

**GEOLOGIC MAP OF THE BIRNEY 30' x 60' QUADRANGLE  
EASTERN MONTANA**

Compiled and mapped by Susan M. Vuke, Edward L. Heffern,  
Robert N. Bergantino, and Roger B. Colton

Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology  
Open File Report MBMG 431

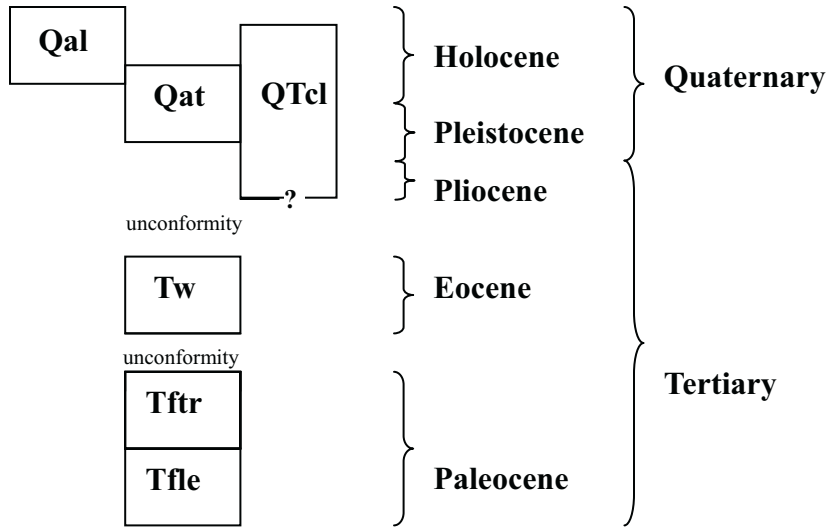
2001

Map revised: 2007

This report has had reviews for conformity with Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology's technical and editorial standards.

Partial support has been provided by the STATEMAP component of the National Cooperative Geology Mapping Program of the U.S. Geological Survey under contract Number 00-HQ-AG-0115.

CORRELATION DIAGRAM  
BIRNEY 30' x 60' QUADRANGLE



DESCRIPTION OF MAP UNITS  
BIRNEY 30' x 60' QUADRANGLE

Note: Thicknesses are given in feet because original field maps were on 7.5' quadrangles with contour intervals in feet. To convert feet to meters (the contour interval unit on this map), multiply feet x 0.3048.

- Qal Alluvium (Holocene)**—Light-gray and light-brown gravel, sand, silt, and clay deposited in stream and river channels and on their flood plains. Clasts are poorly to well sorted, and most are well rounded. Deposits are poorly to well stratified, and clasts are composed primarily of quartzite, chert, and igneous rocks. Thickness as much as 35 ft under larger floodplains, but generally less than 15 ft.
- Qat Alluvial terrace deposit (Holocene and Pleistocene)**—Light-gray to light-brown gravel, sand, silt, and clay in terrace remnants at elevations 20–150 ft above the Tongue River. Clasts are generally well rounded, and are composed of Fort Union Formation sandstone, clinker, and ironstone; brown quartzite; and gray chert. Deposits are poorly to well stratified and poorly to well sorted. Thickness 10–40 ft.
- QTcl Clinker (Holocene, Pleistocene, and Pliocene? [Coates and Heffern, 2000])**—Red, pink, orange, black, and yellow, very resistant metamorphosed sandstone, siltstone, and shale of the Fort Union Formation and Wasatch Formations. Bedrock was baked by natural burning of underlying coal, and collapsed into voids created by burning. Locally, baked rock was melted and fused to form buchite, a black, glassy, vesicular or scoriaceous rock. Thickness 10–500 ft.
- Tw Wasatch Formation (Eocene)**—Yellowish gray to light-gray siltstone and medium- to coarse-grained, massive, or cross-bedded sandstone interbedded with medium-gray shale, brown carbonaceous shale, coal, and associated clinker. A brown-weathering calcareous coquina, 6-8 inches thick is present about 250 ft above the base of the formation in many areas. Formation typically weathers light-gray to tan, and has a distinct heavy-mineral suite (Connor and others, 1976; Denson and others, 1990). At least four different stratigraphic criteria have been used previously to define the Wasatch-Tongue River contact (Seeland and others, 1993). The contact on this map follows that of Denson and others (1990) with some modification, and is at the stratigraphic position of a regional unconformity. It is therefore at a lower stratigraphic position than the contact of Galyardt and Murray (1979) in the Pearl School 7.5' quadrangle (southwestern corner of this map). Thickness as much as 600 ft (Denson and others, 1990).

**Fort Union Formation (Paleocene)**

- Tftr Tongue River Member**—Yellow, orange, or tan, fine-grained sandstone with thinner interbeds of yellowish brown, orange, or tan siltstone; light-bluish or

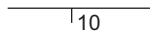
light-yellowish brown mudstone and clay; and coal beds. Sandstone is massive or cross-bedded. Clay is dominantly non-swelling. Coal beds in the map area include Anderson, Dietz, Canyon, Carney, Otter, Wall, Carlson, Brewster-Arnold, and King (McLellan, 1991). Coal is mined at the Spring Creek, West Decker, and East Decker Mines. Upper part of member was removed by erosion in map area. The part of the member immediately below the Wasatch Formation weathers very light gray and locally shows regolith development as silcrete or poorly cemented paleosols with plant stems and roots. Thickness of as much as 700 ft exposed in map area.

**Tfle** Lebo Member—Gray, smectitic shale and mudstone that contain lenses of gray and yellow, very fine to fine-grained sandstone, and a few thin coal beds. Base of member not exposed. Thickness of 70 ft exposed in map area.

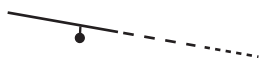
### MAP SYMBOLS



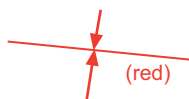
**Contact**—Dotted where concealed.



**Strike and dip of bedding**—Number indicates



**Fault**—Ball and bar on downthrown side, dashed where inferred, dotted where concealed.



**Syncline**—Showing trace of axial plane.

MAP SOURCES AND INDEX OF 7.5' QUADRANGLES  
BIRNEY 30' X 60' QUADRANGLE

Numbers below correspond to index map on following page.

1. Bryson, R.P., and Bass, N.W., 1973, plate 1, scale 1:63,360.
2. Culbertson, W.C., and Klett, M.C., 1976, scale 1:24,000.
3. Culbertson, W.C., and Klett, M.C., 1979a, scale 1:24,000.
4. Culbertson, W.C., and Klett, M.C., 1979b, scale 1:24,000.
5. Culbertson, W.C., Mapel, W.J., and Klett, M.C., 1976, scale 1:24,000.
- 5b. Doegler, and Fahy, 1980, scale 1:24,000
6. Galyardt, G.L., and Murray, F.N., 1979, scale 1:24,000.
7. Law, B.E., and Grazis, S.L., 1972, scale 1:24,000.
8. Mapel, W.J., 1976b, scale 1:24,000.
9. Mapel, W.J., 1978, scale 1:24,000.
10. Matson, R.E., and Blumer, J.W., 1974, plates 2, 3, 4, 5a, 5B, 5C, 6, scale 1:126,720.
11. McKay, E.J., 1976a, scale 1:24,000.
12. McKay, E.J., 1976b, scale 1:24,000.
13. Robinson, L.N., and Barnum, B.E., 1986, fig. 3, scale 1:126,720.
14. Sarnecky, J.C., 1977, scale 1:24,000.
15. Thom, W.T., Jr., Hall, G.M., Wegemann, C.H., and Moulton, G.F., 1935, plate 1,  
scale 1:190,080.
16. Warren, W.C., 1959, plate 19, scale 1:63,360.

Entire quadrangle

- Baker, A.A., 1929, plates 28 and 29, scale 1:62,500.  
Denson, N.M., and Crysedale, B.L., 1991, scale 1:200,000.  
Denson, N.M., Gibson, M.L, and Sims, G.L., 1992, scale 1:200,000.  
Denson, N.M., Macke, D.L., Schumann, R.R., and Murrett, M.E., 1990, scale 1:100,000.  
Denson, N.M., and Pierson, C.T., 1991, scale 1:200,000.  
Ellis, M.S., and Colton, R.B., 1994, scale 1:500,000.  
Heffern, E.L., Coates, D.A., Whiteman, J., and Ellis, M.S., 1993, scale 1:175,000.  
Lewis, B.D., and Hotchkiss, W.R., 1981, scale 1:1,000,000.  
Lewis, B.D., and Roberts, R.S., 1978, scale 1:250,000.  
Stoner, J.D., and Lewis, B.D., 1980, scale 1:500,000.  
Vuke, S.M., Bergantino, R.N., and Wilde, E.M., 1990, scale 1:100,000.

MAP SOURCES AND INDEX OF 7.5' QUADRANGLES  
BIRNEY 30' x 60' QUADRANGLE

107°									108°
45°30'	Birds-eye Spring  15	Bull Creek Lookout  15	Cook Creek Butte  10, 15	Club-foot Creek  10	Birney Day School  16	Green Creek  16	King Mountain  12, 16	Yager Butte  16	
	Kirby  10, 15	Taintor Desert  10, 15	Birney SW  10	Birney  7, 8, 10	Browns Mountain  2, 16	Poker Jim Butte  16	Fort Howes  11, 16	Good-speed Butte  16	
	Half Moon Hill  10, 15	Tongue River Dam  10, 15	Spring Gulch  10, 15	Lacey Gulch  10, 14, 15	Stroud Creek  1, 5, 15	Hamilton Draw  1, 15	Otter  1	Reanus Cone  1	
45°	Pearl School 6, 9, 10, 13, 15	Decker  6, 7, 10, 15	Holmes Ranch  5b 10, 15	Pine Butte School  8, 9, 15	Forks Ranch  1, 3, 15	Quietus  1, 4, 15	Bear Creek School  1	Sayle Hall  1	

REFERENCES  
BIRNEY 30' x 60' QUADRANGLE

- Ayers, W.B., Jr., 1986, Lacustrine and fluvial-deltaic depositional systems, Fort Union Formation (Paleocene), Powder River Basin, Wyoming and Montana: American Association of Petroleum Geologists Bulletin, v. 70, n. 11, p. 1651–1673.
- Ayers, W.B., Jr., and Kaiser, W.R., 1984, Lacustrine-interdeltaic coal in the Fort Union Formation (Paleocene), Powder River Basin, Wyoming and Montana, U.S.A., *in* Rahmani, R., and Flores, R.M., eds., International Association of Sedimentologists Special Publication 7, p. 61–84.
- Baker, A.A., 1929, The northward extension of the Sheridan Coal Field, Big Horn and Rosebud Counties, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 806-B, pt. 2, p. 15–67.
- Barnum, B.E., 1975, Geologic map and coal resources of the Ranchester quadrangle, Sheridan County, Wyoming, and Big Horn County, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Coal Investigations Map C-75, scale 1:24,000.
- Barnum, B.E., 1983, Geologic and structure maps of the Monarch quadrangle, Sheridan County, Wyoming and Big Horn County, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Field Studies Map MF-1517, scale 1:24,000.
- Biewick, L.R.H., and McLellan, M.W., 1990, Isopach maps, perspective projections, and correlation diagrams of the Paleocene Flowers-Goodale coal resource unit in the northern Powder River Basin, Birney and Broadus 30' x 60' quadrangles, Montana-Wyoming: U.S. Geological Survey Coal Investigations Map C-136-A, scale 1:100,000.
- Brown, J.L., 1993, Sedimentology and depositional history of the lower Paleocene Tullock Member of the Fort Union Formation, Powder River Basin, Wyoming and Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 1917-L, 42 p.
- Bryson, R.P., and Bass, N.W., 1973, Geology of Moorhead Coal Field, Powder River, Big Horn, and Rosebud Counties, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 1338, 113 p., 6 pls.
- Coates, D.A., and Heffern, E.L., 2000, Origin and geomorphology of clinker in the Powder River Basin, Wyoming and Montana, *in* Miller, R., ed., Coal bed methane and Tertiary geology of the Powder River Basin: Wyoming Geological Association Guidebook, 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Field Conference, p. 211–229.

- Cole, G.A., Sholes, M.A., Fine, D.E., Matson, R.E., Daniel, J.A., 1980, Geology of the Anderson and Dietz coal beds, Big Horn County, Montana: Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology Geologic Map GM-14, scale 1:126,720.
- Connor, J.J., Denson, N.M., Hamilton, J.C., 1976, Geochemical discrimination of sandstones of the basal Wasatch and uppermost Fort Union Formations, Powder River Basin, Wyoming and Montana, *in* Powder River Basin, Wyoming Geological Association Guidebook, 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Field Conference, p. 291–297.
- Culbertson, W.C., 1987, Diagrams showing proposed correlation and nomenclature of Eocene and Paleocene coal beds in the Birney 30' x 60' quadrangle, Big Horn, Rosebud, and Powder River Counties, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Coal Map C-113.
- Culbertson, W.C., and Klett, M.C., 1976, Geologic map and coal sections of the Browns Mountain quadrangle, Rosebud County, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Field Studies Map MF-814, scale 1:24,000.
- Culbertson, W.C., and Klett, M.C., 1979a, Geologic map and coal sections of the Forks Ranch quadrangle, Big Horn County, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Field Studies Map MF-1086, scale 1:24,000.
- Culbertson, W.C., and Klett, M.C., 1979b, Geologic map and coal sections of the Quietus quadrangle, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Field Studies Map MF-1087, scale 1:24,000.
- Culbertson, W.C., Mapel, W.J., and Klett, M.C., 1976, Geologic map and coal sections of the Stroud Creek quadrangle, Rosebud and Big Horn Counties, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Field Studies Map MF-822, scale 1:24,000.
- Culbertson, W.C., and Saperstone, H.I., 1987a, Structure, coal thickness, and overburden thickness of the Knobloch coal resource unit, Birney area, Big Horn, Rosebud, and Powder River Counties, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Coal Investigations Map C-112, scale 1:100,000.
- Culbertson, W.C., and Saperstone, H.I., 1987b, Structure, coal thickness, and overburden thickness of the Wall coal resource unit, west half of the Birney 30' x 60' quadrangle, Big Horn and Rosebud Counties, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Coal Map C-111, scale 1:100,000.
- Denson, N.M., and Crysedale, B.L., 1991, Geologic map showing total thickness of coal in the north half of the Powder River Basin, southeastern Montana and northeastern Wyoming: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Map I-2131-A, scale 1:200,000.



- Denson, N.M., Gibson, M.L., and Sims, G.L., 1993, Geologic map showing thickness of the Upper Cretaceous Pierre Shale in the north half of the Powder River Basin, southeastern Montana and northeastern Wyoming: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Map I-2380-A, scale 1:200,000.
- Denson, N.M., Gibson, M.L., and Sims, G.L., 1992, Geologic and structure map of the north half of the Powder River Basin, southeastern Montana and northeastern Wyoming: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Map I-2281-A, scale 1:200,000.
- Denson, N.M., Macke, D.L., Schumann, R.R., and Murrett, M.E., 1990, Geologic map and distribution of heavy minerals in Tertiary rocks of the Birney 30' x 60' quadrangle, Big Horn, Rosebud, and Powder River Counties, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Map I-2019, scale 1:100,000.
- Denson, N.M., and Pierson, C.T., 1991, Geologic map showing thickness and structure of the Anderson-Wyodak coal bed in the north half of the Powder River Basin, southeastern Montana and northeastern Wyoming: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Map I-2094-A, scale 1:200,000.
- Doegler, N.E., and Fahy, J.W., 1980, Preliminary geologic map and coal resources of the Holmes Ranch quadrangle, Big Horn County, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Open File Report 80-212, scale 1:24,000.
- Ellis, M.S., and Colton, R.B., 1994, Geologic map of the Powder River Basin and surrounding area, Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Nebraska: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Map I-2298, scale 1:500,000.
- Fox, J.E., 1993, Stratigraphic cross sections A-A' through F-F', showing electric logs of Upper Cretaceous and older rocks, Powder River Basin, Montana and Wyoming: U.S. Geological Survey Oil and Gas Investigations Chart OC-135.
- Galyardt, G.L., and F.N., Murray, 1979, Geologic map and coal sections of the Pearl School quadrangle and easternmost part of the Bar V Ranch quadrangle, Big Horn County, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Open File Report 81-870, scale 1:24,000.
- Heffern, E.L., 1980, Coal stratigraphy of the Tongue River Member, Northern Cheyenne Reservation, Montana, *in* Carter, L.M., ed., Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium on the Geology of Rocky Mountain Coal: Colorado Geological Survey Resource Series 10, p. 76–80.
- Heffern, E.L., and Coates, D.A., 2000, Hydrogeology and ecology of clinker in the Powder River Basin, Wyoming and Montana, *in* Miller, R., ed., Coal bed

- methane and Tertiary geology of the Powder River Basin: Wyoming Geological Association Guidebook, 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Field Conference, p. 231–252.
- Heffern, E.L., Clinker—Its occurrence, uses, and effects on coal mining in the Powder River Basin: Wyoming State Geological Survey Public Information Circular 38, p. 151–165.
- Heffern, E.L., Coates, D.A., Whiteman, J., and Ellis, M.S., 1993, Geologic map showing distribution of clinker in the Tertiary Fort Union and Wasatch Formations, Northern Powder River Basin, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Coal Investigations Map C-142, scale 1:175,000.
- Hinrichs, E.N., 1988, Surficial geology of the Sheridan 30' x 60' quadrangle, Wyoming and Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 1816, 21 p.
- Keefer, W.R., and Schmidt, P.W., 1973, Energy resources map of the Powder River Basin, Wyoming and Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Map I-847-A, scale 1:500,000.
- Law, B.E., Barnum, B.E., and Wollenzien, T.P., 1979, Coal bed correlations in the Tongue River Member of the Fort Union Formation, Monarch, Wyoming and Decker, Montana areas: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Map I-1128.
- Law, B.E., and Grazis, S.L., 1972, Preliminary geologic map and coal resources of the Decker quadrangle, Big Horn County, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Open File Report 72-220, scale 1:24,000.
- Lewis, B.D., and Hotchkiss, W.R., 1981, Thickness, percent sand, and configuration of shallow hydrogeologic units in the Powder River Basin, Montana and Wyoming: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Map I-1317, scale 1:1,000,000.
- Lewis, B.D., and Roberts, R.S., 1978, Geology and water-yielding characteristics of rocks of the northern Powder River Basin, southeastern Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Map I-847-D, scale 1:125,000.
- Mapel, W.J., 1976a, Geologic map and coal sections of the Bar N Draw quadrangle, Wyoming and Montana, U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Field Studies Map MF-763, scale 1:24,000.
- Mapel, W.J., 1976b, Geologic map and coal sections of the Birney quadrangle, Rosebud County, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Field Studies Map MF-813, scale 1:24,000.

- Mapel, 1978, Geologic map and coal sections of the Pine Butte School quadrangle, Big Horn County, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Field Studies Map MF-1014, scale 1:24,000.
- Matson, R.E., and Blumer, J.W., 1974, Quality and reserves of strippable coal, selected deposits, southeastern Montana: Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology Bulletin 91, 135 p, 28 pls.
- McKay, E.J., 1976a, Preliminary geologic map and coal sections of the Fort Howes quadrangle, Rosebud and Powder River Counties, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Field Studies Map MF-807, scale 1:24,000.
- McKay, E.J., 1976b, Preliminary geologic map and coal sections of the King Mountain quadrangle, Rosebud and Powder River Counties, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Field Studies Map MF-817, scale 1:24,000.
- McLellan, M.W., 1991, Cross section showing the reconstructed stratigraphic framework of Paleocene rocks and coal beds in the central Powder River Basin from Decker to Bear Skull Mountain, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Map I-1959-E.
- McLellan, M.W., Biewick, L.R.H., Molnia, C.L., and Pierce, F.W., 1990, Cross sections showing the reconstructed stratigraphic framework of Paleocene rocks and coal beds in the northern and central Powder River Basin, Montana and Wyoming: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Map I-1959A, scale 1:500,000.
- Molnia, C.L., and Pierce, F. W., 1992, Cross sections showing coal stratigraphy of the central Powder River Basin, Wyoming and Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Map I-1959-D, scale 1:500,000.
- Rice, D.R., 1976, Stratigraphic sections from well logs and outcrops of Cretaceous and Paleocene rocks, Northern Great Plains, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Oil and Gas Investigations Chart OC-71.
- Robbins, S.L., 1994, Gravity and aeromagnetic studies of the Powder River Basin and surrounding areas, southeastern Montana, northeastern Wyoming, and western South Dakota: U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 1917, 17 p., 4 pls.
- Robinson, L.N., and Barnum, B.E., 1986, Southeastern extension of the Lake Basin Fault Zone in south-central Montana: Implications for coal and hydrocarbon exploration: *The Mountain Geologist*, v. 23, n. 2, p. 37-44.
- Robinson, L.N. and Culbertson, W.C., 1984, Structure contour map on top of the Canyon coal bed, Birney 30' x 60' quadrangle, Big Horn, Rosebud, and Custer Counties,

- Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Coal Investigations Map C-96-A, scale 1:100,000.
- Sarnecky, J.C., 1977, Geologic map and coal sections of the Lacey Gulch quadrangle, Big Horn and Rosebud Counties, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Field Studies Map MF-832, scale 1:24,000.
- Seeland, D., Hardie, J.K., Gibbons, A.B., Johnson, E.A., Biewick, L.R.H., McLellan, M.W., Molnia, C.L., and Pierce, F.W., 1993, Geophysical log signatures of lower Tertiary and Upper Cretaceous rocks in the Powder River Basin, Wyoming and Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Oil and Gas Investigations Chart OC-140.
- Stoner, J.D., and Lewis, B.D., 1980, Hydrogeology of the Fort Union coal region, eastern Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Investigations Series Map I-1236, scale 1:500,000.
- Thom, W.T., Jr., Hall, G.N., Wegemann, C.H., and Moulton, G.F., 1935, Geology of Big Horn County and the Crow Indian Reservation, Montana with special reference to water, coal, oil, and gas resources: U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 856, 15 pls., 200 p.
- Van Voast, W.A., and Hedges, R.B., 1975, Hydrogeologic aspects of existing and proposed strip coal mines near Decker, southeastern Montana: Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology Bulletin 97, 31 p.
- Vuke, S.M., Wilde, E.M., Bergantino, R.N., and Lopez, D.A., 2000, Geologic map of the Lodge Grass 30' x 60' quadrangle, Montana: Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology Geologic Map GM 56, scale 1:100,000.
- Vuke, S.M., Bergantino, R.N., and Wilde, E.M., 1990, Preliminary geologic map of the Birney 30 x 60-minute quadrangle: Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology Open File Report MBMG 286, scale 1:100,000 (superseded by this report).
- Warren, W.C., 1959, Reconnaissance geology of the Birney-Broadus coal field, Rosebud and Powder River Counties, Montana: U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 1072-J, p. 561–585, 8 pls., 585 p.
- Whipkey, C.E., Cavaroc, V.V., and Flores, R.M., 1991, Uplift of the Bighorn Mountains, Wyoming and Montana—a sandstone provenance study: U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 1917-D, 20 p.