Marion County is at the extreme southwest corner of East Tennessee and bordered on the south by the Alabama and Georgia State lines. Although the county is part of the Cumberland Plateau, it also encompasses a large part of Sequatchie Valley and part of the north side of the valley of Tennessee River. Throughout the county, relatively level rock strata form the plateau and crop out in the valleys cut into its surface. Pennsylvanian-age sandstones, shales, and conglomerates, along with several minable coal seams, cap the Cumberland Plateau tableland. Walden Ridge, the regional name of the plateau east of Sequatchie Valley, and the crest of Raccoon Mountain. Ordovician- and Mississippian-age limestones underlie the valley floors of Tennessee and Sequatchie Rivers. The walls of the valleys and their tributaries are composed of Mississippian-age limestones, sandstones, and shales. Sequatchie Valley, the most prominent topographic feature in Marion County, runs northeast to southwest through its center. Linear in appearance as a result of the geologic processes that formed it, the valley covers a little over one-fourth of the county’s total area.

“Tennessee Topology”
by David D. Starnes
TN Div of Geology, Bulletin 86

Marion County Geological Formation

Walden Ridge Face