62/167

2.3 DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BUREAU OF MINERAL RESOURCES, GEOLOGY AND GEOPHYSICS

RECORD No. 1962/167

AMADEUS BASIN
(SOUTHERN MARGIN)
SEISMIC SURVEY,
NORTHERN TERRITORY 1961

by

F. J. MOSS

The information contained in this report has been obtained by the Department of National Development, as part of the policy of the Commonwealth Government, to assist in the exploration and development of mineral resources. It may not be published in any form or used in a company prospectus or statement without the permission in writing of the Director, Bureau of Mineral Resources, Geology and Geophysics.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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CONTENTS

	Page
SUMMARY	
1. GEOLOGY	1
2. PREVIOUS GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS	3
3. OBJECTS OF THE SURVEY	4
4. FIELD WORK	5
5. RESULTS	5
6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	9
7. REFERENCES	10
APPENDIX A Staff and equipment	
APPENDIX B Table of operations	
APPENDIX C Drilling statistics	
Fig. 1 Amadeus Basin, north-south geological cross-sections	Drawing No. G53/B3-18
Fig. 2 Alice Springs to Finke, gravity profile and geological cross-section	facing page
ILLUSTRATIONS	
Plate 1. Regional geology	(G53/B3-1)
Plate 2. Seismic traverses, preliminary Bouguer anomalies, and aeromagnetic profile	(G53/B3-2)
Plate 3. Generalised cross-sections across Basin	(G53/B3-3)
Plate 4. Variable-area reflection cross-section, Polhill, Shot-points 93 to 101A	(G53/B3-4)
Plate 5. Variable-area reflection cross-section, Polhill, Shot-points 102 to 129	(G53/B3-5)
Plate 6. Variable-area reflection cross-section, Deep Well	(G53/B3-6)
Plate 7. Variable-area reflection cross-section, Mount Charlotte	(G53/B3-7)
Plate 8. Variable-area reflection cross-section, Bundooma	(G53/B3-8)
Plate 9. Variable-area reflection cross-section, Horseshoe Bend	(G53/B3 - 9)
Plate 10. Variable-area reflection cross-section, Black Hills	(G53/B3 -1 0)

Record No. 1962/167

Plate	11.	Time/distance Polhill	curves	and	interpretation,	(G53/B3-11)
Plate	12.	Time/distance Deep Well	curves	and	interpretation,	(G53/B3-12)
Plate	13.	Time/distance Mount Charlot		and	interpretation,	(G53/B3-13)
Plate	14.	Time/distance Bundooma	curves	and	interpretation,	(G53/B3-14)
Plate	15.	Time/distance Horseshoe Ben		and	interpretation,	(G53/B3-15)
Plate	16.	Time/distance Lilla Creek	curves	and	interpretation,	(G53/B3-16)
Plate	17.	Time/distance Lilla Creek S		and	interpretation,	(G53/B3-17)

SUMMARY

The Bureau of Mineral Resources Seismic Party No. 2 conducted a survey from 15th May to 25th August 1961 in the Amadeus Basin. Reflection and refraction traverses were shot at intervals, along or near the Alice Springs/Port Augusta railway line, from Polhill in the north to Finke in the south.

In broad terms the object of the survey was to obtain across the Amadeus Basin a north-south seismic cross-section that would aid in investigating the stratigraphic cross-section and structural relations especially on the southern margin of the Basin.

Access and drilling problems caused the progress of the survey to be slow.

The statistics of the operation are included in three appendices.

During the course of the seismic survey, the Bureau also made gravity surveys covering the area; gravity-meter readings were made along all seismic traverses.

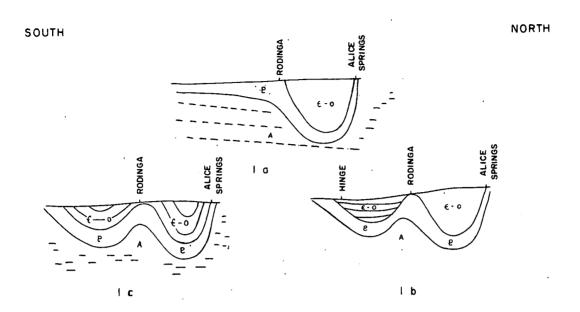
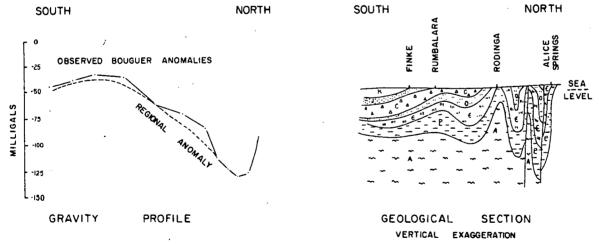


FIGURE I AMADEUS BASIN

North-south geological cross-sections



AFTER MARSHALL AND NARAIN

FIGURE 2 ALICE SPRINGS

Finke gravity profile and geological cross-section

1. GEOLOGY

The geology of the Amadeus Basin has been investigated and reported on in the last 30 years by many geologists including Chewings (1931 and 1935), Voisey (1938), and Browne (1947). More recently Quinlan (1959) and Trumpy, Guillemot, and Tissot (1960) published reports on the geology of the Basin. Trumpy et al. (op. cit.) of the Institut Francais du Petrole prepared a review of the Amadeus Basin geology after consultation with geologists of Frome-Broken Hill Company, and a study of that company's unpublished reports as well as other available geological literature on the area.

The regional geological map (after Quinlan) is shown on Plate 1.

The Amadeus Basin, containing a sequence of extensively-faulted and folded Proterozoic and Palaeozoic sediments, in places overlain by Upper Permian to Recent sediments, is generally thought to lie between the Archaean Arunta Complex, which crops out north of the Macdonnell Ranges, and the Archaean outcrops that occur along the Northern Territory/South Australia border.

The nature of the southern boundary of the Basin is not obvious from known surface geology. At the time of the survey, the possibilities shown in Figure 1 had been postulated. Figure 1(a) summarises an early interpretation by geologists of Frome-Broken Hill Company that Proterozoic basement is shallow south of Rodinga. Figures 1b and 1c present another interpretation, based on the discovery of Ordovician fossils in outcrops at Mount Charlotte, south of Rodinga. Also, limestone analagous to Jay Creek Limestone (Cambrian) occurs in the geological cross-section at Mount Charlotte and dips south.

This interpretation, if accepted, leads to the possibility of substantial Cambro-Ordovician sediments, and these in turn could exist in either trough facies (Fig. 1b)or shelf facies (Fig.1c).

The seismic survey was intended to solve problems posed by these interpretations.

The stratigraphy of the Amadeus Basin, based mainly on lithology, is given by Quinlan (1959):

Era	Period	Formation	Lithology
QUATERNARY			Aeolian sand
TERTIARY			Laterites and 'Grey Billy' profiles etc.
MESOZOIC	JURASSIC	De Souza Sandstone	'Deep Alluvium'. Sandstone, glacial deposits, conglomerate, silty sandstone.
UPPER	PERMIAN	'Finke Series'	·
PALAEOZOIC	PERMIAN?	'Pertnjara Formation	Conglomerate, calcarecus sandstone
	-	Unconformity -	
	DEVONIAN	Mareenie Sandstone	Quartz sandstone
LOWER PALAEOZOIC	ORDOVICIAN	'Larapinta Group	Greywacke, limestone, and shale
	CAMBRIAN	'Pertaoorrta Group	Shale, sandstone, and quartz
UPPER	-	'Pertatataka Formation	Conglomerate
PROTEROZOIC		Disconformity -	
		Bitter Springs Limestone	Interbedded dolomite, limestone, and shale
		Heavitree Quartzite	Sandstone and silicified sandstone
ARCHAEAN		Arunta Complex	Granite, gneiss, schist, etc.

Tectonic movements in the Amadeus Basin commenced in the Ordovician period and continued during the Devonian period into the Upper Palaeozoic era. Large east-west anticlines were formed parallel to the northern boundary of the Basin. Proterozoic rocks are exposed within a large number of these anticlines. Trumpy et al. (1960) conclude that less-deeply eroded anticlines are evident mainly in the western part of the Basin (north of Lake Amadeus) and that they possibly exist also under the conglomerate covering the large Hermannsburg Syncline. Brunnschweiler (1957) states that 'Among the many anticlinal structures, there are at least a dozen which warrant closer inspection because they appear to be closed in Ordovician rocks and would trap oil that may have originated in the fossiliferous shale and limestone sequences of the Middle and Upper Cambrian which are known to contain numerous bituminous horizons'.

2. PREVIOUS GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS

Gravity

Gravity surveys were made in the Amadeus Basin by the University of Sydney in 1954 (Marshall and Narain, 1954), by the Bureau of Mineral Resources from 1957 to 1961, and by Consolidated Zinc Corporation in 1958. Gravity surveys subsidised by the Commonwealth Government have been made on leases east of the railway line by Flamingo Petroleum Pty. Ltd.

In the most-recent Bureau gravity work in the area, helicopters were used (Langron, 1962a). Preliminary Bouguer-anomaly contours from this survey, in the area covered by the seismic traverses, are shown on Plate 2. The gravity values along the railway line are in fair agreement with Marshall and Narain's results. Marshall and Narain's observed Bouguer-anomaly profile, and their interpretation of the geological cross-section along this traverse are shown in Figure 2.

Marshall and Narain have few comments to make on the results from the part of their traverse from Alice Springs to the NT/SA border, except that small residual gravity anomalies are probably due to gentle folding of the basement. Their interpretation suggests that the Proterozoic ridge north of Rodinga is the northern limit of an area containing substantial Cambro-Ordovician deposits.

Langron (1962a) suggests that the gravity work does not show a definite eastern edge to the Basin, but that east of the railway line it indicates a considerable thinning of sediments south of Rodinga.

The results from gravity measurements along the seismic traverses are discussed briefly in Chapter 6 of this Record.

Aeromagnetic

A magnetometer traverse flown by the Bureau of Mineral Resources in 1958 (Jewell, 1960) crossed the region between the Finke River (NT) and Curralulla (SA) and passed close to the seismic lines investigated at Horseshoe Bend, Black Hills, and Lilla Creek.

The results obtained along the northern half of this traverse (Plate 2) are important in an assessment of the known facts regarding the nature of the southern margin of the Amadeus Basin.

The following is a summary of notes on the aeromagnetic profile prepared by J.H. Quilty of the Aeromagnetic Reduction Section of the Bureau's Geophysical Branch. The notes were prepared with the aid of information supplied by the Resident Geologist, Alice Springs, on known surface geology.

Finke River to Curralulla 1958

One broad, low-amplitude anomaly is recorded at position Z. Measurements on this anomaly indicate that the magnetic basement rock is probably not deeper than 6000 ft at this point.

The straight-line magnetic profile in the neighbourhood of Y changing into a series of undulations towards X would suggest a progressively shallowing basement (estimated basement depth 1300 ft below X). Several small anomalies from X to W could be due to dykes, several hundred feet wide, in the basement at depths of 500 to 1500 ft below the ground surface.

No reliable distinction can be made between those anomalies due to lithological changes in the basement and those due to basement topographic features. The geological evidence supplied indicates that dykes are widespread in the basement; the magnetic profile gives evidence to support this geological evidence. Whether these structures are accompanied by topographic effects cannot be resolved from the magnetic data.

The above suggests a very shallow (i.e. 1300 ft) magnetic basement west of Finke, with the basement deepening to 6000 ft (maximum) around latitude 25 degrees where the aeromagnetic traverse meets the Finke River (see Plate 2). As the traverse does not extend north of this point, no estimate can be made of the maximum depth to magnetic basement between Rodinga and latitude 25 degrees.

3. OBJECTS OF THE SURVEY

The principal object was to determine whether the west-extending tongue of Proterozoic rocks north of Rodinga represents:

- (a) a basement structural 'high' separating two troughs respectively north and south of Rodinga; or
- (b) the northern limit of a shelf area south of Rodinga containing substantial Cambro-Ordovician shelf deposits, or
- (c) the northern limit of shallow or outcropping Upper Proterozoic basement (see Fig. 1a)
- If (a) above applies, it was planned to seek evidence that would determine whether the basement elevation occurred before, or after, Palaeozoic sedimentation, e.g. evidence of sedimentary abutment, overlap, or truncation.
 - If (b) above applies, it was planned to seek evidence of:
 - (a) unconformity that might place the division between Upper Proterozoic and Palaeozoic rock,
 - (b) marked and extensive variations of velocity (e.g. from refraction depth probes and the observations of persistent strong reflections) that would indicate marked and extensive variations in lithology and so indirectly indicate shelf-type sedimentation,
 - (c) structural undulation that could help oil accumulation,
 - (d) the location of the southern hinge-line and the relative tectonic characteristics, and the displacement of the two hinge areas, <u>i.e.</u> north and south of Rodinga.

A further object was to investigate the general nature of the structures below the Pertnjara/Ordovician unconformity near Polhill railway siding in the northern part of the Basin.

4. FIELD WORK

Plate 2 shows the location of the seismic traverses. A summary of the work done is as follows:

North-west of Rodinga

Hugh River Proterozoic outcrops - refraction depth probes.

Bokhara Lower Palaeozoic outcrops - refraction depth probes.

Basin north of Rodinga

Deep Well railway siding - 5½ miles of continuous correlation reflection traversing and refraction depth probe.

Polhill railway siding - $9\frac{1}{4}$ miles of continuous correlation reflection traversing and refraction depth probe.

Basin south of Rodinga

Mount Charlotte - 3½ miles of continuous correlation reflection traversing and refraction depth probe.

Bundooma railway siding - 2 miles of continuous correlation reflection traversing and refraction depth probe.

Horseshoe Bend Homestead - 2 miles of continuous correlation reflection traversing and refraction depth probe.

<u>Black Hills</u> (extension of Kingston Range) - 4 miles of continuous correlation reflection traversing

South of Kingston Range

Lilla Creek - refraction depth probe.

Lilla Creek South - refraction depth probe.

5. RESULTS

Hugh River traverses

Refraction traverses A, B, and C were recorded to determine, for future correlation purposes, the seismic velocities in the Upper Proterozoic rocks in the Rodinga area. The velocity in the Arumbera Greywacke at the top of the cross-section was shown to be 15,100 ft/sec, and the velocity in a massive limestone somewhat deeper, believed to be the Bitter Springs Limestone, was 18,900 ft/sec.

Plates showing the time/distance curves and interpretation of results on these traverses have not yet been completed

Bokhara traverses

Refraction traverses D, E, and F were located near the old Bokhara Homestead on Lower Palaeozoic sediments. The velocity in a sandstone identified as of Ordovician age was shown to be 14,400 ft/sec, but the highest velocity recorded in the Cambrian sequence was 10,300 ft/sec.

Plates showing the time/distance curves and interpretation of results on these traverses have not yet been completed.

Polhill, Traverse G

Plates 4 and 5 show variable-area reflection cross-sections along this 9-miles-long traverse.

Reflection quality, which was very good at the southern end of the traverse around Shot-points 129 to 126, deteriorated to the extent that from Shot-point 116 northward, the few alignments recorded are questionable.

The cross-section shows that the axis of the Ooraminna Anticline lies under Shot-point 118. South of this axis the reflections show a strong southerly dip. They are conformable down to about 2 sec(roughly 15,000 ft) at Shot-point 129. At times greater than 2 sec, relatively low-dip reflections of poor quality were recorded. Their positions in the cross-section below the steeply-dipping reflectors are somewhat anomalous. No interpretation of these low-dip reflections is offered at present. North of Shot-point 118, the poor reflections recorded show fairly flat, shallow beds and give little information at depth. This portion of the traverse runs along the strike of the surface outcrops.

Plate 11 shows refraction time/distance curves and their interpretation on this traverse.

Velocities recorded under Shot-point 118 were:

<pre>Velocity (ft/sec)</pre>	Depth (ft)	$\underline{\mathtt{Dip}}$
11,900	700	3°N.
19,750	2700	1°S.

The deeper refractor quite probably correlates with a massive Cambrian limestone (Jay Creek Limestone) at Deep Well in which the same velocity was recorded.

Deep Well Traverse G

Plate 6 shows a variable-area reflection cross-section along this $5\frac{1}{2}$ -mile-long traverse.

Reflection quality ranged from fair to poor, with reflections being recorded down to about 2 sec at Shot-point 209 The cross-section shows about 15,000 ft of sediments (including Upper Proterozoic) which dip at about 8 degrees in the northern part of the traverse

An unconformity probably marking the Lower Palaeozoic/Upper Proterozoic boundary is clearly evident under Shot-points 219 to 222 at about 0.9 to 1 0 sec (5000 to 6000 ft deep).

Owing to structural complexity immediately south of Deep Well, it is impossible to extrapolate reflecting horizons to the surface and so identify them with outcrop.

Plate 12 shows refraction time/distance curves and their interpretation on this traverse. Velocities recorded under Shot-point 219 were:

<u>Velocity</u> (ft/sec)	Depth (ft)	$\underline{\mathtt{Dip}}$
11,900	800	8° N
19,500	2700	8°N

The deeper refractor is interpreted as the Jay Creek Limestone, a massive Cambrian limestone which crops out at Mount Peachy, 10 miles west of this traverse (Wulff, 1960). The identification was made on the basis of the stratigraphic position at the surface, and of thicknesses measured at Mount Peachy.

Mount Charlotte, Traverse G

Plate 7 shows a variable-area reflection cross-section along this $3\frac{1}{2}$ -mile-long traverse.

Fair-quality reflections were recorded along this traverse down to more than 2 sec (roughly 15,000 ft) at Shot-point 416. The cross-section shows a consistent southerly dip. It shows irregularities suggestive of minor faulting in at least two positions. The first is at 1.1 sec under Shot-point 405; the second is at 1.1 sec under Shot-point 411.

Plate 13 shows refraction time/distance curves and their interpretation on this traverse.

Velocities recorded under Shot-point 408 were:

<pre>Velocity (ft/sec)</pre>	Depth below datum (ft)	Dip
11,900	170	2°S
16,800	1520	4°S
20,800 (recorded as 2nd	5800 event)	1°30's

The identification of the deepest refractor as the Jay Creek Limestone is made on the stratigraphic position at the surface, and on the thickness measured on outcrops at Mount Charlotte.

Bundooma, Traverse G

Plate 8 shows a variable-area reflection cross-section along this 2-mile-long traverse.

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Good-quality reflections were recorded down to 1.5 sec (roughly 11,000 ft) using shallow nine-hole patterns. Poor-quality reflections are evident below this depth but they are very difficult to interpret. There is an indication of an anticline of at least 200-ft relief with its axis under Shot-point 512.

Plate 14 shows the refraction time/distance curves and their interpretation on this traverse. It is possible that the 20,000-ft/sec (second event) refractor recorded at about 6000-ft depth is the Jay Creek Limestone. It is identified as such by correlation with the velocity found at Mount Charlotte for a refractor that is almost certainly identified as Jay Creek Limestone.

There is at least 5000 ft of reflecting cross-section below this depth, suggesting that this refractor is neither the high-velocity Bitter Springs Limestone (Proterozoic) nor granite.

Horseshoe Bend, Traverse G

Plate 9 shows the variable-area reflection cross-section along this 2-mile-long traverse.

Good-quality reflections were recorded down to 1 sec (about 6000 ft) and poor reflections were recorded down to 2 sec (about 15,000 ft). The reflecting horizons down to 6000 ft are fairly flat, while the deeper, poorer-quality reflections show a definite strong north dip.

Plate 15 shows refraction time/distance curves and their interpretation on this traverse. A 21,000-ft/sec velocity is recorded as a second event at about 3500 ft (reflection time 0.6 sec). This velocity is interpreted to correlate with the high velocity found at Mount Charlotte and Bundooma, and is most probably the velocity in the Jay Creek Limestone.

Black Hills, Traverse G

Plate 10 shows the variable-area reflection cross-section recorded on this 4-mile-long traverse.

Reflection quality was good for shallow reflectors between Shot-points 652 and 660, reflections being recorded down to about 0.8 sec (about 5000 ft) at Shot-point 652. Reflections down to 0.7 sec at Shot-point 652 generally show north dip, but rather extraordinary reflections from 0.7 sec to 0.8 sec are flat and no satisfactory interpretation has been made of them. It has been suggested that they may be of instrumental origin, but the instruments have not shown similar evidence of malfunctioning at any other time.

An apparent reflection of very poor quality rises to 0.7 sec beneath Shot-point 660 and is probably due to an anticlinal erosional hinge deeper in the geological cross-section.

Lilla Creek, Traverse G

Plate 16 gives refraction time/distance curves and their interpretation along this traverse. Refraction results give a velocity of 18,900 ft/sec at 580-ft depth. This velocity is similar to that recorded for granite at Lilla Creek South and it presumably represents shallow granite basement.

(2)

Lilla Creek South, Traverse G

Plate 17 gives the time/distance curves and their interpretation along this refraction traverse.

Refraction probing was done at a bore site to determine the velocity in granite known to be at 500-ft depth. The velocity measured was 19,400 ft/sec.

6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Seismic methods in the Amadeus Basin

The seismic reflection method has been proved applicable to the study of the Basin; i.e. good reflections are obtainable.

The use of the seismic refraction method is limited owing to the high seismic velocity in the Jay Creek Limestone. Penetration to refractors below the Jay Creek Limestone is virtually impossible. The refractors at Bundooma and Horseshoe Bend, in which the velocity is about 20,000 ft/sec, are currently interpreted as Jay Creek Limestone because of the tentative identification of the 20,000-ft/sec refractor with the Jay Creek Limestone at Mount Charlotte. In general, it may be said that the refraction method has little application for the identification of crystalline basement, except in areas where the Jay Creek Limestone is absent.

North-west of Rodinga

The preliminary refraction work at Hugh River and Bokhara did not provide reliable criteria for the identification of refractors. It was found that particular velocities could apply to more than one horizon in the Palaeozoic and Proterozoic sequences in the Basin.

Basin north of Rodinga

Plate 3 shows a geological cross-section, a preliminary Bouguer-anomaly profile, and a composite seismic cross-section across the Amadeus Basin.

The existence of a deep syncline between Polhill and Deep Well is confirmed by the 1961 seismic survey. Seismic results suggest that there could be up to 20,000 ft of sediments in the syncline.

The seismic results, regional gravity, and geology are in agreement at Deep Well, but no well-defined gravity 'high' is associated with the Ooraminna Anticline at Polhill. Langron (1962b) considers that at Polhill a gravity 'high' due to the anticline is obscured by the steepness of the regional gradient.

Basin south of Rodinga (Plate 3)

Seismic evidence confirms a substantial thickness of Palaeozoic and Proterozoic sediments dipping south at Mount Charlotte. It suggests the existence of at least 10,000 ft of these sediments in the southern part of the Basin.

The hingeline of the southern margin of the Amadeus Basin is placed at the Black Hills extension of the Kingston Range.

(1)

South of Kingston Range

South of the Black Hills traverse, the Lilla Creek traverse shows probable granite at about 600-ft depth. The amount of work done was not sufficient to determine whether deposition occurred in a trough or on a shelf.

The Bouguer-anomaly profile over the southern trough does not indicate the large depth of sediments confirmed by the seismic survey.

Gravity measurements along seismic traverses

This is the subject of a separate Record by Langron (1962b).

Langron states that 'In general there is not a great deal of similarity between the gravity profiles and the geological seismic cross-sections. It would be unreasonable to expect any simple relation in an area so tectonically disturbed.'

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APPENDIX A

STAFF AND EQUIPMENT

STAFF

: F.J. Moss Party leader

Geophysicists : D.J. Walker

K.F. Fowler (11/8/61 - 25/8/61)

R. Leetham) Dept of the Interior M. Francki) Surveyors:

: E.J. Quinn

: G.L. Abbs Observer

: R.J.E. Cherry Shooter

: J.G. Halls Toolpusher

: J. Chandler Drillers R.O. Larter

: I.D. Pirie Mechanics H. McPherson

EQUIPMENT

Clerk

Seismic amplifiers : HTL 7000B

: Electro-Tech ER 66 Seismic oscillograph

: Electro-Tech DS 7 Magnetic recorder

: Electro-Tech 20 c/s (reflection)
TIC 6 c/s (refraction) Geophones

: Failing 750 (Commer)
2 Careys type H1 (Bedford) Drills

: 4 Bedford 700-gal Water tankers

: Bedford 700-gal Shooting truck

APPENDIX B

TABLE OF OPERATIONS

Sedimentary basin

Amadeus Basin, NT

Survey line

Alice Springs to Finke

Camp sites

1. Rodinga (15th May - 17th July)

2. Polhill (17th - 31st July)

3. Bundooma (31st July - 8th Aug)

4. Horseshoe Bend (10th - 25th Aug)

Survey commenced

19th May 1961

Miles surveyed

 $83\frac{1}{2}$ (approx.) 0

Topographic survey control

MSL, Port Augusta railway levels

Explosives used

11,400 lb

No. of detonators used

726

8

Datum levels for

corrections: (above sea level) Polhill

: 1700 ft

Deep Well

: 1500 ft

Mount Charlotte

: 1200 ft

Bundooma

: 1100 ft

Horseshoe Bend

: 1000 ft

Black Hills

: 1000 ft

Lilla Creek

900 ft

Lilla Creek South

: 1000 ft

Source of velocity distribution: t: At analysis

REFIEUTION SHOOTING DATA

Shot-point interval

1320 ft

Geophone group

6 geophones per trace at 22-rt intervals

No. of holes shot

247 (including 14 nine-hole patterns)

Miles traversed

26½

Usual recording filter

K₁8 K₇5 9

Usual playback filter

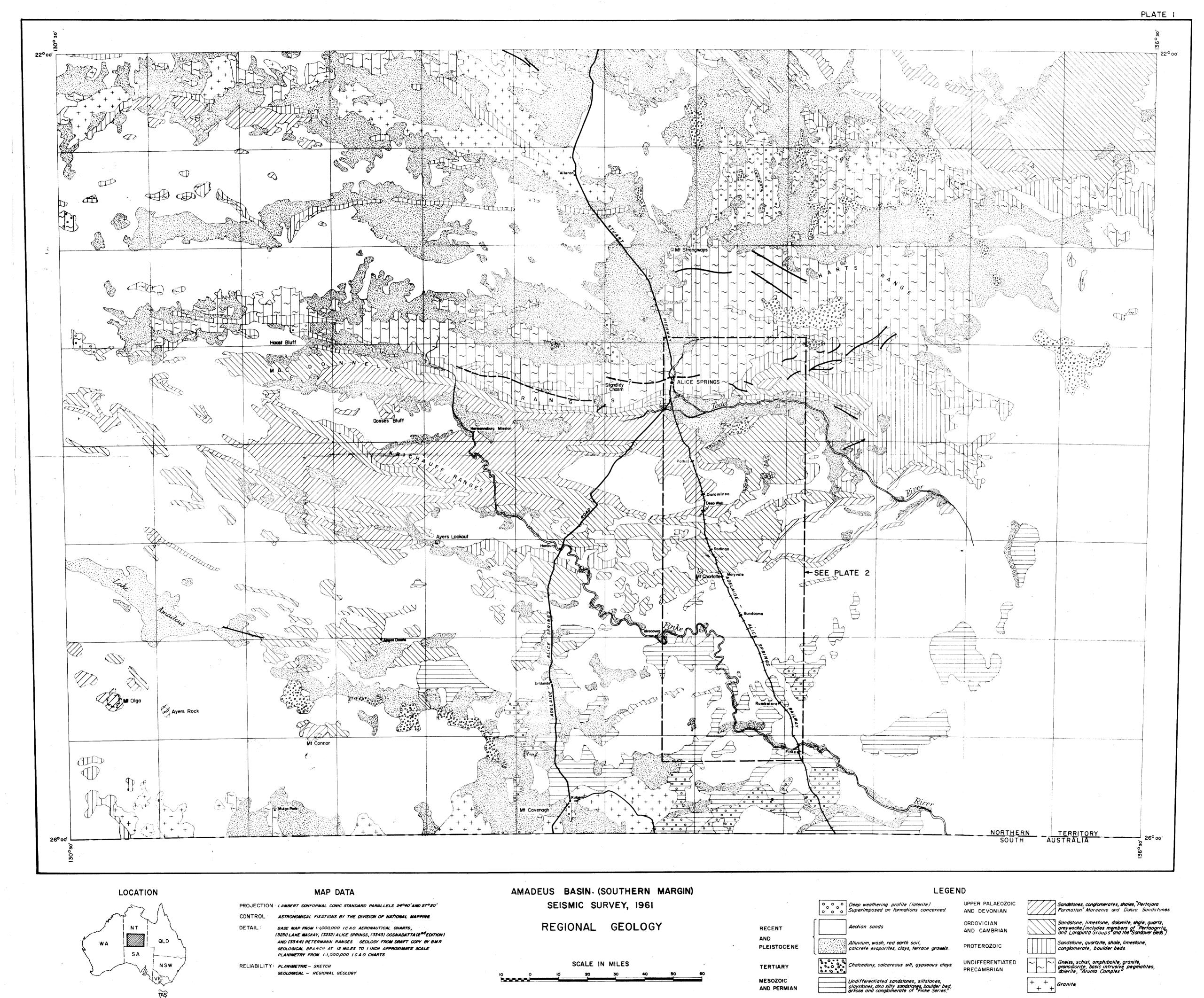
K30 K57

APPENDIX C

DRILLING STATISTICS

for the period 19th May to 24th August 1961

Drilling rigs	2 Carey, type H1
Total footage drilled	23,053
Total number of holes drilled	400
Average depth of hole	54 ft
Deepest hole drilled	195 ft
Travelling time and rigging up	411 hr
Time lost standing by for recorder	54 hr
Total time lost	100 hr
Drilling time	579 hr
Maintenance time	122 hr
Number of shifts worked	117
Bentonite used	28 bags
Average drilling rate	39 ft/hr



FIRST EDITION, MARCH 1960.

