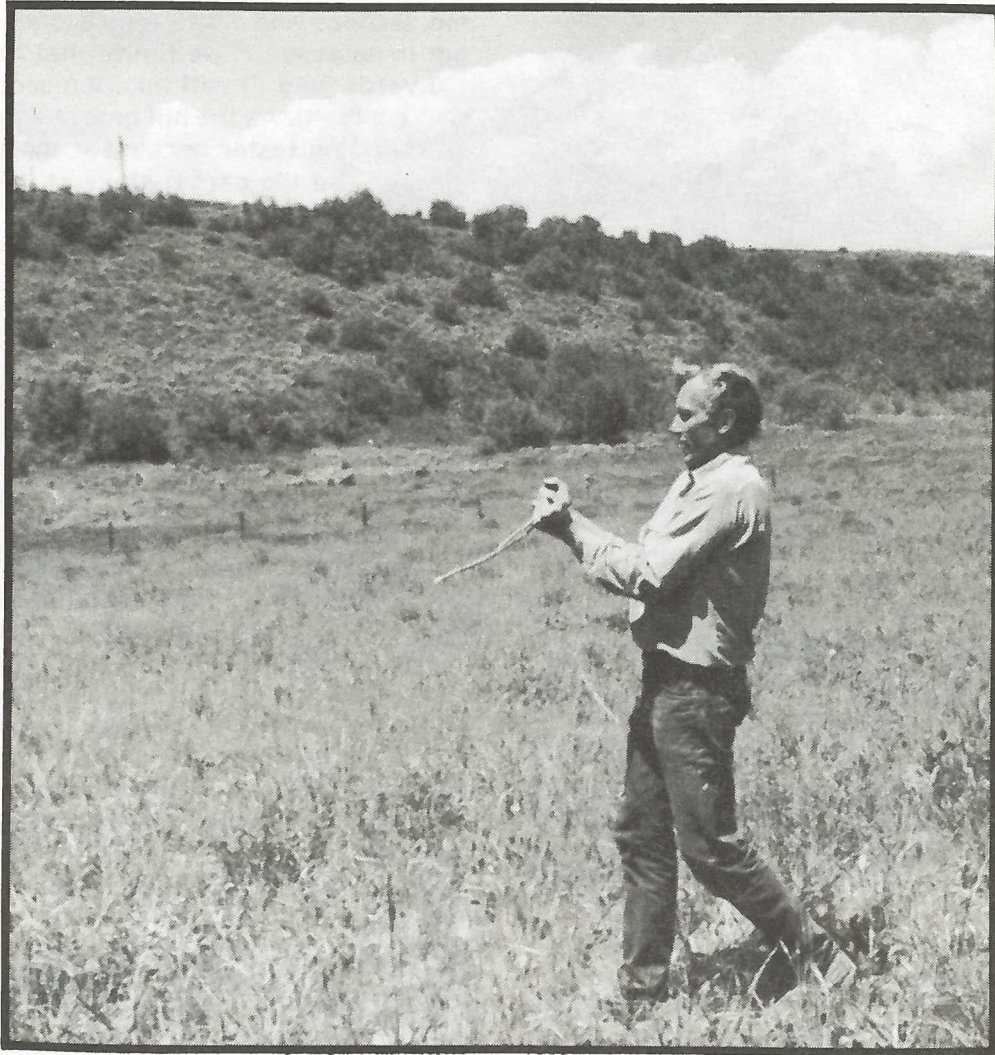


Dowsing Is A God Given Privilege

"Take this stick and smite the rock and water will gush forth, and the people will be content, and their thirst will be quenched.



George Tolles

by Elise McGill and Tara Grillo

God spoke to Moses as he led the Jews out of Egypt, saying his peoples' thirst would be quenched if he could find them water.

George Tolles, a local historian and water dowser, has lived in Steamboat with his wife and three daughters for 25 years. As a teacher in high school and a professor at Colorado Mountain College, he has influenced learners most of his life. After spending much time abroad traveling, working for the state department, and speaking fluently three or more languages, we came to respect his "aura." George has been dowsing for water since 1976 and dowsing professionally for about four years. George began by telling us the history of water dowsing.

"Our earliest records of dowsing are from the Arabian Desert in the Middle East. All through the Middle East, every oasis is actually a spring. There's no surface water, so dowsers became kind of 'high priests.' Since survival depended of finding water, dowers were essential to the Nomadic desert tribes like the Jews.

"The proper term for finding water with a stick or rod is 'dowsing,' and the people who do this are called 'dowsers.' Some call this process 'water witching.' There are two theories as to where this term came from. One is that in Germany they use a branch from a witch hazel tree to dowse. There is actually a hazel tree and branches are used for witching, and it is possible

that they gave the name to the tree. The other theory is that someone with supernatural powers is called a witch. However, this term is only properly applied to women. The male counterpart of a witch is a warlock. Although people do say 'witch' a well, there is no agreement upon the reason as to where the name came from.

"In England a lot of times a dowser and a well driller will hook up together. Dowsing is very popular in England. In the 16th century, Queen Elizabeth brought gold dowzers in from Germany to find metal in gold mines, so dowsing has been recognized in England for a long time. There are a lot of dowzers there, and it's a well organized business and has been for years.

"Paintings have been found on the walls of caves showing dowzers in the Northern Sahara Desert that date back eight thousand years. In these paintings a crowd is standing around the man with the forkstick, and water is gushing out of the ground. So dowsing has a magical quality. No one knows any more about it today than they did then, but the fact is, it was necessary for survival in early life.

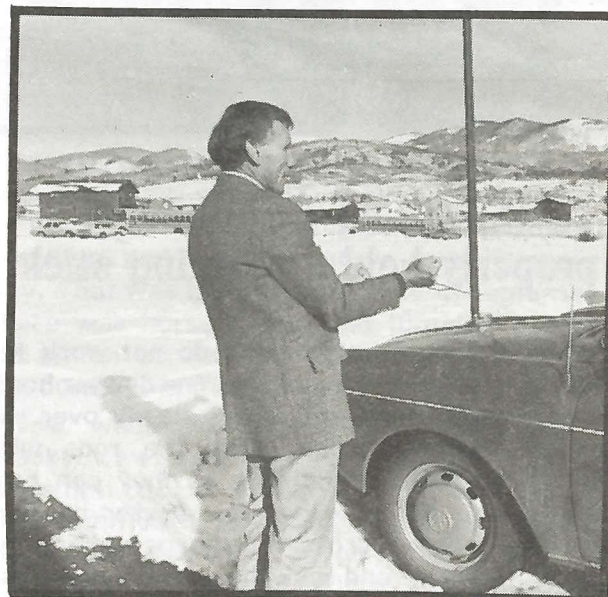
"The ability to dowse is God given. Some people are born with it, and some are not. It's a very old profession, and people have dowsed for centuries. But there are a lot of people who can't dowse. Only one out of five persons have the power. Dowsing power isn't really believing in it or not believing in it, because I didn't particularly believe in it when I found out that I had the power. Then when I found I could dowse, I couldn't explain why. Then I became interested in dowsing and started collecting books on the subject and subscribed to a magazine called **American Dowser**. I also practiced a lot.

"Now I can dowse a glass of water. I can walk along a hall, and the stick will go towards a water pipe or the drinking fountain, wherever

there is water. When I would demonstrate dowsing in my history classes, there were always three or four students who were dowzers. Usually I can tell the difference between surface water and underground water. I dowsed a well once in the rain, and the stick behaved strangely. It was jumpy because there was water all around it. It was raining quite hard as I was dowsing. The stick still went towards the underground stream. Of course, the force of the underground stream was much greater than a few rain drops, but the stick jumped around and quivered a lot more, and I had to concentrate.

"When I dowse I try to get other things off my mind. I can't think of anything else or worry about anything while I'm dowsing. I can't worry about getting my car fixed or teaching class or anything. I have to clear my mind completely and that means I really have to concentrate. It takes complete concentration. It's almost like self-hypnosis, and observers have to be completely silent."

George then explained to us the actual process of dowsing. He told us the steps to follow to find water. "First a person has to find himself an instrument to use. He can use any number of things: a Y shaped branch, a pendulum, L shaped rods, and some people even use coat hangers bent in L shapes. I prefer a willow branch. I've used serviceberry and chokecherry branches which seem to work all right; although, a willow seems more responsive. The willow is more supple and bends easier, and I like the natural feel of a stick. I think a stick is easier to handle because it's a little thicker than the rods, and I can get a nice grip on it. If the willow is green, the torque will take the skin right off of my hands. I have to hold the stick very tight. When the stick twists and goes down, it is really hard to hold. If the magnetic pull is strong the



Yes, it is possible to dowse a glass of water.

stream is usually large. I can often transmit the power (or aura) to nondowers by walking behind them and holding on to their wrists. Usually when I let go of their hands it often doesn't work anymore. I don't know if someone could perfect this by concentrating, but that would be interesting.

"A person should take the Y shaped stick and hold each end tightly inside his fists as if he were going to milk a cow, having the tail of the willow pointing downward. Then he should turn his wrists inward so the palms of his fists are facing upward which will cause the tail of the stick to turn up into the air. He should make sure his elbows are tightly secured against the front of his rib cage. Once a person is holding the stick correctly he may begin to walk slowly saying to himself, 'Show me a stream of clear, pure water.' When he passes over water the tail of the stick will turn down toward the ground where the underground stream or pipe is. This only happens if the person has the 'power', and if he does, he can't stop the stick from turning unless he lets go. Not every dowser says the same thing, but most all concentrate deeply while dowsing.



George Folles showing us (Elise and Tara) how to properly hold a dowsing stick.

"The L shaped metal rods do not work the same way as the willow sticks. The dowser holds a rod in each hand and walks slowly over the ground. Manufacturers make the rods with handles on them sometimes, so they can turn easier in his hands. When the dowser reaches water the rods will cross. If he keeps walking the rods will reverse and seek the water. I don't like the rods as well as the willow stick, as they are not as precise.

"Usually the pendulum is used for oil, and the stick or rod is used for water. Oil dowzers use topographical maps. They are able to dowse areas hundreds of miles away from inside an office. They set up a rather large scale topographical map on a desk. They use a pendulum and hold it like a watch on a chain. They then start swinging their pendulum back and forth over the map, and when the pendulum starts swinging around in circles it indicates there is oil in that area."

George next spoke of his experiences with land owners in this area who were seeking wells and good water for their land. "Most land parcels are sold now with a clause that requires the proving of water before the sale is final. A lot of the contracts today are contingent upon proving water. So that's when the dowser is called in. The dowser dowses, the driller drills, water is found, and then the sale is complete. This accounts for the increased activity in dowsing. People are realizing that if there is no water, the land is not worth anything. Even with all this interest people have occasionally built houses here without drilling wells. The dowser will go to work with the well driller, and if the driller doesn't hit water, the customer doesn't pay; it's that simple. They guarantee it. I often thought it might be interesting to actually associate with a driller. If I had more time to devote to dowsing I would see if the arrangement would succeed. Of course, I would have to find a driller who believed in dowsing.

"Sometimes a land owner will call in two or three dowzers before drilling a well to see if they agree on the water source. Usually each dowser will find the same stream. If I find water in a spot, another dowser will usually find water in the same spot, so there's a consistency."

"People don't like to believe in things that aren't explainable. Often geologists don't believe in dowsing either. Most geologists believe that there are large pools of water underground, like underground lakes, so it doesn't really matter where a driller drills. He can punch holes anywhere around the lake and can hit water. Dowzers believe in underground streams, like cracks in the rocks or a creek flowing through the ground. So when a dowser dowses a well and finds a stream, he puts a stake above that stream and says, 'Drill here!'. He believes if the driller drills twenty feet off the stream, he won't hit water."

We asked George if he had ever tried picking a spot and drilling twenty feet off the stream, and he replied, "No, but I've gone out on property where there is a dry hole. I will dowse the property and find a stream that is no where near where the driller has drilled. And in some instances where the owner has not found an adequate water supply, I have found that they

have drilled as close as six feet from where I find the stream. And I've said, 'Gee, if you would have moved over this way, you would probably have hit water.' But, they didn't drill again.

"A well can cost perhaps four or five thousand dollars, so it is very expensive for a person to drill three or four times. Maybe if the dowzers charged a little more people would pay more attention to them. There are some well drillers who do not believe in dowsing at all. Others believe that they will not drill a well unless it's been dowsed. Sometimes people will build a house and say, 'Okay, as soon as we're ready to hook up the plumbing, we'll bring in a well driller and drill a well.' Then they hit a dry hole and are stuck with a house with no water. So it's become a real hassle. I have seen instances when a house owner has built a house without a well and has had to finally in desperation call in a dowser. As more homes are built in rural areas people will probably seek out dowzers.

"There is a great controversy among dowzers because now it is becoming commercially in demand. Some dowzers believe that since their ability to dowse is God given, to charge for this talent is unethical. Others point out that people with inherited talents such as singers or artists get paid for their talents. To dowse a well it usually takes two to three hours and involves considerable travel. Most dowzers who find water regularly charge a nominal fee to cover their expenses. Oil dowzers and thermal dowzers usually charge large fees and rely on their work for their livelihood the same as any other contract professional, like a lawyer or geologist."

We then asked George how he can tell how deep the stream is. "It sounds strange, but it works. Normally what I do is first locate the stream of water. I relax my grip on the stick and release the aura, and the stick comes up. I call it the aura (a distinctive atmosphere surrounding a given source). Then I walk backwards saying to myself, 'Show me a stream at how many feet, at how many feet?'. When the stick goes down, I measure from the point I started from, to where the stick went down, and that indicates the depth. I'll put a line where the first stream is, and I usually try to get two separate streams at different depths. They if one goes dry the other will feed into it. I just think of them as underground creeks, and I try to find one creek going one way and another crossing it. Where the streams cross I recommend to the driller to drill to the deepest stream of the two. If the drill goes down to only one stream and that one dries up, then the owner is out of water, and some people want the driller to find the stream closest to the surface, so it won't be so expensive. Actually it is a waste of money to do that. When a driller drills there is always a minimum set up fee for the equipment, a primary cost. It is a false economy,

therefore, to stop drilling at the shallowest stream.

"Not long ago I dowsed in an area where a driller had drilled two wells and found bad water in both of them. They had gone down about 120 feet and found water that was brackish and sulphurous. Some distance from the original drillings I dowsed a stream of fresh water at 60 feet deep. So the owner had the driller in again, and he went down 60 feet and hit good water. The new stream was apparently sealed off from the bad water 60 feet deeper."

Next we asked George where the underground water comes from. "Rain replenishes these streams. They'll run deep or they'll run shallow. In the spring, of course, they're higher because there is more water in them. It evaporates and falls in rain, and the whole cycle runs again. Our water comes in from the North Pacific Ocean and is deposited here as rain or snow. And if people pump out their wells faster than they are being replenished, they just go dry. It is happening in California right now too. There is a real danger in depleting the underground water supply faster than it is replenished.

"Before people started moving out of the cities, there wasn't a real demand for dowzers. When people migrated West, they would homestead in Kansas, Nebraska, or Iowa. They needed water, and the only place they could get water was to drill a well. So dowzers were quite in prominence, and there were a lot of them. Then when people moved from the farms into the cities dowsing wasn't necessary. There wasn't a demand for it. Most cities and towns developed a

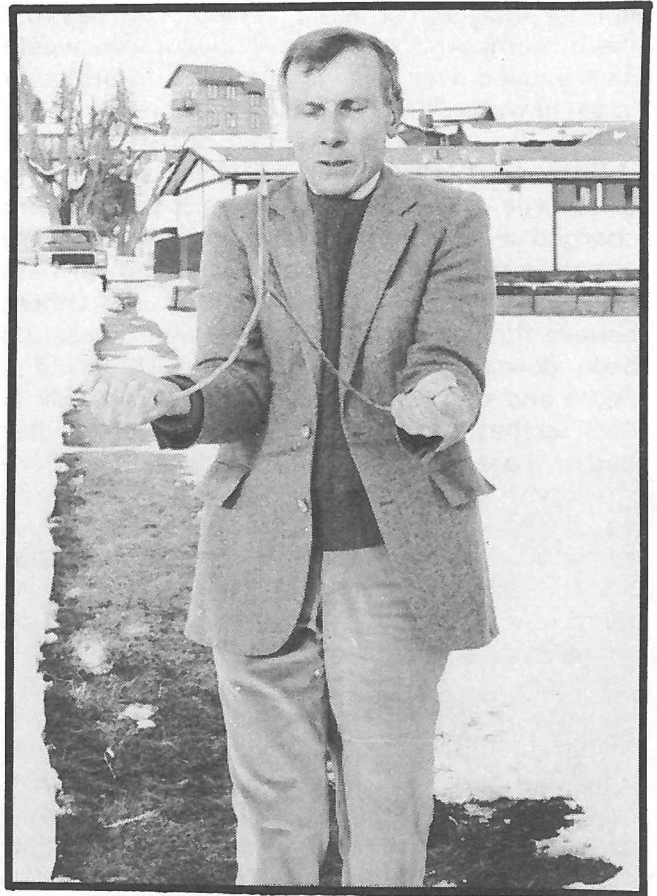


Elise trying to find water with a dowsing stick.

central water system like Steamboat has. The snow melt is retained in lakes, purified and piped to individual homes. Now with the move to the country, particularly in isolated recreational areas like Steamboat Springs, there is a need to develop private water sources, and well drilling and dowsing is again becoming popular."

We next questioned George about his success in dowsing. We asked him if he had not ever found water. "Most of the time when a driller doesn't hit water I hear about it because the dowser gets blamed. I don't always find water, of course. Once I didn't hit water when I thought I would. Actually if there isn't water on the property no amount of dowsing will make it appear. Another time I didn't find water but when the driller came it gushed out as he reached a certain level. It was like a pocket of water under pressure, and it just shot up. Boy, it flowed. Everybody was happy, but after a while the water ran out. I can't explain why.

"I dowsed a well in Country Green right across from some property which had three dry holes. Each hole was over 400 feet deep, and that is about 15 to 20 thousand dollars in drilling fees, and the owner still didn't have water. I dowsed four wells in the area and the driller hit water on three of them. People are quickly becoming aware of the importance of finding water before they build."



George feeling the aura.

We asked about other dowsers and associations for fellow dowsers. "There is a national association for dowsers called The American Society of Dowsers with headquarters in Danville, Vermont. They publish a monthly magazine which covers the latest research in the field. They also host a national conference each September when papers are presented, and members gather to share information.

"There are several regional associations such as the Western Association of Dowsers which operates a dowsing school to teach dowsing and has been featured in Country Journal magazine. Since dowsing has become fashionable, people are exploring such far out areas as dowsing for vitamin deficiencies, cancer and other health problems. I am interested in exploring the effect that dowsing would have on a biofeedback monitor and plan to do research in this area this summer.

In this area water is prolific and abundant, yet it is hidden from the ordinary home owner unless a creek runs through his property. Thus, a far sighted individual must tap all resources and methods available for this most necessary need for development. Even those of us who don't "believe" often find ourselves in a position where we must depend on the aura of water dowsers like George Tolles who through his inspiration and understanding made believes out of us.



The power can be transmitted through George's hands into Elise's.