

THE PALEOECOLOGY OF RICE'S PIT, VIRGINIA

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ABSTRACT

The fossil content present in several samples collected at Rice's Pit in Hampton, Virginia provides valuable data about the paleoecological conditions that prevailed during the Yorktown times. Several different fossil types are studied and compared to provide a strong argument for the concept that a shallow marine ecosystem prevailed here long ago. The sedimentological information correlates well with this same idea.

Careful procedures are described in detail regarding the methods used to collect, process, and study the fossil content and sediment from this area. Some interesting variations on micro-techniques are also used and described. Floatation, with its advantages and disadvantages, is a relatively new process for collecting and sampling foraminifera.

This relict ecosystem has characteristics that are detected by analysis and study. In addition to water depth, the type of community, prevalence of various species, and relative abundance can be determined. Comparisons are made regarding generic diversity and relative abundance that apply to various previous paleontological reports. It is noted that this area is extremely rich and diverse. Future studies on this site and other rich areas will contribute valuable data to the scientific storehouse on paleoecology.