few tens of feet of section throughout the area. Subsequently, marine fossils collected from the carbonates in the uppermost Pennington and plant fossils collected from Raccoon Mountain coal-associated shales verified this formation boundary as being the Mississippian - Pennsylvanian systemic boundary on Lookout Mountain and Sand Mountain (Dade County) in Geor-

In the Pennsylvanian outliers on Sand Mountain (Catoosa Co.), Little Sand Mountain, and Rock Mountain, the Raccoon Mountain Member of the Gizzard Formation appears to be more marine, and contains coal only as thin carbonaceous zones and scarce small lenses. In these outliers, the Mississippian - Pennsylvanian boundary is based on marine fossils (Crawford, 1983b).

In Georgia, the systemic boundary appears to be transitional or gradational, based on physical relationships. However, plant fossils indicate a late Early Pennsylvanian age for the coal-bearing sequences, comparable to the New River Formation in the Pennsylvanian System stratotype (Gillespie and Crawford, 1985, p. 249, Table 1 and p. 252). "Although the underlying Upper Mississippian sequence is essentially complete, a hiatus is indicated by the absence of beds containing the lower Early Pennsylvanian Pocahontas flora." (Englund, Gillespie, and others, 1985, p. 73).

### PENNSYLVANIAN **Gizzard Formation**

# Raccoon Mountain Member

The Raccoon Mountain Member consists of interbedded shale, siltstone, and fine- to medium-grained sandstone. Siderite nodules are common in the gray shales; flaser bedding is pervasive in the shale and

siltstone; and shale clasts are common in the thin-

hedded sandstones In Georgia, the Raccoon Mountain Member has a maximum thickness of about 275 feet on the north end of Sand Mountain, near the type locality in Scratch Ankle Hollow (New Home quad.). In this area, the lenticular sandstone bodies have their maximum development, some attaining a thickness of 40 feet. There are five coal beds in the Raccoon Mountain Member; they are, from youngest to oldest, the AEtna (No. 8), the

Southward and eastward from the type locality, the Raccoon Mountain Member thins to less than 100 feet. Associated with this overall thinning, the lenticular sandstone bodies are thinner (10 to 15 feet) and have less lateral extent; also, there are fewer coal beds in the thinner parts of the sequence.

Dade (No. 9), the Rattlesnake (No. 9A), the Red Ash

# **Warren Point Member**

(No. 10), and the Mill Creek (No. 11).

The Warren Point Member consists primarily of medium- to coarse-grained sandstones, and conglomeratic sandstones. There are extensive lenses of quartz-pebble conglomerate in both the lower and upper parts, with the middle containing relatively less conglomerate. Low-angle planar crossbedding is common. The base of the Warren Point is very uneven, with channeling into siltstones, shales, and coal beds of the underlying Raccoon Mountain Member. Shale and siderite clasts and thin distorted lenticular coals are abundant in basal "rubble zones."

The thickness of the Warren Point varies from less than 100 feet to greater than 200 feet, and averages about 150 feet. Everywhere it weathers massive and is

A lenticular coal bed, the Cliff (No. 7, or Underwood), is sporadically developed in the Warren Point.

### Signal Point Shale Member

The Signal Point Shale Member is primarily a dark gray shale and silty shale, with flaser bedding. Locally, it contains appreciable interbedded siltstone and thinbedded sandstone. Thickness ranges from less than 20 feet to greater than 100 feet, with 40- to 60-foot thicknesses being most common.

There are two coal beds in the Signal Point Shale Member: the Upper Cliff No. 1 (No. 6) coal bed in the upper part; and the Upper Cliff No. 2 (No. 6A) coal bed in the lower part.

### **Crab Orchard Mountains Formation**

# Sewanee Member

The Sewanee Member is primarily a fine- to coarsegrained sandstone, generally feldspathic, and usually thin-bedded, with planar cross-bedding common and well-developed. However, conglomeratic sandstone and quartz-pebble conglomerate in thick massive beds are common, particularly in the lower part of the Sewanee Member and in the middle part, directly overlying a sporadic shale unit. The lower part of the Sewanee commonly contains coal clasts and shale clasts; lenticular channel sands in the lower part intertongue with shales and siltstones.

The Sewanee is about 250 to 300 feet thick, weathers massive, and is a cliff-former.

The thin shale unit near the middle of the Sewanee, seldom more than 20 feet thick and generally overlain by quartz-pebble conglomerate, contains the Lahusage (No. 5A) coal bed.

## Whitwell Shale Member

The Whitwell Shale Member, about 200 feet thick, consists of interbedded shale, siltstone, and finegrained sandstone. Flaser bedding is common in the shale and siltstone; sandstones are generally thinbedded, often lenticular, and contain thin planar crossbed sets.

There are two coal beds in the Whitwell Shale Member. The Sewanee (No. 5) coal bed lies approximately 15 to 20 feet above the base of the Whitwell Shale Member; the Tatum (No. 4) coal bed lies 50 to 100 feet below the top of the Whitwell Shale Member.

### **Newton Sandstone Member**

The Newton Sandstone Member consists of feldspathic sandstone, mostly fine- to medium-grained, but some is coarse-grained; it is mostly in beds and crossbed sets less than 3 feet thick, but is mediumbedded and massive in part.

Thickness of this unit varies between about 100 and 150 feet. No coals beds were found in the Newton Sandstone Member.

### Vandever Member

The Vandever Member is a thick sequence, about 400 feet, of interbedded shales, siltstones, and sandstones, which contains three coal beds.

The upper 300 feet of the Vandever consists primarily of shale, siltstone, and fine-grained lenticular sandstone. There is a marine invertebrate fossil zone about 25 feet above the base of this upper 300-foot interval (contact with the Durham Sandstone Bed), and about 10 feet above the "A" (No. 1) coal bed. The Durham Sandstone Bed, a persistent sandstone bed within the Vandever, is 20 to 30 feet thick, and lies approximately 15 feet below the "A" (No. 1) coal bed.

The Durham Marker (No. 2) coal bed is about 15 feet below the base of the Durham Sandstone Bed, within the lower part of the Vandever Member. Approximately 45 feet below the Durham Marker (No. 2) coal bed lies the Durham (No. 3) coal bed. The No. 3 coal bed is about 10 feet above the base of the Vandever Mem-

### **Rockcastle Member**

Capping two small knobs south-southwest of Durham on Round Mountain (Durham 7.5-min. quadrangle) is 20 to 30 feet of medium-grained, slightly feldspathic sandstone, in beds up to 4 feet thick and in part cross-bedded. This sandstone is the youngest Pennsylvanian rock unit in Georgia, and is interpreted as the Rockcastle Member of the Crab Orchard Mountains Formation, based strictly on lithology and position in the stratigraphic sequence.

### STRUCTURE

Lookout Mountain and Pigeon Mountain consist of a series of NNE-trending doubly plunging anticlines and synclines. In Georgia, the structurally lowest parts of Lookout Mountain are centered around Durham (Dade and Walker Counties) and north of Cloudland between East Fork Little River and Middle Fork Little River (Chattooga County). A third, smaller, structurally low area straddles the Georgia-Alabama boundary at the Walker-Chattooga County line. The youngest Paleozoic rocks in Georgia are preserved in these

Fox Mountain is generally synclinal. Little Sand Mountain consists of a series of NNE-trending doubly plunging anticlines and synclines; Rock Mountain is gently synclinal; and Sand Mountain (Catoosa County) is only a small erosional remnant dipping to the ESE. The part of Sand Mountain (Dade County) in Georgia consists of a broad syncline with gently dipping limbs and a low-angle plunge to the SSW. Lookout Mountain, Pigeon Mountain, and Fox Mountain are more complexly deformed than is Sand Mountain (Dade County).

The folds are everywhere complicated by high-angle reverse faults and low-angle thrust faults of quite variable magnitudes. Small-scale reverse and thrust faults are exposed in coal strip mines, such as the Sand Mountain Minerals Pullen Mine and the Hanes Mining Company Roy Massingale Mine (Map Stas. 40 and 9 on the New Home quadrangle); and in underground mines, such as the Tatum Gulch (New Camp) Mine (Map Sta. 25, New Home quadrangle), and the Phoenix Iron and Coal Co. Mine (Map Sta. 9, Trenton quadrangle). These exposures in man-made openings are temporary, and are soon masked or obliterated by weathering. Creek exposures of faults, such as those along Lively Creek on the Bridgeport, Ala. and New Home, Ga. quadrangles (Map Sta. 95, New Home quadrangle) tend to be exposed for longer periods of

Large-scale low-angle overthrust faulting is indicated by thick breccia zones, such as that exposed near the Castle Rock Mine (Map Sta. 68, New Home quadrangle) where there is a breccia zone approximately 60 feet thick at the Pennington (Mississippian) - Raccoon Mountain (Pennsylvanian) contract. This likely represents a decollement zone as described by Harris and Milici (1977).

Large-scale high-angle reverse faulting is most spectacularly illustrated by the vertical beds and topographic features along the east side of Lookout Mountain. Here, high-angle reverse faults have displaced Upper Mississippian and Lower Pennsylvanian rocks between Bowers Gap and Nickajack Gap, Walker County. Two subparallel faults strike NNE and are vertical to steeply dipping ESE. The western fault of the pair is the Steven Gap fault, named for exposures along Georgia highways 136 and 157, at Steven Gap; the eastern fault is the High Point fault, named for its relationship to this prominent topographic feature (Crawford, 1983a). Both faults are interpreted as ramps of, or splays from, the Lookout Valley fault (Chowns and Waters, 1978). The Lookout Valley fault may be equivalent to the Cranmore Cove fault of Tennessee as described by Milici and Leamon (1975). The magnitude of displacement is best shown by the High Point fault in the vicinity of High Point, where gently dipping rocks of the Pennington Shale (Upper Mississippian) have been brought in contact with steeply dipping rocks of the Warren Point Member of the Gizzard Formation (Lower Pennsylvanian); this juxtaposition indicates a minimum vertical displacement of about 350 feet.

A high-angle fault showing a similar relationship between gently dipping and steeply dipping beds was mapped along the east side of Fox Mountain, and is herein named the Fox Mountain fault. Still another similar relationship was noted in the steeply dipping to nearly vertical beds along the southeast side of Little Sand Mountain NNE of Crystal Springs.

### AGE OF THE PENNSYLVANIAN ROCKS IN GEORGIA, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO UNDERLYING STRATA

The strata which directly underlie the Pennsylvanian rocks in Georgia have been mapped as the Pennington Formation and contain macrofauna of late Chesterian age (T.W. Henry and Mackenzie Gordon, Jr., 1982\*). Calcareous foraminifera indicate a similar age (Mark Rich, University of Georgia, oral communication, 1983). Macroflora from these rocks are Namurian "A" and correlate with those of the Upper Mississippian part of the Bluestone Formation in the eastern Appalachians (Gillespie and Crawford, 1985).

Strata directly above these Upper Mississippian Pennington rocks are mapped as the Raccoon Mountain Member of the Gizzard Formation. Plant megafossils from this unit indicate an Early Pennsylvanian age equivalent to the New River Formation of the proposed Pennsylvanian System stratotype in the central Appalachians, and Namurian "C" - Westphalian "A" of Europe (Gillespie and Crawford, 1985). Sparse, nondiverse marine macrofauna from the Raccoon Mountain Member suggest an Early Pennsylvanian age (T.W. Henry and Mackenzie Gordon, Jr., 1982\*).

It is in the structurally low and topographically high area around Durham (Dade and Walker Counties) that the youngest Paleozoic rocks in Georgia are preserved. Here, above the No. 1 coal bed, a marinefossil zone has yielded an invertebrate fauna which includes a goniatite, tentatively identified as <u>Gastrioceras</u> sp. These beds can be no older than late Morrowan (Early, but not earliest, Pennsylvanian) and probably are middle Morrowan (latest Early Pennsylvanian) in age (T.W. Henry and Mackenzie Gordon, Jr., 1982\*). Plant data from this part of the section suggest correlation with the upper part of the New River Formation (late Early Pennsylvanian age) of the proposed stratotype for the Lower Pennsylvanian Series (Gillespie and

Although very earliest Pennsylvanian age has not yet been paleontologically established for the Raccoon Mountain Member of the Gizzard Formation, field relationships indicate that, in Georgia, the Raccoon Mountain Member is conformable with the underlying Upper Mississippian Pennington Formation. Indeed, there is more evidence for erosion, missing intervals, and disconformity within the Pennsylvanian than there is in the proximity of the Mississippian - Pennsylvanian boundary; paleontological evidence, however, indicates a hiatus at this boundary.

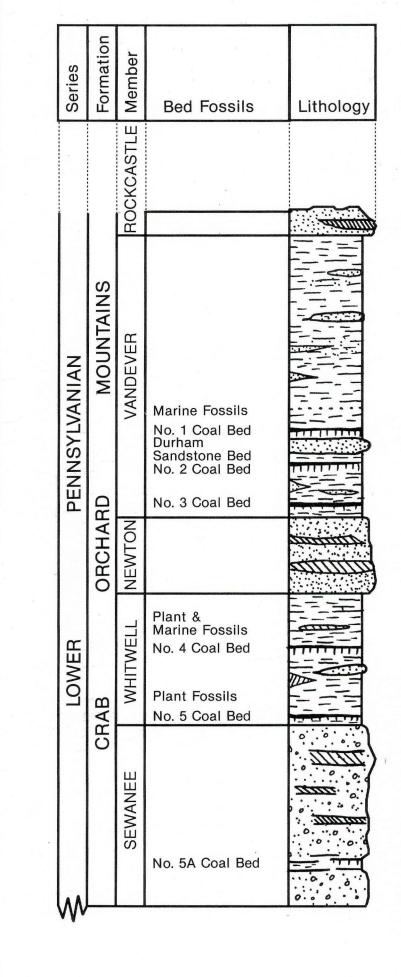
\*Marine invertebrate fossils have been examined by Thomas W. Henry and Mackenzie Gordon, Jr., of the U.S. Geological Survey.

### **COAL QUALITY**

A comprehensive study of the quality of Georgia coals was conducted as an integral part of this overall coal investigation. Results have been published in the Georgia Geological Survey Bulletin 102 and Information Circular 76 (Coleman, Crawford, and Medlin,

These coal-quality reports characterize the quality of the coal beds underlying Sand Mountain, Lookout Mountain, and Pigeon Mountain in Georgia and adjacent northeast Alabama. This characterization includes not only ultimate and proximate analyses, forms-of-sulfer, free-swelling index, and the heating value, but also the major-, minor-, and trace-element concentrations in the coal beds. The distribution, occurrence, thickness, and stratigraphic position of the coal beds are discussed on a bed-by-bed basis. Geological and analytical data are presented for 47 coal samples collected and analyzed during the current study.

Coal bed designations and correlations used in these reports are given in Table 1.

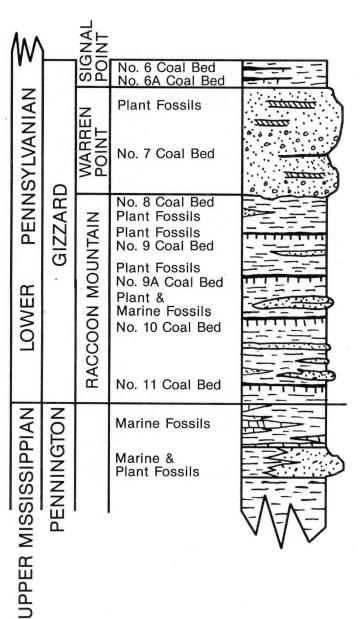


Scale

-100 Feet

**-** 50

Generalized stratigraphic section of Uppermost Mississippian and Lower Pennsylvanian Series in northwest Georgia, southern Appalachian basin.



BUTTS & GILDERSLEEV 1948 COULTER 1947 TROXELL 1946 McCALLIE 1904 SPENCER 1893 BERGENBA 1978 ERSL 1946 Sou Cun PI) No. 12 No.1 No. 1 (LM) <u>No. 2</u> Durham Marker No.2 (LM) <u>No. 5</u> Durham (LM) No. 5 Double (LM) Durham No. 11 (Sou Tenn Lantana No.3 No. 3 (Sou Tenn) No. 10 (LM) No. 4 (LM) Tatum (LM) Tatum No. 4 No.4 Sewanee (Sou Tenn No. 9 (Sou Tenn Richland No. 5 No.5 No.5a (Sou Tenn No. 7 (Sou Tenn Wilder (Sou Tenn Angel (LM, SM) UpperCliff ALA, LM, SM Sewanee No. 6 UpperCliff No.6 Whitwell Marker (ALA) UpperCliff 2 (SM) Underwood (LM, ALA) (Sou Tenn) ALA, LM, SM Sewanee No.6a No. 6 JpperCliff (Sou Tenn) No. 7 No.7 No. 5 Cliff JpperClif (Sou Tenn Etna <u>AEtna</u> **AEtna** No.8 Main Etna No. 8 Nelson Castle Roc No. 10 Raccoon Cliff Cliff Cliff Cliff (LM) Bluff Cliff No. 9 No.9 No. 8 <u>Dade</u> No. 10 Cole City Cliff Eureka No.9a (AEtna Dist) Dade (SM) No. 9 (SM) No. 10 Red Ash Reese No.10 No. 10 Red Ash No.11 Mill Creek Mill Cree No. 11

CORRELATION - GEORGIA COAL BEDS TABLE 1

Ala -Alabama LM - Lookout Mountain SM - Sand Mountain Sou Cum PI - Southern Sou Tenn - Southern Tennessee

**EXPLANATION** 

 Map station—location and number • Z Map station—location and number for data entered into the U.S. Geological Survey National Coal Resources

Data System (NCRDS)

X No. 4 Coal bed outcrop and coal bed number ★ No. 4 Map station with coal bed outcrop and coal

o BMDH20 Core hole drilled by U.S. Bureau of

o BMGP6 Core hole drilled by U.S. Bureau of Mines

for Georgia Power Company

Sample No. 2 GA/ALA Coal Sample—location and

number

✓ Coal mine or prospect, underground, adit

Massey Mine Frick Prospect Name, if known Coal mine—strip

Lookout Mtn. Coal 6.—Mine Operator Chattooga No. 1—Mine name Upper Cliff No. 2—Coal bed designation used

by company (see correlation

Lithologic boundary—all contacts are approximate

BWP—Elevation at base of Warren Point—by hand

chart)

BRM-Elevation at base of Raccoon Mountain-

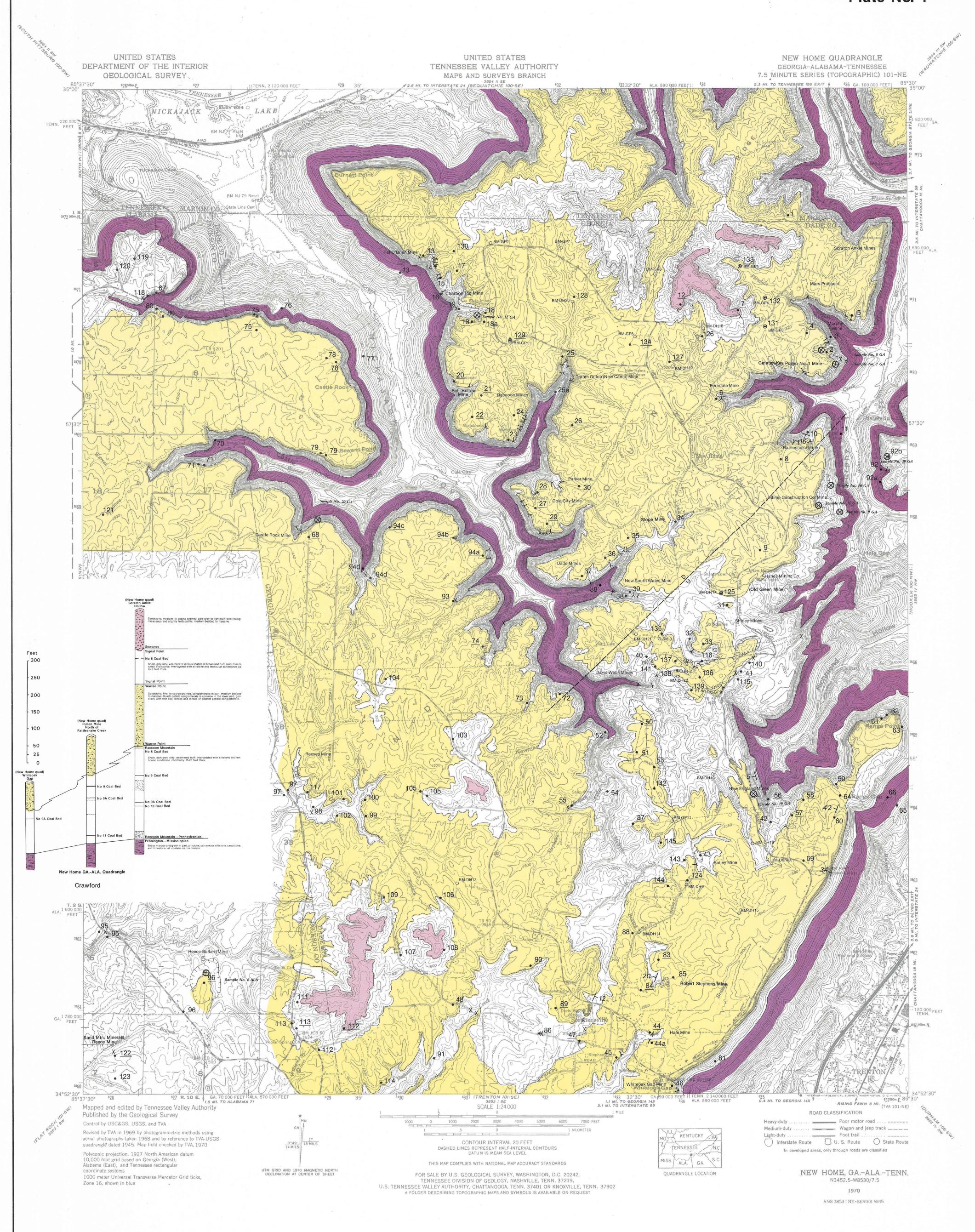
by hand level

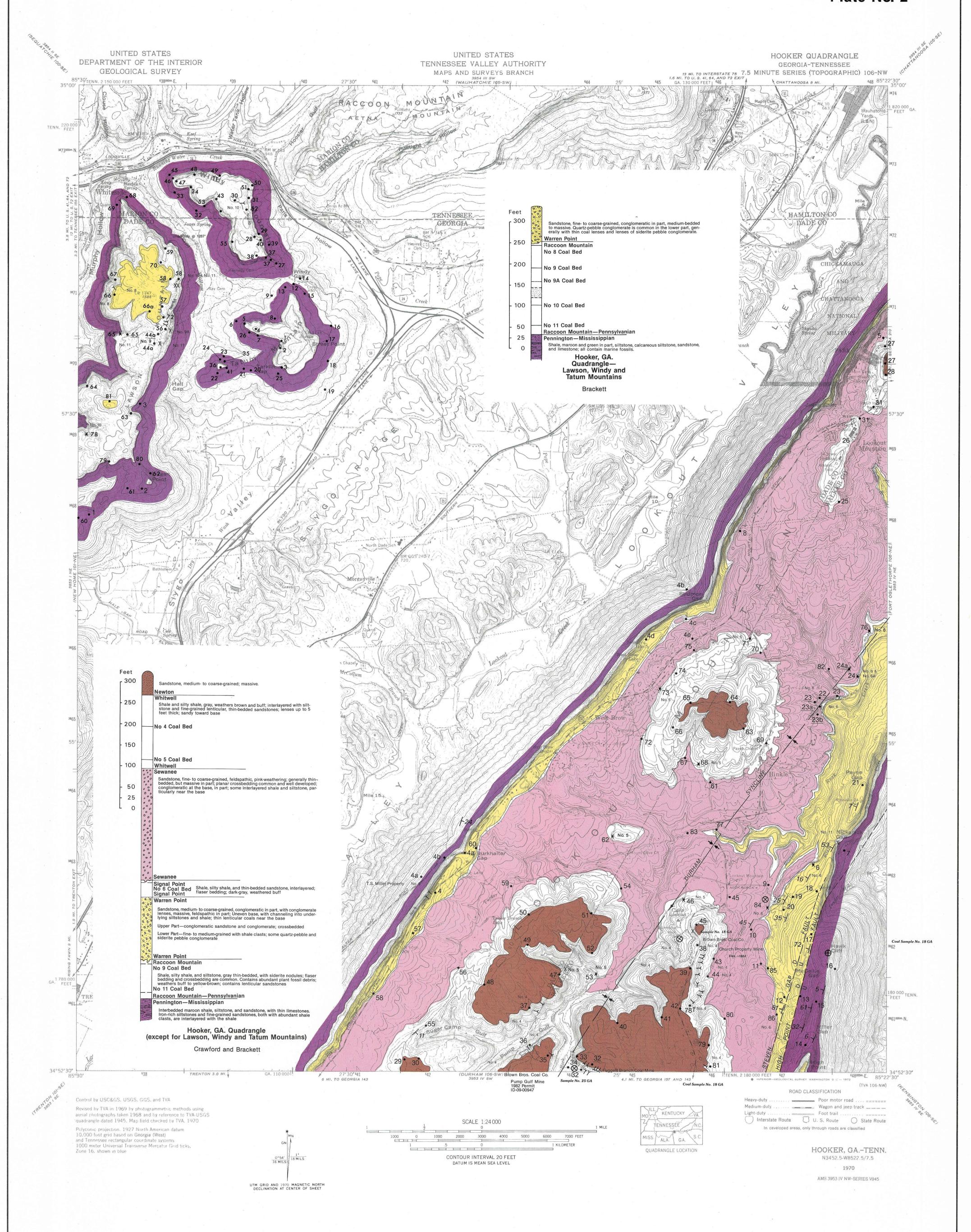
Bedding—horizontal

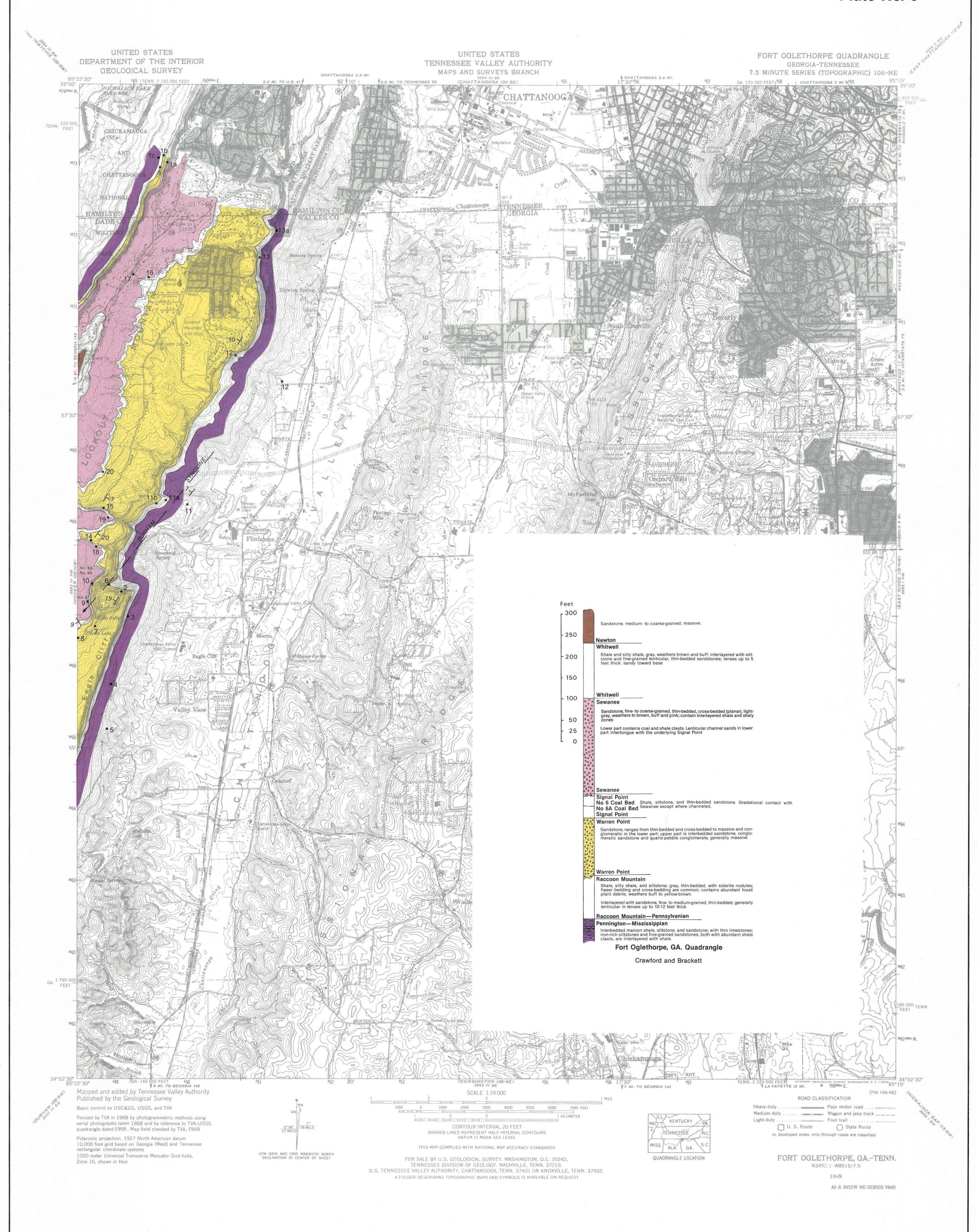
X Bedding—vertical ✓ Bedding—inclined

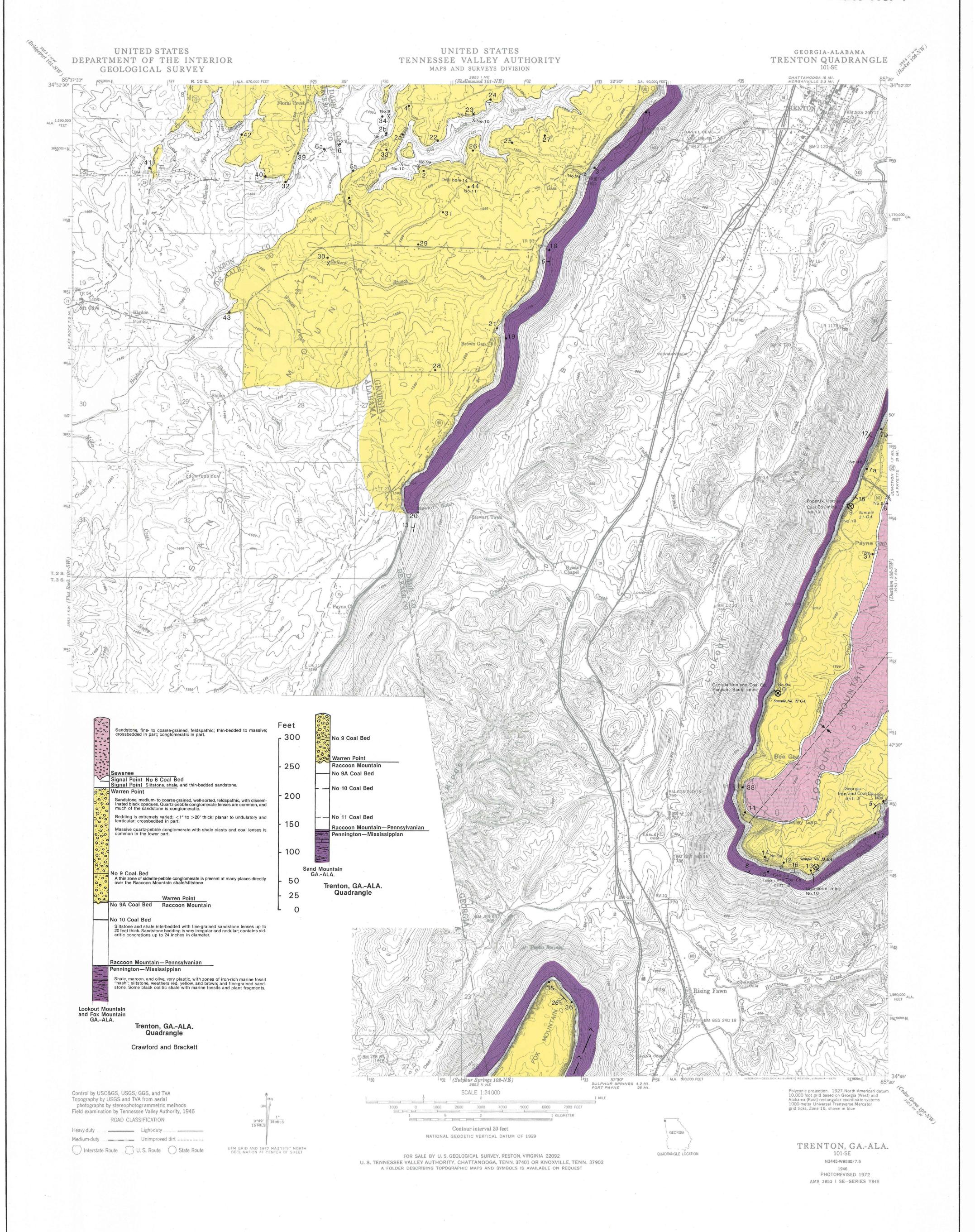
Axis of plunging anticline Axis of plunging syncline

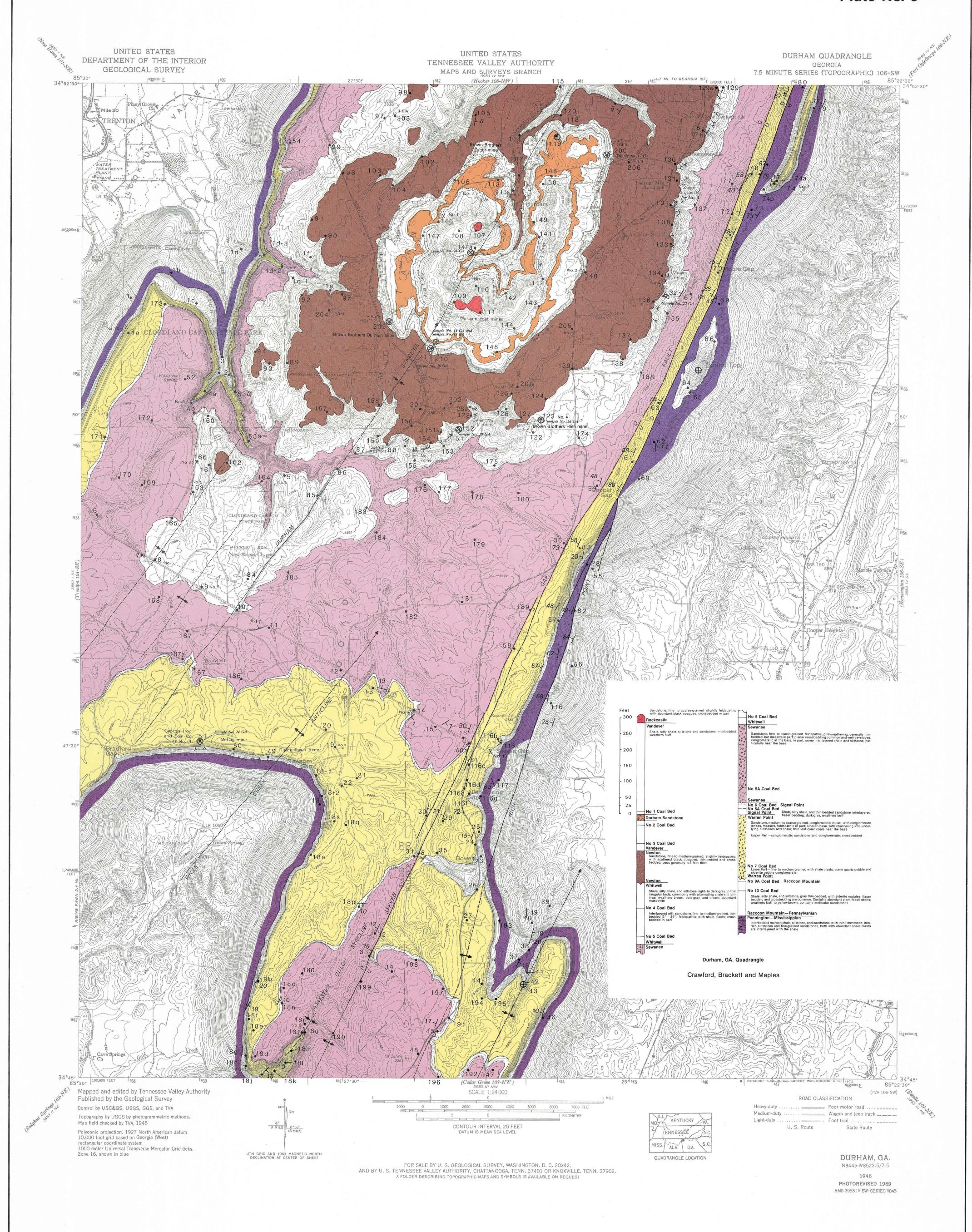
Fault, high-angle; U on upthrown block

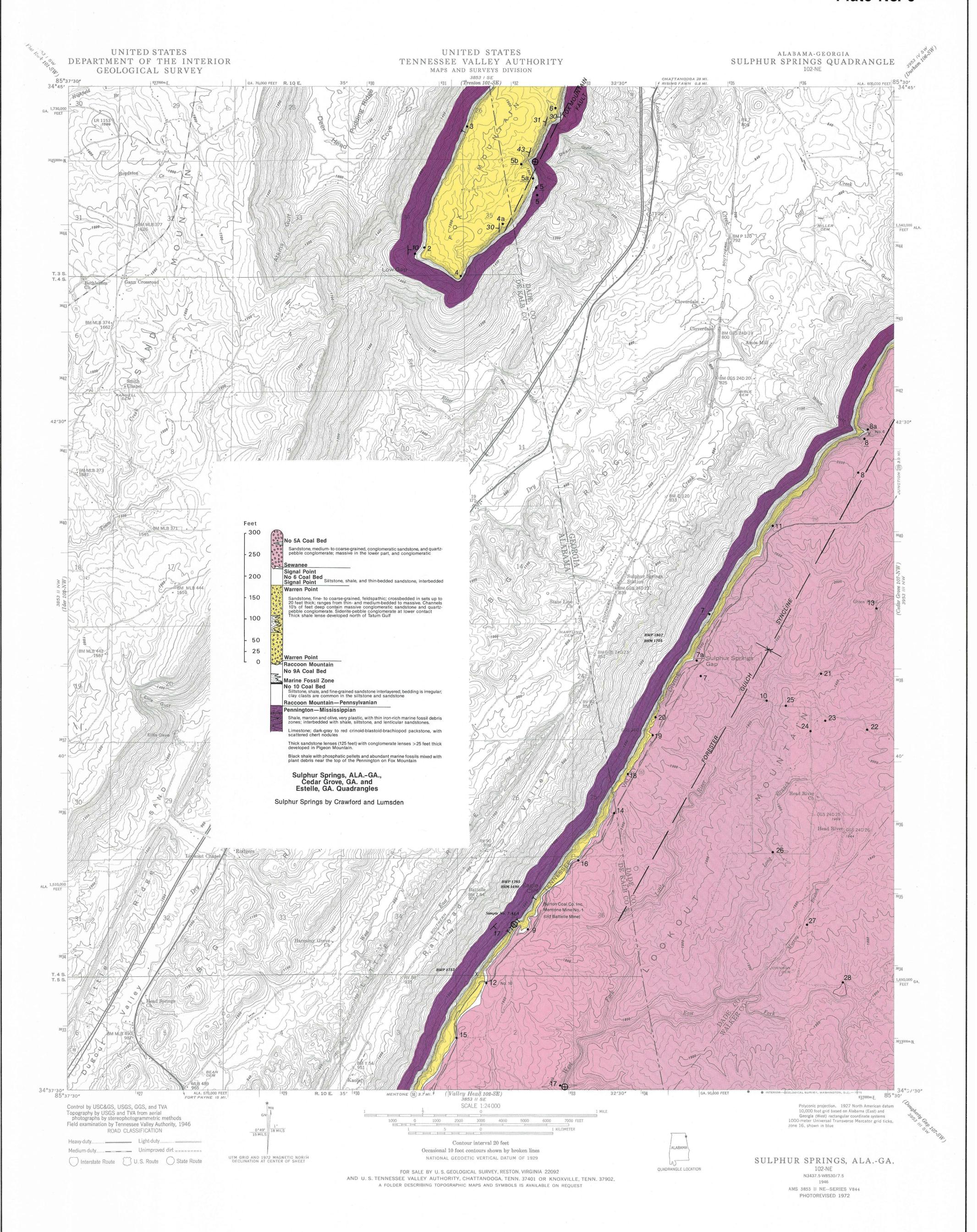


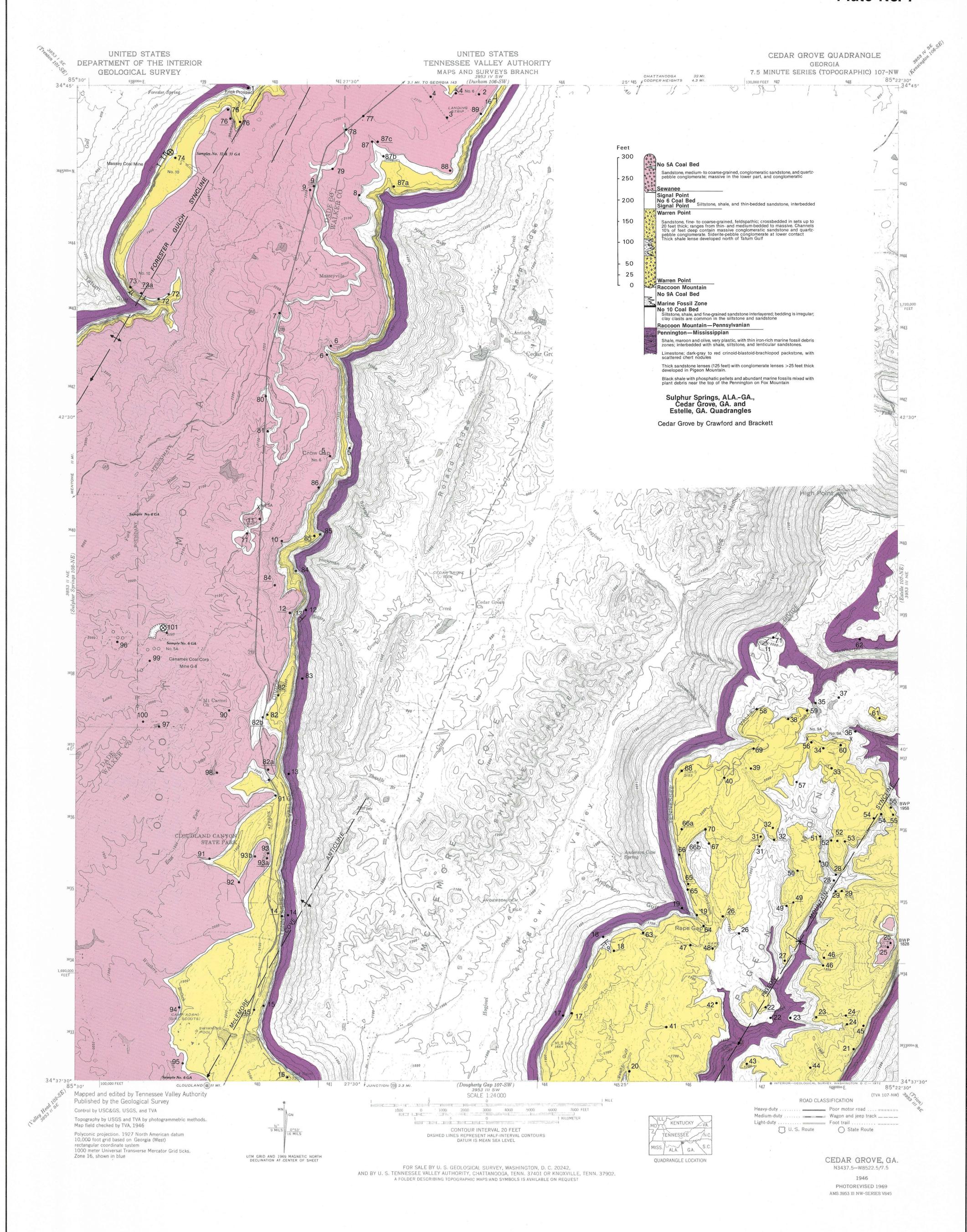


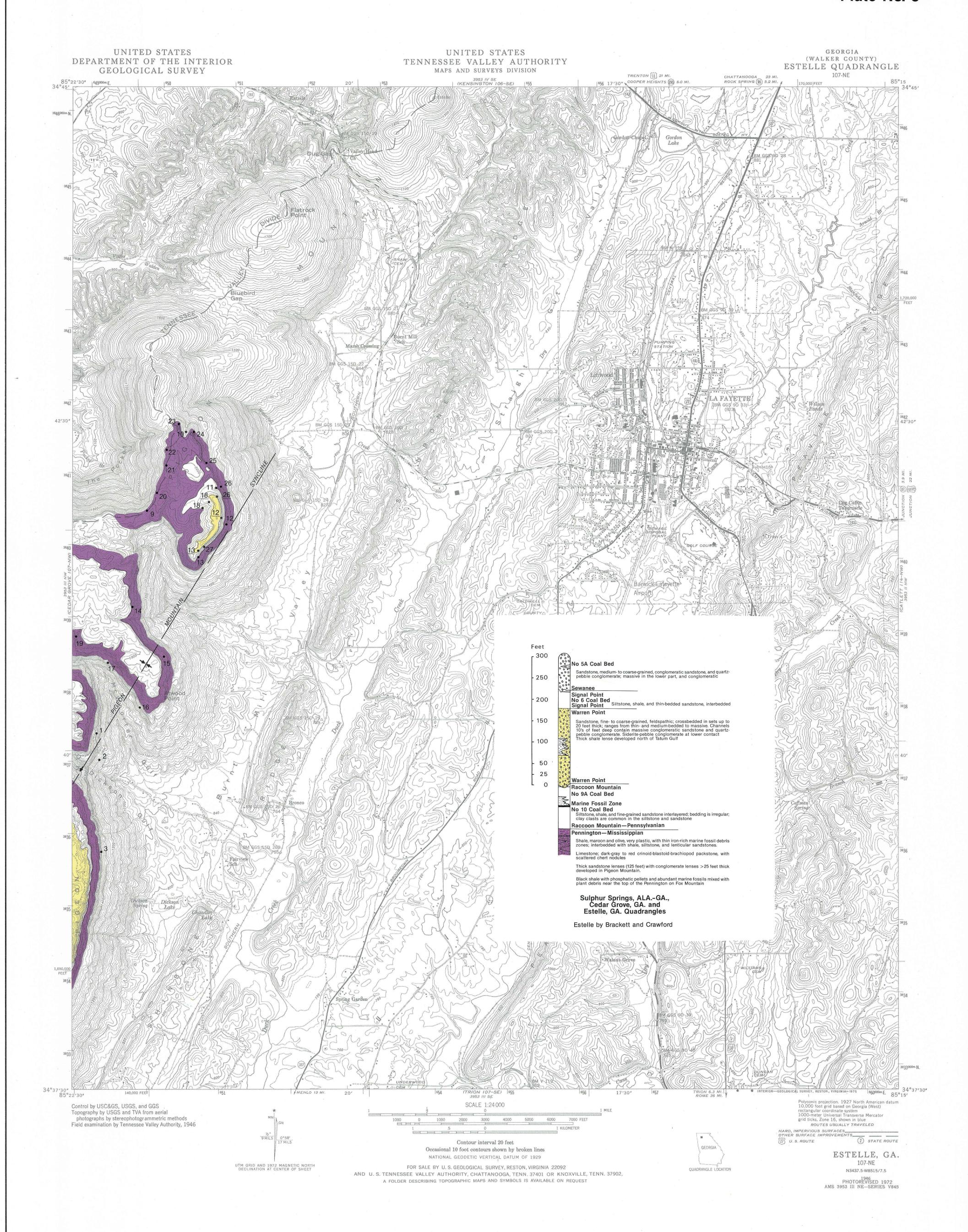


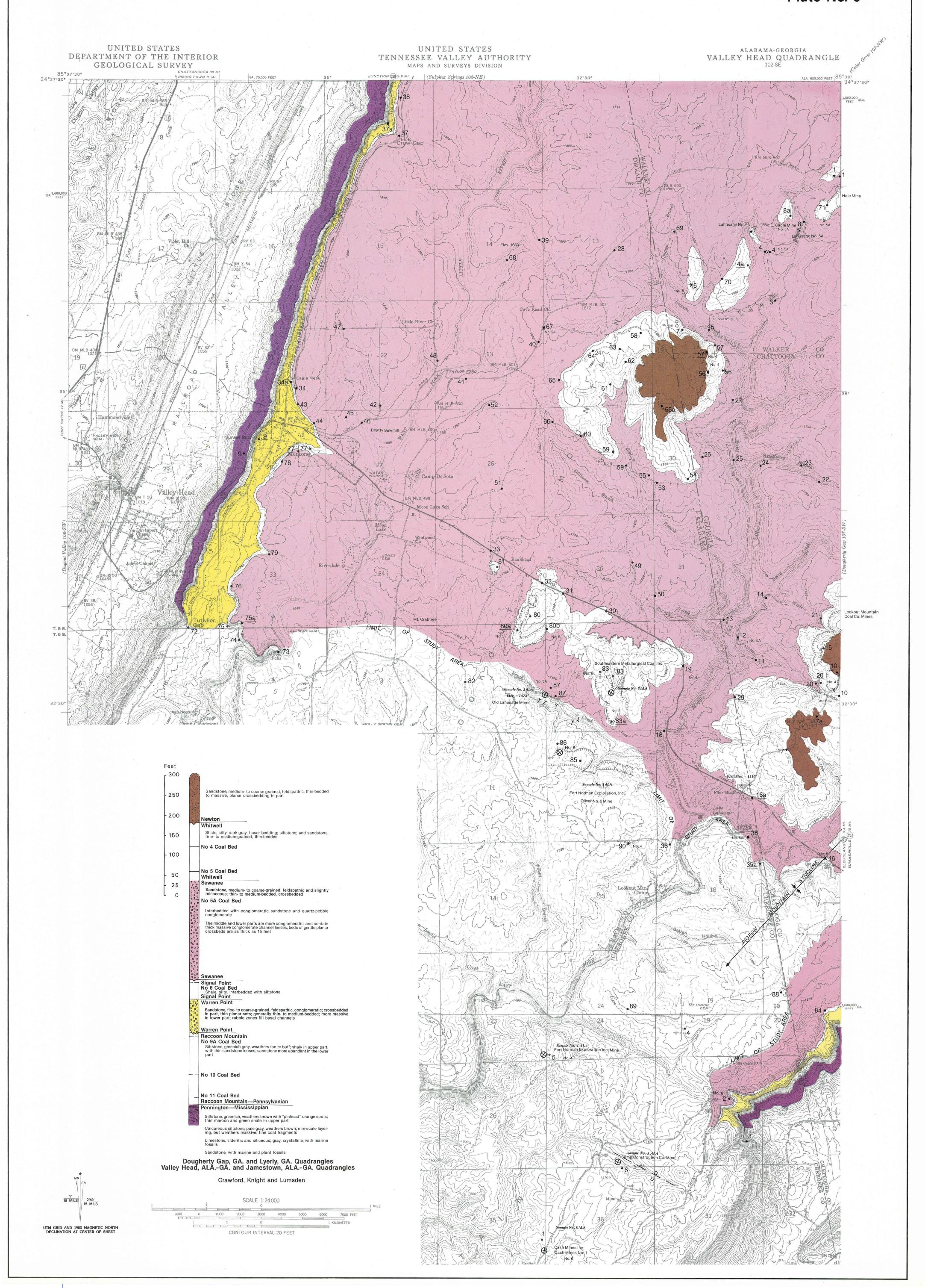


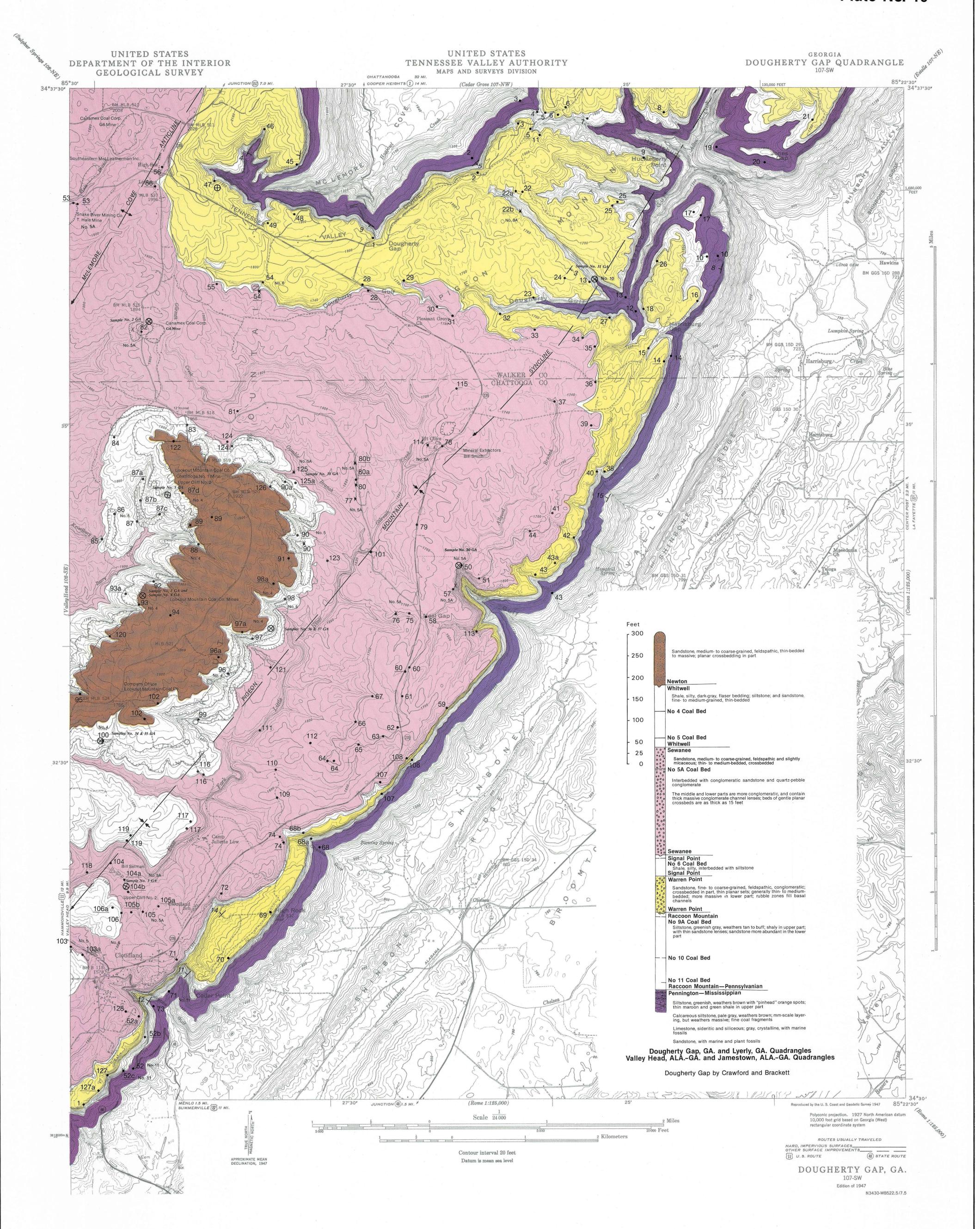


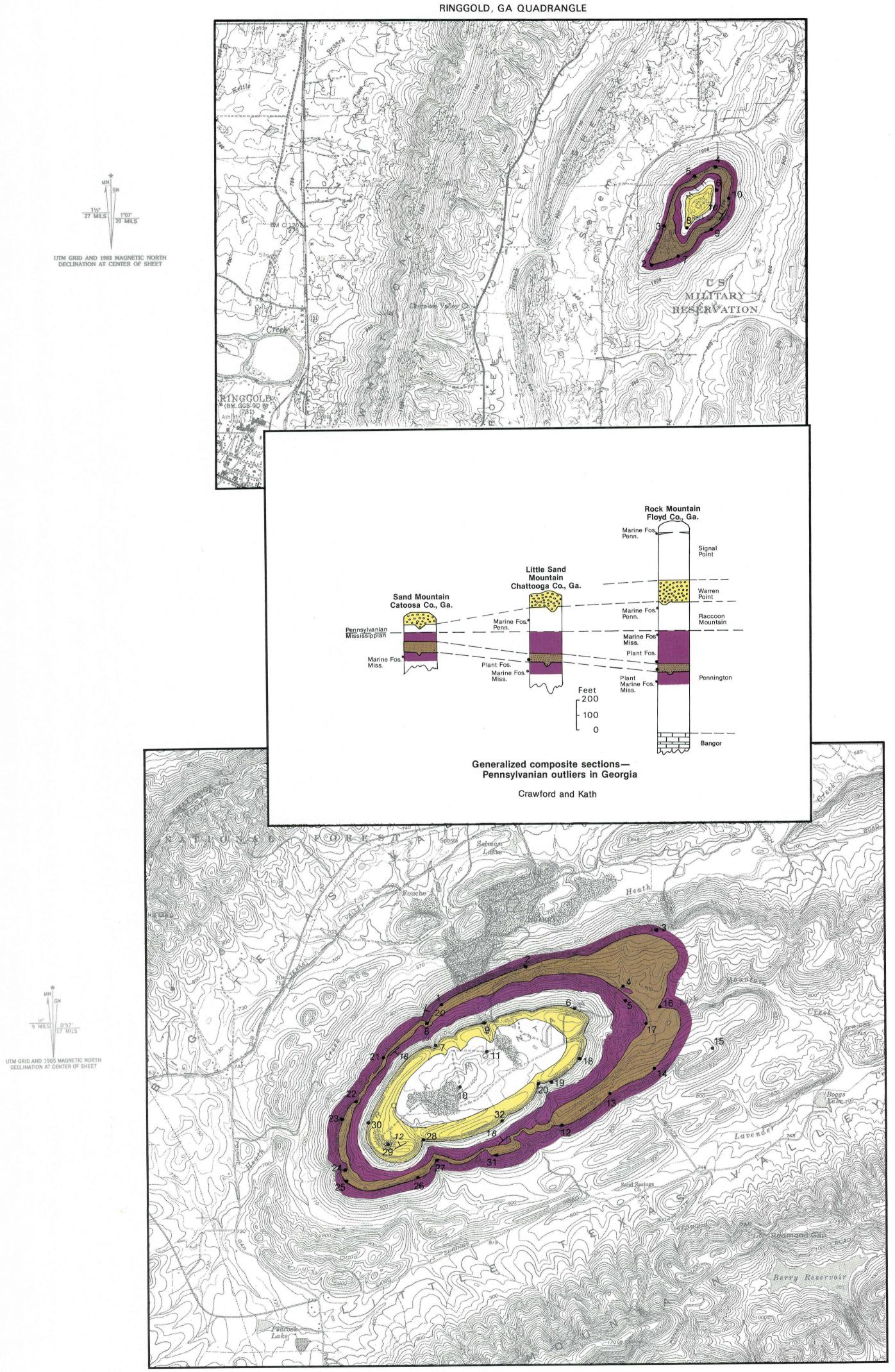




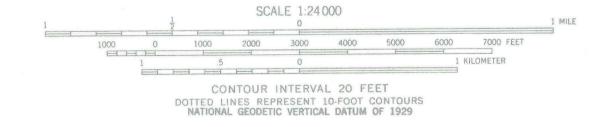


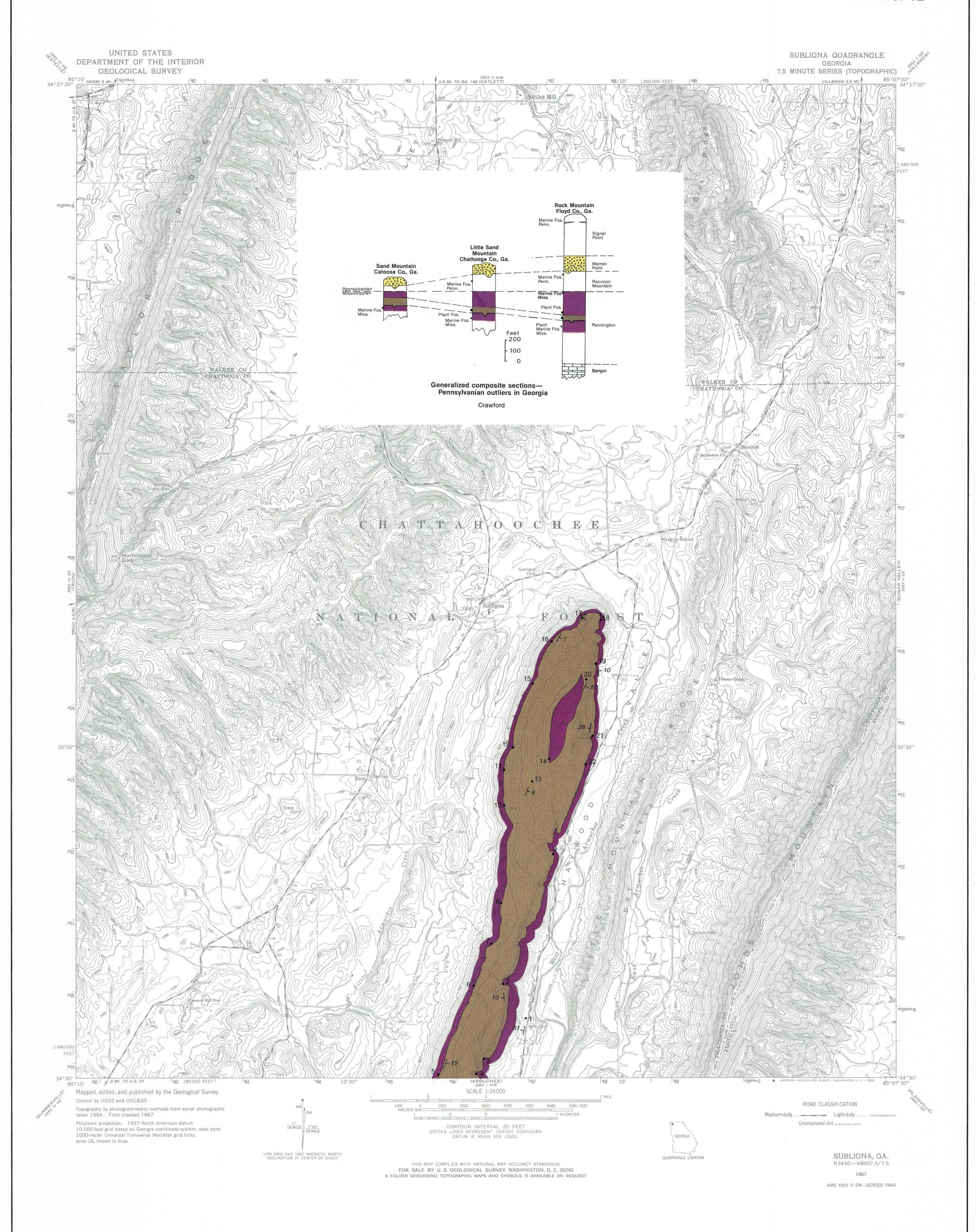


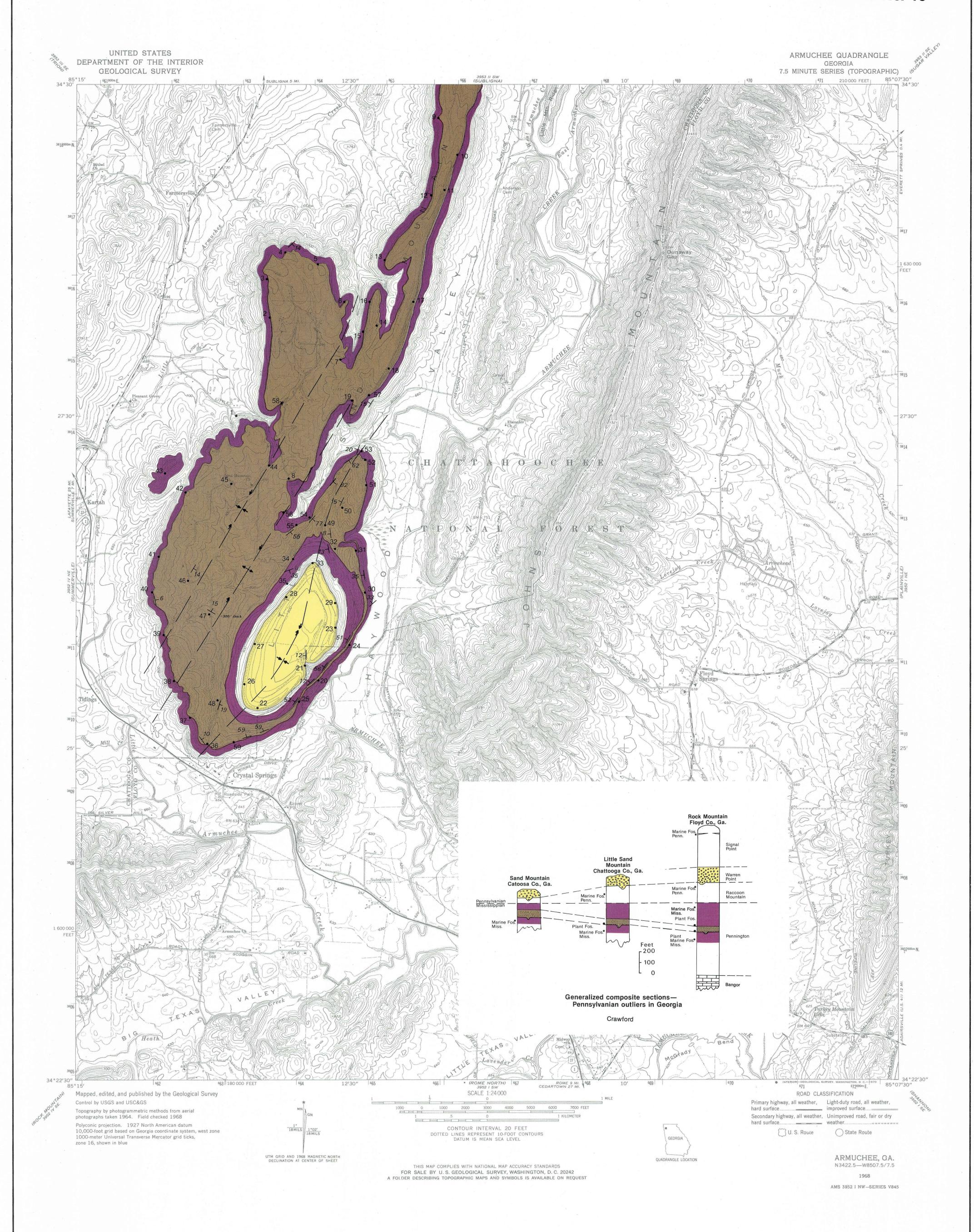




ROCK MOUNTAIN, GA QUADRANGLE







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