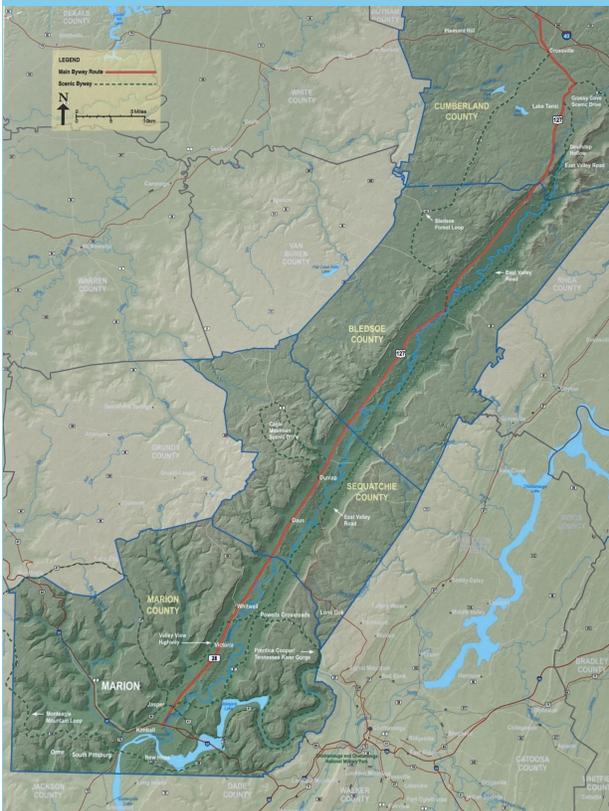
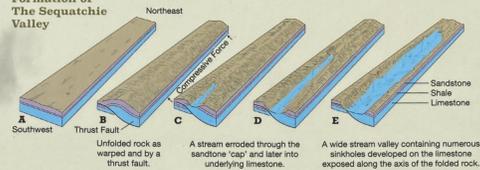


The Sequatchie Valley



Formation of The Sequatchie Valley



The Great Valley of Tennessee

The Sequatchie Valley is Tennessee's smallest and most distinctive physio-graphic region. Formed over millions of years, the prominent landscape feature is the remnant of a compressional geologic structure, the Sequatchie Valley Anticline. Though it is difficult to visualize, the Valley was once an upward fold comprised of a sandstone cap that was considerably higher than the surrounding Cumberland Plateau. Over time, the sandstone cracked, allowing water to erode the softer layers of rock underneath. The result of the sediment washing away was a deep valley.

No one knows for sure where the word Sequatchie comes from. It is thought to be the name of a Cherokee village called "Sigwetsi" that was located in the vicinity of Knoxville near the end of the nineteenth century. A westward trail, informally called "the Sequatchie road," ran from the village through what is now Kingston to the head of the Valley. Thus, Sequatchie Valley took the name of the road.

Running down the heart of the Valley is the Sequatchie River. Water for the river collects near Grassy Cove in a vast limestone sinkhole, the largest in eastern North America and recognized as a National Natural Landmark. From there it travels underground to the "Head of Sequatchie," located at Devilstep Hollow at Cumberland Trail State Park, where it finally emerges to create the 116-mile freshwater river. Because the underlying limestone karst topography is continually dissolved by underground creeks and streams, the entire region is marked by numerous remarkable caves, cascading waterfalls, and extensive serene low ridges and rolling hills.

Limestone Karst Topography

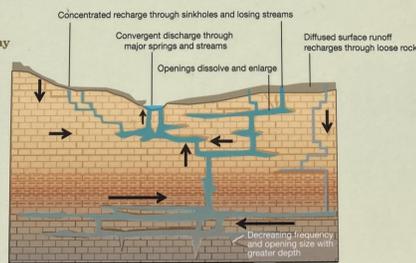


Photo from Marli B. Miller (geologypics.com)

Located 15 air miles west of Chattanooga, the Sequatchie Valley divides Walden Ridge (to the east) from the rest of the Cumberland Plateau. An inverted anticline, it is underlain by Ordovician carbonates and bounded by Pennsylvanian sediments. The coal mining history of the area can be explored at the

Coal Miners Museum in Whitwell

www.coalminersmuseum.com and the Dunlap

Coke Ovens www.cokeovens.com



Photo from NASA