

Grave Dowsing Information - Vince Marshall (April 19, 2011)

I am interested in history, particularly local history and I actively research and collect information regarding people, events and places in prior years.

I use basic tools for my historical research: the pen and notepad, the digital camera, sometimes a mini-tape recorder, but one of the more unusual tools is a pair of L-shaped wire rods.

I use these wire rods to obtain historical information about deceased and buried people.....the process of using the rods is called grave dowsing.

I have for many years used the dowsing rods for locating buried utility lines and pipes and found it to be a reliable and inexpensive method. I never have dowsed for underground water and am not interested in that process.

A few years ago I attended a historical group meeting in Wichita where I learned about using dowsing rods for locating unmarked graves. I have since practiced grave dowsing at local cemeteries and feel that I have at least an 'amateur' status as a grave dowser.

Here's how I go about dowsing and locating unmarked graves.....

First the dowsing rods are of very simple construction: one can use coat hangers or other types of wire to make a pair of rods suitable for dowsing buried graves or underground utilities.

The rods are L-shaped with a ninety degree bend between the long length and the short length of the rod.....the long portion of the rod could be 12 to 16 inches or so and the short length of the rod (the handle) could be 4-6 inches long. Variations in these lengths will also be effective.

[My dowsing rods are constructed out of regular household type #12 copper electrical wire. I use two each of these uninsulated wires twisted together to form a reasonably light but somewhat firm rod. The lengths are about 19 inches on the long portion and 6 inches on the short portion (or handle). I use a couple of short 1/2 inch plastic tubes to insert the handles of the rods in for ease of rod movement.]

The method of holding the rods during the dowsing process is important.

- >Hold the handles of the rods in each hand with a light grip in order to keep from obstructing their natural swinging movement.
- >While holding the rods straight out in front of you with your forearms parallel with the ground, keep your elbows at your waist.
- >The rods should be parallel with the ground straight out in front of you at waist level. Now you may need to tip the rods down slightly if they swing uncontrollably.
- >The rods should be held with your hands lightly gripping the rod handles, about 6 to 8 inches apart.
- >Don't restrict the swinging movement of the rods by placing your thumbs on the bends of the rods.

I always start by practicing on a marked grave site. I must point out that the direction of movement of the dowsing rods may vary from person to person. Some folks, when they walk across buried human remains, have the rods cross inward and others have the rods divert outward. When I detect a buried body with my dowsing rods, the rods divert outwards.

I walk slowly across the marked grave site on a path from north to south or south to north. As I walk this path, the rods should diverge when I start to cross the grave and then return to the normal parallel position when I exit the grave site. I usually turn around and repeat my dowsing process by walking across the grave in the opposite direction.

Once I have established that there is a body in the grave site, I then dowse the grave from head to foot and foot to head to determine the length of the body.

I slowly walk in a path from head to foot or foot to head and, while the dowsing rods are diverged, I count the foot lengths (I place heel to toe and walk in this short step manner until the rods return to their normal parallel position---(my foot length is about 12 inches)

>For me, 2-3 foot lengths indicate that the burial site is of an infant.

>3-4 foot lengths, that of a child

>5 foot lengths, would be an adolescent or short adult

>6-7 foot lengths, would be an adult

Practicing with marked graves that indicate age of the buried person helps me more accurately determine size of the body for those buried in the unmarked grave (which I approximate with stage of life, from infant to adult).

Determining gender of the body is to me a somewhat amazing and unusual observation.

One method is to hold a single dowsing rod above the head. The rod is held parallel with the ground and the hand gripping the dowsing rod handle can be held against the forehead. Stand over the center of the grave and note the direction that the rod moves. If the rod points towards the head, this indicates that the gender of the body is female. If the rod points towards the foot, this indicates that the body is male.

Another method of gender determination is to observe the rods movement while doing the initial dowsing of the grave when walking across it from north to south or south to north. I watch to determine which rod moves first: if the one on the head side moves first, it is a female body....if the one on the foot side moves first, it is a male body.

A variation of gender determination is to walk either just outside of the grave site at the head or feet. When walking at the head end of the grave site, if the rods point away from the head, then the gender is female. If the rods point towards the grave site (head and feet), then the gender is male. Walking at the foot end of the grave site, the opposite is true.

There is another method of determining gender of the buried body, but I have not been able to make it work for me. This involves standing over the center of the grave, balancing the handle of one rod on your index finger, holding the rod straight down. The rod is supposed to begin making a circular motion. It should rotate clockwise for a male and counterclockwise for a female.

Another somewhat obscure dowsing procedure is to determine the depth of the buried remains. One should stand over the center of the grave site holding one dowsing rod out in front of your body. Now stomp with one foot on top of the grave and start counting slowly....'one-thousand one', 'one-thousand two', 'one-thousand three', and so on until the single rod diverts to one side or the other. Depending on the final count when the rod diverts, the number reached is the depth of the grave to the top of the buried remains. That is, if one reaches the count of 'four', then the depth of the grave to the top of the buried remains is four feet.

To summarize the dowsing process of identifying an unmarked grave site and its remains, I first locate the grave and then I determine the approximate size of the body and its gender.

In many of the older, rural cemeteries, there are often numerous unmarked burial sites. These sites may have had old wooden headboards or crosses that deteriorated and have since disappeared. There might have been marker stones that have deteriorated or were buried or removed by vandals. An observer may detect a slight depression in the ground or disturbed earth and vegetation at these sites.

An important factor in the grave dowsing process is that, in the United States, there generally has been an observation of a specific Christian burial method of placing the body in the ground with the head on the west and the feet facing east. It is important to remember this as it helps one to determine the gender of the body. The marker stone may be at either end of the burial site.

The above dowsing processes can be tested with a live person laying on the ground or floor. Remember to have them lay with their head to the west and the feet to the east so that gender determination can be accurate. Make certain, if you do this 'live person' dowsing demonstration, that there are no buried utility cables or pipes in the immediate area that skew the detection results.

A good Web site to read about dowsing techniques can be located at the following:

<http://www.tommymarkham.com/gravedowsing.htm>

I am interested in helping others locate unmarked graves and determine the presence, gender, approximate size and depth of the buried remains. My contact information is:

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