# *ACROCANTHOSAURUS*

## *THE BONES OF CONTENTION*

## The True Story of Cephis Hall and Sid Love

### The Arkansas Hillbilly and the Choctaw Indian

### Who Outsmarted the Corporation and Saved the Dinosaur

**Russell Ferrell**

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This Book Is Dedicated to all Amateur Paleontologists and Naturalists

**Especially to the Memory of Sid Love**

**September 19, 1923 – November 21, 2007**

**One of the Greatest Amateur Paleontologists in History**

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# Preface

This book venture started when my son Thomas and his wife Kasie were on vacation at Beavers Bend State Park and just happened to stop off at Cephis Hall's rock shop on Highway 259 near Hochatown, Oklahoma, to examine his rocks and collectibles. My two grandchildren, Halee and Christian, love rocks and no doubt were instrumental in prodding their parents to stop for a visit, thus bringing the family in contact with the rock shop and Cephis Hall. My son and daughter-in-law engaged Cephis in conversation about his dinosaur adventure and got a glimmer of the nature of the story, which apparently captured their imagination and interest.

Within days of their return home to the Dallas area, Thomas called and informed me about what he had learned about Cephis Hall and the dinosaur. At the time, I was working on a book about barbarians, and while not seeking another writing opportunity, found myself intrigued with the tale. Thomas explained that the story sounded amazing, although he had only scratched the surface. He explained that he wanted to investigate the subject further and considered it a prime prospect for a book.

He convinced me to go with him to interview Cephis. We left that following weekend and spent two days interviewing the homespun rock hound at his home and reading over local newspaper stories. We both deemed the story worth telling, and since nobody else wanted to tell it at the time, we had inherited the job. We decided to take on the project as a father-son team. But unfortunately, Thomas, working as a software engineer at the time, was too constrained by the requirements of his job and had little spare time to devote to the project. Consequently, the endeavor fell totally on my shoulders. I thence became the caretaker of Cephis Hall and Sid Love's story – an intriguing story that deserved to be told.

Over the past three years, I traveled back and forth to southeastern Oklahoma on weekends to investigate and research the story. Although my forte is history, I had a modest background in science, particularly biology. The undertaking required me to buttress and polish up my mediocre knowledge of dinosaurs and paleontology. In research for this book, I read a number of books and publications about dinosaurs and the great fossil discoverers of the past. I learned that most major dinosaur excavations have been undertaken by professional paleontologists. In the case of Cephis Hall and Sid Love, here was an instance where two amateurs had taken on the entire excavation task with no financial or back-up support from Ph.D's or a university staff. This was a rare phenomenon in the scientific world – perhaps the only time in history in which such an undertaking by amateurs proved successful. Amazingly, their excavation turned up a rare and valuable find that soon became a center of controversy and conflict. It was in the aftermath of the recovery that their real troubles began.

I interviewed many people with firsthand and secondary knowledge of the story. I spent a considerable amount of time reading old stories from the local newspapers and concluded that Cephis Hall probably had his name in the local papers more than any single individual over a span of several years during the early to late 1980s when he was active not only in local fossil discoveries and nature tour guiding, but also quartz crystal and mineral prospecting and geologic exploration. He is McCurtain County's foremost naturalist and the discreet holder of many deep secrets about McCurtain County's hidden geologic treasures.

I tried to approach the story from many different angles and intricacies. The best source, of course, was Cephis Hall himself. I found him not only an interesting narrator, but honest and straightforward as well. This is his story and it is told from his point of view. And I believe his story, although it may in some ways reflect his bias and personal feelings, is generally accurate and truthful as best as can be garnered from weighing the evidence and consulting the sources. His narrations were largely confirmed by local newspaper stories or through interviews with parties or persons possessing firsthand knowledge of the subject.

The book was written piecemeal as the story was gradually uncovered over a three-year period of investigation. I was busy weighing new facts and details until the very end. I had to learn the story as I progressed with the investigation and research. It is an amazing story and one I really did not begin to fully appreciate until I became deeply engrossed. I began to realize its amazing quality sometime after I had written Chapter 22. It was about that time that I truly realized I had gotten hold of a real jewel in the rough. Professional authors had totally overlooked this story and allowed a rookie writer to step into the void and garner the meat.

A couple other writers had tried to write this book, but for untold reasons had fallen by the wayside. One journalist I encountered who himself had considered taking up the challenge bluntly told me that the

story needed to be fictionalized if I wanted to sell any books. In essence, he implied that the real story was simply too boring for a fickle, dumbed-down American readership with a short attention span and disdain for complexity. I guess only time will tell whether or not he was right, but it was my humble opinion that the real story could rest on its own laurels and needed no fabrication or exaggeration. What I offer to the reader is a true story principally told from the main character's point of view. Frankly, I could not have fictionalized or romanticized a better story. In this case, truth is better than fiction. In my biased opinion, this is not just an adventure story, but a true epic. Real flesh and blood stories like this are as rare as a newly-discovered, fully-articulated dinosaur specimen. It is my privilege and good fortune to have been entrusted with this story. I have done the best I could with it. I eventually found the real story to be much more astonishing and meritorious than I had initially imagined.

Shortly after I commenced my research and writing endeavor, a few of Cephis' close confidantes tried to convince him to go with a more established author. They recommended he bring in Bob Burke from Tulsa – the man that had written more books than any native Oklahoman. Cephis refused and continued to stake his hopes on my effort. A man of intuition, he was willing to give an unknown writer a shot, and he stuck with me even when the initial first few chapters did not turn out so well. If this book becomes a success, it is as much a testament to his presentiment and openness as it is to any writing talent that might be assigned to the author.

Sadly, it must be said that the other hero of the story, Sid Love, passed on before I was able to get his point of view. Would the book have been different had he been alive to narrate his own experience? Perhaps there would be some changes or additions. Certainly more light would have been cast on a few gray areas. However, I am thankful to have had the honor of putting into print the ordeals and struggles of Cephis Hall and his partner Sid Love, and I hope that my work reflects well on Sid and would have met his approval if he were alive today to read it.

Finally, the bias and point of view of the author must be addressed. If the main character has his particular insight and frame of reference, so too does the author. I had the opportunity to read a few parts of some chapters of this book at local writer's workshops in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. In one instance, I was accused of having a bias against academia. To such a charge, I respond to the negative and aver that I have the utmost respect for academia. I will acknowledge, however, that the arch protagonist of the book, Cephis Hall, seems to have such a bias and that his bias is colored by his own personal experience, and rightly so. Since this is his story and reflects his point of view to a considerable extinct, that bias cannot be negated. The author would, in fact, like to see academia play a more vocal and active role in the direction of society and actually serve as a countervailing force to the misinformation often disseminated in the corporate media by partisan political pundits.

Some readers or reviewers might claim the author has an inherent bias against large corporations, or at least against multi-national corporations, and that assessment would be correct. The author believes corporations have too much power and too much influence over government, the electoral process, the legal system, public opinion molding, the media, the government's purse strings, the private lives of individuals, and the direction of society. As a result of this imbalance of power, the society and economy have become destabilized and the democratic process undermined. The repeal of Glass-Steagall and the deregulation of commercial and investment banking led to the financial meltdown in 2008 and a near collapse of the entire economic system which was only averted through massive bailouts of too-big-to-fail institutions. The author is not alone in this assessment. Many social scientists and left-leaning political pundits agree. As widely noted in the press and media, main street America extensively distrusts big banks and Wall Street.

The author asserts that he has no particular negative sentiment against Weyerhaeuser per se, but it must be admitted that the principal character of the story, Cephis Hall, likely harbors such an unaffirmative predilection as well as a sizeable portion of the local population of McCurtain County, perhaps the majority. Despite some of the contents of the book not exactly projecting a benign corporate image of Weyerhaeuser, the author actually believes Weyerhaeuser is a good corporate citizen, at least in a relative sense – far more flexible and citizen-environmentally friendly than many, if not most, giant corporations that impinge directly on the environment, community, and labor relations.

The author, who has some legal training, has another inherent bias that may also seep through parts of this book dealing with the legal subjects. That bias is against the legal system and reflects a disdain for lawyers, the State Bar Association, and Texas courts based on firsthand personal experience as a plaintiff against wealthy defendants. The author believes most Americans share his bias and distrust of the legal system. The life experience and sentiment of the author does indeed color some of the pages of

this book as it relates to the legal system. But from the point of view of a social scientist, this sentiment is more grounded in objective reality than capricious prejudice.

The author interviewed many people in the research of this book. Some potential interviewees were simply unavailable or unwilling to consent. In most cases, the names of Weyerhaeuser officials and employees were changed out of respect for their privacy. I was unable to locate some of the principal Weyerhaeuser officials, namely the character identified by the pseudonym herein referred to as "Joe Bueno." Regardless, it was felt that there was not much that could be added or detracted by the real "Mr. Bueno" that would fundamentally change the story in any way. I was able to largely confirm the veracity of Cephis Hall as it related to his dealings with "Mr. Bueno" through other sources and a review of the legal case file contained within the records of the National Archives.

Neither Dr. Wann Langston nor Dr. Jeffrey Pittman responded to my email requests for an interview. I took that as an obvious sign of a lack of interest and did not press the issue. Still, despite their conflict with the story's heroes, I tried to paint them in a most favorable light. In regard to Dr. Langston, I referenced his long-standing distinguished career and accomplishments. In the case of Dr. Pittman, I noted his accomplishments made after completing his university studies and obtaining his Ph.D.

I found Dr. Rich Cifelli and Pete Larson to be most cordial and receptive during our personal contact. The two men were quite affable, and it was a pleasure to have had the opportunity to interview them. True gentlemen they were. Unfortunately, Allan Graffham was in very bad health at the time I started my research and had passed away before I had a chance to interview him. Other than the two main characters, Cephis Hall and Sid Love, Allan Graffham played a principal third-person role. As a result of his ensuing conflict with the two protagonists, he is seen in both a positive light and a negative dark side, as both a hero and villain.

It is hoped that this book will be both entertaining and informative. The book is basically about nature, a dinosaur discovery and excavation, and the struggles of the two men in the aftermath of that recovery; but it also has a wide breadth and takes on various side-topics. The author has thrown in some science, history, political commentary, and controversy to supplement and enliven the story line. Hopefully, this added material complements rather than detracts from the story. There are actually two versions of this book. This book you have in hand concentrates more on history; whereas, the alternative version concentrates more on the science aspect. The first 34 chapters of the book deal largely with the discovery and excavation phase of the story. After Chapter 34, the story takes on a new dimension and changes tone as the nature of the story transforms. You have chosen an amazing story and should find it quite compelling. For any communication to the author about this book, the author can be contacted at the following email address: acrocantho2010@yahoo.com.

# INTRODUCTION

Cephis Hall grew up in the lingering shadows of the Great Depression. Like millions of other families across the nation, his family was forced to migrate in search of work. In the aftermath of that great catastrophe, agricultural prices were still too low for the Halls' small, 160-acre farmstead to earn enough income from their crops to support a family.

During the period from 1930 through the 1950s, waves of seasonal migrations moved itinerant families across the nation in search of field work. Agricultural labor was still in demand in rural America as late as the 1950s and native-born white workers performed much of that labor at a time when there was only a trickle of migrant laborers crossing the border from Mexico. Cephis Hall's family was one of those migrant farm families seeking work in the fields.

In the aftermath of the Great Depression, people in search of work were not particular about the labors they performed to earn economic sustenance. People were still humble enough to work in the fields picking cotton, watermelons, or tomatoes, and were not afraid of hard, back-breaking labor, sweat, dirt, or danger. These conditions were accepted by the laborers of the time as part of the natural order of work. Cephis Hall's father was one of these people.

The Hall family did not buy into the California Dream that propelled so many of their rural brethren ever westward in a desperate search for agricultural field work during the darkest days of the 1930s calamity. Cephis' family were Arkies, rather than Okies –more mountain folk than prairie folk – and less inclined to move west in search of a blissful fantasy in sunny California.

The family's home base was a small farm in the foothills of the Ouachita Mountains in rural southwest Arkansas. Like many other poor families during this time, the Halls were forced into seasonal migrations; however, they headed north, rather than west. Their migrations were temporary and timed to the growing and harvesting periods of the northern zone. The Halls were inclined to stay close to their geographical roots instead of chasing some illusory dream and a sense of permanence elsewhere. In their quest for crops and cash, they had chosen a different migration path to the cooler climate and shorter planting season of the Great Lakes region.

The Halls found what they were looking for in Indiana near the glaciated lakes close to Elkhart, a vicinity south of Lake Michigan. The large commercial growers in the area were contracted by the Campbell Soup Company to grow and supply tomatoes, so the seasonal field hands like the Halls worked the fields and picked the tomatoes for these contract growers.

Cephis' father, Robert Hall, like his son would later become, was a diligent laborer. He was not too proud to pick vegetables in the field, but ambitious enough to work hard and gain recognition as a reliable employee with proven organizational and leadership skills. Soon Robert Hall earned the title and responsibility of supervisor, and finally rose to superintendent over the fields and field hands who were both white and Mexican migrants.

Robert Hall worked out an arrangement with the contract growers so that every summer in late June, he and his family could arrive in time to work and supervise the fields, then return to southwestern Arkansas in September to tend their own crops.

Americans and Mexicans came from all directions to pick tomatoes. The family of renowned Mexican-American singer Freddie Fender picked tomatoes in the fields of Indiana with the Halls. The Hall family earned extra cash, and because Cephis' father was a field superintendent, he earned considerably more that the typical tomato picker.

While working as a young boy in the fields of Indiana near the remnants of the glaciated lakes, Cephis picked up his first fossils, the small remains of ancient marine animals. Such natural oddities were common on the lands southwest of the Great Lakes area. They were corrals, branchiopods, and crinoids, although he did not know what they were at the time. The idea of these ancient, once-living things transforming into rocks captivated his curiosity. He trained his eyes to scan for such natural relics on the ground and in the earth, and began to also find them at home on the lands of rural Arkansas.

He took these small fossilized pieces to school in his pockets to show them to his classmates and to ask his instructors what they were. His teachers did not know, and the other students did not care. His fellow students, perhaps even his teachers, thought he was rather odd and different. In fact, he was sent home on one occasion merely for asking too many questions.

Some of the other children made fun of him and called him names, thinking he was weird because he picked up fossils and strange objects and was curious about their origins. Out of meanness or spite, some of the boys even stole his pocket treasures.

Cephis grew into a rather tall, skinny, and gawky teenager – perhaps an early forerunner of the nerd before the term was invented. As a youngster, Cephis was more interested in natural things rather than technological gadgets and more curious about geological science than physical science; in other words, he gravitated to biology rather than physics, and nature rather than technology.

As a teenager, Cephis did not fit in well with the more popular students – the celebrities and jocks. He was sometimes bullied in school by the more dominant students who were generally from the more affluent families. Cephis didn't play sports in high school; instead, he was studious and preferred to spend his time in the library reading *National Geographic* or other nature publications. He made average to good grades in school.

From his earliest childhood experience, Cephis became cognizant of the influences of class, money, and privilege, and how such social factors impinged on people who ranked lower on the social scale. He became aware of differences in family backgrounds and how such differences prejudiced the behaviors and attitudes of privileged groups against the less privileged. He was conscious about being poor and developed sensitivity to an array of social and economic factors and the innate privileges that class and money seemed to convey and the social distinctions they engendered.

These early experiences from school made an indelible impression on his psyche and melded his awareness of money, privilege, title and power, or at least how it was sometimes wielded against him or other rural poor people.

Cephis, like his father, was not averse to hard work. Although entrepreneurial in outlook, he had no illusions or fantasies about becoming rich. He sided with the "little guy" and was well versed in the plight of the underdog. He would, in later life, become entangled with powerful persons and forces in which he performed the role of the underdog to the hilt, quite literally and admirably. After years and decades of hard and dangerous physical labor as a lumberjack and mine excavator, Cephis toughened and transitioned himself into a physical dynamo that would not be intimidated by the size, stature, or status of any man.

Cephis never tried to make the easy buck; hard work was his hallmark, and he never shied away from any demanding physical endeavor or labor. Although he would become a small business owner, he soon learned or discerned the reality of economic power – about the oligarchic and oligopolistic enterprises that overshadowed small businesses. He would confront this naked power equation both in the business and social realm throughout his life.

It was his love of geological treasures and a great desire to discover and retrieve them that spurred him onward in pursuit of an impractical dream that brought him face to face with unforeseen and deleterious forces. His passion and unbridled determination brought him into direct conflict with scores of foes and belligerents who stood in the way of his dream.

His quest for hidden treasure would take him on a great adventure as the underdog in a titanic struggle against enormous opposition and odds. The struggle would be over the rightful ownership of a rare and valuable dinosaur. After wresting one of the greatest dinosaur specimens in paleontological history from a viscous and hardened earthen embankment, a bitter struggle against the forces of man ensued, with the victor to garner the acclaim and spoils, while the loser to get nothing. It was an all-or-nothing, winner-take-all contest and brawl to the bitter end.

CHAPTER ONE

# SETTING THE SCENE -- ABOUT THE MAN, THE PLACE, AND THE TIMES

It is a well-known contemporary fact of life that the rich and powerful rule and the poor must simply obey. When the common man occasionally butts heads with the rich and powerful, those who own and control the big institutions that dominate society, he usually gets his head handed to him. This reality can be evidenced in the daily workings of the courts, legal system, government, business, and virtually every arena of life. The little guy is always at a disadvantage, and the powerful always win. At least that is the prevailing conventional belief, and the evidence to support that thesis is ever so compelling. The rich and powerful may sometimes dispute this widely held belief, but it is just an exercise in public relations, if not outright propaganda.

Once in a blue moon, however, the above modus operandi of life is repealed and the little guy manages to hold his own or even triumph against those dominant forces that perpetually want to regulate and control his behavior and fix the outcome in their favor. The saga of Cephis Hall is about one of those rare exceptions to the rule and demolishes the universal belief that the powerful always win, regardless of circumstances, truth, and justice. When one ponders the final outcome of the Cephis Hall experience in fighting against those powerful institutions of society, he will inadvertently shake his head in amazement and ask, “How could this have happened?”

The story you are about to read tries to answer that very elusive question. In case you are already skeptical, we will dismiss, right here and now, the typical explanation that luck was solely responsible for the outcome. It had to be more than just luck. A clue to the outcome may be found in the personal qualities and character of the man himself. In search of some clues that may shed light on the question, we will begin the book by looking at the background and history of the man.

Hall was born into poverty in the foothills of the Ouachita Mountains of southwest Arkansas on May 10, 1941. He grew up on a farm of about 160 acres in southwestern Arkansas near a small town named Mena. His family raised row crops, cattle, and hogs. During a certain period, they also operated commercial chicken houses. As produce farmers, his family raised cucumbers and strawberries, which they sold to wholesale produce companies.

Even though the Great Depression had passed, these were still tough times in rural Arkansas. The typical family was much like the Halls, scratching out a bare subsistence on hardscrabble family farms. There were no unionized factories in Southwestern Arkansas during these times that offered good paychecks, fringe benefits, overtime, and the standard forty hour workweek. Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal administration had already ended the social and public works programs that employed thousands of rural Arkansas folk during the darkest days of the Great Depression. On the other hand, families were generally closer, and society was more closely-knit. Extended social relations and friendships seamed together a more cohesive society across a broad front.

In sharp contrast, there was the small class of the patrician rich, who moved largely in their own social circles, and then there was most everybody else, who were all poor to some degree, some being dirt poor. As might be expected, the “wealthy snobs” and the “working slobs” lived on opposite sides of the tracks. Although they may have interacted with each other more than do the rich and poor of the modern world, their social worlds were far apart and in sharp contrast.

Perhaps the time, place, and style of life that captured Hall and his family during these early years qualified them as genuine “Arkansas hillbillies.” This is often used as a regional pejorative term, like the epithet “Okie” that labels and sometimes stereotypes, the neighboring Oklahomans. The term can be applied loosely to describe the condition and behavior of a large cross-section of people who are tied to the land in an abject state of deprived material and cultural existence. During that period of the early and

mid-twentieth century in rural Arkansas and Oklahoma, one could find an abundance of destitute people on the land who were conspicuous in their appearance and behavior. The whole lot of these people, with their grimy, tattered clothes and all, were broadly cast with that label and stigma of "Okie" during those times.

The stereotype of the Okie conjures up archaic images of destitute farm families from the Great Depression era packing up their lifetime-belongings in a worn out, clanking old truck and fleeing from a whole panoply of misfortunes and disasters in a desperate quest to make it to the ever-elusive Promised Land in California, or somewhere out in the American West.

"California Dreaming" had beckoned them westward to a distant Mecca – a sunny, warm, coastal oasis on the western edge of Pax Americana. It was a land of "milk and honey" and boundless opportunity – or so they imagined in their naïve and idyllic fantasies.

The Depression, drought, howling winds, dust storms, infertile soils, hunger, and the banker's bulldozer had pushed them off their lands and onto the roads like nomadic gypsies. Desperate, but full of hope that God would provide and protect, their naïve intuitions and aspirations drove them onward.

Across the Heartland they poured – over muddy, bumpy, and pot-holed roads – down Route 66, the highway of promise and hope – through the golden arches and into the "fields of dreams." Many fell by the wayside; but many others ultimately reached their destination. A throng of prairie Sooners and hillbillies cascaded into the Golden State by the tens of thousands. John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* describes the images precisely.

The Okies were mostly God fearing creatures of the soil, fleeing both the wrath of God and man. Although God-fearing, moral, and righteous, the images they cast as they trekked westward across the heartland of America were hideous and despicable to those people whose presence and space they suddenly invaded. Wretched and desperate, these displaced people were viewed with suspicion and scorn from those experiencing their intrusion. These disheveled Okies were bound to attract considerable attention from wary and distrustful onlookers. The greetings they received from the communities they entered were never warm or friendly. The Promised Land they initially encountered was more like purgatory than paradise.

After encountering ignominious exploitation and heart-wrenching disappointment, the Okies and Arkies eventually settled and found economic subsistence in the military factories and farm fields from Barstow to Bakersfield, which became a hillbilly enclave. The country singing legend, Merle Haggard ("*Okie From Muskogee"*), whose parents had traveled that same path, was born in 1936 while his family was living in an abandoned railroad car in Bakersfield.

The term "Okie" was coined to identify these distressed migrants as a people, in whole or in part. In those times, the term always carried a negative connotation. Today the term usually just means somebody from Oklahoma. A different array of stereotypical images has been foisted for the "Arkansas hillbilly."

The hillbilly was more a product of the backwoods and mountains, as opposed to the open prairie and soil for the Okie. More rural and isolated than the typical Okie, the hillbilly was inclined to conceal his sins and indiscretions behind the hollows, hills, and pine forests in which he dwelled. These were not always puritanical, god-fearing, bible thumpers like the Okies out on the expansive prairies. Sometimes, these were vicious and feuding peoples driven by prurient instincts and desires. Unlike the Okies, they seldom resorted to migration to escape their problems. Most stayed in place, enduring their hardships with whatever palliatives they had within easy grasp.

They were often suspicious of strangers who wandered off the beaten path. A small and crudely constructed whiskey still might rest in a concealed corner behind the house. Moonshine was plentiful and indulgently used to assuage the lingering misery of poverty and isolation. A bottle of white lighting was often in easy reach and habitually used to wash away the incessant bleakness, at least for the moment.

The "Okie" and "Arkansas hillbilly," like obverse sides of the same coin, represent images that endure and endear to this very day. These two socially descriptive terms represent distinctive peoples.

They are unforgettable relics from an earlier era. Both still persist as regional and historical icons. They remind us of a tougher but simpler time when an agrarian economic and social order prevailed throughout the American heartland. Although America had gradually emerged from the wild, untamed frontier by the later part of the nineteenth century, people were still brutally oppressed by awesome forces unleashed by man and nature. Even in a modern, mass, transient society, there are still people in rural Oklahoma and Arkansas who identify and describe themselves by such terms, whether they understand their true connotation or not.*

These stereotypical images stem largely from the Great Depression era or the preceding decades when people were still moving westward into unsettled lands – including isolated mountainous areas and empty plains. One of the last thrusts of westward migration occurred in the late 1800s and pushed people from the Appalachia regions into the mountains of northwestern Arkansas and the plains of Oklahoma. Families made their way onto new lands and eked out a marginal existence largely from the family farm or intermittent manual work found in nearby towns. The arrival of the Great Depression made rural life even more precarious. The full recovery from the Great Depression did not reach many rural folk until late in the 1950s.

This was a world in stark contrast to the high-tech, globally integrated economic order of the twenty-first century – a world dominated by high technology and multi-national corporations. The great majority of the people were still tied to the land. Production of food was the mainstay, not the production and consumption of consumer goods.

Okies and hillbillies were rural phenomena. The modern-day American experience is an urban one. There are, however, people still living today who actually lived and experienced the life of the "Okie" and "hillbilly." Whether captured in the anguished experience of the Oklahoma Panhandle dust storms, the dreary isolation of the hollows and hills of the Ozark and Ouachita Mountains, or some other meager and wretched kind of rural existence, the great majority of ordinary people tied to the land had a similar experience – an experience marred and shaped by poverty and isolation, which sometimes turned into despair and desperation.

Haunting memories from this recent past still encompass the minds of many older people in southeastern Oklahoma and southwestern Arkansas. It inflicted a harsh imprint on their psyche. The attitudes and behaviors of the remaining "old timers" in rural Arkansas and Oklahoma are colored and influenced by these indelible images and experiences from the Great Depression era. They likely passed on vestiges of their enduring consciousness to their sons and daughters born immediately before and after World War II. The parents of Cephis Hall must have also imbued their son with many of these enduring attitudes, insecurities, and archaic social experiences that still lingered in their own minds.

*Lest we leave some readers in a state of confusion, the above images describing the Okie and Arkansas hillbilly need to be clarified in connection to the actual setting and characters of this book. The above Okie description stems from that imagery depicted by John Steinbeck in his popular novel *The Grapes of Wrath* and pertains to the destitute Oklahomans fleeing the Dust Bowl experience that afflicted large portions of the state, particularly the northern and western prairie areas, during the Great Depression era. The experience did not reach McCurtain County or the contiguous counties of Pushmataha and LeFlore in southeastern Oklahoma. It was a phenomenon of the prairies, not the forested or mountainous areas. The affliction did, however, heavily impact the rolling hills areas further to the north, such as the Sallisaw area. Likewise, the Dust Bowl experience did not infringe upon the adjacent southwestern Arkansas counties of Little River, Sevier, and Polk.

The people of southeastern Oklahoma and southwestern Arkansas, in those geographically connected counties named above, were very similar in character and lifestyle – both living in the foothills of the Ouachita Mountains in a similar economic environment. The Arkansas people have sometimes been referred to as "Arkies," perhaps a copied imitation of

the labeled term “Okie,” reserved for their neighbors across the state line. The people in these bordering counties on both sides of the state line did not engage in mass migration to seek refuge from a dust bowl-like condition in the 1930s. Many did flee, or migrate, out of economic desperation, however. The Great Depression had set in motion a giant chain-reaction of migration across the entire nation.

The term “hillbilly” is more obscure than the term “Okie.” Apparently it was derived from the Ulster-Scottish (or Scots-Irish) settlers who had migrated from Ireland to America and then promptly moved out west and settled in the frontier Appalachians. The origin for the term goes even further back. Its antecedents were originally coined by the catholic supporters of King James II, who was defeated by William, Prince of Orange, a protestant aspirant to the throne, at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. The supporters of William, mostly lowland Scots, were called “Orangemen” and “Billy Boys” by the opposing Catholic troops loyal to King James. The names endured. They brought their songs and ballads pertaining to the battle and their support of Prince William with them to America.

These two descriptive names they earned at the Boyne would eventually be combined into one – “hillbilly.” These very same Scots-Irish people would later make up the majority ethnic composition of the Presbyterian droves that migrated from Northern Ireland to America in the first half of the 1700s and progressed onward to become the great frontiersmen who settled, and eventually tamed, the West. This nickname for the mountain folk of Appalachia would stick and ultimately tag that same ethnic people after they subsequently migrated west from Appalachia into the Arkansas Ozarks – thus nicknamed “Arkansas Hillbillies.” The term is largely a negative stereotype – referring to isolated mountain people who appeared culturally and socially backward when observed by outsiders with an inherent bias.

The term hillbilly has also been transplanted to the deep American south and applied to the poor whites and “good ole boys” occupying the mountains, foothills, and pine forests of northern Georgia and Alabama. The closely related cultural terms “redneck” and “cracker” also originated with the transplanted Ulster Scots and their descendants inhabiting the Appalachian highlands and have been broadly applied to a wider cast of people. Burt Reynolds popularized the imagery in a neutral, if not positive light, with several of his iconic, faddish movies of the 1970s about the South: Smokey and the Bandit, White Lightning, W.W. and the Dixie Dance Kings, and Gator. His other popular movie of that era, Deliverance, cast the image in a darker light.

The imagery for the “Arkansas hillbilly” was simply transferred from the existing Appalachian version, just given a slightly regional twist. Apparently, the images of the feuding Hatfields and McCoys of Appalachia have also been mixed into the cultural iconic brew.

One true-to-life, regional “Arkansas hillbilly,” the actor Billy Bob Thornton from rural Alpine, Arkansas, successfully catapulted his career after his highly acclaimed, eerie performance of the indelible character Karl, the mentally challenged “redneck” character in the movie Slingblade who had a peculiar conversational monologue and sordid past, but a good heart. Thornton went on to give a striking and realistic performance of Davy Crockett, himself a Scots-Irish frontiersman, in the movie The Alamo and as a football coach in the popular movie Friday Night Lights, as well as other excellent performances.

The label “Arkansas hillbilly” had originally been reserved for the northern mountain folk of the Ozarks. The comic strip characters Li’l Abner and Snuffy Smith, of Dogpatch USA, have served as a continuing caricature of the Ozark hillbilly image. In more recent times, the hillbilly term has sometimes been loosely applied to the people further south of the Ozarks in the other upland region – the Ouachitas. It was in the foothills of the Ouachitas that our main character, Cephis Hall, was born and reared. This is also the region from which Bill Clinton came. Because this Ouachita foothill region of both southwestern Arkansas and southeastern Oklahoma is closely connected geographically, economically, and culturally, if any such distinctive hillbillies still exist in that part of Arkansas, then they would also likely exist in the adjacent Oklahoma area to the west.

Cephis Hall, quite aware of what the connotation meant in an earlier time, has openly referred to himself as an Arkansas hillbilly and a country bumpkin. Most people would not dispute this claim. A peculiar rural accent can be detected in his speech, such as the conversational phrase "like that there" that he frequently interjects in the middle of a spoken phrase or sentence.

He possessed a conspicuous "Arkansas hillbilly persona" in terms of speech, mannerisms, and outlook – a set of cultural tendencies likely derived from the cultural epicenter of the Appalachian highlands, which, in turn, harkened back to the Ulster Plantation in Northern Ireland, and ultimately to the border areas of lowland Scotland. His ancestral folks were the same people who had stood with William Wallace, "Brave Heart," who, with his ragtag army of Scottish peasants, soundly trumped the professional army of King Edward I of England at the Battle of Sterling Bridge in 1297 and sent Edward's troops reeling and limping back across the border into England.

A close-knit family structure and a disciplined, sod-busting, Ouachita-hills rearing had molded both the interior and exterior of the man. Perhaps the hardships Hall endured in his early life may have conditioned him to deal with the future hard knocks he would one day receive as an adult. Such a condition of poverty can cut two ways, both strengthening and weakening a person at the same time. But one thing is certain: poverty places a person at a relative disadvantage in life compared to those with a more affluent and privileged background.

Poverty was pervasive and persistent throughout southwestern Arkansas during the first half of the twentieth century. It must have made its mark on the man in countless ways. Hall admits having feelings of inadequacy about his clothing in comparison to the other kids in his school. Perhaps Hall's family was among the poorest of the poor; and make no mistake, during those times in rural Arkansas most people were, indeed, poor, certainly in relative comparison to the material abundance that was soon reached by the urban masses as a result of America's rising industrialization and competitive economic preeminence in the post-World War II world.

A religious-oriented upbringing, an instilled time-honored set of morals, values, and convictions, and a uniquely rural life experience had honed Cephis Hall into a person with a rare combination of qualities not often seen in the modern world – a plain-spoken, straightforward, down-to-earth, rough-hewed rustic with an unwavering penchant for honesty, equity, and truth – at least in firsthand dealings with all encountered people. He was the type of person one could rely on and could be expected to hold up his part of an agreement. Cephis Hall was a tough-minded and determined individual – a formidable opponent for any competitor or foe. These qualities served him well throughout his life.

Also, Cephis was an oddity of mixed contradictions. He was like a rare coin – on one side a backwoods hillbilly who seemed to have never cracked a book; while on the other side, a studious, book-worn nerd with a rural, homey accent who in some plush quarters might be perceived as having a loutish, unpolished appearance. In one instance, he was an avid bible thumper and quoter; on another, an adherent and strong defender of science and evolution. He was seemingly anti-intellectual on the surface, but intellectual to the core beneath the surface. Poverty had coalesced with perseverance and perspiration to shape his life chances and shade and color his demeanor.

Regardless of how poverty may have shaped and limited his life opportunities, Hall managed to graduate from high school in 1960. He relates having to work jobs after school to buy his clothes, books, and supplies. Unfortunately, he never had the opportunity to pursue his scholastic education beyond high school.

Did the world lose the services of a potential world-class scientist? We will never know. But for sure, Hall never realized his true potential in society as a result of his early-life experience with poverty and the limitations that experience cast over his entire life. Had the circumstances of his life been different, Hall potentially could have made a great professor or field scientist in any one discipline such as geology, paleontology, archaeology, or biology. Hall did manage to develop eclectic interests in these scientific areas and learned from a more practical application of skills applied in the field. He developed interest and enthusiasm for rocks, rare minerals, fossils, nature, and museums.

A person can see the evidence of this practical knowledge if fortunate enough to engage him in conversation or application in regard to the geological or biological disciplines. It would otherwise be easy to underestimate this man's knowledge base, until he begins to converse and elaborate about geological principles and features that he largely learned out in the real world. People soon begin to wonder, despite this man's modest and unpretentious demeanor, if they might be talking to a scientist or some professional expert in the naturalist world.

Cephis became interested in rocks and fossils while working on the farms and fields of southwestern Arkansas. As a child, he began collecting those obscure fossils and rocks he found on the land. As a result of his early love of these objects of nature, he developed an interest in science. Through largely trial and error, he gradually learned practical techniques for applying science to the natural world. He had become fascinated with fossils since he was ten years old. He had found petrified fossils, marine fossils, corals, and other objects and had developed a keen interest in the natural forces that shaped and modified them. At the tender age of eight, he had found a brachiopod near the Great Lakes and said to himself "this thing once lived." The thought of it captured his imagination.

Hall would eventually compensate for his lack of formal educational training by his extensive personal involvement and field experience in the true natural world outside the classroom. Although the economic necessities of having to make a living and support his family had for years relegated his scientific interest to largely that of a hobby or side interest, he became a self-made man who worked hard all his life to support his family. He worked at many things, but was for years employed in cutting logs, a dangerous and difficult job. He suffered several serious injuries doing this work, but fortunately he survived. Unlike most academic scientists who are constantly engaged and wired to the scientific world, Hall had to pursue his scientific interests in his spare time when he was not otherwise working hard at making a living.

Hall had married his wife Joyce, a resident of his local Arkansas community, in 1963. Just after their marriage, they relocated to DeQueen Arkansas, just east of the Oklahoma state line. During their residence in DeQueen, Cephis worked as an independent trucker and was a contract driver for a big poultry company. The family lived in DeQueen until 1968 when they moved a few miles west across the Oklahoma state line to the small town of Eagletown in McCurtain County. In Oklahoma, he changed occupations from a contract poultry driver to a contract logger. He also worked as a carpenter on large commercial contracts for the giant construction firm Brown and Root. Their first child, Angie, was born December of 1966, while they were still living in Arkansas. Their other two children –April, born March 1973 and Alan, born March 1978 – were born after they moved to Eagletown, Oklahoma.

Eagletown is located on highway 70 about fourteen miles east from Broken Bow, Oklahoma. It is now largely an abandoned town, but in the 1960s it was livelier. It is only a few miles east of the Mountain Fork River. The Mountain Fork attracts a lot of canoeists and tubers to its cold, clear waters and brings cash to the local economy.

Eagletown was indeed active in the early part of the twentieth century after serving as one of the camps, or perhaps more accurately, company towns, that was established by the original Dierks Brothers timber company -- then known as the Choctaw Lumber Company. These camps had narrow-gauge rail spurs leading into the hills and valleys where virgin timber was to be cut, then skidded with mules, and loaded onto railcars, ultimately to be hauled to the mills. Broken Bow, to the west, was developed in 1912 as one of the largest mill sites of the Choctaw Lumber Company. The camps stopped being used in the late 1930s once the virgin hardwood timber had been cut. The company's workforce packed up and left. Eagletown then went into a precipitous decline.

Going even further back in time, in the early nineteenth century, Eagletown was a thriving center for the newly arrived Choctaw Indian Nation. In 1830, the Choctaws signed a treaty with the federal government that dictated the trade of their lands in Mississippi for remote lands in Oklahoma between the Canadian and Red Rivers. That following year, through forced removal, they began moving from

Mississippi to Oklahoma and finally scattered over about ten counties of Oklahoma. About 6,000 would be moved per year for three consecutive years. Eagletown was founded by that first wave of Choctaws.

Eagletown became an annuity town. Each year, Choctaws from the surrounding area came to town to get an annual payment. The leaders of the Choctaw Nation had to ride on horseback to a disbursement center in Little Rock to get the funds that would, in turn, be distributed to individual tribal members in the Eagletown area.

Eagletown was also an early cultural and educational center for the emergent Choctaw Nation. One of the first schools to educate Choctaw children was established at Eagletown by a missionary brought in from Mississippi for that very purpose. The missionaries had not been requested for religious training, but solely for the teaching of reading and writing to the children.

During this period, the federal government built one of the first major roads in the state for the purpose of moving supplies and Choctaws from Little Rock, Arkansas to Fort Towson, Oklahoma with Eagletown as a major stopover. This military road, in the earliest period, was originally traveled from Little Rock, Arkansas, through Old Washington, and from there it extended through Horatio to Eagletown. Eventually the trail would link a community called Hoorah, which would later be known as DeQueen, Arkansas. This early primitive road was eventually to become Highway 70, a major transportation artery in southeastern Oklahoma and Arkansas. Highway 70 currently represents that same trail; only now it is paved with asphalt.

This same highway now links the county's two predominant cities, Idabel and Broken Bow. Idabel, with a population of about 7,000, serves as the county seat and the hub for agriculture, shopping, and county government operations. Its sister city, Broken Bow, has a population of about 5,000 and is a hub for timber and tourism. Big-rig logging trucks are frequently seen rolling through the highways and thoroughfares of Broken Bow. Idabel straddles the Red River valley, and its surrounding landscape was once dominated by King Cotton. Cotton was still king as late as the 1950s, but corn and cattle have since become the principal agricultural products.

Lumber**,** tourism, cattle, and poultry are the major industries and employment underpins of the local economy. The giant poultry king, Tyson Foods, is probably the largest employer, at least since the beginning of the twenty-first century. There are considerable employment opportunities in poultry processing plants and poultry farms. Within the forest products industry, Weyerhaeuser and International Paper are the other two major employers in the county. Like most rural areas of America since the 1980s, McCurtain County has seen a decline in population as the younger generation continues to seek career opportunities elsewhere.

The two cities, particularly Broken Bow, are unmistakably blue collar, as evidenced by economic demographics, occupational patterns, and dress and appearance. Stylish designer clothes or three-piece suits are not conspicuous in the open forums and streets. Dress is modest and casual, if not drab.

Choctaws are evident in the stores, communities, schools, and streets. Choctaw prominence also registers in tourist landmarks and recreational icons. The Choctaw Casino and tourist center in Broken Bow bring in gaming enthusiasts and cash to the local economy.

Outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing provide recreational diversion for county residents. The people are sports-minded. High school football and basketball are highly popular for the locals, and both Broken Bow High School and Idabel High School have had considerable success in state sports competition. Football is god in Oklahoma, or if not, it is king over all sports and spectator entertainment.

This area of southeastern Oklahoma, in and around the principal cities of Broken Bow and Idabel, is now dominated by monoculture plantations of Loblolly Pine. These new stands of planted pine trees have replaced the original virgin hardwoods. These extensive pine-timber stands are interspersed with numerous streams and creeks. The rivers and creeks flow generally southward and meander through the low-lying valleys as they drain the surrounding foothills of the Ouachita Mountains.

While living in Eagletown, Cephis became acquainted with the local crystal trade in and around Hochatown, Oklahoma, a small community north of Broken Bow. Years earlier, he had been exposed to

the crystal trade in Arkansas and had since been involved in collecting and trading crystals. In the Hochatown locality, he found a new and productive area. He began frequenting the area and searching the backwoods of the Hochatown crystal zone.

This small but productive crystal zone is located just north of Hochatown and is a significant zone for producing quality quartz crystals. The veins of this mineral zone run generally from west-southwest, to east-northeast all across the Ouachita uplift. Quartz crystals are formed when hydrothermal solutions are forced into spaces and cracks of the earth.

The zone can graphically be delineated as roughly a 20 X 20 square mile area just north of Hochatown and is found (east and west) on both sides of Highway 259 as it proceeds north out of Hochatown. This is a unique geological structure. It is literally a rock hound's paradise, but not big enough for commercial ventures. This crystal zone attracts serious mineral collectors from all over the world.

Crystals must be dug or mined; they are not simply found lying on the ground for the easy picking. Quartz crystals are found in "Vugs" or "pockets" at various places along a vein of hydrothermal quartz and must be mined by hand, or by mechanical digging. Successful digging of quartz requires meticulous care and good technique. Such skills cannot be learned overnight. They require extensive practice, largely by trial and error.

Hochatown is located just a few short miles north of the city of Broken Bow. It is a small, picturesque village on the southern edge of the Ouachita National Forest and at the base of the Kiamichi Mountains. This is a scenic and quaint tourist area, less than a five-minute drive to a major tourist attraction.

Nearby, beautiful Broken Bow Lake and popular Beavers Bend State Park are nestled in the foothills at the base of the Kiamichi Mountains. The cold and clear flowing Mountain Fork River, teeming with trout, flows through the heart of this popular state park. The park was built during the Great Depression by President Franklin Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) after citizens of Broken Bow and Idabel raised $1,800 and purchased 1,200 acres of cutover land known as Beavers Bend from the Choctaw Lumber Company.

In August 1935, 208 enlisted CCC men began building barracks, water works, telephone lines, and sewer systems. In addition, the CCC constructed park cabins, a large bathhouse, a concession building, a swimming area, fencing, and a major access road. Many of these original buildings are still in use today. Vestiges of the past era of the Great Depression and the Rooseveltian public works projects designed to put a restless, displaced rural population back to work are still seen throughout the county. In those days, desperate and disenfranchised hellions and hooligans threatened the social order of the political landscape. Roosevelt's "tree army" restored forests, fought forest fires, planted trees, harvested seedlings, and constructed fire towers, roads, dams, trails, and telephone lines,

The Mountain Fork is a major focal point within the county – a scenic, natural marvel that entices tourists. Hunters, fisherman, canoeists, and other recreation seekers flock to the area. The area also attracts naturalists and amateur collectors of antiquities, crystals, and fossils. Log cabins dot the landscape in and near the state park. These private tourist cabins blend well with the scenic setting and accommodate the multitudes of travelers and vacationers who visit the area annually.

Hochatown has been a center of interest for more than just recreation and crystals. For decades, it was known as the moonshine capital for the state of Oklahoma. This distinction is not just referring to the Prohibition or Great Depression eras; but a period as late as the early 1970s when major moonshine operations shipped cases of bootleg whiskey across the entire length and breadth of the nation. Shipments of moonshine would reach major metropolitan cities like Chicago in the Midwest and Los Angeles and Las Vegas in the west, and even reach markets as far away as Alaska in the far northwest. Shipments from McCurtain County sometimes made the distance to these major markets. This was apparently big business in McCurtain County.

While collecting crystals in the Hochatown area, Cephis became acquainted with local still operators and landed a part time job as a driver transporting sugar to several local still operations. In McCurtain

County, a local resident often had to work two or three jobs at the same time to earn enough to support a family.

The larger moonshine stills were very lucrative businesses in those days. People who have the impression that major stills were ordinarily run by "squalid rednecks" from the backwoods, are patently mistaken. Prominent local families owned these larger and more successful still operations. They hired professional people with business savvy and political connections to manage the operations. The owners of the big stills were not socially uncouth and culturally backward. They were generally sophisticated businessmen with considerable wealth and influence.

Of course, the smaller stills were more likely operated by "remote and rustic rednecks." These were generally only a local, single-family still, rather than a large operation of many stills under the control of a management consortium. These stills were usually designed to supply the immediate family, local kin, and neighbors, rather than a distant market. It was one of the few ways of making money without stealing in those days.

The only thing illegal about brewing custom made whiskey was not paying taxes on it, and ever since Alexander Hamilton's day, at least until more recent times, most Americans have thought that alcohol should not be taxed. This sentiment was widely held among the small, yeoman farmers of the western hinterland. When Hamilton, a staunch federalist who wanted to increase the size and power of the federal government through taxation, needed to raise revenue to erase the war debt, he cast his ravenous eyes on the small whiskey trade of the frontier farmer class. He chose to tax the distilled spirits produced by small farmers, rather than shakeout revenue from the wealthy industrialist and merchant classes on the east coast. In 1791, he persuaded Congress to pass a law that imposed a burdensome whiskey tax on western settlers. This was highly resented by the pioneer farmers who depended on whiskey for comfort and income (whiskey was actually used as a medium of exchange). A full-scale whiskey rebellion erupted.

In 1794, the rebellion was put down by a militia force of some 13,000 men, led personally by General Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee, the father of Confederate general Robert E. Lee, and the two most important politicians of the day, Alexander Hamilton and President George Washington* himself. This was probably the first rumbling of a regional conflict within the new nation – the industrial and commercial eastern seaboard versus the western, mountainous frontier.

> *What was Washington's personal interest in being involved in the whiskey raids? Was it an undying patriotic duty to beef up the depleted federal treasury or did it spring from an economic self-interest? Was Washington trying to lessen market competition and expand the market for his own whiskey products? Washington was deeply involved in the whiskey trade. In 1798, George Washington produced 11,000 gallons of whiskey at Mt. Vernon, making him the single largest distiller of alcohol in America. In addition, Washington had a vested real estate interest in the West and stood to benefit economically from the suppression of the rebellion. After the revolt was put down, Washington's large land holdings were said to have increased in value by about 50 percent. (Hogeland, William, "The Whiskey Rebellion*", A Lisa Drew Book/Scribner, New York, N.Y., 2006, page 240)*

Sometimes, even smaller operators who were less soundly financed could build a smaller still operation into a larger one. Much would depend on one's skill and guile, and perhaps even more importantly – political connections. It was always necessary to have the protection of the local sheriff, who always got his cut. The federal Revenuers could only bust a still if they had an undercover agent working on it, or if it were turned in for a bounty by some poor snitch that would probably get killed for it if he was ever discovered. Otherwise, it was usually an accident when they found a large operating still around McCurtain County. As for the small stills operating since the 1930s, reviews of old newspaper clippings from the 1930s onward tell of numerous busts of small still operations throughout the county. The busts

were usually by local law enforcement officers; a local officer by the name of Gene Harris was involved in a number of these busts.

Allegedly, the local county sheriff operated at least one of the major stills in McCurtain, County. This was probably an ideal business arrangement. The nature of the business dictates that one must pay off the local authorities. If true, this sheriff-operator probably got to pocket what ordinarily would have been a non-deductible business expense. This local sheriff, the name I am told was Gene Thorpe, ended up spending a short time in prison but eventually retired as the Police Chief of Valiant, Oklahoma.

Moonshine was generally, at least for the big operators, a stable and well-managed business in those days. The successful stills were not small-scale, fly-by-night operations. Occasionally, some moralist do-gooder or starry-eyed social reformer might cast a scornful eye and make a little noise, but as long as law enforcement could be paid to look the other way, the operator remained in business. The major operations were well financed and the organizational model was sound – often resembling a hierarchical corporate organizational chart.

The organization was replete with a division of labor into specialties and an extensive infrastructure for the production, storage, marketing, finance, sale, handling, transport, warehousing, distribution, and delivery of the product. Major buyers were the bars and nightclubs of the major cities across America. The large bulk-buyers of the product were usually prominent people in the community, including important politicians, who always kept a bottle handy for friends at social gatherings. Wealthy and prominent people were the major sellers and buyers of moonshine whiskey at times before, during, and even after Prohibition.

Moonshine was not mass-produced like in a factory. It was custom made and a much better product than industrial whiskey. Moonshine, particularly the kind made from corn rather than sugar, bears no comparison to store-bought whiskey, or what they call bonded whiskey. The drink was very smooth and mellow. Although stronger proof than store-bought whiskey, it had a very mellow taste and “went down well.” Good quality moonshine would never burn the nose or throat. It did not irritate the senses and was more addictive, or at least more pleasing, than bonded whiskey. The quality of the taste insured a continuous market, even after Prohibition was repealed. High taxes imposed on licit distillers after Prohibition was repealed kept some illicit, non-taxed distillers in the regional South hanging on until the dawn of the twenty-first century.

McCurtain County, particularly the Hochatown area, was an ideal setting for moonshine operations because of the many clean, cold spring-fed streams that ran through the isolated backwoods. These natural springs were vital to produce a pure, quality product. They were indispensable for the condensation and distillation processes. Also, the seclusion of the extensive forested areas provided a backdrop for isolation and concealment of the still operations.

Old timers remembered one still operation that had people working in eight-hour shifts and had a whistle that blew when each shift was over – just like a manufacturing plant. After Prohibition ended, Oklahoma was still a dry state. Oklahoma did not vote to legalize whiskey until 1959. This portended the ultimate doom for the moonshine business in Oklahoma.

But the moonshine business was still hanging on in McCurtain County as late as the 1960s until a new major landowner arrived on the scene. In 1969, Weyerhaeuser, a giant timber corporation from out of state, suddenly moved to the county. They bought out the large existing holdings of an old mainstay lumber company, Dierks, and subsequently purchased additional timberlands scattered throughout the county. Weyerhaeuser soon acquired nearly 900,000 acres in Southeastern Oklahoma, almost 700,000 acres in McCurtain County alone. Nearly overnight, they had become the largest landowner in the county, owning more than 50% of the county land base. Nationwide, Weyerhaeuser owned almost six million acres of timberland with nearly two million acres of their holdings in Arkansas and Oklahoma combined.

The paternal Dierks’ family empire was more akin to the dynastic capitalism of the nineteenth century, whereas Weyerhaeuser, the new monolithic timber concern, is the archetypical modern corporation – a mixture of old and new industrialism, the old and new economy, publicly owned, rather

than family owned, nationalistic and multi-nationalistic, oligopolistic more than capitalistic, scientific management and information age technology, and Wall Street finances.

In the late 1960s, when it arrived on the scene in southeastern Oklahoma, Weyerhaeuser was more of an old-line, industrial corporation – more a production machine than a high tech, informational company. The very nature of its business, timber and building materials, dictates that it can never become the truly enlightened "knowledge corporation" that encapsulates modern organizational democracy in consonance with "knowledge workers" and computer technology. The mechanized assembly line of Taylor or Ford is a closer fit than the computerized, white collar-staffed, information platform. It requires a more hierarchical management and staffing arrangement – more of a command and control approach, unlike that of the twenty-first century high tech companies with more liberated workplaces, like a Yahoo, an Apple, a Google, or an Intel – where the corporate organizational chart is centered more on the computer chip and a decentralized information flow.

Weyerhaeuser's 2007 Investor's Guide reveals that in the year 2007 the company owned or leased 6.4 million acres of land in the United States ( including 663,000 acres in Arkansas and 549,000 acres in Oklahoma/Texas) and 15.1 million acres of land in Canada for a total controlling interest in North American lands of approximately 21.5 million acres. Weyerhaeuser also owned or managed some 514,000 acres in four foreign countries: Uruguay, Brazil, New Zealand, and Australia. Its operations are divided into five divisions: Timberlands, Wood Products, Cellulose Fibers, Real Estate, and Containerboard, Packaging and Recycling. Most of its manufacturing plants are located in the United States and Canada. In addition, it has several manufacturing plants in Mexico that make linerboard and corrugated boxes.

In no short order, Weyerhaeuser began to have an impact and make its presence known in McCurtain County. The intrusive company began to build private roads throughout its extensive landholdings on top of pre-existing public roads and began casting suspicious eyes on strangers and intruders. Almost a decade later, in 1980, Weyerhaeuser would claim that the 80,000 miles of its timberland roads that had been built over old public roads, were then, according to them "Private Roads" even though public access had not been denied on those roads during the previous thirty years. Apparently, at least many believed, they had started calling them private roads as a legal attempt to avoid liability against lawsuit if an accident occurred.

Weyerhaeuser's new private roads began to cut through previously isolated backwoods that few people, except maybe moonshiners, cared to visit. The isolated stills could no longer be guaranteed concealment, and Weyerhaeuser officials could not be trusted for a wink and a nod.

Additionally, Weyerhaeuser did not operate like Dierks, the previous large timberland- owning company in the county. Dierks had always maintained a liberal policy in regard to public use of its timberlands. But this policy did not originate from a generous heart. It was due to a binding legal Trust Agreement between the State of Oklahoma and the Dierks Lumber Company, which was then called the Choctaw Lumber Company, in exchange for taxing their forestlands as "wasteland." Weyerhaeuser, at least many believed, would eventually elect to violate this obligatory Trust Agreement, which they bought as a legacy of the original land transaction with Dierks. In addition, a number of citizens of McCurtain County also believed Weyerhaeuser elected to violate Title 29 of Oklahoma State Law, regardless of the consequences. Weyerhaeuser was less favorably disposed toward public access and use of its lands and would begin a gradual process of blocking and gating entrance roads to prevent public encroachment.

Finally, Weyerhaeuser managed its timber farming operation differently. It utilized a monoculture plantation system. The company's practice of clear-cutting and heavy reliance on fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, and defoliants resulted in these chemicals being washed into the previously pristine streams, which denigrated their purity and quality. Their extensive grading and construction of new roads throughout the timberlands and the radical clear-cutting of the pine plantations created erosion problems that further jeopardized the quality and integrity of the streams.

A clean moonshine product could no longer be obtained. The quality of the product would be seriously compromised with reduced water quality. The future was indeed bleak for the moonshine industry in McCurtain County. A large portion of the underground workforce of the county would have to find a new occupation. Perhaps they could find new employment with Weyerhaeuser, now the county's major employer. Cephis himself soon landed a new job as a logging contract-employee for a prime Weyerhaeuser contract logger.

Weyerhaeuser, like virtually all modern American corporations, began to contract out all duties that might previously have been done by regular, full-time employees on the company's payroll. The practice allowed Weyerhaeuser to reduce labor costs and limit their liability for accidents and injuries. Although the contractor may have enjoyed more freedom from the shackles of Weyerhaeuser's constant imperious obtrusion, contracts were basically insecure and indeterminate. Weyerhaeuser could terminate a contract, even after a contractor invested large sums of money to obtain it, at its own discretion. This sometimes placed the contractor in a very precarious financial situation – even to the point of the stark risk of bankruptcy.

A wide range of services were now being separately contracted between Weyerhaeuser and its independent, prime contractors. Weyerhaeuser set the terms, and the contractor complied. As one local resident described it: a kind of "hungry hound dog policy" set the tone and parameters. The reciprocal contract relationship worked largely to Weyerhaeuser's advantage. Weyerhaeuser maintained control and kept the contractor in a kind of perpetual state of dependency. The contractor had to walk a fine-line to avoid offending or losing credibility with the Weyerhaeuser officials on the public front who issued the contracts.

The contractor had to buy and own his own equipment, and this usually required massive capital expenditure that took the form of a loan and substantial monetary debt. Loans in the millions were sometimes necessary to purchase heavy equipment. With the Weyerhaeuser monoculture system, the individual chainsaw operator was no longer indispensable to the actual tree cutting function. In fact, he was largely replaced by heavy machinery.

These high-capital requirements and the one-sided, restrictive covenants of the contract sealed the deal for Weyerhaeuser. The art of the deal was finessed by Weyerhaeuser's fine legal print couched within the contract. The legal stipulations and performance requirements of the contractor were clearly spelled out. The advantage and bargain accrued to Weyerhaeuser.

The contractor was locked-in and forced to maintain a harmonious relationship with the Weyerhaeuser official who buttered his bread via the issuance of the contract. He had to satisfy Weyerhaeuser's contractual expectations for performance or suffer the consequences. Contractors were deliberately given one job at a time to keep them loosely hanging and continuing to feed at the same trough. He hired his own workforce as contract-employees or sub-contractors and was responsible for paying them from the proceeds he received from Weyerhaeuser. Both the contractor and his contract-employees were paid by the tonnage they delivered. The amount per ton was specified in the contract.

Weyerhaeuser also specified the tract of timberland to be cut and paid for the wood when it was finally delivered to the mill. If the contractor failed to get the wood to the mill, he would not be paid; consequently, his contract employees would not be paid. He not only had extensive debt, but fixed and variable operational costs like fuel, workmen's comp, equipment maintenance, and labor. Failure to satisfactorily perform for any reason meant loss of pay, termination of the contract, lawsuits from disgruntled, unpaid sub-contractors, and finally bankruptcy.

Whether fair and reasonable or not, these types of hard-nosed, bureaucratic practices are not unique to Weyerhaeuser. Instead, they are indicative of a universal corporate ethos and organizational style and practice, which dictates that corporate policy and business relationships must be implemented with maximization of profit in mind – an obsession with feasibility, efficiency, and the short-term bottom line.

Local residents recount instances when Weyerhaeuser officials pulled contractors off an unfinished job to be sent elsewhere to cut and harvest. The logs that had been cut, stacked, and readied for

transport to the mills were left lying in waste. The contractor and his crew would not be paid for this work until this specific pile of harvested logs was received at the mill. In the meantime, the wood could be stolen, burned, or if abandoned long enough, could deteriorate on the ground. Nevertheless, the contracts were usually written to specify a certain timeframe within which the logs had to be delivered.

Weyerhaeuser drives a hard bargain with its prime contractors. Quite possibly, their rank and file workers on the payroll are equally hard-pressed. In all fairness to Weyerhaeuser, however, the lumber and paper business is a very tough and competitive market. These industries are very cyclical, especially lumber and building materials, which are tied directly to the housing market, which in turn, is very sensitive to interest rates and the normal cyclical gyrations of the national economy. There is enormous overhead, and the margin between costs and sales is low.

Both top and middle management are under constant pressure to control these costs. They must continuously assess these high, fixed costs in light of the low margins and onerous encroachment of the business cycle. There is enormous pressure to cut costs and realize savings wherever they can be achieved; but there are limits as to how far management can go in cutting costs.

Not only top management is obsessed with the bottom line; Wall Street and investors are interested as well. Margins must be pushed to the max in order to generate a bottom line that will justify the spiraling mega-salaries the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and other top executives have come to expect, not just at Weyerhaeuser, but in most other major U.S. corporations, where the ratio of the salary gap between the average CEO and that of the average worker has now ballooned to something like 500 to 1.

Weyerhaeuser and the other U.S. timber companies cannot easily respond to these pressures in the same manner as most other American industries. It is simply not feasible to relocate existing paper and lumber operations to other countries – to places like Mexico, China, or India, where labor and other input costs are extremely low. Lumber and paper mills serving the national market must be located near the supply source of logs to realize maximum economic efficiency. Otherwise, transportation costs would soon spiral out of control.

In addition to contract logging, Weyerhaeuser contracts for a wide variety of other services connected to growing and harvesting trees. Specific, specialized functions might be contracted to specific contractors best suited to perform the service. Such contracted-out services include: site-preparation, bedding, ripping, tree planting, herbicide/fertilizer/pesticide applicators, chipping, limber (tree pruning), and transporting. Other contract services outside the tree-farming umbrella might include services having to do with road maintenance, infrastructure, vehicle maintenance, research and development, public relations, and even political relations, which are handled through well-connected lobbyists at the state and federal level.

Cephis spent years successfully plying his trade within the logging craft and stoically endured the constant pains, wear, and tear that are a veritable hallmark for the occupation. This experience must have toughened him both physically and mentally. It was not just physical pain that had to be endured, but unrelenting mental anguish. There must have been an inexorable feeling of trepidation that accompanied the inherent occupational insecurity of a contract-logging employee. There was not just the constant harrowing prospect of serious injury; contract employees knew they might not get paid if the prime contractor failed to perform or receive his compensation check from Weyerhaeuser, for whatever reason. The employee turnover rate in this industry was extremely high, and Cephis had already outlasted most.

While in the logging trade, Cephis continued to drive from Eagletown to Hochatown in search of recreation and diversion from his harsh occupational reality. In those days, gas was cheap. The frequent drives back and forth were not a financial burden. His primary pursuit was crystal collecting; but other objects of nature, like fossils, would also attract his attention. He proved to have an uncanny ability to locate rare and hidden objects. Some people believed he had a kind of ESP or sixth sense, an innate ability to project mind over matter. As Cephis grew more proficient in his hobby of mineral and fossil collecting, he gradually built a reputation within the community of so-called rock hounds, both locally and nationally.

Cephis was a local country boy who had risen in the undistinguished ranks of that loose collective of local naturalists: rock hounds, fossil collectors, antiquity dabblers, botanical fanciers, gem and mineral aggregators, museum connoisseurs, bird watchers, wildlife conservationists, and environmentalists of all stripes and persuasions. He had literally made a living working off the land – virtually his entire life had been spent in outdoor avocations tied directly to the extraction of the earth's bounties. He cut trees for a living and hunted crystals for a side-business. He was simultaneously a tree hugger and tree cutter. While adoring trees, even plantation pines, for their beauty and majesty – he also saw them as a utilitarian means to an end. He earned his living as an instrument of commercial harvest.

He became an expert on quartz crystals, and before long, his name had became synonymous with crystals. He also became a crystal dealer and had small-scale commercial dealings in minerals. His fine minerals were sold to museums and his exquisite quartz crystals to private collectors. He also donated rare mineral specimens to local museums.

Mineral enthusiasts began flocking to him for guidance on finding crystals.  Before long, he began offering and instructing tours for people looking for crystals. He has sold crystals to dealers in Switzerland and Germany. Overseas collectors came from afar to buy his most precious collections. Thirteen varieties of quartz crystal in McCurtain County have been identified, and Cephis has displayed all these varieties at numerous mineral shows.

Cephis made a part time business out of guiding small tours in search of crystals in McCurtain County. He guarantees his clients they will find them. The guided tours are taken on Weyerhaeuser land, on land managed by the U.S. Forest Service, and on local privately owned lands that are located in, or near, the crystal zone. The typical charge for a family of two is a very reasonable $100.00 a day. The maximum number for a group tour is five or six people at $20.00 each.

Hall knew the back roads and back lands of McCurtain County. When people were looking for natural phenomena of an earthly genre, they turned to Cephis Hall for guidance and direction. He was the most popular nature guide of McCurtain County. He operated Ouachita Mountain Tours, a local tourist service for naturalist sightseers and mineral prospectors in search of raw earthly products formed by geological forces. The tours were more recreational and educational than commercial.

When the highly regarded Neal Suneson from the Oklahoma Geological Survey at the University of Oklahoma visited McCurtain County in June of 1990 to explore and sample the geological treasures of the county, he chose Cephis Hall as his nature guide.

Hall took him to the places he needed to visit in order to locate prominent rock and geological formations as well as to assess the overall natural and geographical features of the area. While on stay in the county he was asked, "How good is Cephis Hall?"  Suneson responded, "He's good. He keeps his eyes to the ground. After you know what you're looking for, and he does, then you need good eyes just like hunting squirrels in trees … he will certainly be valuable to anybody who wants to go directly to some of the marvelous locations in the county. He already knows where they are." (quote from *McCurtain Daily Gazette*, June 1, 1990)

Cephis says he learned to excavate fossils from the techniques he learned digging crystals – a similar procedure. He also learned patience, where to look, and where not to look.  His interest in fossils grew from a natural curiosity about rocks – about how they changed and evolved. "To be a good fossil hunter," he says, "you must have good eyes that can spot textural differences and color differences." "Finding fossils and crystals," he further adds, "involves a physical and spiritual connection – pure mental concentration."

From examining the man's background and history, one can deduce several salient facts about his character that may at least partially explain how he was able to surmount enormous obstacles and accomplish his mission in the face of extreme adversity and powerful opposition. Any person not possessing these personal qualities would have failed or given up prematurely. Cephis was able to draw upon this inner strength to succeed in the discovery, excavation, preservation, and ensuing legal battle for

possession and ownership of the fossil remains of one of the most fearsome prehistoric predators that ever walked the face of the earth.

His life experience had uniquely prepared him to endure hardship and adversity with a spiritual tenacity. He learned perseverance as a part of his normal, daily routine. His early childhood experience with poverty and his hazardous occupation as a logger had toughened him both physically and mentally. He learned to deal with stress on a daily basis and generally took negative incursions in stride. His unpolished mien was that of a raw, razor-thin, dirt-splattered Okie with calloused hands, denim jeans, and "fields of dreams." As the world around him changed literally by-the-minute, his down-to-earth simplicity remained intact and incorrigible.

In the course of time, he learned patience as part of his normal regimen in searching for precious minerals. His mental concentration involved in hunting crystals had sharpened his mental faculties and his ability to stay focused on both the long-term mission and the immediate task at hand. His close family and personal friendships, especially with his partner Sid Love, helped sustain him during the darkest hours of his struggle.

His humble origin and modest background transcribed and outwardly projected a kind of delusive personality and demeanor that easily caused an opponent to underestimate him. This, conceivably, gave him an edge in a tight situation. His extraordinary character and inner strength is not readily apparent on a first, or transitory, encounter. The impression he initially conveys is that of simple, country folk.

Most importantly of all, due to the respect and reputation he gained as a crystal expert and the adulation of his peers among the naturalist community, his self-concept had been nurtured, and he gained undaunted confidence in his competence and abilities. A history of success as a scientific hobbyist helped lay the foundation for future success on a professional level as a major dinosaur bone excavator. His self-confidence had allowed him to persevere when others would have become discouraged and relinquished all hope.

A uniquely molded background and life experience, an exceptional penchant for scientific curiosity and scrutiny, and a made-to-order inventory of unique and indomitable personality traits had each converged to create a strongly determined individual who could not be deterred or subdued. This made-to-task dynamo of a person, with extraordinary determination and perseverance, would emerge from the pit with a treasure of bones from the prehistoric past that had eluded, and would continue to elude, the grasping hands of a giant, multi-national corporation and a small cabal of esteemed, scientific elites. Even invasive police officers with drawn guns, a stacked-deck legal system, and an intrusive, lobby-swayed, Oklahoma State Legislature could not get their hands on the treasure.