

Megasequences and the floating forest hypothesis: part 1

Dr Timothy L. Clarey's perspective¹ on critiquing the floating forest hypothesis by using his proposed version of how megasequences were created by super tsunamis should be examined critically. Clarey accepts the names of the megasequences on the North American continent as given by Sloss.² He also accepts the stratigraphic boundaries and erosional nature of them as related by Sloss.³ He uses a diagram on how the sea level relates to the six megasequences that is a bowdlerized version of the isomorphic one Sloss developed.³ In so doing, he should consider the following.

Sloss's diagram has at least 55 regressional episodes on it representing the six megasequences. (At least 13 of these are in the Sauk megasequence.) This is simply a recording of empirical data. Sloss also mentions regression explicitly at least 31 times in his article, with many more implied references. He repeatedly has statements concerning regression like the following one referring to the base of the Tippecanoe, which he says was "interrupted by numerous partial regressions"; or the one concerning the base of the Absaroka where he points out "there is every evidence of numerous transgressive episodes separated by regression and erosion to form a complex of intraregional and intrasequence unconformities". How then can Clarey continue to assert there were six major tsunamis which swept over the Transcontinental Arch (his Dinosaur Peninsula)?⁴ Due to quantitative considerations and physics, these imagined super tsunamis are already questionable. Did these tsunamis have multiple episodes of

reversals in them as they swept over the continents, or does Clarey have his own set of field data that differs from the well-accepted ones used by Sloss? Are we to accept the hand-drawn smoothed curves of sea level as used by Clarey as representing reality?⁵ Does Clarey accept paraconformities as erosional surfaces despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary?⁶

Regarding boundaries of megasequences, Clarey accepts the boundary between the Kaskaskia and Absaroka megasequences as being near the middle of the Pennsylvanian (or Upper Carboniferous).³ This is simply preposterous from a catastrophic point of view, but not from a uniformitarian one. Did the mechanism for the deposition of these coal beds have a hiatus in the middle of the cyclothemic deposition of them? Where is the field evidence for this?

Clarey's conjecture of Lycopod trees likely fringing the "land/sea boundary along the outer edges of the peninsula",⁷ that is his Dinosaur Peninsula, needs to be quantitatively evaluated. With the Moscow and Michigan coal basins both exhibiting over 230 layers in them, one might reasonably believe this is something of a universal number for the Northern Hemisphere. If this be so, then any rational estimate of the extent of Clarey's fringing lycopod forest can only explain a small fraction—not of the whole Carboniferous deposits in the United States—but of 1% of them! Also, although the idea of a continent-fringing forest, first proposed by the evolutionist Kuntze,⁸ might be considered a logical way to account for the volume of coal in Carboniferous layers if long ages are assumed, there is absolutely no field evidence to suggest this.⁹ Regarding the hundreds of Carboniferous layers in coal measures or cyclothem, how many does Clarey believe have relic soils and what does this do to his catastrophic perspective?¹⁰

The excellent and extensive chemical analyses performed by Kuntze unequivocally point to a marine environment for the Carboniferous coals.⁸ This is pinpointed more precisely by Woolley,¹¹ and is confirmed by such abundant fossil evidence as the millions and millions of *Spirorbis* fossils found at the former town site of Linton, Ohio. These and numerous other facts presented by the aforementioned authors (a review of which is beyond the word limitation of this letter) and Dr Joachim Scheven certainly make Clarey's evidence-deficient and qualitative conjectures untenable and have not been addressed by him.

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References

1. Clarey, T.L., Floating forest hypothesis fails to explain later and larger coal beds, *J. Creation* 31(3):12, 2017.
2. Sloss, L.L., Sequences in the cratonic interior of North America, *Bull. Geol. Soc. Amer.* 74:93–114, 1963.
3. Clarey, T.L., *Dinosaurs: Marvels of God's Design*, Master Books, Green Forest, AR, 2015.
4. Clarey also has the flood waters in his imagined scenario detouring around the Transcontinental Arch for all six megasequences, while Sloss tells us the Absaroka megasequence (which was followed by two others) is the one which records "the disappearance of the Transcontinental Arch as a controlling element in the distribution, facies, and thickness of preserved sediment". *Acts and Facts* 41(12):16, December 2014.
5. The author knows of no smoothing algorithms that would be able to produce Clarey's curves from those of Sloss unless there were numerous multiple ones used in a disingenuous patchwork manner on Sloss's data. Also Clarey, who has reduced each megasequence to a simple transgressive episode, has the audacity to accuse 'secular geologists' of doing the same thing—without, of necessity, producing any references to back this up. Clarey, T., Grappling with megasequences, *Acts and Facts* 44(4):18, April 2015.
6. Roth, A.A., 'Flat gaps' in sedimentary rock layers challenge long geologic ages, *J. Creation* 23(2):76, 2009.
7. Clarey, T. and Tomkins, J.P., Sinking the floating forest hypothesis, *Acts and Facts* 46(8):10, August 2017.
8. Kuntze, O., *Phytogeogenesis: Die Vorweltliche Entwicklung der Erdkruste und der Pflanzen in Grundzügen*, P. Froberg, Leipzig, Germany, 1884.

9. Field evidence would have to involve a linear (or linear trending) line (or series of broken line segments) demonstrating terrestriality. Nothing approaching this has been observed to date, so one could reasonably conjecture that the majority of the floating forest was not continent fringing.
10. The experience of Joanna Woolley and the author in examining hundreds of coal seams over the numerous basins in the United States is confirmed by others: the so-called relic soils are usually not there and can be best accounted for as a product of diagenesis.
11. Woolley, J., The origin of the Carboniferous coal measures—part 1: lessons from history, *J. Creation* 24(3):81, 2010.