Does the Forked Stick Locate Anything? An Inquiry into the Art of Dowsing

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DOWSING, SOMETIMES CALLED WATER WITCHING, water divining, doodlebugging, well witching or rhabdomancy, is a most controversial subject. It seems considerably less controversial in Europe than in this country.[1] Dowsing's protagonists swear *by* it, its antagonists swear *at* it. There appear to be many of each, and each has a great deal to say. Is there any safe middle ground? I think there is.

I am not a dowser. I have never found a forked stick, a bobbing stick, any rod or wand, any pendulum or dowsing gadget which would function in my hands. I have tried every sort coming to my attention. I am a dud at dowsing. But if I cannot witch a well, I can collect, shall we say, *dowsingana*.

I saw my first dowser locate a water well in southern Michigan more than thirty-five years ago. There was something in the process which intrigued me and I watched the dowser intently. After he was finished and had gone his way I cut myself a forked branch from the same peach tree, held it as the dowser had held his, and walked over his location stake. Nothing happened to my fork. Nothing has ever happened to my unaided hands, dowsing-wise.

Ordinarily, a person would have forgotten the matter under such circumstances. Perhaps some sliver, thorn, or juice of that first forked stick inoculated me enough so I could not forget it. At any rate, the phenomenon has plagued my interest all this time. As a result, I believe there are a few things I can say about dowsing with some accuracy.

Though I am not a dowser, I know more than a hundred of them scattered all over the Southwest. They range in ability and experience from seasoned professionals who have successfully dowsed more than 2,500 water wells to the rankest tyro who has never located anything of provable consequence. My observations, study, and thinking have allowed me to promulgate no

[1] There is no association or society of dowsers in the United States. England has the British Society of Dowsers; France, l'Association de la Radiesthesie; Belgium, Centre International d'Étude Scientifique de la Radiesthesie; Germany, Gesellschaft für wissenschaftliche Pendelforschung.

theories of my own which attempt to explain why some dowsers have the ability to locate materials of their choice, but in my own mind I am satisfied they are able to do this, and to do it accurately. I have garnered a few ideas which I feel, in my present status of knowledge, to be valid.

The art of the divining rod, forked stick, or pendulum for discovering something hidden is of considerable antiquity.[2] Cicero and Tacitus wrote about the diviners of their day. We know the old mineral prospectors of Germany's Harz Mountains used a type of divining rod in the fifteenth century. It is believed this phase of the art was taken to England by the Germans in Queen Elizabeth's day for further search in the mines of Cornwall. When mining declined there it is thought that the art was turned toward the locating of water. From England it was brought to this country. There is some evidence that immigrants from other European countries may also have introduced the art here.

Pictures of a portion of a stone frieze have been published[3] which are said to have been taken from an ancient Syrian king's court or tomb. These pictures show a figure which it would be difficult to mistake for other than a water locator with his forked stick in dowsing position. This stone is supposed to have been carved some time before 1200 B.C. If this is correct, it would indicate that the art of dowsing was known to mankind more than 3,200 years ago. According to some translations of the hieroglyphics beneath this figure, the dowser corresponded to a "mining official."

Coolwater Ranch lies in the Mojave River valley a short distance north of the little desert town of Daggett, California.[4] Coolwater contains some 3,000 acres with more than 1,000 of them in cultivation of alfalfa, permanent pasture, and row crops. The Mojave River valley is one of those places where "common knowledge" says one is supposed to be able to find underground water anywhere he wishes to drill for it. Coolwater had drilled for it almost everywhere. Some of their well holes were not worth setting a pump over. Among the many small gallonage wells they had, the best one was delivering but 280 gallons a minute. Coolwater wanted more water.

They heard of a young dowser named Jerry Smith who lived in Barstow, California, not far away.[5] They wanted water so badly they were willing to try anything once to get some. They asked Smith to come to the ranch and see if he thought it possible to locate them a good well site.

Mr. Smith is a mechanical engineer employed by the California Electric Power Company, as manager of their Barstow district. He has been with the

[2] *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1942), VII, 451.

[3] Ronald Matthews, "Radiesthesia, an Old Hoax or a New Science?" *Realities* (May 1952), 31–35, 72.

[4] Anon., "Science or Witchcraft," *Farm Management* (February 1953), 56–59.

[5] Gaston Burridge, "Desert Dowser," *Radio-Perception* (December 1952), 367 f.

company more than sixteen years and is thirty-eight years old. Smith has been dowsing desert water wells for eleven years. He has dowsed more than 300 such wells in California, Nevada, and Arizona without a single known failure.

Did Smith think he could find Coolwater a good well site? He did. He cut himself a forked branch from a nearby creosote bush and began searching. About noon he asked the ranch manager to come out and have a look at the site. This site was near a ranch road. It was near the ranch power line. It nearly centered a group of fields and was in—and mark this—the center of an arc of dry holes and small gallonage producing wells.

The manager took one glance at the site and caught his breath. "Why, Jerry," he exclaimed, pointing a hundred yards away, "right over there is a dry hole!"

"I know," replied Smith. "That hole is off the vein edge about thirty feet. I paced it. But right here you'll get a good well."

The manager's eyes scanned the other small gallonage wells; then he asked, "How good?"

"Would 2,500 gallons a minute make you happy?" asked Smith.

The ranch manager's eyes bunged out, "2,500 gallons a minute!" he shouted. "It most certainly would make me happy, but you'll never get any 2,500 gallons a minute here. Why, there isn't a well anywhere around here which will develop any place near such water."

"If you'll drill right here, you'll get 2,500 gallons a minute—or better," replied Smith calmly. Then, pointing to each of the other wells, one at a time, Smith explained to the manager which veins fed which wells, about where they entered the ranch, where they met or branched—then concluded, "If you'll drill right here, you'll get what I say you'll get."

The manager rubbed his chin. "How deep will we have to go to get this 2,500 gallons a minute?" he asked.

"You can set your pump at 100 feet," replied Smith, "you'll not need to drill deeper than 110 or 115 feet."

"Are you sure?" repeated the manager.

"I've never missed yet," said Smith, "and I don't think I'll miss this time."

It was finally decided to spend the $7,500 on the well, but not without considerable apprehension.

The day finally arrived when the well was finished and the big test-pump pinch-barred into place, bolted down, and powered. When they finally allowed it to settle down to steady running, the well delivered 2,890 gallons a minute with no more than a thirteen foot draw-down. To say there was jubilation at Coolwater is putting it very mildly.

Eight months later, Coolwater wanted another well. They asked Jerry

Smith to return. Did he think he would be able to locate them another well as good as the first one? Smith spent the better part of a Saturday locating a well site which suited him. He knew he must set this new pump over an entirely different group of veins than those serving the first pump because Coolwater wished to pump these wells together much of the time and they wanted to pump 2,500 gallons a minute from each well.

At last Smith found the spot. This time there was no questioning, no misgiving. The well was drilled. It tested 3,150 gallons a minute with but a seventeen foot draw-down.

These two wells are pumped about eight months of the year, sometimes as much as fourteen hours a day. Together, they surface more than 6,000 gallons of water a minute. They have not failed once during their lifetime for any reason attributable to their dowsing. They show no more draw-down when working together than when pumping separately. This is, at least, an indication that they are not supplied from the same source—or if they are, that the source is great enough to supply both wells. These two wells are about a mile apart.

In my files are two test sheet copies. These test sheets were made by Mr. Norman Williams for Wintroath Pumps, Inc., of Alhambra, California. The wells which these test sheets cover are owned by Mr. C. T. Mills, Bakersfield, California. Both of these well sites were dowsed by Jerry Smith. One well delivers 1,735 gallons a minute, the other 1,150 gallons per minute. The larger well was test-pumped April 6, 1953, the smaller on April 2, 1953.

Also in my files is a recent photostatic copy of a testimonial letter sent to Mr. Smith by Mr. Claire Leach of the Nickerson Commercial Co., of Hinkley, California. Mr. Leach states that they drilled 326 feet and got 166 inches of water (miner's inches, or about nine gallons per inch per minute, or about 1,490 gallons a minute) at a location dowsed by Smith. This location, the letter further states, was not where Mr. Leach had planned it, but he took Mr. Smith's advice and location when drilling.

It may be considered possible that Jerry Smith found all the above wells through, or within the laws of chance, but should we not consider, at the same time, his other more than 295 successfully dowsed wells? In doing so, should we not also recall these wells have been located consecutively and over a period of eleven years? If this is done, would it not seem the results were outside the possible limits of the laws of chance as generally understood?

Who can dowse and who is a good dowser? Strangely, there is a great difference in the two—at least so it appears to me. From my observations it seems that about one person in 1,000 has enough of the dowsing ability, power, acumen or faculty to be able to recognize it as an asset. This does not necessarily mean that he is a good dowser or that he can ever become one.

To me, a good dowser is a person who has enough dowsing ability to begin with, and enough experience in using it, to allow him to be accurate in 95 per cent of the locations and predictions he makes. I may be generous, but I believe that about one person in 250,000 is equipped with sufficient ability to enable him to acquire the necessary experience. Good dowsers are scarce. So are "good" anything else one wishes to name. It might be pointed out that while many musicians play in orchestras, few play on the stage alone.

Dowsing appears to me to be an innate gift, much like the one of perfect or absolute pitch, musically. But as I understand it, with absolute pitch, if one has it, one has all of it. With dowsing ability, however, I believe that those who possess it have it in varying amounts—or perhaps they have different ability in interpreting it. These differing amounts make poorer or better dowsers, regardless of their experience.

This brings us to the question so often asked, "Do dowsers make mistakes?" My answer is always, "Yes, they have made mistakes, they do make mistakes, and I believe they will continue to make them, because dowsing is a human faculty and whatever humans do they make errors in the doing, sooner or later." Just as an example of what I mean, I cite the following.

In 1952, The Standard Oil Company of Indiana drilled 950 oil wells, of which 205 were dry holes, or "dusters," as they are called.[6] These were mistakes, not just of one person, but of many persons collectively. I am sure none of us believes, because nearly one quarter of those wells were dry, that the science of oil geology approaches any form of fakery, superstition, or relies in any way on the laws of chance to be successful. Standard Oil of Indiana's record of drilling is far above the industry's average in this respect.

In the matter of mistakes, however, I believe many such have been placed unwarrantedly at the dowser's doorstep. Often, a well driller uses well casing where and when it should not be used, or fails to use it where and when it should be used. Frequently, well holes are not plumb, even one way. If targets are small, as in cases of rock-vein dowsed wells, a crooked hole can miss the water completely. Explosives are occasionally employed to "shoot" a well in rock or difficult earth. This shooting, more often than not, collapses the ceiling and sides of the water vein, thus restricting its flow, or perhaps damming it forever. Frequently, an edge of a well intercepts a large rock. Unless great care is exercised, this pushes the drilling apparatus to one side, putting a "kink" in the well hole. Often this deflection is not discovered until the casing is pressed into place—or even worse, when an attempt is made to set the pump. Inaccurate logging of the well's depth can easily send a driller completely past a stratum—the well casing closing off the water's entry into the well.

[6] *Annual Report of the Standard Oil Company of Indiana for 1952*, p. 12, col. 1.

I do not list the above points as excuses for dowsers' mistakes, for there is no real excuse for them, but merely to show that an unsuccessful well is not necessarily an unsuccessfully dowsed well.

Mr. Vern L. Cameron of Elsinore, California,[7] probably the dean of California dowsers in point of years of active dowsing and number of wells dowsed, says he has located more than 2,500 water wells throughout the Southwest and Mexico. He has a scrapbook filled with innumerable items pertaining to his dowsing activities covering these years. Not only does he have testimonial letters from agencies of the federal government expressing satisfaction with his work, but there are many other letters from civic leaders, heads of corporations, and motion picture figures.

Mr. Cameron is the inventor of a dowsing instrument he calls the Aurameter, and he has compiled a book of the same name which sets forth considerable information regarding his success with this instrument.[8] Here also are recorded many experiments having to do with the human aura. These are of startling character and if verified by others may well change conceptions of that phenomenon.

In searching for some means of amplifying certain dowsing signals, Mr. Cameron experimented with metal cones of different materials, sizes, shapes, and angles at the apex. He did not find the amplification sought, but he relates some most interesting findings which, if they can be verified with laboratory measuring apparatus, may well develop a new interest in electromagnetics.

One of the most interesting of Mr. Cameron's locations for water was made high in the San Jacinto Mountains of southern California, for the small hamlet known as Fern Valley. When need for more water developed, those in charge hired Cameron to locate a site sufficient to meet their present needs and to provide a margin for future needs.

The altitude at the site is about 6,000 feet. The soil here is thin. After it comes granite—hard, gray, mountain-top granite. There would appear to be little or no aquifer here, no collecting basin, no deep sedimentary accumulation of weathered surface materials. If there was to be any water obtained it would have to come from the granite—and that is just where Cameron found it.

After he made the location, Cameron gave those in charge the following information. It would be necessary to drill 254 feet through the granite. At that depth they would strike a fissure or vein carrying a stream of potable water sufficient for their needs. This water would rise in the well to within thirty feet of the surface and when pumped, a designated spring farther

[7] Gaston Burridge, "Dowsing in California," *Radio-Perception* (September 1953), 129–131.
[8] Vern L. Cameron, *The Aurameter* (San Diego: Talk of the Times Press, 1952).

upcanyon would cease to flow as long as the pump ran, for actually an offshoot from this fissure was feeding the spring. Cameron said further that the water in the fissure was traveling uphill under pressure.

This well was drilled. The vein was contacted very close to the 254-foot level. It held splendid water. The water rose in the well to within twenty-eight feet of the surface and when it is pumped, the designated spring ceases to flow as long as the pump runs.

If there was no perceptive ability used by Mr. Cameron in the location of this well it would appear he possessed rules of thumb, experience, and knowledge of geology far beyond those otherwise generally accepted. It would seem to me that such information as he gave cannot be accounted for by the laws of chance. The U.S. Geological Survey does not attempt to trace underground watercourses, therefore Mr. Cameron could not have had knowledge of the matter from that source. There are geologists and geochemists who would attempt to locate a fissure carrying water, but they are exceedingly few, and they require the services of a commercial laboratory for chemical, crystalographic, and petrographic analyses before such an attempt is made. Mr. Cameron had no such assistance.

What this perception is, or how it functions in, or upon, certain human brains remains a mystery, but is it too much to conclude that it exists? I do not think so.

I have been asked many times what makes the forked stick turn downward at certain spots, not at others. What makes the rod bob, the pendulum swing? I feel certain that these appendages operate from the muscles of the dowser's arms and wrists. What activates those muscles at the proper time and place remains undiscovered—at least unsubstantiated—and it is at this point where charges of fakery, superstition, witchcraft, etc., lie. To me, the stick, rod, or pendulum is only an indicator, a transposer, so to speak, between human senses—an interpreter of impressions gained otherwise than through ordinary senses. There are dowsers who use no form of indicator at all, their outstretched, downward-turned palms acting as such.

Some authorities claim that we have as many as twelve senses, rather than the ordinarily considered five.[9] Which of the possible seven "extra senses" dowsing is, I do not know.

I have not found a case, not one dowser, in which I was not satisfied that the dowsing indicator was set in motion by the muscles of the dowser. At one time I did believe I had found one case otherwise, in the instance of Mr. John Klemm, but detailed observation proved my contention wrong.[10]

John Klemm is now nearly eighty years old. He has been a dowser for more

[9] Ivan T. Sanderson, "The Animals Have It On Us," *Saturday Evening Post* (October 24, 1953), 30, 150–154.

[10] Gaston Burridge, "John Klemm's Loop," *Radio-Perception* (June 1953), 91–93.

than forty years. His dowsing activities began when as a young farmer he wished to find water for his own land. I asked him in 1952 how many wells he had dowsed. He had no idea. It has been a great many, but he said he had dowsed twenty wells the year before. He is still an active dowser for both water and oil.

There is some evidence, unpublished as yet because of incomplete experiments, indicating definite differences in millivoltage readings, at the surface of the earth, over those places where the turning of a dowser's fork reveals to him that water lies beneath, as compared to other spots where the fork does not turn. The Dutch geologist, Dr. S. W. Tromp, found differences of millivoltage readings on the surface of dowsers' skin when their forks turned down over spots where the dowser suspected water, as compared with those readings made where the fork did not turn.[11] This would indicate some sort of physiological change took place in the dowser's body when it approached or contacted areas where certain conditions existed.

Mr. Harris Gallay,[12] electronics consultant of Belleville, New Jersey, and a group of associates conducted experiments, similar to those of Dr. Tromp, with Mr. Henry Gross[13] and other dowsers, and obtained similar results. Many dowsers with whom I have talked have felt that their perceptive powers lay in the fields of electricity or magnetism, probably in aspects of them calculable only in micro-measurements. Other dowsers feel their ability to locate various hidden objects lay in the probable fact they were able to tune in the object's inherent wave length, or the wave length of the disturbance created by its contact with another object.

A possible explanation of the following incident may lie in the theory that objects possess inherent wave lengths and that some human beings are so constituted as to be able to separate these wave lengths at will.

Emuel Carroll is a young man of forty who is a mineral dowser. He has been interested in dowsing since about 1932. In the spring of 1948 he made some interesting dowsing history. He was on the north fork of the Feather River, some eighteen miles above the town of Quincy, California, enjoying a vacation and prospecting trip, when his rod picked up strong indications of gold. Carroll was with his friend and partner, Mr. Henry Lipking, who was not a dowser.

At first, Carroll could not believe his rod. It kept repeating that there was gold in the bottom of the Feather River. Here the river was nearly 20 feet deep and fast flowing. Further study of the location pointed to the conclusion the gold lay in a narrow confine and was of considerable amount. The bot-

[11] Dr. S. W. Tromp, *Psychical Physics* (Houston, Texas, and Amsterdam, Holland: Elzevier, 1949).

[12] Kenneth Roberts, *The Seventh Sense* (New York: Doubleday, 1953).

[13] Kenneth Roberts, *Henry Gross and His Dowsing Rod* (New York: Doubleday, 1951).

tom of the river was covered with about four or five feet of gravel, sand, and larger loose rocks. The gold lay below this covering, but not far below it.

A week later Carroll and Lipking had obtained diving suits, built themselves a crude raft on which to support the air pump, and had cleared away some of the rocks in the river at the spot where the gold was indicated. With his rod working under water, Carroll located a crack in the rocky river bed carrying the gold. This crack was about two feet long and from three to six inches wide and about as deep. It held a collection of gold nuggets and gravel. The gold nuggets amounted to more than $1,400 in value. The largest nugget weighed slightly over two ounces.

Carroll and his partner remained in this Feather River vicinity for about three months and were successful in recovering other natural caches of gold nuggets, which totaled, all in all, a most satisfactory return for their time and effort.

Gold, whether ore or nugget or treasure trove, is one of the more difficult substances with which any dowser has to deal. It is as illusive as a phantom. Silicon is abundant in nature and often it is all a dowser uncovers where he was sure gold lay. Gold is successfully dowsed, but not often.

In the summer of 1950, at Belmont Shores, California, a fiber-glass boat belonging to Mr. J. H. Carpenter was sunk, motor and all, in from twenty-five to twenty-eight feet of murky water. As both boat and motor were valuable, Mr. Carpenter tried every means at his disposal to recover them, enlisting the services of a diver to make descents at the spot it was thought the boat had sunk. All efforts over a period of nearly a month proved fruitless.

Mr. Donald Graves, a friend of both Mr. Carroll and of Mr. Carpenter, asked Carroll if he would try to locate the boat and motor for Mr. Carpenter. Carroll went to the scene by boat and located the spot where the sunken craft lay. This place was at a considerable distance from the site of the previous searches, probably because the action of the tides had moved the boat.

In five minutes after arriving over the location of the boat Carroll had it hooked, and later it was raised. There were seven witnesses to the process. The story may be verified at a machine shop at 10th and Cherry Avenue in Long Beach, California, where the motor was reconditioned after its long salt water bath.

The Santa Barbara *News Press* for November 11, 1951, carried an interesting story and picture regarding a new 300-gallon per minute water well which had been recently brought in on the property of Mr. A. M. Souza. This well was 262 feet deep and the water stood in the well at 141 feet. Test pumping at 300 gallons per minute for sixteen hours had failed to change its depth.

Mr. Souza's well is situated about two miles northwest of Nipomo, California, and is in a region which always has been short of adequate under-

ground water. This well was dowsed by Mr. Ray D. Carse,[14] chemist, assayer, and dowser of Santa Maria, California. Mr. Carse locates both water and oil professionally and is particularly interested in mineral dowsing. At first glance, this well might seem a bit out of place in the discussion of other such wells noted here because of its lesser output, but it must be remembered that this region's valleys are not alluvial fill but consist rather of shales and clays.

It is frequently said that dowsers go to a well site, look the vicinity over, choose the location, then let their stick guide them to the exact place. This well was dowsed by Mr. Carse at night, his only light coming from a small flashlight held by Mr. Souza. The reason for this unusual dowsing was no publicity stunt, no wager, no demonstration to prove anything about dowsing, no buffoonery, no trick. Rather, it was a case of a professional man's performing his service for a client in difficulty.

The client's difficulty had come about this way. That afternoon a drilling rig had just completed nearly 400 feet of test drilling with not so much as a sign of water. If Mr. Souza did not tell the driller either to keep on drilling deeper there or to begin drilling in a new spot next morning, the driller would go to other waiting clients, and there was no way of knowing when he would be able to return again. Mr. Souza wanted water badly. He did not wish to drill any deeper at the 400-foot location. He had no idea of where else to begin. Neither did anyone else, so he sent for Mr. Carse to decide upon the location.

Mr. Carse's written report of this dowsing shows that the spot he set for this well site was on a fault fracture only sixteen feet wide, and he counted the depth to the top of the water lying in it at 225 feet. In actual drilling, the bit broke through at 226 feet and they bottomed the well at 265 feet. This well has been in use for more than two years. The pumping unit attached to it delivers 250 gallons per minute and supplies a sprinkler system covering about forty acres.

Los Osos Valley lies between San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay, California. It is a very fertile valley but seems to be a spot where any quantity of underground water is difficult to obtain. Within three miles of its length are seventeen known "dry attempts" to locate irrigation wells, yet this same area does contain a few "domestic wells." The largest irrigating well in the vicinity delivers only ninety gallons per minute.

Mr. Carse was called into this country by a Swiss dairy farmer, Mr. J. Kuden. Carse made a location on a fault fracture about forty-five feet wide which had to be traced four miles from the mountains to the ocean with his rod. This bore proved most difficult to make because it penetrated compacted shales and sandstone with no gravels indicated at all.

[14] R. D. Carse, "Location of Water," *Radio-Perception* (June 1952), 216–231.

Many of the farmers in the valley insisted that water would not be found at such a location. A test hole bottomed at 260 feet. Mr. Carse, who was present, recommended giving the hole a light water wash before the rotary rig was pulled out. By the time the stem of the rig was out of the test hole, artesian water was flowing over the top at a rate of thirty gallons a minute. Test pumping proved this well would sustain 250 gallons a minute pumping with a normal draw-down. This well is still flowing, when not pumped, at the rate of fifteen gallons a minute over the top of the casing.

Mr. Carse is an intensive experimenter with various phases of dowsing. At present he is developing a method for classifying dowsers and non-dowsers by a micromagnetic process, with a considerable potential, but like many other things dealing with the human mechanism, it will require the proverbial 1,000 statistical tests. And these tests will have to be classified before definite statements can be made. Herein may lie the answer to questions of why some dowsers appear more sensitive to one substance than another, why they prefer one sort of dowsing tool, or indicator, to another, why some dowsers are more accurate than others, and why some of us cannot dowse at all. Its possibilities are almost unlimited.

Some dowsers use heavy forked sticks, as sizable as three quarters of an inch in thickness. Such a fork has strength enough not to break in one's hands. When a dowser, using such a fork, is over a vein of water, and tries to prevent the stick from descending, his arms and upper chest area are shaken violently. This throbbing feels, when I place my hand on the stick, to be the rhythm of a cycle of about one second, from extreme to extreme. These vibrations appear to be considerably enervating to the dowser. After less than a minute of continued absorption of these vibrations, the dowser's face begins to assume the appearance of a fatigued person. Many tell me the sensation is most unpleasant. I have found only one who has said otherwise.

My observations lead me to believe if experiments are to be conducted with dowsers, those experiments will have to be conducted out of doors for accurate results. I have found few dowsers who work well indoors, and none who work as well indoors as outdoors. Perhaps this can be accounted for in a work pattern or a habit-of-working outdoors. Maybe it is true, as some dowsers believe, that there are certain insulating qualities of a building occupied for a long time by human beings. Then again, some mental block may occur in a dowser when confined in a small space.

I have found dowsing a most individual matter. Because dowsers vary so greatly in their ability, their experience and their general point of view, I cannot too strongly urge anyone hiring one to make sure he is a good dowser. It is my opinion a dowser and his services should be decided upon in the way that a surgeon is decided upon or a lawyer is chosen to handle a difficult case.

A good dowser will be able to give recommendations. A good dowser will discuss problems of location and fees with you fully and will answer your legitimate questions to the best of his ability. He will not place your well at a point where it will damage operation of an already established pump. It is too much to expect a good dowser to aid you in any nefarious scheme.

There are, undoubtedly, those who have dowsing ability who do not realize it. Perhaps you are one such. Unless one discovers it by chance, he may live out his life in ignorance of the possessed gift. There are some who discover they have the ability, but because of press of other matters, do nothing with it. This, I think, is the reason why so few women are dowsers—not because the female, by virtue of her sex, is devoid of the ability. Then, there are others who learn they have the dowser's gift but for some reason known only to themselves, deny the validity of it or seriously question its existence.[15]

I have never found a dowser who I thought was knowingly a faker. Even those among dowsing's severest critics do not go as far as saying dowsers are deliberate fakers, but only misguided or deluded persons.[16] I have not found one dowser who did not wish to learn more about his art, nor one who would not welcome any concrete help a competent source might offer.

It is strange that at mid-twentieth century there exist in this country religious institutions which hold that the origin of the divining rod is pagan and that the unknown power in divining resembles that of wicked spirits mentioned in the Bible.[17]

The phenomenon of dowsing, though it is an ancient art, opens pioneer fields for the objective investigator. I believe he will glean much grain in these fields, but he will need a pioneer's spirit and determination, for the way will be difficult.

Downey, California

[15] Howard A. Meyerhoff, "Can a Water Witch Really Find Water?" *Popular Science* (October 1953), 100–102, 304.

[16] Arthur J. Ellis, *The Divining Rod, A History of Water Witching, With Bibliography* (Water Supply Paper No. 416, Washington, D.C., U.S. Geological Survey, 1938).

[17] Anon., "Does the Divining Rod Locate Water?" *Awake* (February 22, 1953), 16.