

*Sedimentology of Braided Alluvial Interval  
of Dakota Sandstone,  
Northeastern New Mexico*

by J. L. Gilbert and G.B. Asquith

**New Mexico Bureau of Mines & Mineral Resources**

A DIVISION OF  
NEW MEXICO INSTITUTE OF MINING & TECHNOLOGY

Circular 150



**New Mexico Bureau of Mines & Mineral Resources**

A DIVISION OF  
NEW MEXICO INSTITUTE OF MINING & TECHNOLOGY

# Sedimentology of Braided Alluvial Interval of Dakota Sandstone Northeastern New Mexico

by J. L. Gilbert and G. B. Asquith

## NEW MEXICO INSTITUTE OF MINING & TECHNOLOGY

KENNETH W. FORD, *President*

## NEW MEXICO BUREAU OF MINES & MINERAL RESOURCES

FRANK E. KOTTELOWSKI, *Director*

### BOARD OF REGENTS

#### Ex Officio

Jerry Apodaca, *Governor of New Mexico*

Leonard DeLayo, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

#### Appointed

William G. Abbott, *President, 1961-1979, Hobbs*

John M. Kelly, *1975-1981, Roswell*

Dave Rice, *1972-1977, Carlsbad*

Steve Torres, *1967-1979, Socorro*

James R. Woods, *1971-1977, Socorro*

### BUREAU STAFF

#### Full Time

WILLIAM E. ARNOLD, <i>Scientific Illustrator</i>	NORMA J. MEERS, <i>Clerk-Typist</i>
GEORGE S. AUSTIN, <i>Indust. Minerals Geologist</i>	CANDACE H. MERILLAT, <i>Editorial Secretary</i>
ROBERT A. BIBBERMAN, <i>Senior Petrol. Geologist</i>	NEILA M. PEARSON, <i>Scientific Illustrator</i>
LYNN A. BRANDVOLD, <i>Chemist</i>	JUDY PERALTA, <i>Secretary</i>
CORALE BRIERLEY, <i>Chemical Microbiologist</i>	MARSHALL A. REITER, <i>Geophysicist</i>
JUDY BURLAW, <i>Editorial Assistant</i>	JACQUES R. RENAULT, <i>Geologist</i>
PATRICIA E. CANDELARIA, <i>Secretary</i>	JAMES M. ROBERTSON, <i>Mining Geologist</i>
CHARLES E. CHAPIN, <i>Geologist</i>	RONALD J. ROMAN, <i>Chief Research Metallurgist</i>
RICHARD R. CHAVEZ, <i>Technician</i>	ROBERT SHANTZ, <i>Metallurgist</i>
RUBEN A. CRESPIN, <i>Technician</i>	JACKIE H. SMITH, <i>Laboratory Assistant</i>
THELA ANN DAVIDSON, <i>Geological Technician</i>	WILLIAM J. STONE, <i>Hydrogeologist</i>
LOIS M. DEVLIN, <i>Office Manager</i>	DAVID E. TABET, <i>Ass't. Field Geologist</i>
JO DRAKE, <i>Administrative Ass't. &amp; Sec'y.</i>	JOSEPH E. TAGGART, JR., <i>Assoc. Mineralogist</i>
ROUSSEAU H. FLOWER, <i>Senior Paleontologist</i>	SAMUEL THOMPSON III, <i>Petroleum Geologist</i>
ROY W. FOSTER, <i>Senior Petrol. Geologist</i>	ROBERT H. WEBER, <i>Senior Geologist</i>
ROBERT W. KELLEY, <i>Editor &amp; Geologist</i>	SHERLEY WHYTE, <i>Signographer</i>
ARTHUR J. MANSURE, <i>Geophysicist</i>	MICHAEL W. WOOLDREDGE, <i>Scientific Illustrator</i>

#### Part Time

CHRISTINA L. BALK, <i>Geologist</i>	JACK B. PEARCE, <i>Director, Information Services</i>
CHARLES O. GRIGSBY, <i>Laboratory Technician</i>	JOHN REICHE, <i>Instrument Manager</i>
CHARLES B. HUNT, <i>Environmental Geologist</i>	ALLAN R. SANFORD, <i>Geophysicist</i>
CHARLES A. MAJDEROSIAN, <i>Geologist</i>	THOMAS E. ZIMMERMAN, <i>Chief Security Officer</i>

### Graduate Students

DANIEL R. BROWN	DAVID L. HAYSLIP	PAUL SHULESKI
JOSEPH DAUCHY	JOSEPH IOVINETTI	TERRY SUMERS
JEFFREY A. FISCHER	GLENN R. OSBURN	
HENRY L. FLEISHHAUER	CHARLES SHEARER	

Plus more than 35 undergraduate assistants

*First printing, 1976*

# CONTENTS

## ABSTRACT 5

## INTRODUCTION 5

Location 5

Tectonic Setting 5

Purpose 5

Acknowledgments 5

Methods 5

Paleocurrent analysis 5

Grain size analysis 6

Sedimentary structure analysis 6

## STRATIGRAPHY 6

Dakota Sandstone 6

Braided alluvial interval 7

Meander-belt interval 8

Marine sandstone interval 8

## SEDIMENTOLOGY 10

Paleocurrent Analysis 10

Grain Size Analysis 10

Sedimentary Structure Analysis 11

## SUMMARY 13

## REFERENCES 14

## APPENDIX 15

## FIGURES

1 – Location map iv

2 – Late Paleozoic uplifts and basins 6

3 – Early Cretaceous uplifts and basins 6

4 – Early and middle Tertiary uplifts and basins 7

5 – Stratigraphic section, Dakota Sandstone 7

6 – View of Dakota Sandstone 8

7 – Electric log, Dakota Sandstone 8

8 – Isopach map of braided alluvial interval 8

9 – Cross section A-A' of Dakota Sandstone 9

10 – Cross section B-B' of Dakota Sandstone 9

11 – Plot of mean grain size and phi deviation  
for braided alluvial interval 10

12 – Three-component sedimentary facies plot 10

13 – Vector mean paleocurrent direction  
for braided alluvial interval 11

14 – Mean grain size in phi units  
for braided alluvial interval 11

15 – View of proximal facies in braided alluvial interval 11

16 – View of distal facies in braided alluvial interval 12

17 – Stratification ratio for braided alluvial interval 12

18 – Three-component sedimentary facies plot 12

19 – Paleogeographic map 12

20 – Section and well locations for braided alluvial interval 15

## TABLES

1 – Thickness of braided alluvial interval 15

2 – Paleocurrent data 15

3 – Grain size data, Dakota Sandstone 15

4 – Sedimentary structure data, Dakota Sandstone 16

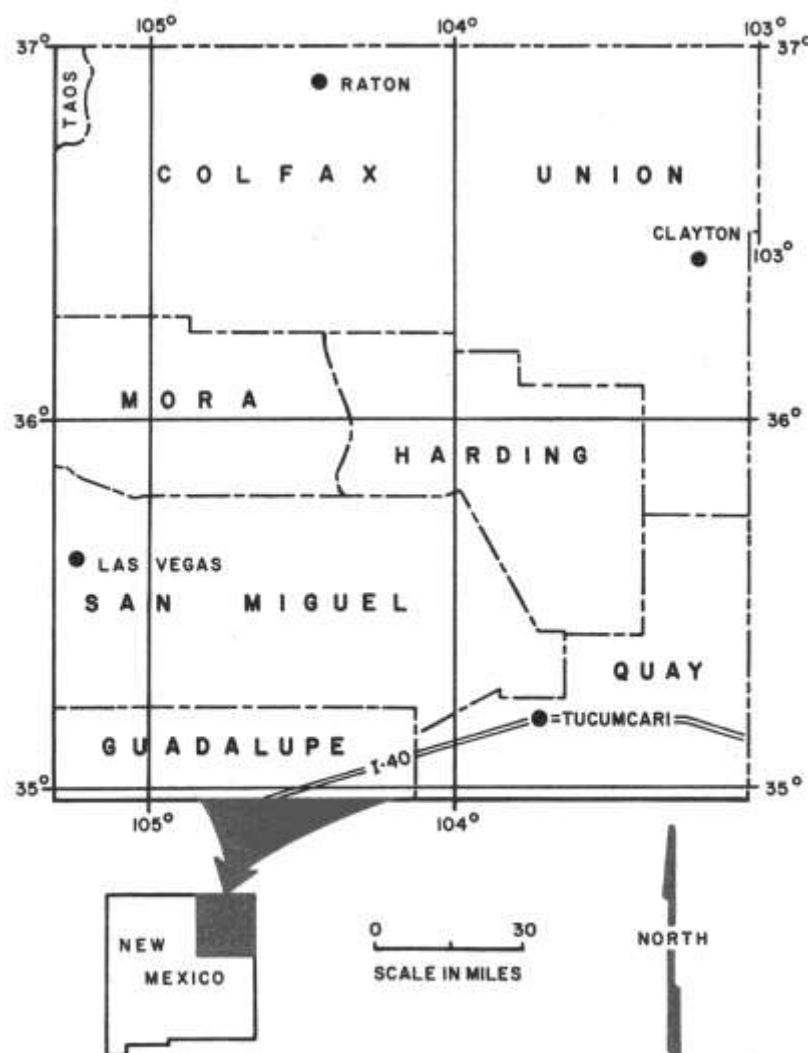


FIGURE 1 – Location of study area in northeastern New Mexico.

# ABSTRACT

The Dakota Sandstone (Cretaceous) in northeastern New Mexico is subdivided into 3 intervals (Jacka and Brand, 1973). The lower interval is a braided alluvial sheet composed of fine- to medium-grained, cross-stratified sandstone with conglomerate lenses. The middle interval represents a meander-belt environment and contains fine- to very fine grained, lenticular sandstone with interbedded carbonaceous shale and coal. The upper interval represents a transgressive marine succession containing fine- to very fine grained, horizontally stratified sandstone with burrow casts of *Ophiomorpha*.

Paleocurrent analysis of the braided alluvial interval indicates a dominant southeasterly transport direction. This conclusion is supported by a decrease in mean grain size and thickness to the east and southeast. Analysis of the stratification ratio indicates that proximal braided-stream facies are predominant in the west and northwest parts of the study area, and that distal braided-stream facies are predominant to the east and southeast. The sediment dispersal pattern and the presence of proximal braided stream facies indicate that the source areas were the San Luis and Apishapa uplifts of Colorado and New Mexico.

# INTRODUCTION

## Location

The approximate boundaries of the study area are the Texas-Oklahoma-New Mexico border, the Colorado-New Mexico border, the extreme eastern edge of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and 1-40 (fig. 1). The area is essentially rectangular, about 150 miles north to south and about 130 miles east to west.

## Tectonic Setting

According to King (1959) and Baltz (1965), the major active Pennsylvanian and Permian tectonic features in the northern New Mexico-southern Colorado region (fig. 2) were the San Luis uplift (southern extension of the Uncompahgre uplift), the Wet Mountain-Apishapa uplift (southeast extension of the Front Range uplift), the Sierra Grande uplift, and the intervening Rowe-Mora basin (southern extension of the Central Colorado basin into New Mexico). Baltz (1965) noted that the Rowe-Mora basin was connected at its southern end to the Tucumcari basin (extension of the Palo Duro Basin of Texas). Permian, Upper Triassic, and Upper Jurassic rocks blanketed the northern New Mexico-southern Colorado region and buried the late Paleozoic Sierra Grande, Apishapa, and San Luis uplifts (Baltz, 1965; McGookey and others, 1972).

The San Luis and Apishapa uplifts (fig. 3), rejuvenated during the Early Cretaceous, were probably source areas for the Dakota braided alluvial interval (Baltz, 1965; McGookey and others, 1972). According to Jacka and Brand (1973) and Muehlberger and others (1967), the braided alluvial interval was deposited by streams originating from early Laramide uplifts to the west. During the Late Cretaceous, the western Cretaceous seaway (McGookey and others, 1972; King, 1959) inundated the Rocky Mountain region including northeastern New Mexico.

The San Luis uplift and the western parts of the Paleozoic Rowe-Mora and Central Colorado basins were elevated to form the Sangre de Cristo uplift during the early and middle Tertiary (Baltz, 1965). Baltz (1965) concluded that the present Raton basin, Las Vegas sub-basin, Wet

Mountain uplift, and the Apishapa and Sierra Grande uplifts were formed during early Tertiary time (fig. 4).

## Purpose

Jacka and Brand (1973) postulated that the source area for the braided alluvial interval was probably early Laramide uplifts to the northwest. They based their conclusion on a study of pebbles in the conglomeratic fraction of the interval and on southeasterly transport directions measured only in the Las Vegas-Canadian River areas. The purpose of this study was to determine the source area for the braided alluvial interval using regional paleocurrent analysis, grain size analysis, and thickness variations. In addition quantitative sedimentary structure analysis was used to determine whether the position of the area within the braided stream system is proximal or distal (Smith, 1970).

## Acknowledgments

The authors are especially grateful to the New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources, Socorro, New Mexico, for providing financial assistance for the field work. The authors are grateful to Robert L. Burton and Franklin W. Daugherty for their critical reading of the manuscript. Assistance given in the field by James B. Gilbert, Charles M. Puckett, and Don R. Matthews was greatly appreciated. Thanks also go to D. E. Owen, Department of Geology, Bowling Green State University for his suggestions. They were greatly appreciated. Acknowledgment is also extended for the facilities and financial support provided by the Killgore Research Center, West Texas State University.

## Methods

### PALEOCURRENT ANALYSIS

At each of 12 sections in the braided alluvial interval, 25 paleocurrent directions were measured (Brunton compass) from trough axes, planar foresets, and current ripples.

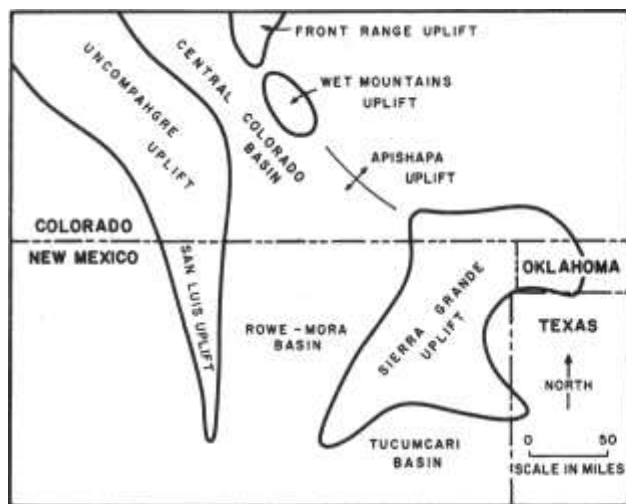


FIGURE 2 — Late Paleozoic uplifts and basins in New Mexico and Colorado.

According to High and Picard (1974, p. 165), 25 readings are the minimum number of measurements necessary to define reliably the mean paleocurrent direction when planar cross stratification is measured in addition to trough axes. The only corrections for structural dip were made in the field on the western side of the area where the braided interval dips  $10^\circ$  to  $16^\circ$  SE or NE; in the remainder of the area the braided interval is horizontal. A Fortran computer program CURT (Asquith, 1974) was used to calculate vector mean direction, consistency ratio (magnitude of mean vector in percent), and standard deviation. The program also calculated and performed a Raleigh test (Durand and Greenwood, 1958). The paleocurrent analysis at each of the 12 sections passed the Raleigh test indicating that the distributions differ significantly from a uniform distribution at a 5-percent level of significance. The vector means, therefore, are statistically valid.

#### GRAIN SIZE ANALYSIS

Five random samples were collected from the braided alluvial interval at each of the 12 sections for grain size analysis. Approximately 30 grams (Blatt and others, 1972, p. 47) from each sample was crushed, washed, dried, and then sieved down to 4.5 phi using one-quarter phi intervals.

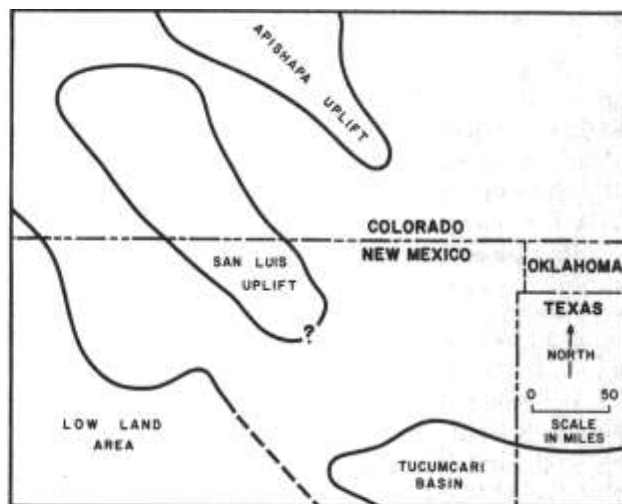


FIGURE 3 — Early Cretaceous uplifts and basins in New Mexico and Colorado (modified after McGookey and others, 1972).

Each sieve fraction was then weighed to the nearest one-hundredth of a gram. A Fortran computer program GZSZ (Asquith, 1974) was used to calculate the Folk and Ward (1957) statistical parameters (mean, phi deviation, skewness, and kurtosis). The statistical parameters were then averaged for each of the 12 sections.

#### SEDIMENTARY STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

At each section the thickness of the braided alluvial interval was measured with a steel tape, and the percentage of each variety of sedimentary structure was recorded on a lithic log (fig. 5). Next the thickness of each variety of sedimentary structure in the 12 stratigraphic sections was measured to the nearest ft and recorded. A Fortran computer program SED (Asquith, 1974) was used to calculate the total thicknesses and percentages of each variety of sedimentary structure in each of the 12 sections. The program also calculated the stratification ratio (planar cross stratification/planar cross stratification + horizontal stratification; Smith, 1970, p. 3001) and percentage data for 3 component sedimentary facies plots (cross stratification-horizontal stratification-ripples; Allen, 1970, p. 310; and planar cross stratification-trough cross stratification-horizontal stratification).

## STRATIGRAPHY

The Dakota Sandstone (Cretaceous) unconformably overlies the Morrison Formation (Jurassic) in the western portion of the area. However, the Morrison is overlain by the Purgatoire Formation (Lower Cretaceous) in the Raton basin and in the northeast and east portions of the area. The Tucumcari Shale of the Purgatoire Group (Griggs and Read, 1959) overlies the Morrison Formation in the Tucumcari basin (southern extent of study).

#### Dakota Sandstone

The age of the Dakota Sandstone in Colorado and New Mexico has been the subject of much controversy. Based on a study of fossil plant fragments Baldwin and Muehlberger (1959) concluded that the Dakota Sandstone in

southeastern Colorado and northeastern New Mexico is Late Cretaceous. Scott (1970) determined, from a detailed stratigraphic study, that the Dakota Sandstone is equivalent to the Mesa Rica Sandstone (Upper Cretaceous) in the Tucumcari basin area. Reeside (1957), however, considered the Dakota Sandstone to be uppermost Lower Cretaceous.

Jacka and Brand (1973) subdivided the Dakota Sandstone into 3 intervals in northeastern New Mexico: a lower braided alluvial interval, a middle meander-belt interval, and an upper transgressive marine sandstone interval (figs. 5, 6 and 7). Mankin (1958) recognized a similar threefold subdivision of the Dakota Sandstone in northeastern New Mexico.

## BRAIDED ALLUVIAL INTERVAL

The braided alluvial interval consists of a sheetlike body of sandstone and conglomerate with numerous scour-and-fill structures deposited over most of northeastern New Mexico. In the southern portion of the area, some workers have substituted the name Mesa Rica for the name Dakota (Jacka and Brand, 1972). Scott (1970) concluded that the Mesa Rica Sandstone and the Dakota Sandstone are correlative. According to Brand and Mattox (1972), the marine Mesa Rica Sandstone interfingers with Cretaceous nonmarine rocks northwest of the Tucumcari basin. In this study of the nonmarine braided alluvial interval, the name Dakota is used throughout the area except in the Tucumcari basin where the name Mesa Rica is retained. However, the Tucumcari basin area has been excluded from the sedimentological portions of this study.

The massive sandstone of the braided alluvial interval forms conspicuous cliffs capping many mesas and buttes. The main rock type of the braided alluvial interval is a pale-yellowish-brown to white, fine- to medium-grained, moderately well rounded, moderately well sorted, and cryptocrystalline quartz-cemented quartzose sandstone. Quartz overgrowths are common; limonite in some places forms cementing material. Feldspar grains are rare suggesting a source area of extensive weathering and high humidity (Mankin, 1958, p. 123). Conglomerate lenses composed predominantly of chert pebbles are common in this interval especially at sections located in the western part.

Jacka and Brand (1973, p. 25) described the pebbles in the braided alluvial interval as predominantly replacement chert derived from dissolution of the Espiritu Santo (Devonian), Tererro (Mississippian), and Madera (Pennsylvanian) limestones that crop out west of the study area. Other pebbles were composed of metamorphic rock fragments and quartz (Jacka and Brand, 1973, p. 25).

The braided alluvial interval varies from 195 ft thick at Shock Ranch to 45 ft thick at Black Mesa (table 1, Appendix). The interval is thickest on the west side and generally thins to the east and southeast (figs. 8, 9 and 10). The average thickness in the area is 105 ft.

The predominant sedimentary structures in the braided

alluvial interval are high-angle (greater than 10 degrees) and low-angle trough and planar cross stratification, horizontal stratification, and scour channels. Current ripples are rare; parallel stratification is present only in thin and discontinuous shale and siltstone stringers. No fossils are present within the braided interval; however, carbonized plant debris occur locally in furrows between ripple crests.

Electric logs from 6 wells drilled in the Raton basin were used to determine the thickness of the braided alluvial interval in the northwest part (table 1 and fig. 20, Appendix). All wells penetrated the 3 intervals of the Dakota Sandstone. Formation tops were correlated and marked using tops from wells 5 and 6 and from scout tickets. The log from the W. J. Gourley No. 2 Vermejo well was selected as the type log of the Dakota Sandstone in the Raton basin (fig. 7).

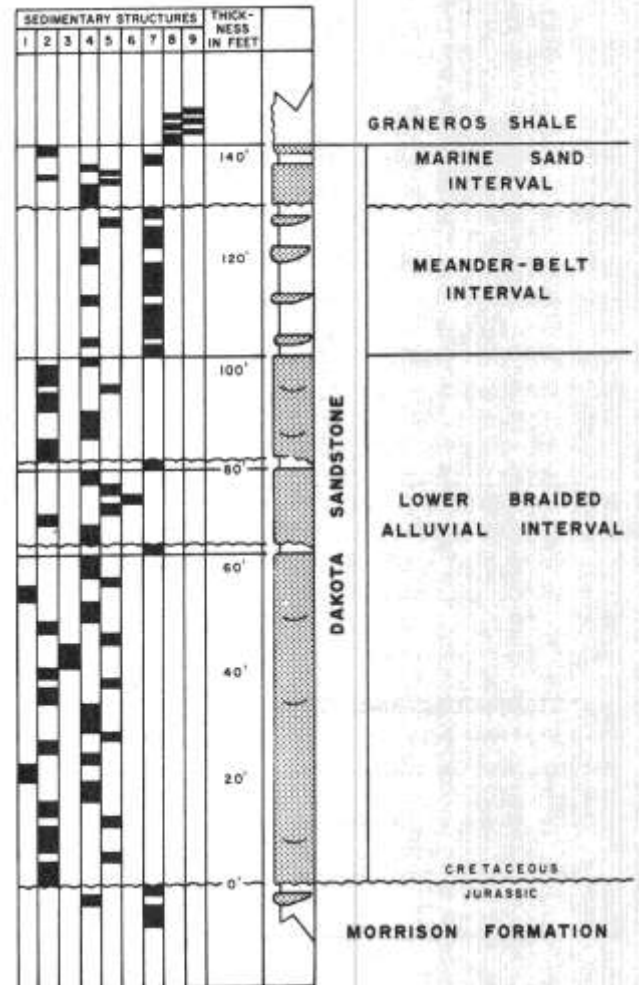


FIGURE 5 - Stratigraphic section of Dakota Sandstone, Romeroville, New Mexico.

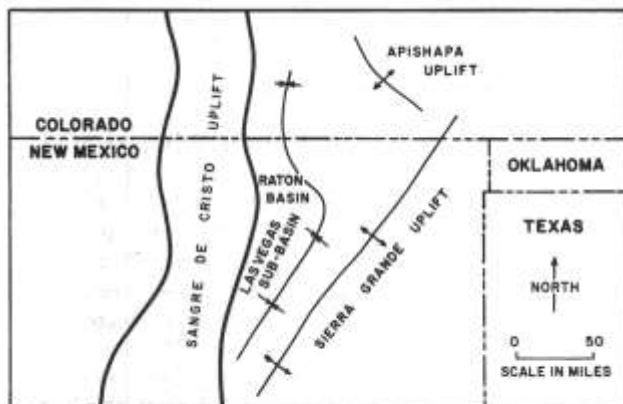


FIGURE 4 - Early and middle Tertiary uplifts and basins in New Mexico and Colorado (modified after Baltz, 1965).

## MEANDER-BELT INTERVAL

The braided alluvial interval is conformably overlain by a meander-belt interval composed of silty shale and inter-bedded channel sandstone. The silty shale is light to dark



MS – Marine sandstone interval  
MB – Meander-belt interval  
BA – Braided alluvial interval  
Jm – Jurassic Morrison Formation

FIGURE 6 – View of Dakota Sandstone along US-85 north of Romeroville, New Mexico.

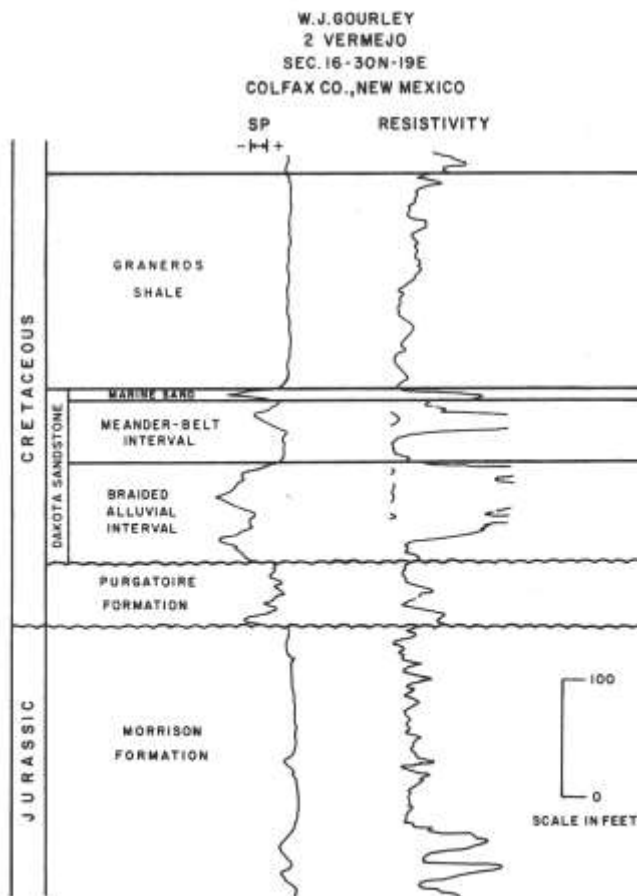


FIGURE 7 – Typical electric log characteristics of the Dakota Sandstone in the Raton basin, New Mexico.

gray, thin bedded, lignitic, and contains abundant plant debris. The lenticular sandstone is white to light brown, fine to very fine grained, thin bedded, and forms lens-shaped bodies exhibiting trough cross stratification and horizontal stratification. Many of the channel sandstones contain clasts of carbonized wood and coal.

The meander-belt interval probably records headward erosion of the early Laramide uplands to the west, accompanied by a decrease in gradient over the area and the ultimate submergence of the region by a shallow sea (Jacka and Brand, 1973). The meander-belt interval averages 25 ft thick throughout.

## MARINE SANDSTONE INTERVAL

The meander-belt interval is unconformably overlain by a shore-zone marine sandstone interval. The sandstone is light yellowish brown, well sorted, well rounded, highly quartzose, and horizontally stratified. Vertical burrows of *Ophiomorpha* are present in the upper portion of the interval near the contact with the overlying marine Graneros Shale (Cretaceous) (fig. 7). The marine sandstone interval averages 12 ft thick.

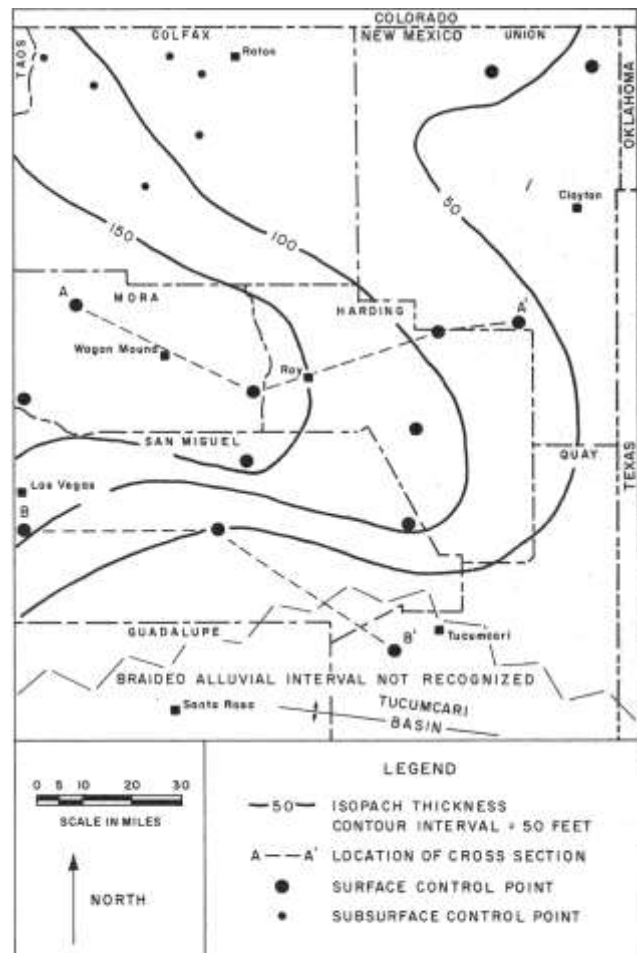


FIGURE 8 – Isopach map of the braided alluvial interval of the Dakota Sandstone, northeastern New Mexico.

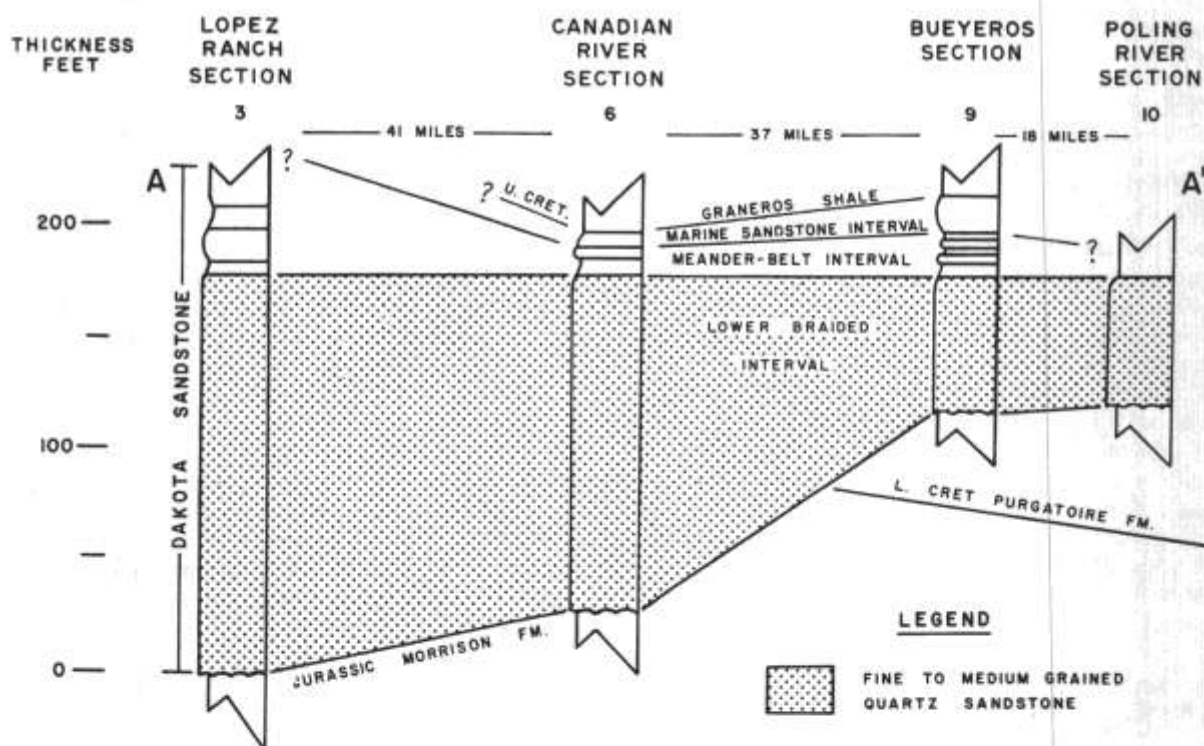


FIGURE 9 — Cross section A-A' of the Dakota Sandstone, northeastern New Mexico. Line of cross section shown on fig. 8.

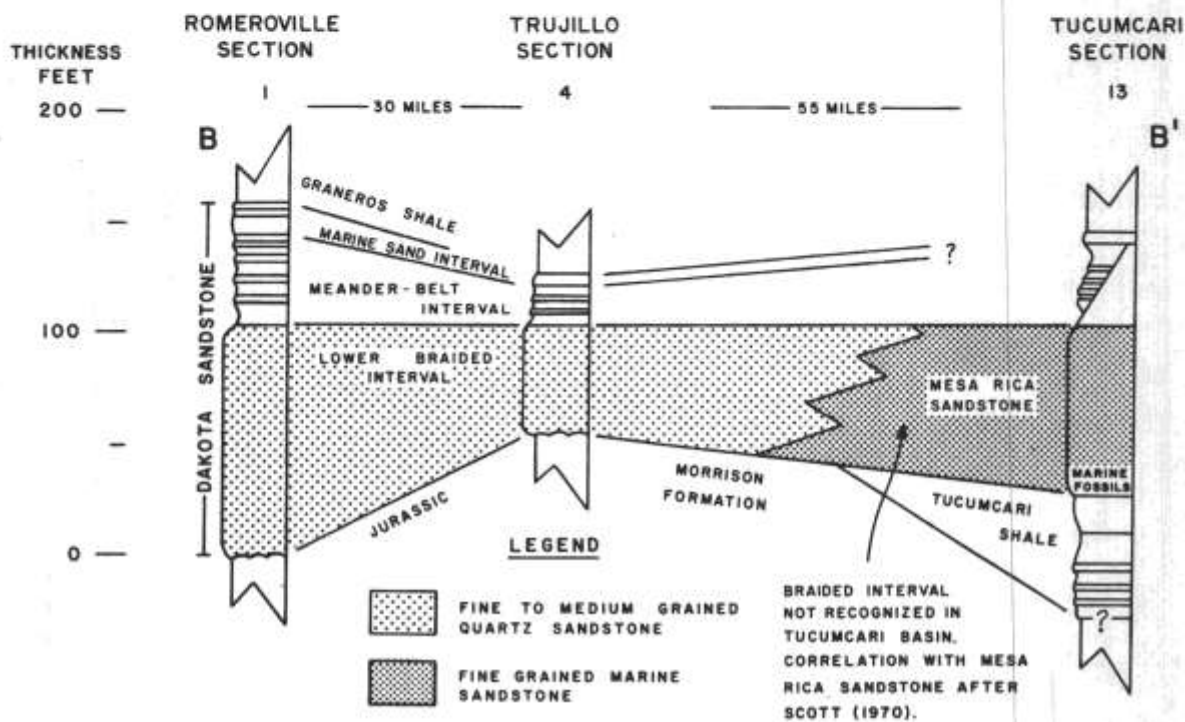


FIGURE 10 — Cross section B-B' of the Dakota Sandstone, northeastern New Mexico. Line of cross section shown on fig. 8.

# SEDIMENTOLOGY

The lower sandstone interval is believed to have been deposited by braided streams (Jacka and Brand, 1973). Evidence suggesting a fluvial origin for the lower interval of the Dakota Sandstone includes the absence of marine fossils, the unimodal paleocurrent trends, the presence of numerous scour-and-fill structures, and the abundance of planar and trough cross stratification. Also a plot of mean grain size and phi deviation differentiates the lower Dakota Sandstone as a fluvial deposit in all but 6 of 60 samples analyzed (fig. 11).

Several distinguishing features of braided stream deposits are found in the lower interval of the Dakota Sandstone. The characteristic sedimentary structures include mixed planar and trough cross stratification, horizontal stratification, and very few current ripples (fig. 12). The lower sandstone interval forms a sheetlike sandstone and conglomerate deposit containing numerous scour-and-fill structures and a low percentage of shale (figs. 5 and 6). Also, there are no definite cyclic vertical variations in grain size and sedimentary structures (fig. 5) as characteristically found in point-bar sequences of meandering streams. All these features are characteristic of braided streams as opposed to meandering streams (McGowen, 1975, oral communication; Brown and others, 1973).

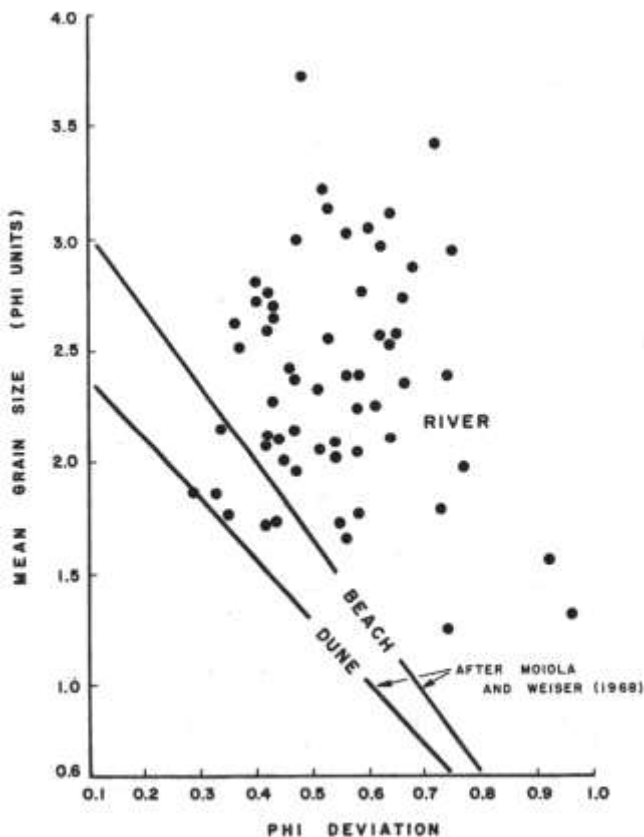


FIGURE 11 — Plot of mean grain size and phi deviation for the braided alluvial interval of the Dakota Sandstone, northeastern New Mexico.

## Paleocurrent Analysis

A computer analysis of 300 paleocurrent readings (25 readings per section) reveals a significant regional transport direction to the southeast (fig. 13). Vector mean directions in the western part show less dispersion than in the eastern part (fig. 13). However, the regional dispersion is low; all vector means are unimodal in distribution. The vector mean directions in the northeastern part show a somewhat more southerly transport direction, possibly indicating a different source area; other supporting evidence was not found. The grand mean paleocurrent direction calculated from 300 readings is 122 degrees.

The computer program CURT (Asquith, 1974) calculated the consistency ratio and standard deviation for each section, and these data along with the vector mean directions are summarized in table 2 (Appendix). The consistency ratio (L) is generally lower in the eastern part (fig. 13) and varies from 20.5 percent to 80.3 percent. The standard deviation varies from 38.8 to 94.7.

## Grain Size Analysis

Mean grain size values range from 1.65 phi to 2.82 phi or medium to fine sand. In general the mean grain size in the braided alluvial interval decreases in an east to southeasterly direction (fig. 14) supporting the east and southeast paleocurrent directions and the decrease in thickness to the east and southeast. Mean inclusive graphic standard deviation (phi deviation) values range from 0.44 to 0.68 phi units or moderately well sorted to well sorted. A trend in phi deviation values across the area is not distinct. Table 3 (Appendix) is a summary of the grain size data.

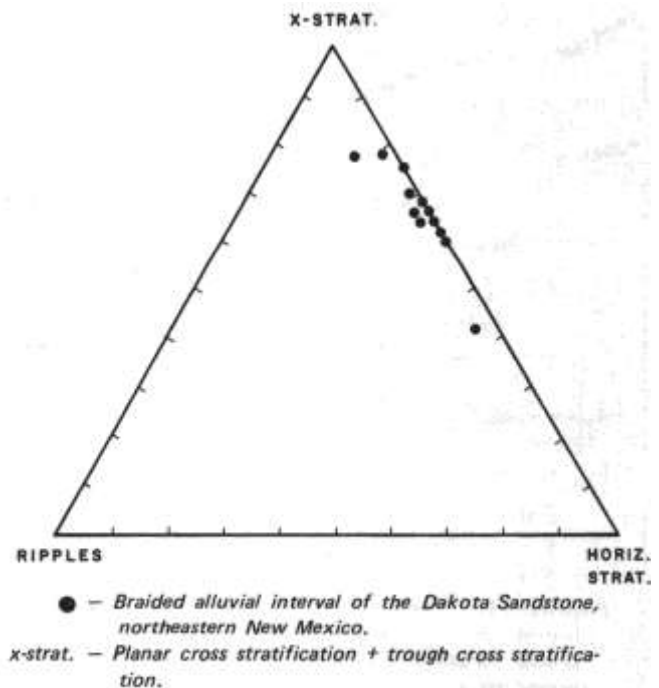


FIGURE 12 — Three-component sedimentary facies plot (cross stratification-horizontal stratification-ripples).

## Sedimentary Structure Analysis

Predominant sedimentary structures observed in the braided alluvial interval were planar cross stratification, trough cross stratification, horizontal stratification, and a few current ripples (fig. 12). Trough cross stratification is the most common variety of sedimentary structure and ranges from 36.0 to 68.3 percent of the sedimentary structures. Horizontal stratification ranges from 16.8 to 45.2 percent; planar cross stratification ranges from 9.2 to 42.0 percent. Ripples range from zero to 7.3 percent (table 4, Appendix).

The abundance of trough cross stratification and current ripples does not seem to change significantly across the study area. However, planar cross stratification increases in abundance to the east while horizontal stratification generally decreases.

Observations by Smith (1970) demonstrated that the ratio between planar cross stratification and planar cross stratification plus horizontal stratification (stratification ratio) could be used to determine the ratio of transverse bars to longitudinal bars. Smith (1970, p. 3010) determined that a predominance of longitudinal bars (proximal braided

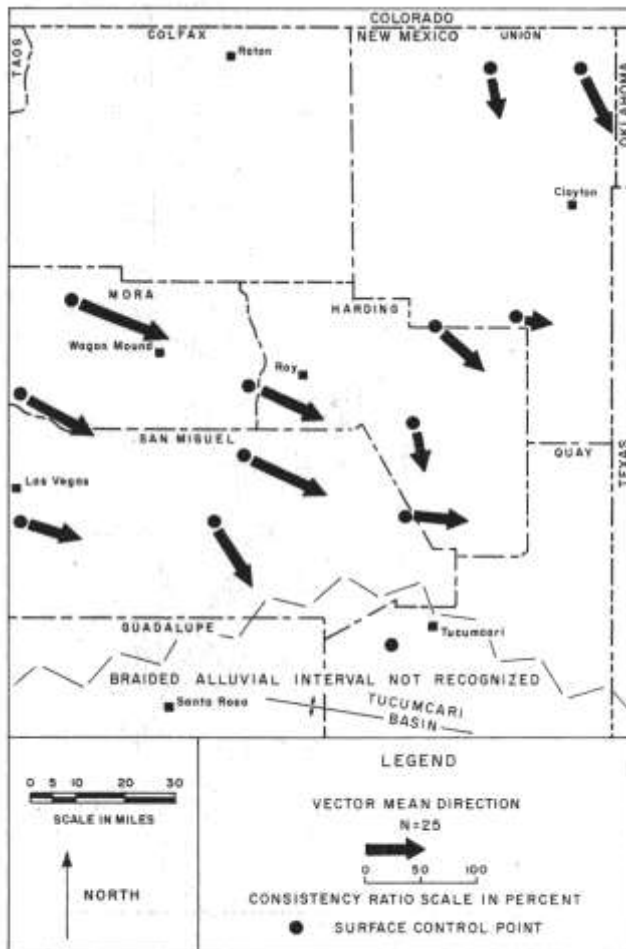


FIGURE 13 – Vector mean paleocurrent direction with consistency ratio for the braided alluvial interval of the Dakota Sandstone, northeastern New Mexico (25 readings per location).

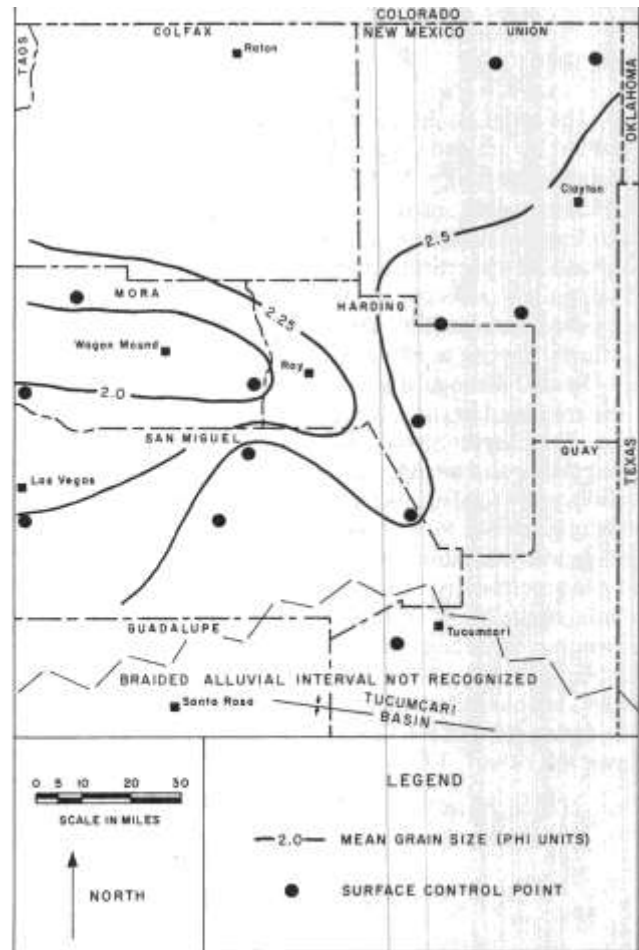


FIGURE 14 – Mean grain size in phi units for the braided alluvial interval of the Dakota Sandstone, northeastern New Mexico.



FIGURE 15 – View of proximal facies in the braided alluvial interval of the Dakota Sandstone along US-120 at the Canadian River (stratification ratio = 0.21).



FIGURE 16 – View of distal facies in the braided alluvial interval of the Dakota Sandstone along US-39 east of Mosquero, New Mexico (stratification ratio = 0.62).

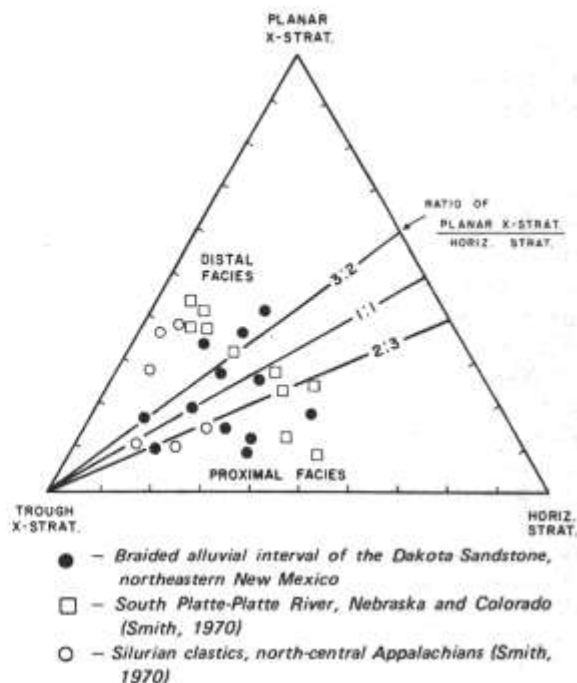


FIGURE 18 – Three-component sedimentary facies plot (planar cross stratification-horizontal stratification-trough cross stratification).

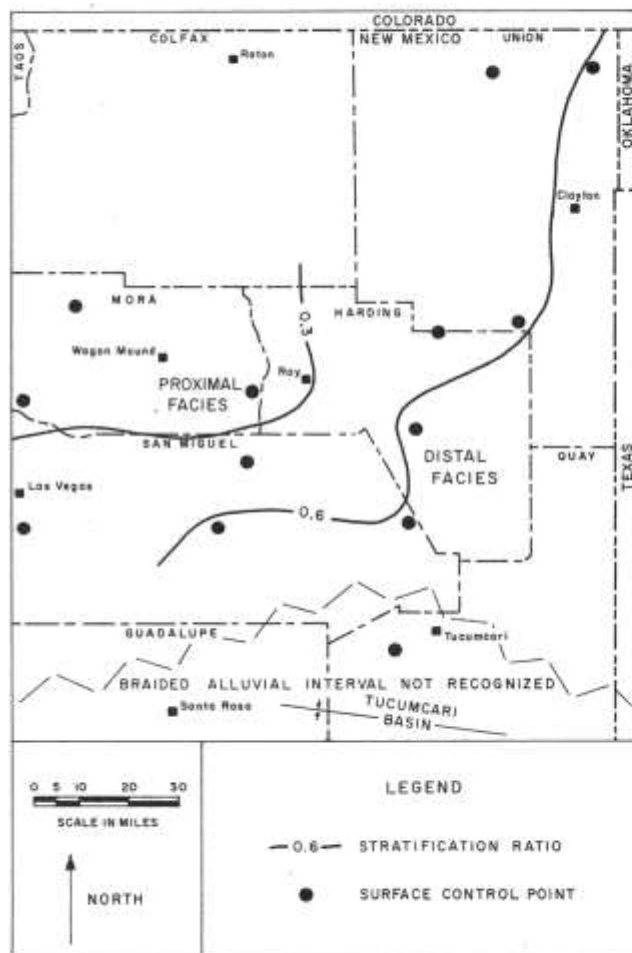


FIGURE 17 – Stratification ratio (planar cross stratification/planar cross stratification + horizontal stratification) for the braided alluvial interval of the Dakota Sandstone, northeastern New Mexico.

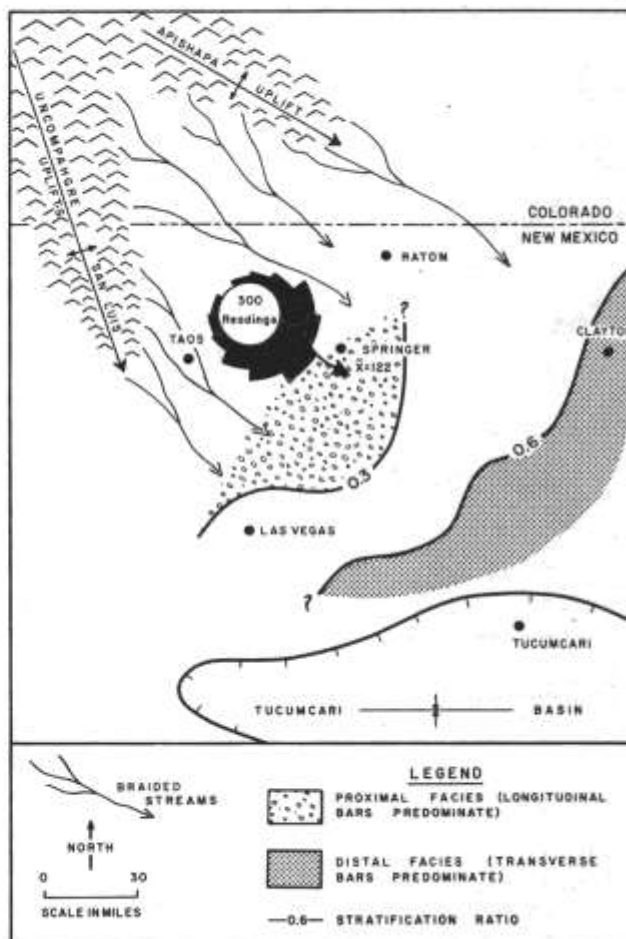


FIGURE 19 – Paleogeographic map of northeastern New Mexico and southern Colorado during deposition of the braided alluvial interval of the Dakota Sandstone. Source areas after McGookey and others (1972).

stream facies) was indicated by a low stratification ratio (0.3 or less) and that a predominance of transverse bars (distal braided stream facies) was indicated by a high stratification ratio (0.6 or greater).

The stratification ratio for the braided alluvial interval varies from 0.21 to 0.66 (table 4, Appendix). The ratio is lower (predominantly longitudinal bars, fig. 15) in the west and northwest and is higher (predominantly transverse bars, fig. 16) in the east and southeast (fig. 17). This relationship indicates a transition from proximal to distal braided stream facies moving eastward and southeastward (fig. 17). The same proximal-distal relationship can also be illustrated using a three-component sedimentary facies plot (fig. 18). Similar data for the South Platte-Platte River in Colorado and Nebraska and the Silurian clastics of the north-central Appalachians (Smith, 1970) are included for comparison.

Smith (1970, p. 3009 and 2996) noted that the downstream distance to the distal facies, where transverse bars

first became predominant, varied from 100 miles for the Silurian clastics to 230 miles for the South Platte-Platte River. The data from the Silurian clastics (Smith, 1970) compared well with data from the Dakota braided alluvial interval which had a downstream distance of 100 to 160 miles to the distal braided stream-facies (fig. 19). The distance differences of the South Platte-Platte River versus the Dakota braided alluvial interval and the Silurian clastics are probably the result of either differences in individual braided stream gradients or errors in determining the exact distance to the source area in ancient sediments.

Fig. 19 is a paleogeographic map of northeastern New Mexico and southern Colorado during deposition of the braided alluvial interval of the Dakota Sandstone. This interpretation is based on isopach trends, paleocurrent directions, grain size variations, and sedimentary structure analysis.

## SUMMARY

Regional paleocurrent analysis of the braided alluvial interval of the Dakota Sandstone in northeastern New Mexico indicates a dominant southeasterly transport direction. This conclusion is supported by the decrease in mean grain size and thickness to the east and southeast. Analysis of stratification ratio (planar cross stratification/planar cross stratification + horizontal stratification; Smith, 1970) indicates that longitudinal bars are predominant (proximal braided stream facies) in the west and northwest parts, and that transverse bars are predominant (distal braided stream facies) to the east and southeast.

The downstream distance to the distal braided stream facies for the braided alluvial interval of the Dakota Sandstone varies from 100 to 160 miles. This range compares favorably with the 100-mile distance to the distal braided stream facies determined by Smith (1970) for the Silurian clastics of the north-central Appalachians. The sediment dispersal pattern and the presence of proximal braided stream facies in the west and northwest parts of the study area indicates that the source areas were the San Luis and Apishapa uplifts of Colorado and New Mexico (fig. 19).

*References & Appendix follow*

## REFERENCES

- Allen, J. R. L., 1970, Studies in fluvial sedimentation: A comparison of fining upwards cyclothems, with special reference to coarse member composition and interpretation: *Jour. Sed. Petrology*, v. 40, no. 1, p. 298-323.
- Asquith, G. B., 1974, Manual of sedimentological computer programs: West Texas State University Press, 22 p.
- Baldwin, Brewster, and Muehlberger, W. R., 1959, Geologic studies of Union County, New Mexico: New Mexico Bureau Mines Mineral Resources, Bull. 63, 171 p.
- Baltz, E. H., 1965, Stratigraphy and history of Raton basin, and notes on San Luis basin, Colorado-New Mexico: *Am. Assoc. Petroleum Geologists, Bull.*, v. 49, no. 11, p. 2041-2075.
- Blatt, Harvey, Middleton, G. B., and Murray, R. C., 1972, Origin of sedimentary rocks: Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 634 p.
- Brand, J. P., and Mattox, R. B., 1972, Pre-Dakota Cretaceous formations of northwestern Texas and northeastern New Mexico: New Mexico Geol. Soc., Guidebook 23rd Field Conf., p. 98-104.
- Brown, L. F., Cleaves II, A. W., and Erxleben, A. W., 1973, Pennsylvanian depositional systems in northcentral Texas, a guide for interpreting terrigenous clastic rocks in a cratonic basin: Bureau Econ. Geol., Univ. Texas, Austin, Guidebook 14, 121 p.
- Durand, David, and Greenwood, J. A., 1958, Modification of the Raleigh test for uniformity in the analysis of two dimensional orientation data: *Jour. Geology*, v. 66, no. 3, p. 229-238.
- Folk, R. L., and Ward, W. C., 1957, Brazos River bar; a study in the significance of grain size parameters: *Jour. Sed. Petrology*, v. 27, p. 3-26.
- Griggs, R. L., and Read, C. B., 1959, Revisions in stratigraphic nomenclature in Tucumcari-Sabinoso area, northeastern New Mexico: *Am. Assoc. Petroleum Geologists, Bull.*, v. 43, p. 2003-2007.
- High, L. R., and Picard, M. D., 1974, Reliability of cross stratification types as paleocurrent indicators in fluvial rocks: *Jour. Sed. Petrology*, v. 44, p. 158-168.
- Jacka, A. D., and Brand, J. P., 1972, An analysis of Dakota Sandstone in the vicinity of Las Vegas, New Mexico, and eastward to the Canadian River valley: New Mexico Geol. Soc., Guidebook 23rd Field Conf., p. 105-107.
- , 1973, Interpretation of depositional environments from selected exposures of Paleozoic and Mesozoic rocks in north-central New Mexico: Panhandle Geol. Soc., Guidebook Field Conf., September 19-21, 49 p.
- King, P. B., 1959, The evolution of North America: Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 189 p.
- Mankin, C. J., 1958, Stratigraphy and sedimentology of Jurassic and pre-Graneros Cretaceous rocks, northeastern New Mexico: New Mexico Bureau Mines Mineral Resources, Open-file Rept. 49, 231 p.
- McGookey, D. P., Haun, J. D., Lyle, A. H., and Goodell, H. G., 1972, Cretaceous system in Geologic atlas of the Rocky Mountain region: Rocky Mountain Assoc. of Geologists, p. 190-228.
- Moiola, R. J., and Weiser, David, 1968, Textural parameters, an evaluation: *Jour. Sed. Petrology*, v. 38, p. 45-53.
- Muehlberger, W. R., Baldwin, Brewster, and Foster, R. W., 1967, High Plains northeastern New Mexico, Raton-Capulin Mountain-Clayton: New Mexico Bureau Mines and Mineral Resources, Scenic Trips to the Geologic Past No. 7, 107 p.
- Reeside, J. B., 1957, Paleocology of Cretaceous seas in western interior of the United States in *Treatise on Marine Ecology and Paleocology*: Geol. Soc. America, Memoir 67, p. 505-542.
- Scott, R. W., 1970, Stratigraphy and sedimentary environments of lower Cretaceous rocks, southern western interior: *Am. Assoc. Petroleum Geologists, Bull.*, v. 54, p. 1225-1244.
- Smith, N. D., 1970, The braided stream depositional environment; comparison of the Platte River with some Silurian clastic rocks, northcentral Appalachians: *Geol. Soc. America, Bull.*, v. 81; p. 2993-3014.

## APPENDIX

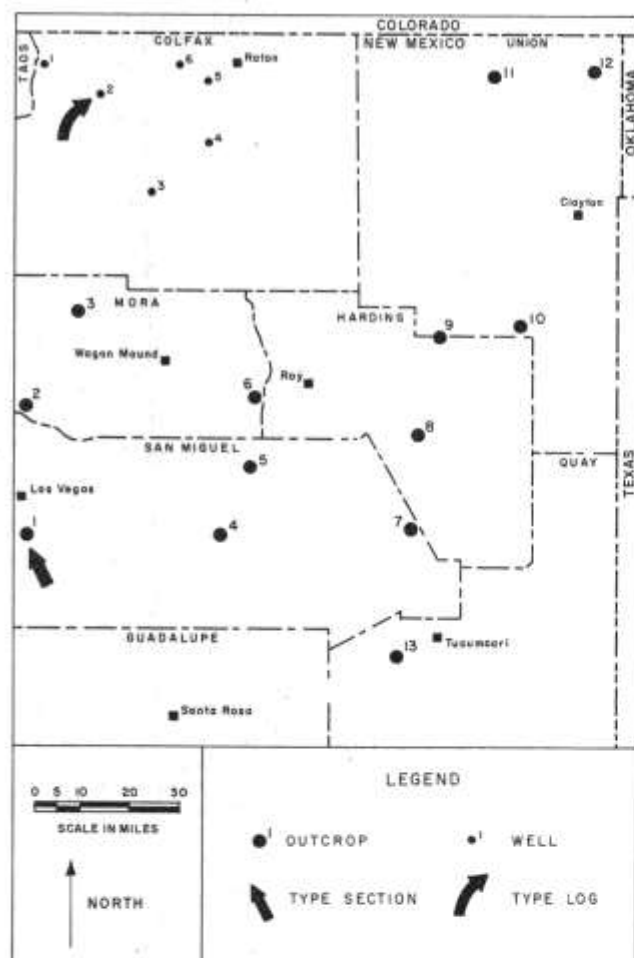


FIGURE 20 — Section and well locations for the braided alluvial interval of the Dakota Sandstone, northeastern New Mexico.

TABLE 1 — Thickness of braided alluvial interval of the Dakota Sandstone, northeastern New Mexico

Measured Section	Thickness (feet)	Well Log	Thickness (feet)
1. Romeroville	101	1. Vermejo # 1	115
2. Shock Ranch	195	2. Vermejo # 2	95
3. Lopez Ranch	180	3. W.S. Ranch # 1	103
4. Trujillo	50	4. Maxwell Land Grant # 1	74
5. Esquibel Ranch	161	5. St. Louis # 1	66
6. Canadian River	154	6. St. Louis # 2	60
7. Trigg Ranch	116		
8. Mosquero	128		
9. Bueyeros	62		
10. Poling Ranch	59		
11. Farr Ranch	75		
12. Black Mesa	45		
13. Tucumcari *	78		

\* The braided alluvial interval is not recognized at this location in the study area. The thickness of the correlative Mesa Rica Sandstone was measured.

TABLE 2 — Paleocurrent data (25 readings per section) Dakota Sandstone, northeastern New Mexico

Section	Vector Mean Direction	Consistency Ratio (percent)	Standard Deviation
1. Romeroville	107.6*	47.4	89.7
2. Shock Ranch	118.1*	65.9	63.7
3. Lopez Ranch	115.2*	80.3	38.8
4. Trujillo	149.7*	63.8	55.2
5. Esquibel Ranch	115.9*	72.0	46.2
6. Canadian River	123.5*	59.2	57.8
7. Trigg Ranch	94.2*	46.1	89.1
8. Mosquero	165.1*	36.8	83.9
9. Bueyeros	137.1*	50.2	68.0
10. Poling Ranch	106.9*	20.5	94.7
11. Farr Ranch	170.3*	49.7	67.4
12. Black Mesa	155.0*	62.1	56.5

TABLE 3 — Grain size data (average of 5 samples per section) Dakota Sandstone, northeastern New Mexico

Section	Mean Grain Size (phi)	Mean Standard Deviation	Mean Skewness	Mean Kurtosis
1. Romeroville	2.26	0.50	+0.23	1.20
2. Shock Ranch	2.01	0.68	+0.08	1.20
3. Lopez Ranch	2.08	0.51	+0.09	1.03
4. Trujillo	2.35	0.67	+0.25	1.18
5. Esquibel Ranch	2.69	0.62	+0.27	1.24
6. Canadian River	1.65	0.48	+0.14	1.39
7. Trigg Ranch	2.36	0.50	+0.15	1.17
8. Mosquero	2.61	0.47	+0.13	1.16
9. Bueyeros	2.82	0.60	+0.15	1.29
10. Poling Ranch	2.62	0.44	-0.05	1.22
11. Farr Ranch	2.27	0.50	+0.23	1.23
12. Black Mesa	2.58	0.57	+0.19	1.07

Table 4 follows

TABLE 4 — Sedimentary structure data Dakota Sandstone, northeastern New Mexico.

Section	Planar X-Strat. (percent)	Trough X-Strat. (percent)	Horizontal Strat. (percent)	Ripples (percent)	Stratification Ratio
1. Romeroville	10.3	70.3	17.3	2.1	0.37
2. Shock Ranch	10.8	56.4	32.8	0.0	0.25
3. Lopez Ranch	13.2	38.9	45.2	2.7	0.24
4. Trujillo	42.0	36.0	22.0	0.0	0.66
5. Esquibel Ranch	14.4	56.5	29.1	0.0	0.33
6. Canadian River	9.2	56.5	34.3	0.0	0.21
7. Trigg Ranch	25.8	52.6	20.6	1.0	0.56
8. Mosquero	34.4	44.5	21.1	0.0	0.62
9. Bueyeros	12.1	67.7	12.9	7.3	0.48
10. Poling Ranch	19.6	60.8	19.6	0.0	0.50
11. Farr Ranch	29.2	44.6	24.9	1.3	0.54
12. Black Mesa	37.8	42.2	20.0	0.0	0.65

Composition: Camera-ready copy prepared by  
NM Bureau of Mines & Mineral Resources

Presswork: Text-38" Miehle Offset  
Cover-20" Harris Offset

Binding: Saddlestitched

Stock: Text-60 lb. White Offset  
Cover-65 lb. Gray Hopsack Carnival

Inks: Text—Cal Mira-jet Black  
Cover—Cal PMS 412

