Evidence of Petrified Forest
Found in Clay County Within Few Miles of Town of Piggott

By PAUL T. WAYLAND.

Piggott—Added to the wonders of Arkansas are the remains of a petrified forest, located in the northeastern corner of the state, in Clay county, within a few miles of Piggott. Perhaps you are already saying there is not a petrified forest in Arkansas. But you have only to visit this town to become convinced beyond all doubt that here, on this section of Crowley's Ridge, are trees that have actually turned to stone. When we walked through the woods we found them to be stone and granite.

There is no log, stripped of all bark, lying out in an old, dried-out field atop Crowley's Ridge—and that is where they are found. One is instantly made to think that here lies an ordinary log that has been cut, cut out of a hill. In fact the breaks in the log and the pieces that have been torn away from the log resemble pieces of wood upon close examination, however, one learns that the logs are pure stone and have been rolled into the ditch by the farmer who was clearing the land. The place where the logs were thrown from a stump nearby. The logs have been found in the area and it is probable that the logs ever would have been found without the aid of erosion.

The petrified specimens are found at various depths, ranging from five feet to many feet below the surface. Not having seen any erosion on Crowley's Ridge, it has been impossible to estimate how deep the forest was originally buried or how long ago the upheaval occurred.

Scientific Investigation

A few years ago a government representative came to investigate the report of a petrified forest. He came to Mr. Harlan to secure specimens and be directed in his search for more. He would forward to this representative some information as to the cause of the petrified trees. He heard from the department one time in the course of this investigation that a petrified forest was found in the area.

An interesting feature in connection with the petrified forest is that practically all specimens found are on the east side of the ridge. On the east side the strata is downward toward the west and on the west side it is slightly downward toward the east. From this it would appear that although somewhat higher than the surrounding country, is lying in a part of trough.

That the whole section has seen some history that would make even the most daring person shudder, is evidenced by some things connected with the rusty past, which have been unearthed in the region during past years.

Pre-Historic Skeleton

Chief among the astounding discoveries came in the form of a giant prehistoric animal skeleton which was found near Markham several years ago and which is still in the possession of a party near that town. The skeleton created considerable excitement for a time. It was the skeleton of something else. Students of archaeology looked upon the skeleton as belonging to a monster which during an age long past roamed about over the region, lord of everything that came in its way. When it died, its death occurred in a ravine where the torrential rains soon buried it under a stratum of debris. Then came the disturbances which altered the surface of the earth, lowering it below and raising it there, and in that way the huge monster was sent so well down into the earth that it remained undisturbed until discovered by more chance a few years ago.

We are told that the skeleton was found by some fishermen who were swimming in a dredge ditch and happened to discover that the thing from which they had been diving thinking it was a stump, was part of the great skeleton.

Year after year, according to our story, the fishermen had been using a certain point in the ditch to bathe and did not think of the haunted underground dwelling by the swimming party discovered that the lower part of the stump showed that in reality it was a huge bone. He excitedly told his discovery to others of the party and the members of the party only laughed at him. But he was not to be disregarded in his belief. After much argument and discussion the party rowed across the ditch in the dark and found the bone and decided that it was the skeleton of a giant.