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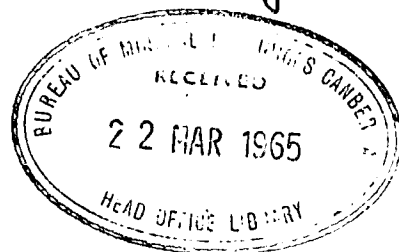
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RECORD No. 1962/77

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CLONCURRY GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY FOR UNDERGROUND WATER, QUEENSLAND 1960

by

P.E. Mann and W.A. Wiebenga



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SUMMARY

This Record describes a geophysical survey for underground water in the Cloncurry River valley, at the request of the Queensland Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, on behalf of the Cloncurry Shire Council.

Appreciable differences in ground water level in different sections along the valley suggest the presence of rock bars across the valley. In choosing bore sites it is desirable to know the position of these rock bars.

Plate 12 shows the location of rock bars that were indicated by ground water level data. Plate 13 shows the position of rock bars that were indicated by geophysical data. Good agreement exists between the two sets of indications. Sites that were based on geophysical data are suggested for water bores.

1. INTRODUCTION

The existing water supply for the town of Cloncurry is pumped from a bore in the bed of the Cloncurry River (T.W.S. well, see Plate 1). During the dry season, from April to December, this supply is supplemented from a well 3000 ft further up-stream, and known as Dempsey's Soak.

Because of the growing demand for water, the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission of Queensland (referred to as the Commission) began in 1956 an initial investigation to select sites for bores to augment the water supply. The Commission drilled several 4-in. bores at different locations in the river bed, principally to determine the nature and thickness of the alluvium. In general the results are regarded as inconclusive because it is suspected that some of the bores stopped at boulders rather than in the bedrock.

Appreciable differences in ground water level between the T.W.S. well location and the well at Dempsey's Soak suggests the presence of an underground rock bar. During the seismic survey, the ground water level was observed in some of the shallow (depth 2 to 3 ft) shot-holes. Observed ground water levels were plotted on the seismic profiles because they may be indirectly used to deduce or confirm the presence of rock bars.

Although investigations for a dam to collect surface water began in 1956, the Cloncurry town water supply will probably need to rely on ground water sources for some years to come. In choosing bore sites for water development, it would be desirable to know the location of any rock bars.

Hence, the Commission requested the Bureau of Mineral Resources to carry out a geophysical investigation to disclose any areas where rock bars across the valley are present beneath the alluvium.

The Bureau provided a geophysical party which consisted of P.E. Mann (party leader and geophysicist), D.J. Harwood (geophysicist), and J.P. Pigott (geophysical assistant). Four field assistants and some additional transport were supplied by the Commission. The topographical surveying was done by McIntyre and Associates, consulting engineers to the Cloncurry Shire Council. The Council supplied gelignite and detonators. Field operations took place between 10th and 27th June and between 25th and 27th July 1960.

2. GEOLOGY

The detailed geological information available at the time of the survey consisted of logs of bores drilled by the Commission between 1956 and 1958.

The regional geology of the area is described by Carter (1959). The alluvium in the river bed consists predominantly of sand, with clay, silt, and gravel, overlying bedrock of Lower Proterozoic age. The gravel stones, generally 2 to 3 in. in diameter, are well rounded.

The bedrock consists of quartzite, weathered basic volcanics, and schists. Outcrops along the river banks are rare.

A pink granite crops out at the Mount Isa-road crossing. Approximately one hundred yards down-stream from the power house is an outcrop of fractured quartzite with travertine. Black Mountain, opposite Black Mountain crossing, consists of siliceous haematite. Between the railway bridge and the gravel pit borehole line there are outcrops of mineralised dolerite 250 yards east of the river. At the gravel pit line heavily fractured schists of the Corella Formation crop out on both river banks (see Plate 1).

3. METHODS AND EQUIPMENT

Seismic method

The seismic refraction method used on this survey has been described by Heiland (1946, p.548) and Polak and Hawkins (1956).

The following arrangement of geophones and shot-points (called the geophone 'spread') were used :

- (1) Normal spreads, in which the geophones are spaced 50 ft apart in a straight line, with shot-points at 50 and 200 ft beyond both ends in line with spread.
- (2) Weathering spreads, to obtain information about the near-surface layers, with geophones 10 ft apart, and shot distances 10, 50, and 200 ft.

The equipment used was a portable 12-channel refraction/reflection seismograph, manufactured by Midwestern Geophysical Laboratories, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Brush geophones with a natural frequency of 20 c/s were used to record the vertical motion of the ground.

Resistivity method

In the resistivity method (Wiebenga, 1955) an electric current is applied to the ground through two current electrodes and the potential difference is measured between two additional electrodes at points between the two current electrodes. The ratio of the measured potential to the applied current is a measure of the ground resistance. In the Wenner configuration the electrodes are equally spaced.

The depth of penetration of the current is roughly the same as the electrode spacing. However, this depends to some extent on the relative resistivity values of the various subsurface layers through which the current passes to complete the electrical circuit. If the electrode spacing, and thus the depth of penetration, is kept constant and the electrode arrangement is progressively moved as a whole, then lateral variations in resistivity of the near-surface layers can be determined. A different electrode spacing can be used to measure the effect of lateral resistivity variations of layers to a different depth. The resistivity of a rock is approximately inversely proportional to the rock porosity and the salinity of the pore solutions. Assuming negligible variations in salinity and a bedrock with much lower porosity than the overlying alluvial sediments, resistivity traversing may be used to disclose the undulations of the bedrock or the presence of rock bars. In the present survey, resistivity traversing with a Wenner configuration was applied with electrode spacings of 50 and 100 ft.

The instruments used were a geophysical megger earth tester (Evershed & Vignoles) and a Japanese earth resistance meter (Yokogawa model L10).

4. RESULTS

Seismic velocities

Although the principal objective of the seismic method is the determination of the depth to elastic (seismic) discontinuities, the seismic velocities give some indication of rock type and the degree of weathering, jointing, and fracturing of the bedrock. Table 1 shows the observed seismic velocities with a tentative interpretation in geological terms, based on experience in other areas.

TABLE 1

<u>Seismic Velocity</u> (ft/sec)	<u>Rock Type</u>
1000 ⁺	Soil and sand.
2400 to 2700	Predominantly clay and silt, moist to water-saturated.
5000 to 5700	Water-saturated alluvial deposits, predominantly sand and gravel.
7000 to 11,000	Very weathered to weathered bedrock.
12,500 to 13,000	Moderately weathered bedrock.
13,000 to 14,000	Slightly weathered, or possibly fractured or sheared bedrock.
16,000 to 20,500	Unweathered bedrock.

In unconsolidated sediments in which sand and gravel predominate, the top of the 5000 to 5700-ft/sec layer may mark the ground water level; if water-saturated clay and silt are present the ground water level may coincide with the top of the 2400 to 2700-ft/sec layer.

Ground water level

The original evidence for assuming that there are rock bars in the river bed was based on observed ground water levels in bores; if a rock bar exists it acts as a subsurface dam (or barrier) causing ground-water gradients to be greater than average down-stream from the rock bar, and less than average up-stream.

During the seismic investigations, ground water was present in some of the shallow shot-holes (depth about 3 ft). Plate 12 shows a plot of the ground water levels observed in the shot-holes together with ground water levels from bore logs, with an exaggerated vertical scale of 50 to 1. The accuracy of the plotted water levels is probably within $\pm \frac{1}{2}$ ft. On Plate 12 there are also plotted the position of the top of the 5000-ft/sec layer, which is considered to be the main aquifer, and the top of the 2500-ft/sec layer, where it has been recorded. The ground water profile shows steeper than average gradients near stations 20, 104, 180, and 230. The possible location of rock bars is indicated by arrows on Plate 12 at stations 30, 112, 182, and 238. Possibly there is a minor rock bar near station 202.

Seismic and resistivity profiles

Plates 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 show the results of seismic work in the form of cross-sections, together with resistivity data. With the aid of Table 1 the seismic velocities may be interpreted in geological terms. Plate 13 summarises the seismic depth-determinations in one cross-section with an exaggerated vertical scale of 50 to 1.

From stations 198 to 208, and from 238 to 348 (Traverses F, G, H, J, K, L, and M) the seismic profiles show a 2400 to 2700-ft/sec layer above the 5000-ft/sec layer. This layer, shown on Plate 12 but not on Plate 13, is a moist to water-saturated formation in which clay and silt predominate. Elsewhere along the traverse this layer is either missing or too thin to be detected. The ground water table agrees better with the top of the approximately 2500-ft/sec layer than with the top of the 5000-ft/sec layer, where both layers are present.

Bedrock velocities of 13,000 to 14,000 ft/sec suggest the presence of shear or fault zones near stations 178 (Traverse F) and 326 (Traverse K).

A zone of high-resistivity values on the 100-ft spacing resistivity profile between stations 182 (Traverse F) and 254 (Traverses G and H) (where the river valley is narrow) suggests shallow bedrock, probably with low-porosity alluvial gravel and sand.

Rock bars may be found in places where the weathered bedrock is shallow, viz. near station 38 (Traverse A), between stations 98 (Traverse C) and 128 (Traverse D), probably between stations 188 (Traverse F) and 248 (Traverse G), and perhaps south of station 348 (Traverse M).

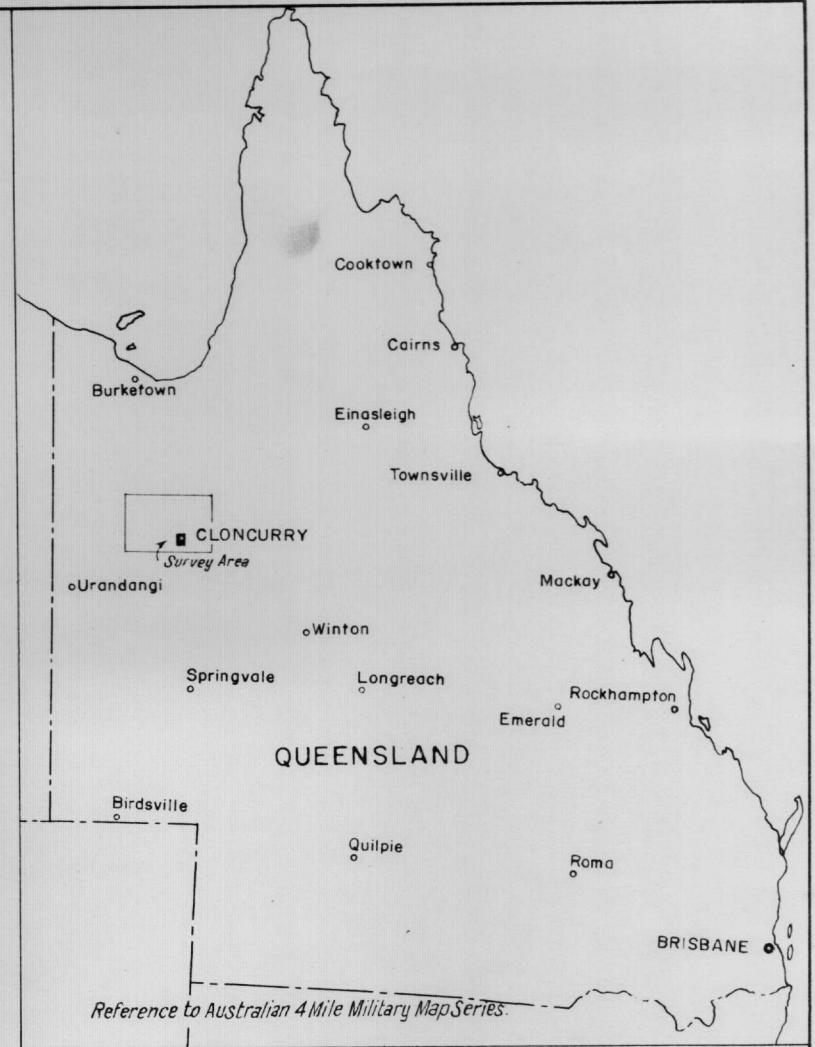
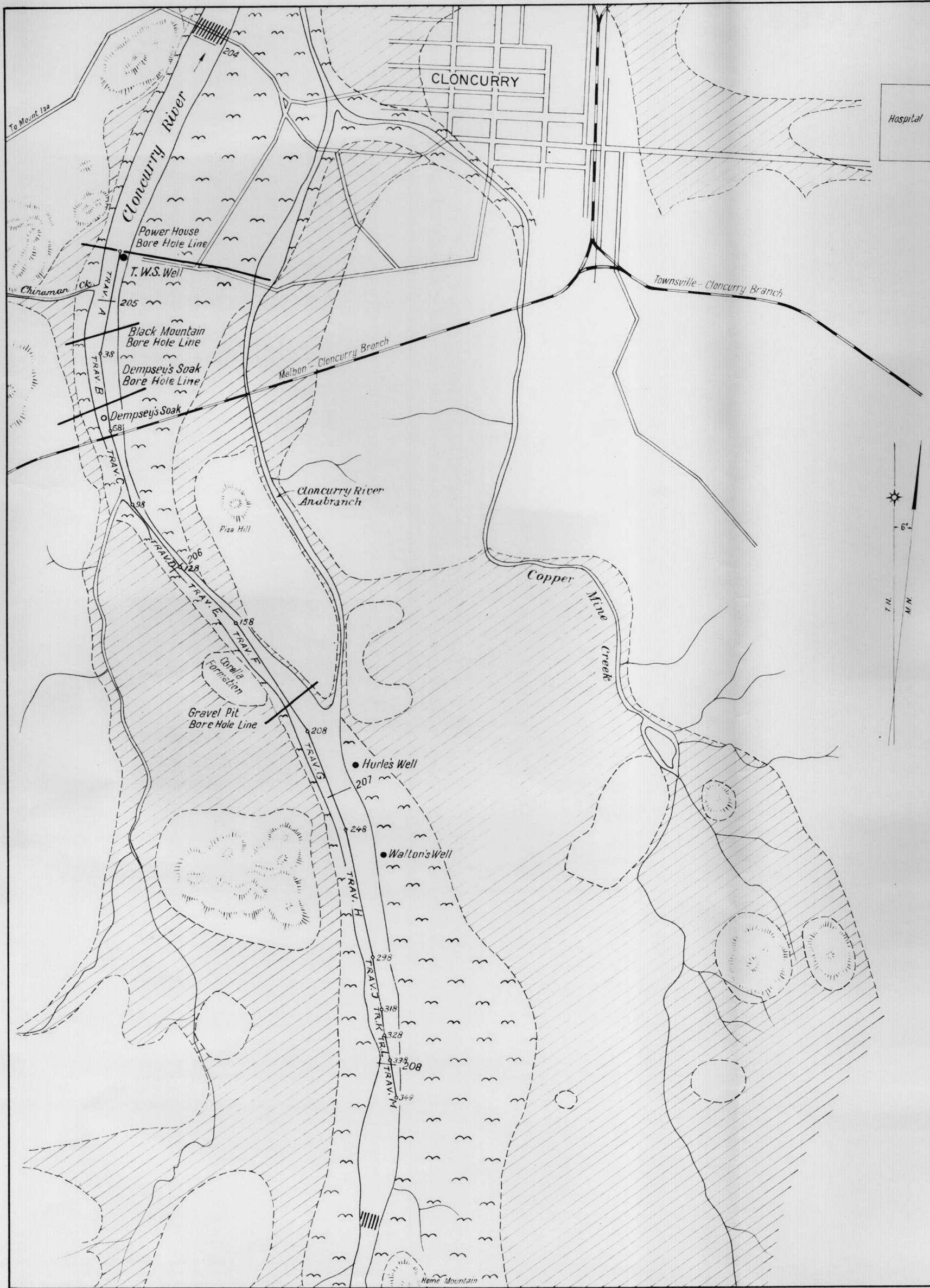
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A comparison of Plates 12 and 13 shows very good agreement between the locations of rock bars suggested by ground-water-level data and by the seismic cross-sections.

Targets for water bores should be located between the indicated rock bars, where the weathered bedrock is deepest. On Plate 13 recommended locations for water bores are indicated near stations 56, 74, and 85; 152 and 158; 258, 268, and 277; and 314 and 325. In the selection of the sites the resistivity data have been taken into consideration. The borehole at station 325 should be deep enough to check whether the suggested shear zone in the bedrock contains a fresh-water supply or not.

6. REFERENCES

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|------|---|
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| WIEBENGA, W.A. | 1955 | Geophysical investigations of water
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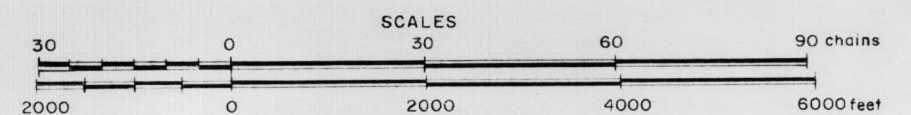


LEGEND

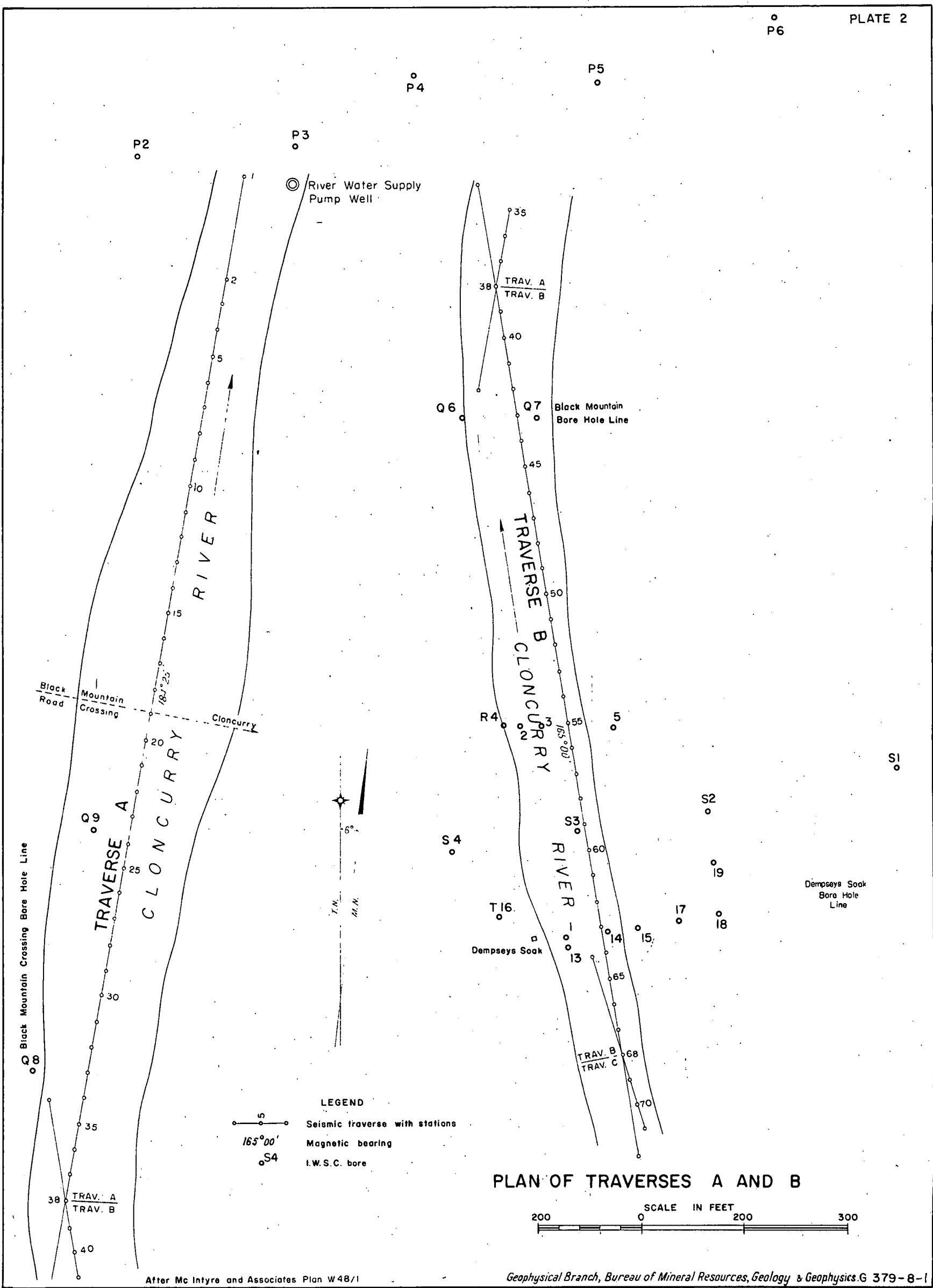
- APPROXIMATE DEFINITION OF ALLUVIUM.
- " " " " FLAT PEDIMENT AREAS - SOMETIMES SHALLOW SOIL COVER.
- ROCK BARS EVIDENT IN CLONCURRY RIVER CHANNEL.
- LOCATION OF I.W.S.C. BORE LINES.
- WELL
- SOAK
- ADOPTED MIDDLE THREAD MILEAGE (A.M.T.M.)
- SEISMIC TRAVERSES WITH STATION NUMBER
- RAILWAY

CLONCURRY RIVER GROUND WATER INVESTIGATION QUEENSLAND, 1960

GEOLOGY AND LOCATION OF GEOPHYSICAL TRAVERSES



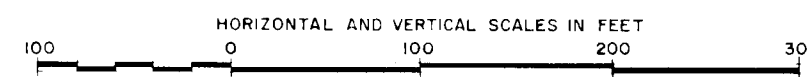
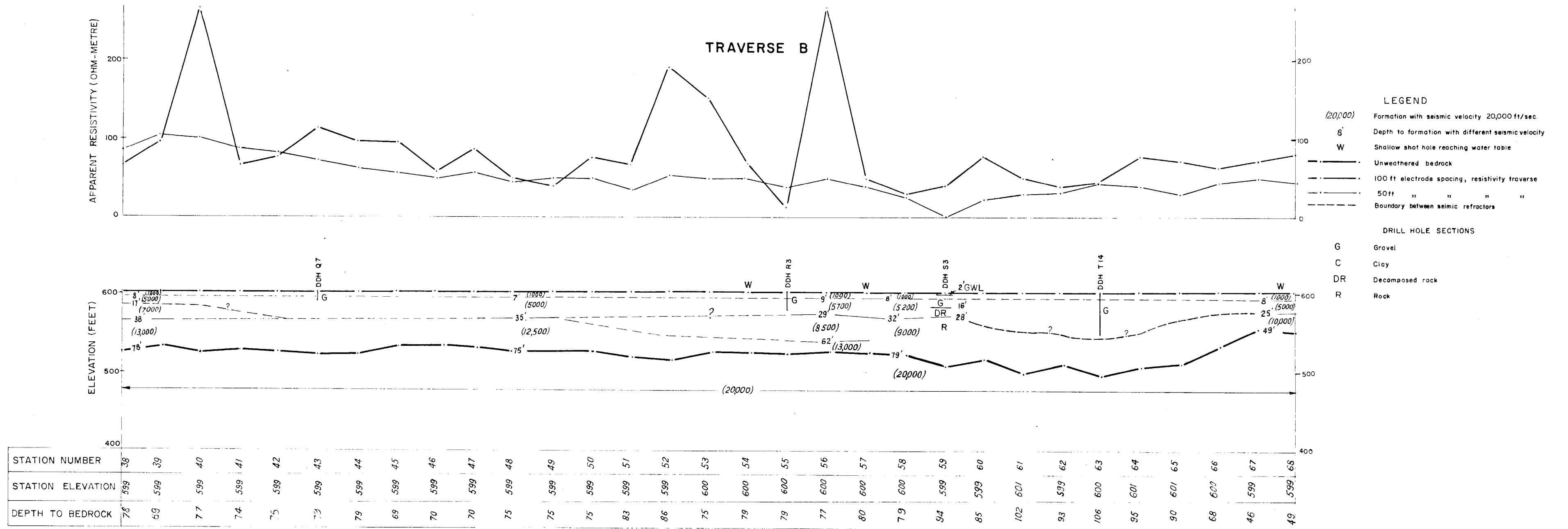
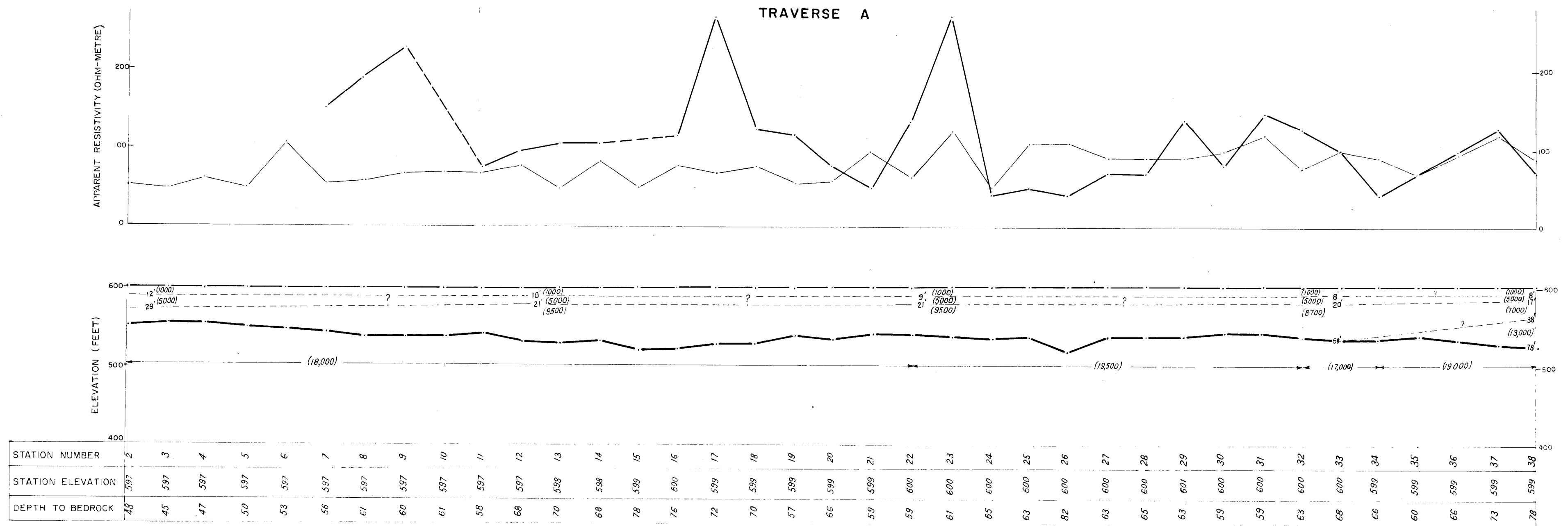
After I.W.S.C. Plan M17416



After Mc Intyre and Associates Plan W48/1

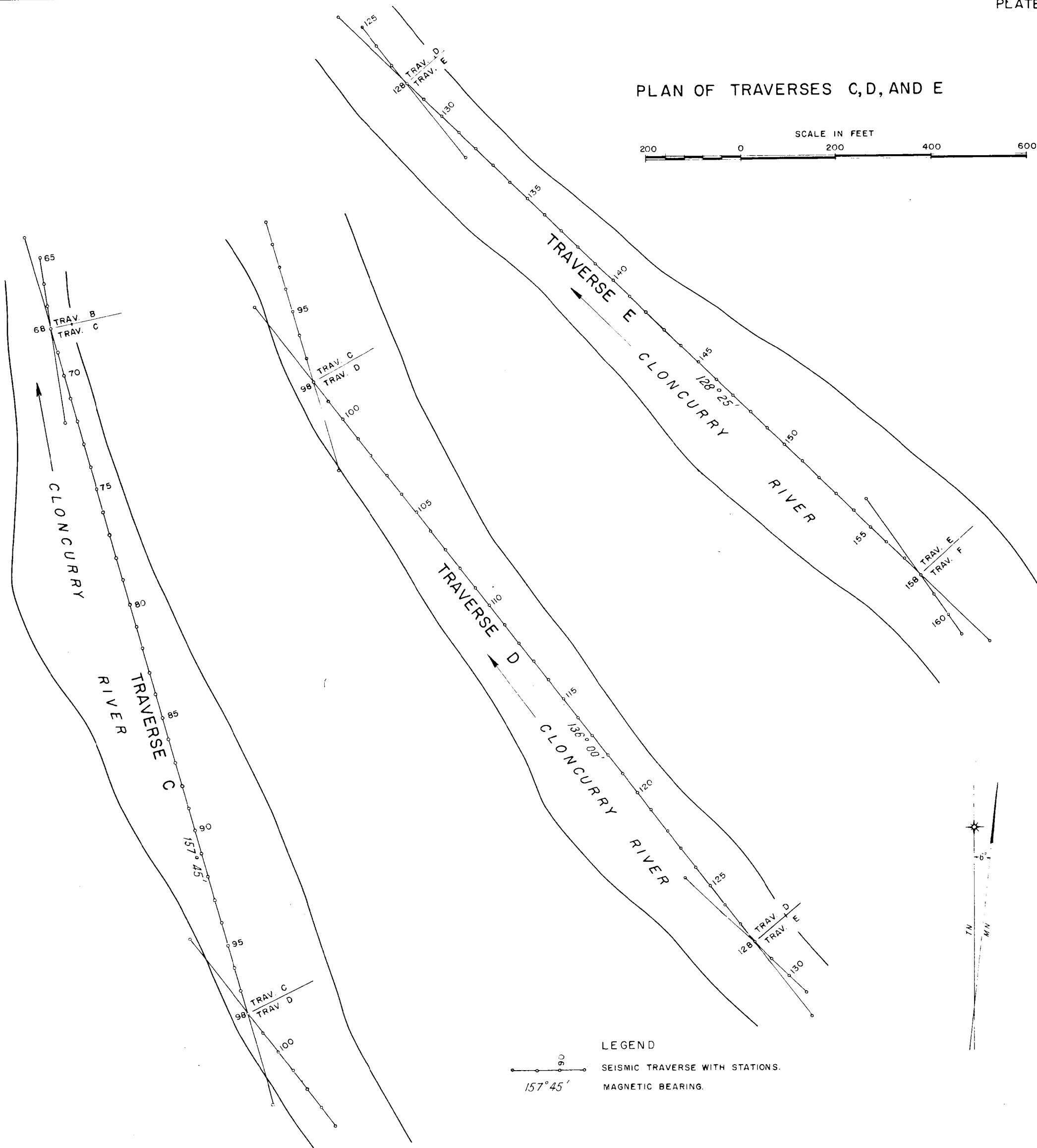
Geophysical Branch, Bureau of Mineral Resources, Geology & Geophysics. G 379-8-1

To Accompany Record No. 1962/77

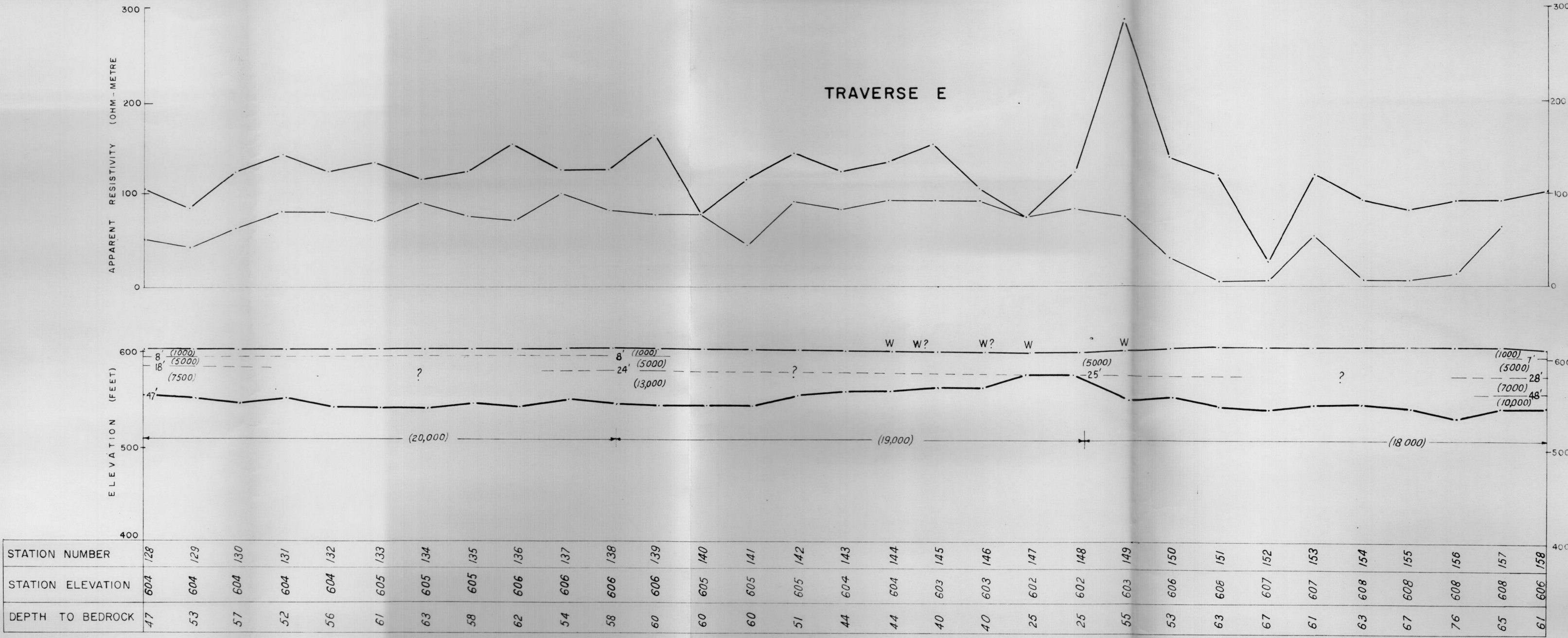
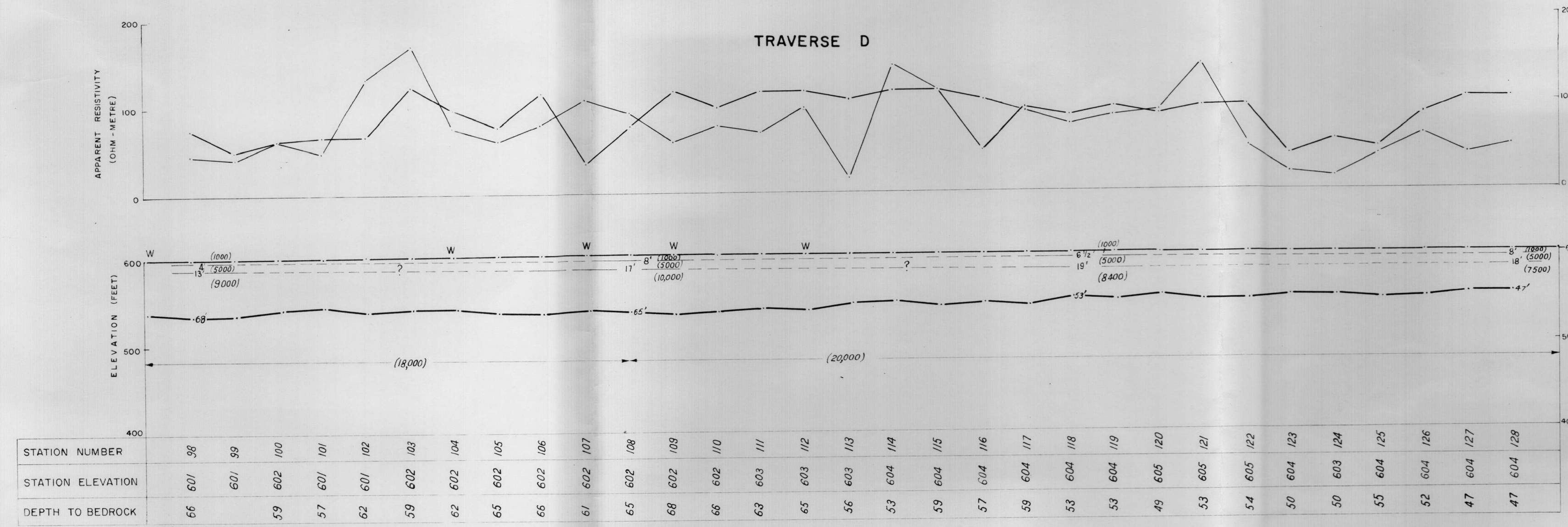
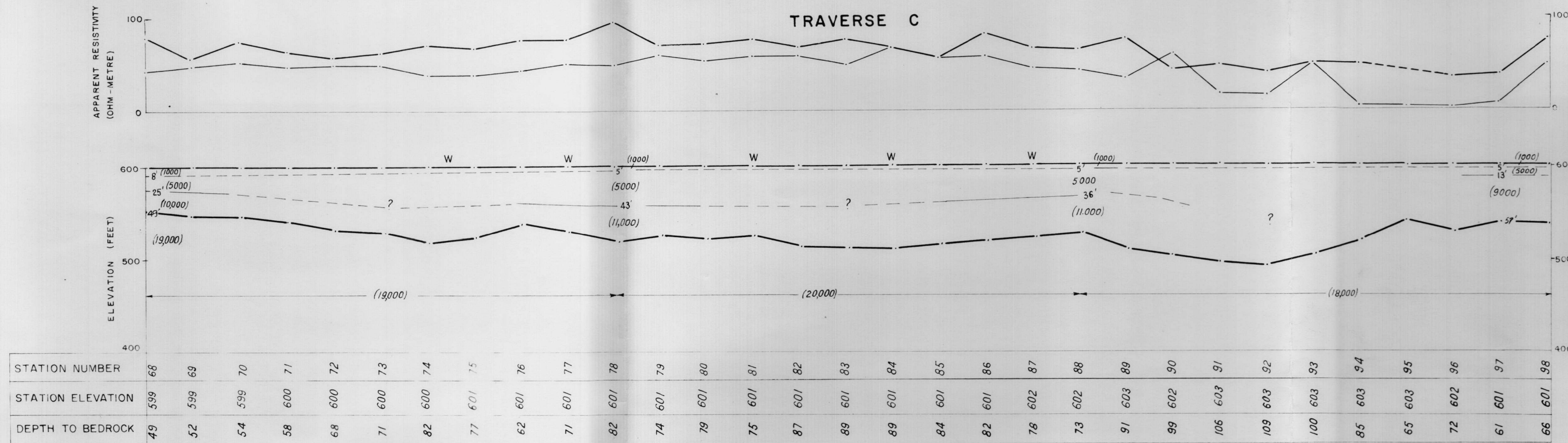


TRAVERSES A AND B
CROSS-SECTIONS AND APPARENT-RESISTIVITY PROFILES

SCALE IN FEET

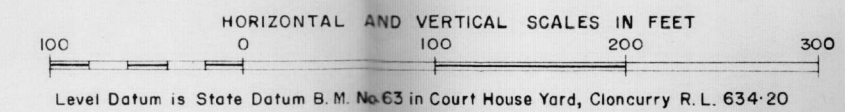
A horizontal scale bar with markings at 200, 0, 200, 400, and 600 feet. The bar is divided into segments by vertical tick marks. The segments between 200 and 0, 0 and 200, 200 and 400, and 400 and 600 are each subdivided into four equal parts, indicating a scale of 50 feet per subdivision.

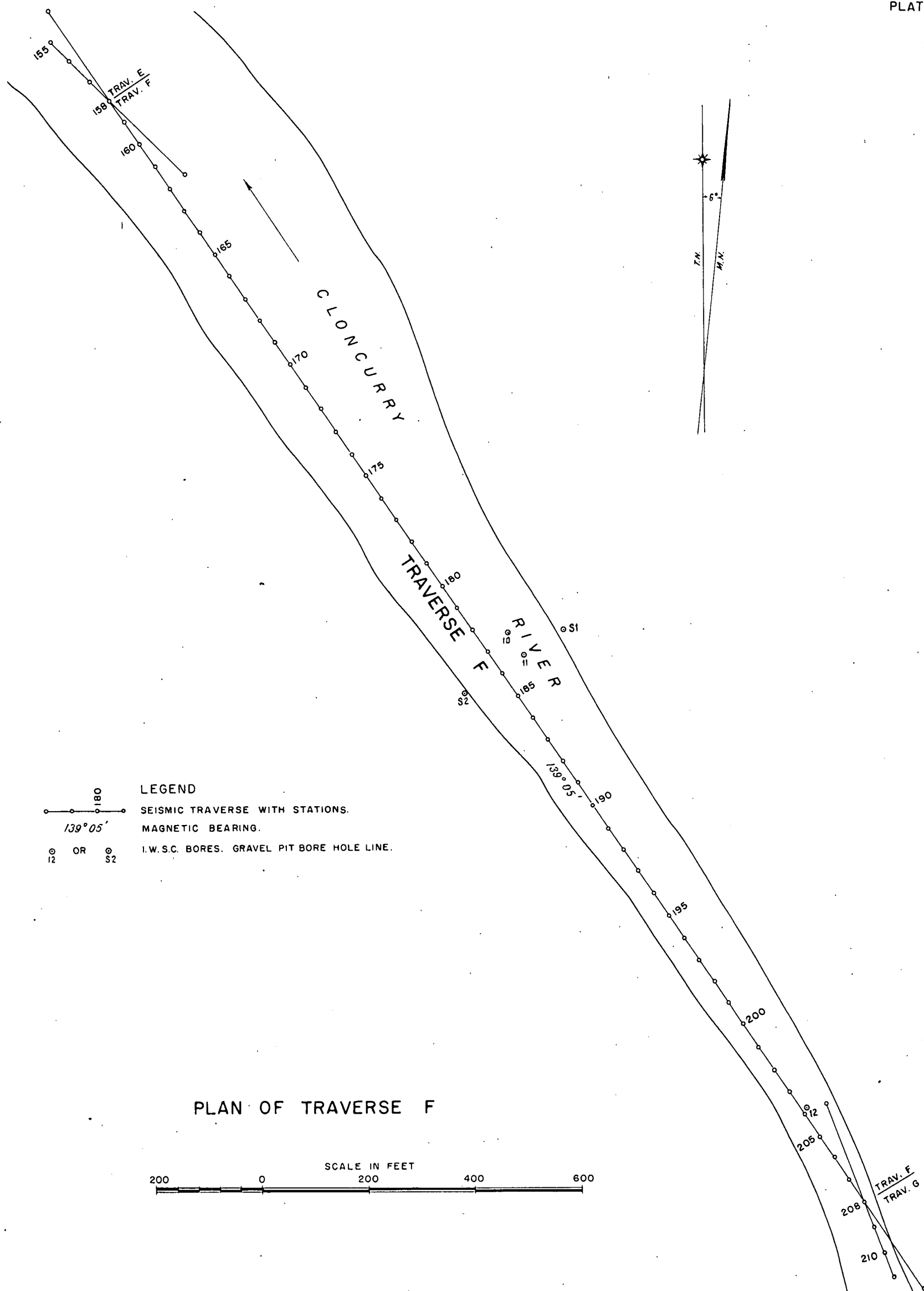
SEISMIC TRAVERSE WITH STATIONS.
MAGNETIC BEARING.

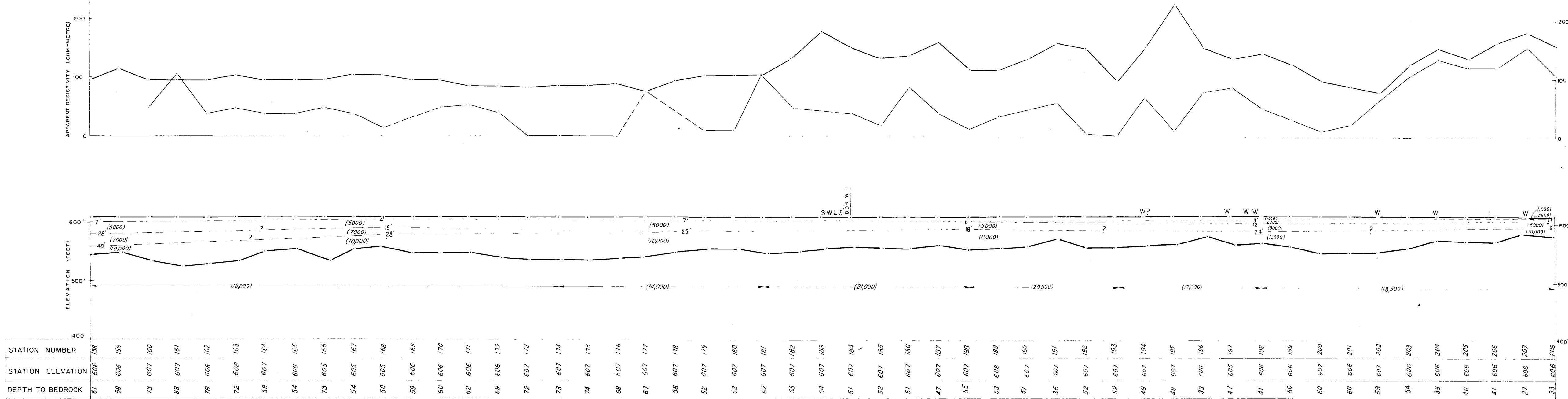


- LEGEND**
- (20,000) Formation with seismic velocity 20,000 ft/sec
 - 5' Depth to formation with different seismic velocity
 - W Shallow shot hole reaching water table
 - W? Probably water encountered but not noted by operator
 - Unweathered bedrock
 - 100 ft electrode spacing apparent resistivity profile
 - 50 ft " " " " " "
 - Boundary between seismic refractors

**TRAVERSES C,D, AND E
CROSS-SECTIONS AND APPARENT-RESISTIVITY PROFILES**



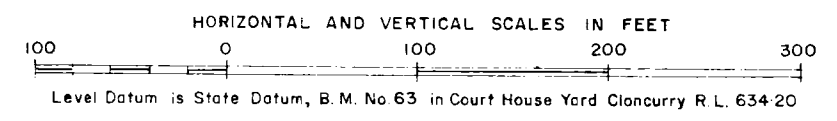




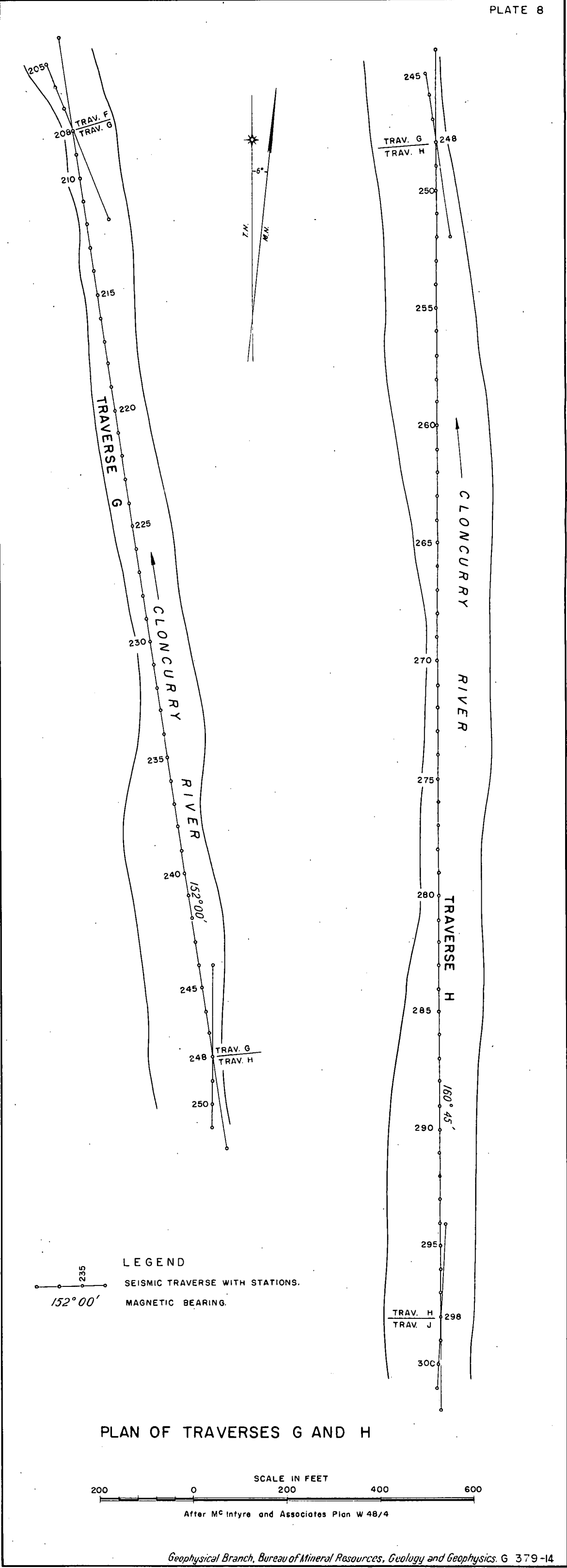
LEGEND

- (21,000) Formation with seismic velocity 21,000 ft/sec
- 5' Depth to formation with different seismic velocity
- W Shallow shot hole reaching water table
- W? Probably water encountered but not noted by operator
- Unweathered bedrock
- 100 ft electrode spacing, apparent-resistivity profile
- 50 ft " " " " "
- Boundary between seismic refractors

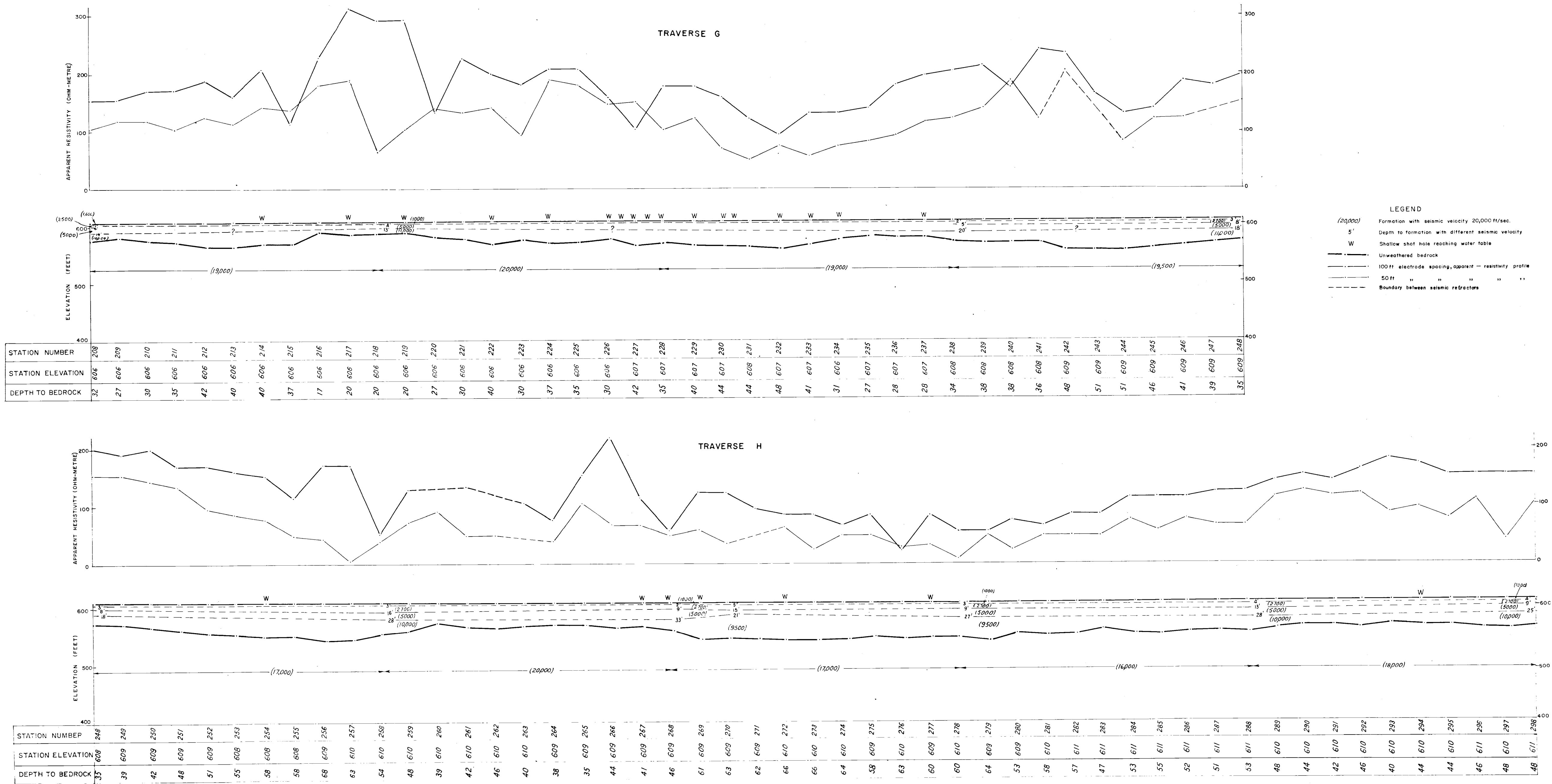
TRAVERSE F
CROSS-SECTION AND APPARENT-RESISTIVITY PROFILE



CLONCURRY RIV. GROUND WATER INVESTIGATION.



CLONCURRY RIVER UNDERGROUND WATER INVESTG. 1960.

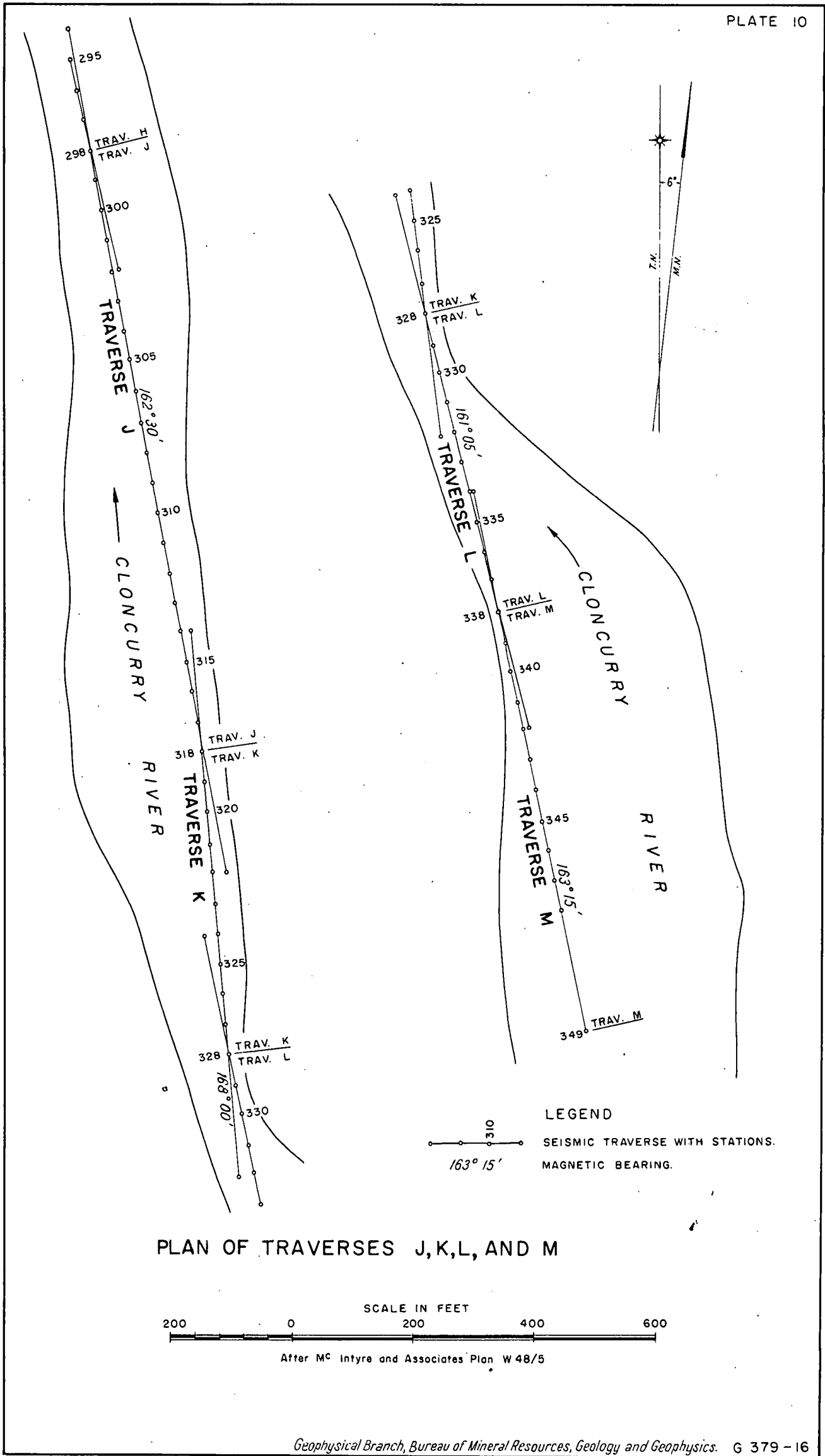


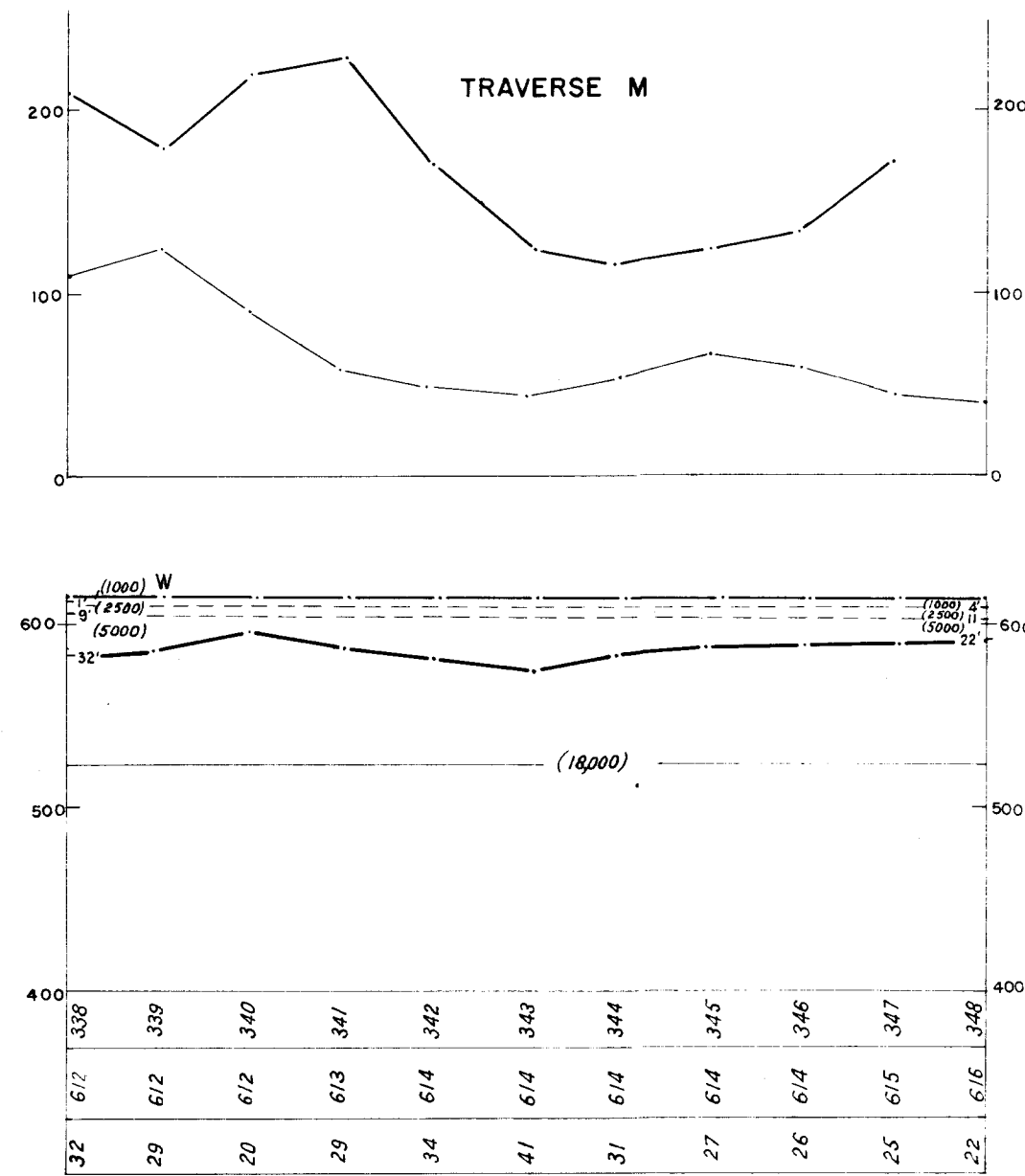
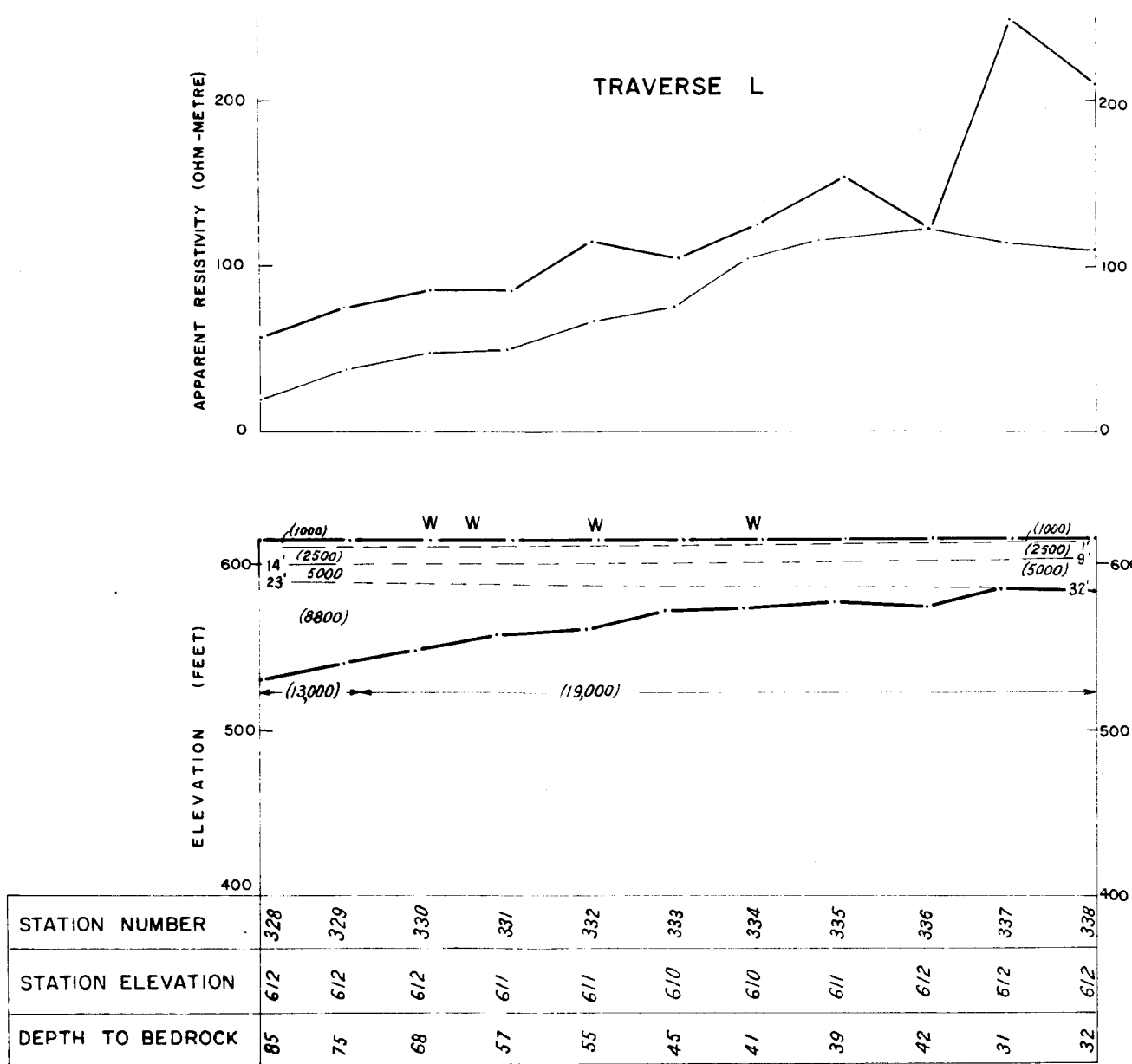
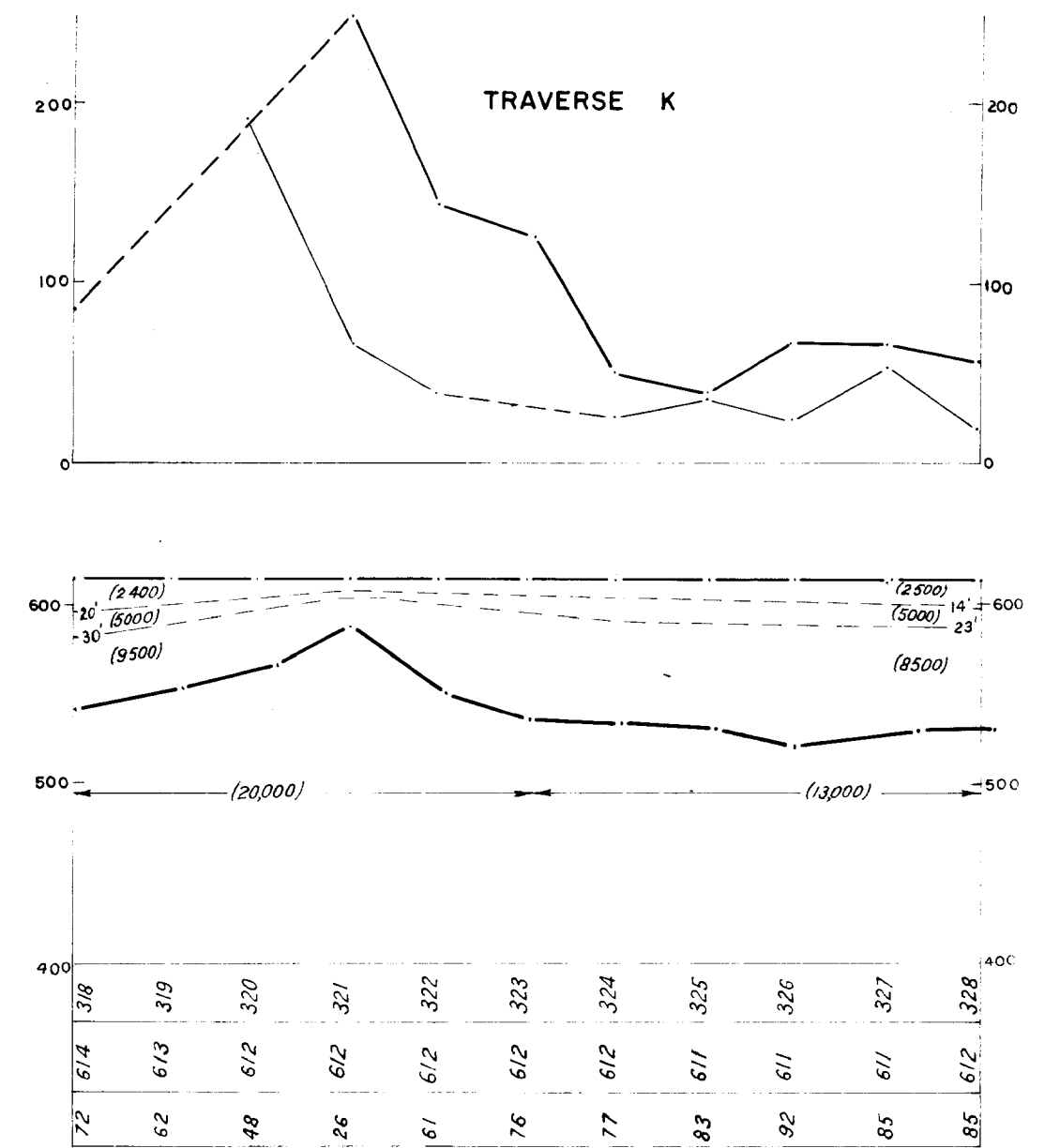
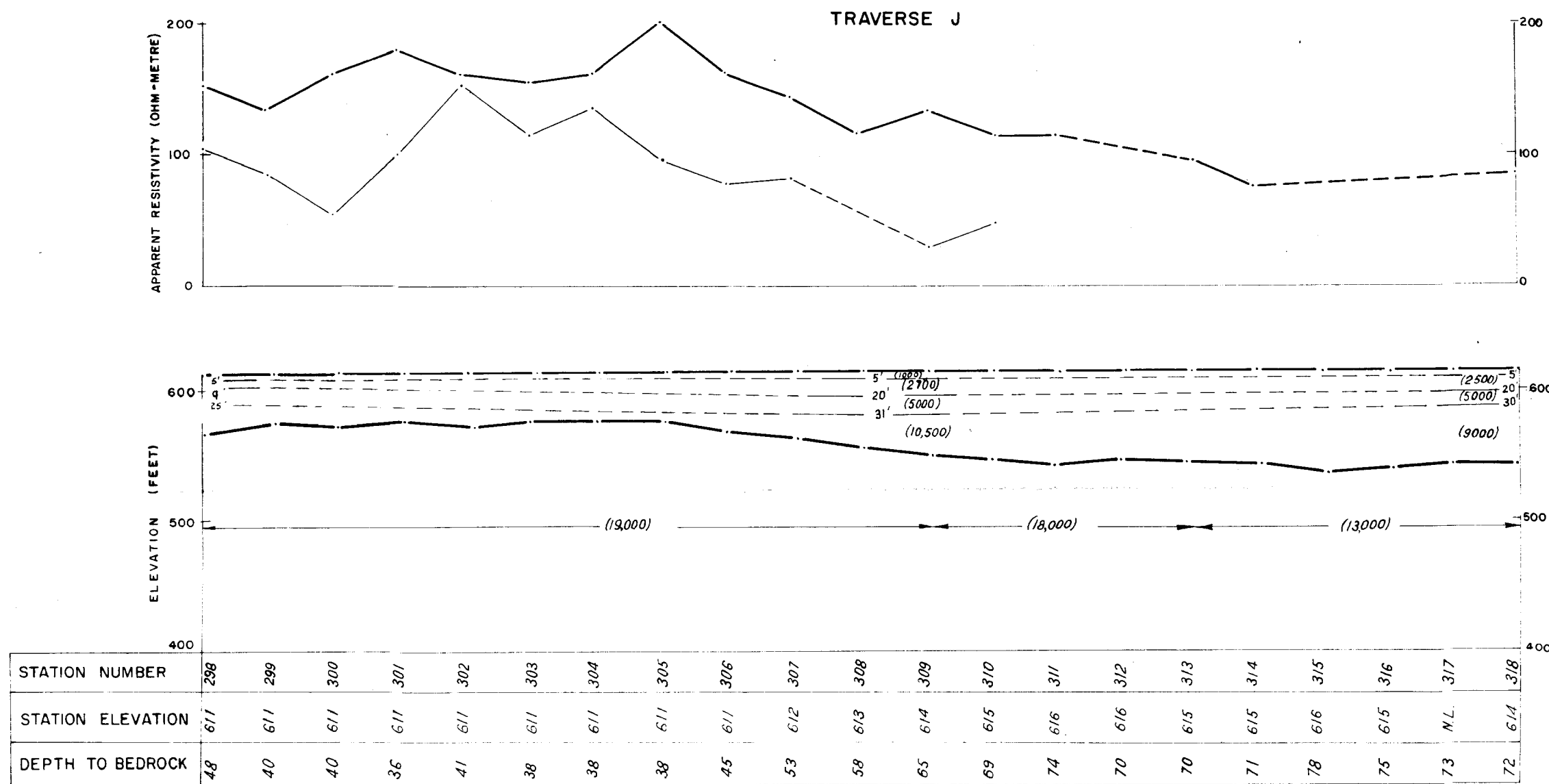
TRAVERSES G AND H
CROSS-SECTIONS AND APPARENT-RESISTIVITY PROFILES

HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL SCALES IN FEET

100 0 100 200 300

Level Datum is State Datum, B.M. No. 63 in Court House Yard, Cloncurry R.L. 634.20





LEGEND

(20000) Formation with seismic velocity 20,000 ft/sec.

14' Depth to formation with different seismic velocity.

W Shallow shot hole reaching water table

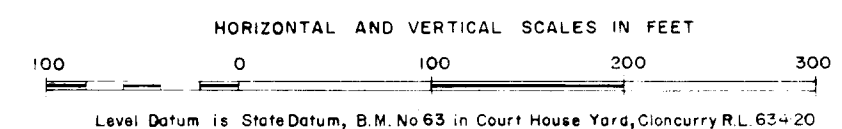
Unweathered bedrock

100 ft electrode spacing, apparent-resistivity profile

50 ft " " " " " "

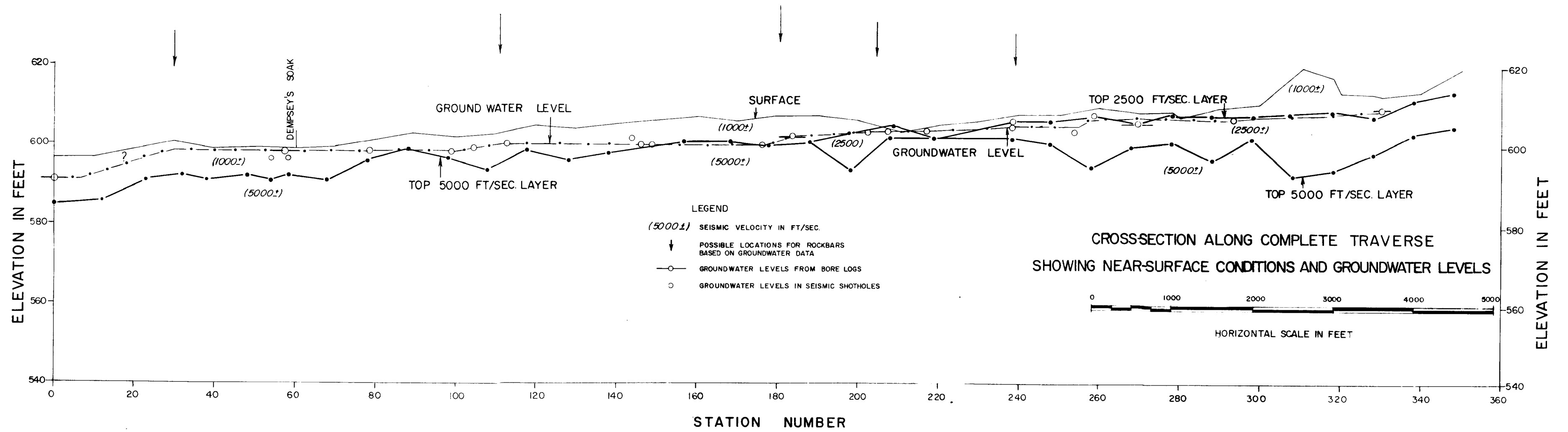
Boundary between seismic refractors

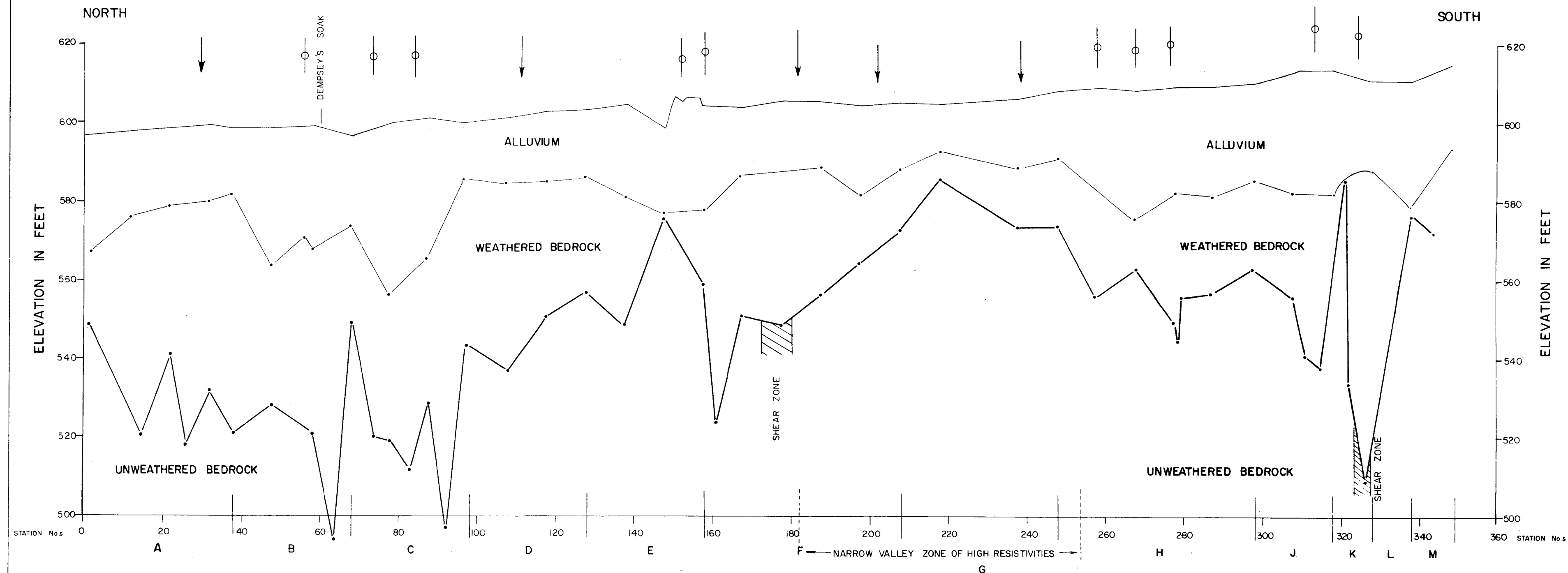
TRAVERSES J, K, L, AND M
CROSS-SECTIONS AND APPARENT-RESISTIVITY PROFILES



NORTH

SOUTH





LEGEND
↓ POSSIBLE LOCATION OF ROCKBARS
BASED ON GROUNDWATER DATA
○ SUGGESTED TARGETS FOR WATER BORING
B TRAVERSE B

SEISMIC CROSS-SECTION
ALONG COMPLETE TRAVERSE

