

Geologists distinguish three principal divisions in the history of life as read in the record of the rocks. During the earliest of these great time divisions, archaic forms of life flourished—uncouth fishes, crustaceans, mollusks, and tree-ferns—most of them very unlike those now extant. On this account this is known as the period of most ancient life, or *Paleozoic Time*. To this succeeded a long lapse of ages when enormous reptiles predominated, associated with other types more like those that now inhabit the globe. To this is given the name of middle life, or *Mesozoic Time*. Finally, living things began to assume the form and appearance with which we are familiar, so that this last grand time division, which includes the present, is designated as the period of recent life, or *Cenozoic Time*.

Each of these three grand divisions of geologic time is in its turn separated into shorter subdivisions called *Periods*, characterized by their own peculiar types of life; and the several periods themselves are divided into *Epochs*, which vary more or less in character according to the region where they are developed. For this reason the chronological and stratigraphical divisions require an independent nomenclature, although this duality of geological classification can in most instances be readily adjusted to the contingencies of each district. The stratigraphical divisions are usually designated by local terms.

There are representatives not only of each of these great time divisions in North Carolina, but also of most of the periods as well as of many of the epochs.

The Piedmont Plateau and Appalachian Region contain representatives of the Archean, Paleozoic, and earliest period of the Mesozoic, while the Coastal Plain contains representatives of the latest period of the Mesozoic and the Cenozoic. The following tables give the sequence of Coastal Plain formations of North Carolina described in detail in later pages:

CENOZOIC.

QUATERNARY:

Recent,

Pleistocene—Pamlico

Chowan

Wicomico

Sunderland

Coharie

} Columbia Group.