Mapping Indian Cultural Heritage Sites Using Fundamental and Advanced Dowsing Techniques

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David Johnson opened our eyes to the existence of underground streams associated with Indigenous sites in 2015. From late 2015 until mid-2016, we tested that theory in the southeast at multiple sites and found his hypothesis to be factual. We have researched sites dating from the Woodland Period all the way to the Historic Period and found water under every site but one. The one site is the rock formation on Fort Mountain, GA. The theory has been that is was a Cherokee sacred site. There is little evidence to support that assumption. We researched the entire rock site and surrounding area and found no evidence of water under the site. We therefore question this site as being of an Indigenous nature.

From mid-2016 until late 2016, we expanded our research areas to include Colorado and the mid-western states and have found similar findings in those states. Further, David Johnson has validated that the same conditions exist at Indian sites in the southwestern and northeast parts of the U.S. He has also validated these conditions in Chile and Peru. Thus, it can be stated that the Indigenous peoples in the northern and southern hemisphere had knowledge of the existence of underground streams and for reasons not yet known, placed their sacred artifact sites directly over the underground streams. For the present, it is assumed that placing the sites over water has a spiritual connectedness to tie together the Indigenous peoples. However, at present, no elders have shared their knowledge of the meaning of placing the sacred sites over water so we will continue to research these sites and expand our knowledge of this fascinating discovery.

FUNDAMENTAL DOWSING in SEARCH of UNDERGROUND WATER

Most dowsers spend their time in search of water for home water supplies. During the pioneer exploration of this country, a family depended on finding water in order to build a homestead. In many places in the US, if one wanted to find water, they called the dowser. Victoria Foth of the Kansas Natural Resource Council wrote in 1988, “Swedish-born Ida Gillette purchased her Riley County farm in 1877 for a reasonable price--then learned that the previous owners sold out because they never found water. Discouraged and anxious, she consulted a local man who could water witch. He took a forked willow stick in each hand and held them straight out in front of him. Where there was water, he said the willow stick would point down immediately," she recalled. Sure enough, after a little while, as he walked about the grounds, the willow stick pointed downward and still farther down more quickly and finally it went down suddenly. With a sigh of relief, I knew that water was found at last and very conveniently near the house."

Victoria went on to say, “In Gillette's day, Kansans often turned to water witchers or "dowsers"
in their efforts to cope with a hidden, unpredictable resource. Other frontier customs have faded—but the tradition of water witching persists. You can go most anywhere in Kansas and find yourself a water witcher, noted Tom McClain of the Kansas Geological Survey.” This is true, not only in Kansas but also in the rest of rural America.

Dowsers could also be found on utility trucks in the early days before all the electronic wizardry was developed. Their job was to locate the buried utility lines.

For those of us researching Indigenous sites, dowsing is the fundamental tool for validating the existence of any underground water associated with the site. Dowsing allows us to gain a better understanding of the area forensically. An added benefit is that this can be done without disturbing the site. In our research, we have discovered that apparently every Indian Marker Tree, rock cairn sites, sacred rock formation sites, effigy mounds, burial mounds and other Indigenous sites have water underneath them. And, for the most part, the water is centered under the site.

**Marker Trees**

When we began researching Indian Marker Trees over a decade ago, we assumed the Indians located a tree to become a pointer and bent it in the direction of the place they wanted to call attention to such as a spring, a grave, a stream crossing, a shelter site, a trail and more. Now, it is obvious that our initial assumption was incorrect. Having researched hundreds of these Marker Tree sites, our research indicates that it was more likely the Indians planted a sapling directly over and centered on the underground stream and bent the tree in the direction of the underground stream. These trees still point to important places but they were located specifically to be over water. The figure to the right shows a Marker Tree location centered over the discovered underground water. This Marker Tree is pointing to a spring resulting from the underground stream penetrating the ground surface.
Effigy Mounds

Effigy Mounds seem to be located mostly in the eastern part of the US. A large number of them can be found in Wisconsin. Two have been located in Georgia in Putnam County. These are known as the Rock Eagle and Rock Hawk because of their configuration. They have been determined to date from about 1000 to 3000 years ago. Both of these Effigy Mounds were dowsed. They were found to have underground streams running directly under the bird configuration from the tail to the head. Archaeologists can only speculate as to why these massive structures were built but it is assumed they had some ceremonial purpose.

Burial Mounds

Indian Mounds, dating from the Woodland Period and later, can be found throughout the U.S. Many of these mound sites have ceremonial or platform mounds and normally one or more burial mounds. In the southeast, the largest mound site is the Pinson Mounds located in western, Tennessee. There are at least 17 mounds at this location dating from around 200 BC to 500 AD. Saul’s Mound is 72 feet high and
recorded as the second highest mound in the U.S. Dowsing indicated that water was located under several burial mounds at Pinson as well as under the burial mounds at the Etowah site in Georgia and the Toltec site in Arkansas.

**Sacred Rock Formations**

There are a number of sacred rock formations throughout the U.S. however; we have only visited some of those in the southeast. Two of the more well-known formations are Track Rock near Blairsville, GA and Judaculla Rock near Cullowhee, NC. The Cherokee and Creek Indians both claim Track Rock as being related to them whereas the Judaculla Rock is a sacred place to the Cherokee. Both of these sacred rock formations are soapstone with many petroglyph carvings on the stone face. Judaculla Rock has at least 1,500 petroglyphs and is considered to be the largest known petroglyph rock on the east coast and perhaps in the US.
Both of these sites were dowsed for underground water. Track Rock has water underneath the site going from east to west directly under the rock formation. Additionally, at the site to the east of the rock formation is an Indian Marker Tree pointing in the general direct of the rock formation. The tree also has water under it. The two underground water streams are probably connected but it was too difficult to map the entire site due to steep terrain features.

The Judaculla Rock site has water underneath it going in a generally north-south and east-west direction. The two streams cross directly under the Rock. Judaculla Rock is about twenty feet in diameter. The streams are about that same width. There are no other rocks similar to the Judaculla Rock nearby so it is a wonder how it got there in the first place.

**Rock Cairn Sites**

The Rock Cairns have been used for ceremonial purposes and for grave enclosures. Due to the vandalism of sacred sites, we seldom find a rock cairn still standing as poachers often destroy them looking for artifacts. Typically, a rock cairn is about 5-6 feet in diameter at the base built of stacked rocks in a circular pattern and tilted inward to be stable. They generally are about 5-6 feet high but have been found much higher in some locations.

The Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology reported in their 1 July 1898 report that, ”Stone cairns were formerly very common along the trails throughout the Cherokee country, but are now almost gone, having been demolished by treasure hunters after the occupation of the country by the whites. They were usually sepulchral monuments built of large stones piled loosely together above the body to a height of sometimes 6 feet or more, with a
corresponding circumference. This method of interment was used only when there was a desire to commemorate the death, and every passer-by was accustomed to add a stone to the heap.”

In Big Canoe, GA, one of the largest cairn sites can be found that has remained in-tact and protected from the treasure hunters. That site is now a protected park in the gated community. Permission was granted to survey that site in early January 2016. There are 16 rock cairns located at the site, 8 of which are large cairns and 8 are smaller in size. All 16 cairns are underlain with five interconnecting underground stream. Also the 8 large cairns when plotted and viewed on Google Earth appear to form a Big Dipper formation.
Sacred Rock Sites

Near Manchester, TN is the sacred Indian site known as the Old Stone Fort. The name is a misnomer probably related to its Civil War history. However, archaeologists have identified the site as being an Indian ceremonial site used in solstice events. Dating as far back as the Woodland period, the Indians built a rock wall encompassing a large acreage between the Duck and Little Duck Rivers. This is a remarkable feature. However, complete analysis of the purpose of the site’s purpose is impossible. One underground stream goes directly under the stone site connected to the solstice ceremonies. There are also several other underground streams crossing the site between the rock walls. A number of graves were also located within the rock walls dating to the Historic Period which shows the Indians of all generations considered this site sacred to them.

In Georgia, a number of sites containing rock formations were located some of which included seemingly special graves sites. Most Indian grave sites do not have elaborate markings; many have none at all. The graves sites in the place of the rock formations were specially marked with piles of rocks or included within a rock formation oval in pattern. These graves were obviously for important peoples in the local tribe.
One interesting grave site was located on top of the highest hill around. This site has a circle of rocks 70 feet in diameter and a large pile of rocks located tangentially to the rock circle. Under the large pile of rocks is the grave. We were told by a local Old Timer that when he visited the site over 60 years ago, the stone pile was a built up formation and was similar to an altar. Dowsing indicated that water went directly through the stone circle from north to south.

ADVANCED DOWSING RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

Researchers, who are highly skilled in using dowsing rods, are usually also skilled in using a “phenomenon” associated with the rods. There is no simple explanation or way to describe what can be accomplished with the rods other than to say some dowsers can hold the rods out in front of them and ask yes and no questions and get a response from the rods. For me, a yes answer to a question results in the rods crossing in front of me. A no answer results in the rods either not moving at all or rotating backwards and pointing behind me. Each dowser need to work with their rods enough to learn what signals indicate yes or no for them. If the question is asked so that a simple yes or no answer can be provided, the rods will usually respond. The language needs to be simple and specific. Complex words are not required. A simple question might be, “Is there underground water located here?” and if a yes response is received, a follow on question can be, “In what direction is the water?” wherein the rods will point which direction to go find the water. If I hold the rods out horizontally in front of me and walk in the direction the rods pointed, I will know I have found the water when the rods cross in front of me. Again, it takes practice for dowsers to discover how their rods respond to them.

When we began to explore the “phenomenon” we limited our questions to very simple things not expecting to use the rods beyond basic questions. In an effort to more forensically research the sites, we have discovered that there seems to be no limits to what we can ask as long as the answer is yes or no. Each day seems to open new avenues to explore and new understanding of what can be accomplished with the rods. Some of what we have found can be accomplished with the rods is described in the following sections.

Marker Trees

After seeing thousands of Marker Trees, our eyes are trained to recognize them. We then are able to collect the data on the trees. Before beginning to collecting data on a Marker Tree, you can simply ask if there is a Marker Tree in the vicinity. If there is, the rods will give you a yes answer. You can then follow up with “In what direction is the tree?” The rods will swing and point directly toward the tree. If you already believe that there is a marker tree in the area, you can just ask the rods to point the way to it. Finally, to help determine if the tree is really an Indian marker tree it is necessary to dows to see if there is an underground stream related to it. If the tree meets all of the criteria, we consider it an authentic Marker Tree.
On occasion, I question the response I get from the rods about whether a potential Marker Tree is authentic or not. Sometimes I assume it is one and the rods indicate that it is not. In either case, I check the tree for underground water. If there is no water, I discount it. If there is water, I record it as authentic. Again, practice and experience will lead you to trust the responses you get from the rods.

All Marker Trees have a purpose but often over time the purpose may no longer exist. For example a spring that existed may have dried up. You can try to determine the purpose of the tree by asking questions such as “Does, or maybe did, this tree point to a spring?” or “Does this tree point to shelter?,” or “Does this tree point to a stream crossing?.” When there is no obvious feature the tree is pointing toward, it may be pointing to a grave and you can ask that question. If you get a yes answer, then follow up with asking the direction of the grave. Then, go look for it. It will usually be within less than 30 feet of the tree location and along the pointer direction or just a bit off the pointer direction. If you get no answers to your questions, you are left in a quandary. Ask yourself: What purpose might the tree have served; or, what questions should you have asked? Other questions will invariably come to mind after you get home.

**Indian Graves**

Indian Graves are sometimes marked with a small upturned stone, a pile of rocks, a rectangular pile of dirt or some other indication. They are sometimes marked by a Marker Tree. Thus, these type graves are more easily recognized and can be checked. However, many of the graves have no markings so the only way to locate those graves is with the dowsing rods.
Quite often there are a number of graves co-located together and in some cases it has been determined that a husband and wife have been buried close to each other. Some grave marking seem to be specially configured to honor someone of importance in the tribe. The graves are often located in higher elevations again possibly to honor the departed or possibly to put the grave closer to next world. However, at an Indian village site located in a lower elevation, the graves were near the village but apart from the village living area.

There is insufficient data at this time to make any conclusions on where Indian graves will be found but one recurring place that they are being found is along Indian trails. One of the trails currently being studied has been determined to have been used in the Cherokee Trail of Tears as a feeder route. The trail was used to gather the Indians and take them to the holding fort before transporting them to Chattanooga, TN for the start of the removal to Oklahoma.

While some graves can be easily recognized, most are found using the dowsing rods. When you suspect there may be graves in the area, you hold your rods and, you pose the two part question: “Is there (or Are there) Indian graves in this area?” and if the rods give a yes answer, then you follow up with “In what direction are the graves located?” The rods will swing in the direction of the graves. You go in that direction holding the rods in front of you. When you are directly over a grave, the rods will cross.

One fact which helps in the analysis of a grave is that most Christian graves are aligned east-west with the head to the west; that way the body will be facing east at the coming of Christ. Similarly, many Indians are buried with the head to the west and the body facing east. East is the most important direction to Indians so they want to be buried facing east. Knowing this fact, when you find the grave, you can use the rods to check the grave alignment and, in fact, measure the length of the grave. This is done by passing the rods in the closed position above the grave along the alignment until the rods open. This is then one end of the grave. Now pass the rods along the grave in the opposite direction and find the other end where the rods will uncross again. Now you know the size of the person buried. If the distance is short, then it is a child; otherwise it is an adult grave.
If the grave is aligned east-west, then you can determine the gender of the grave by holding one of the rods over the center of the grave. The single rod will rotate and point to the head of a woman and the feet of a man. This may seem odd and impossible but it will happen. The only time it will not work is if the man and woman are buried in the same grave. Again, take your rods to a cemetery and without looking at the name on the grave practice using the single rod.

If the grave is not oriented east-west, then you will not know where the head or feet are located and you cannot determine the gender by using the rod. However, you can ask if this is a male or female grave and get an answer.

After locating the first grave and determining gender, it is good to determine if there are more graves in the same location. Ask: “Is there more than one grave in this location?” If there is, you will get a yes response and you can follow up with, “In what direction is the 2nd grave?” The rods will point in the direction and you can locate the 2nd grave following what you did on the 1st grave. If this is a major burial site, you can begin to ask, “Are there more than 3, 4, 5 graves here?” or whatever number you choose and begin to narrow down the number of graves by asking the question until you get to the real number of graves.

When the graves have been located, you can begin to determine more data by asking more probing questions. If there are two graves co-located together they are often related. So asking, “Are these two graves husband and wife?” or some other question about relationship will determine if the graves are related to each other. At one grave site in Colorado, we located two graves, a woman and a small male child. We asked if they were mother and son and got a yes answer. We did not go further in the questioning but these two could have died in childbirth.

If you get a yes answer to the grave question and determine the gender, then next you can ask what tribe they came from by asking, “Are these Indians Cherokee? Are they Creek?” or whatever tribe might have been located in that area. Most often, we have been able to determine tribe affiliation but not always.

Another question that can be asked is how they died. We have determined some died of old age, some from disease and some during the Trail of Tears. Some have also been determined to have died in a battle.

If the grave is specially marked, we usually probe to see if this is a chief, a chief’s wife, a medicine man, a warrior or some other question. At a site in Colorado where there had been a Ute battle and a number of Ute were buried, it was known that the Ute often buried their horses with the warrior when he died. That question was posed at the site and the rods responded with a yes the horses were buried there as well.
One last place to search for Indian graves is in old cemeteries where the Indians lived before removal. Many people think all the Indian left during the removal but that is not true. In fact, many stayed and either hid their culture for many years are just tried to fit in with the settlers. These Indian people did not fit in with a white society and it was often not acceptable for them to be buried in the white cemeteries. But some did get accepted or were buried at night with no one knowing. There is seldom a marker for these graves and they can only be found using dowsing rods. Others have a small stone upturned to mark the grave. While mapping the Old Alabama Road though Middle GA, we stopped at the old cemetery in Waverly Hall, GA because it is located right on the old trail. At the back part of the cemetery, we located six unmarked Indian graves. In a cemetery located now on Lake Guntersville State Park in AL, the Indian graves were found outside of the main cemetery.

Without disturbing the graves, a lot can be learned about them using the rods and the limits to answers are only limited by what you do not ask or by what questions did not give you an answer.

**Indian Trails**

Mapping Indian trails begins by doing your homework and locating old maps of where the trails were located. The Mountain Stewards have perfected methodology wherein we are able to overlay the old map on Google Earth if the map can be geo-located or geo-referenced, that is it is accurate. Once the map has been carefully geo-located on Google Earth and aligned with the existing terrain features, we can then extract the trails data. Now the map is removed and the trail data layed on Google Earth. With this knowledge of the trail location, we can zoom down on Google Earth and find a known feature such as an existing road, river crossing or such and get the GPS coordinates of that point. Now using our hand-held GPS, we can guide ourselves to that point and begin to search for the trail.
Some of the old maps were not surveyed with great accuracies so when located on Google Earth, the trail may be off by several hundred feet. Thus, in searching for the trail in the “boots-on-the-ground” phase, you may need to search a wider area than expected to locate the trail.

Sometimes, when the trails are located on federal or state lands which have not been disturbed, the trail is very evident such as the Cherokee Trail in SC or the Grierson Trail in GA. Once these trails are discovered you can walk them and obtain their exact location to make corrections on Google Earth.

When you find the trail, to confirm that it is an Indian trail, you hold the rods out in front of you and ask, “Is this an Indian Trail?” or if you know which trail it might be, you can ask if this is the Grierson Trail or the Old Alabama Trail or whatever you know about the trail. As an example, we followed the Old Alabama Trail from Columbus, GA to Indian Springs, GA., a distance of about one hundred miles and found remnants of the trail is several counties. At each location, we asked if this was the Old Alabama Trail and got a yes answer to confirm we are on it.

Because of land disturbance, quite often the trails cannot be seen and you are left with searching for it by using the rods. If you are near the location of the trail, you begin by asking, “Is there an Indian trail located nearby this location?” If you get a yes response, then follow up with the question, “In what direction is the Indian Trail? The rods will rotate to point toward the trail location. You then walk in the direction with the rods held in front of you until they cross over in front of you. You are now on the trail and you can ask if this is the Indian trail which should get a yes answer. Now you follow up by asking, “In what direction does the trail go?” and the rods will point in the direction of the trail. Now you turn in that direction with the rods still crossed in front of you and follow the path keeping the rods crossed. If you drift off of the trail the rods will begin to uncross and you need to correct your direction to make the rods cross again.

This technique is very similar to following underground water by keeping the rods crossed to know you are on the right path. Periodically along the path you might want to take a GPS reading to collect waypoints so that you can record the exact location of the trail for future reference. On occasion, there are branch trails off of the main trail and you need to be alert to
where they may be. Often the location of the branch trail is marked with a Marker Tree or other marking. Similar to finding the direction of the main trail, you can move over to the branch trail and ask the direction the trail is going and get a response.

As mentioned in the graves section, there are often graves found along the trail so keeping your eyes open for signs is important. If you get the sense of a grave being nearby, you can ask the question: “Are there graves nearby?” and get a response of yes of no.

One Indian Trail was suspected of being on the ridge line of the Southern Appalachian Mountain range in Pickens and Dawson County, GA. This trail was not recorded on any old maps so other features were needed to identify its existence. A decade ago, when starting the Indian Trail Tree Project, a number of Indian Marker Trees were located on the ridge line of the mountain range. This led us to suspect there was an Indian trail located on the ridgeline but we could not prove it at that time. With the recent improved capabilities in mapping Indian trails, we initiated a search for the trail and located it on Oglethorpe Mountain at the end of the range. It was suspected that the trail came up the mountain from a suspected Cherokee village located near Lake Pettit. However, when we asked if the Cherokee village was near the island in Lake Pettit we got a no response. Upon further questioning, we got a yes response to the village being Creek. It is likely the village was initially Creek but the Cherokee moved into the area around 1750 and may have reoccupied the village site.

Of interest, in 1932, the Appalachian Trail was started on Oglethorpe Mountain and it followed this Indian trail heading north for over six miles before the two trails diverted. We confirmed the existence of the Appalachian Trail by asking if it was there as we walked the Indian Trail. Most often, we got a yes response but several times we found the two trails separated by up to 20 feet.

Using the techniques described above, the Indian trail has been documented for over five miles along the ridgeline and two branch trails have been also located leading to sacred sites of the Cherokee and Creek. Also of interest, following this trail, we passed right by all of the Marker Trees we located a decade ago. Now we know for sure that these trees were marking the trail. Also of interest, we located a number of Indian graves both Cherokee and Creek so this trail has been in use since at least the 1700’s or before.

**Sacred Sites**

I mentioned earlier in this report that sacred sites such as Effigy Mounds, Burial Mounds, Sacred Rock formations and more can be found throughout the U.S. Some of these sites have been studied by archaeologist and we have confirmation of their existence. Some have also been identified by the Native Americans as being sacred to them. Sometimes there is little evidence
that a site may be sacred so you are left with using the rods to ask questions in order to make a determination as to it being a sacred site or not.

If there are a number of graves located at the site, you will usually get a positive response to the question, “Is this a sacred site?” Once you determine the site is sacred, you may be able to determine why it is sacred by asking if this is a ceremonial site or a solstice site or something else.

The answers you are seeking may not always be found. As an example, in Upson County, GA there is a site with six rock formations aligned to an east-west orientation with three rock formations on one side of a ravine and three on the other side. The rock formations are obviously man-made and there is an underground stream directly below the six rock formations confirming they were important to the Indians. This site is suspected of being a solstice site based on all the evidence. However, when asked if it is a solstice site, the rods did not respond to other that it was a sacred site. The underground water of the rock formations connected with other underground streams located on the 100 acre site and one Marker Tree pointed directly toward the rock formation site. Further, on that acreage are two Indian graves sites. The graves sites are marked with seemingly special rock formations, perhaps to honor the departed.

Every sacred site will have an underground stream directly going through the site so this is the one sure way of identifying sacred sites.

In Northeast Georgia is a rock site that heretofore has remained a mystery. This site was dowsed recently and more has been learned about its purpose. The rock formation at this site is a circular to oval formation about 150 feet in diameter. The “old timers” have said when they first discovered it 60-70 years ago, the rock walls were about five feet high. However, many locals came to the site in their wagons and harvested the rocks for foundations so all that remains today is a wall of a couple of feet. There were likely entrances to the area surrounded by the walls but that cannot be proven now. Using the rods to determine the site’s purpose, we asked if it was a sacred site and got a yes answer. We then asked if it were a ceremonial site and did not get an answer but did get an answer to it being a solstice site barely. However, one has to question that response since the site is on the western slope of a mountain so being able to see the sun through the forest canopy would be difficult. It is likely this site dates to the Woodland Period but we confirmed it was also used during the Historic Period.

Water was located directly under the site going through the center of it in a NE-SW direction.

On grave of a Creek Indian was located within the boundary of the stone walls and one directly outside of the walls in close to the direction of the water flow. Surprisingly, we also located a dozen of more male Creek Indian graves on an arc to the NW from the stone structure. We then
asked if the stone structure was used for burial ceremonials and got a yes answer. Interestingly, there were no female graves at the site. Obviously, there had to be a Creek village nearby from where they traveled to use this site for burials.

Less than a quarter mile for the site to the south is the Unicoi Indian Trail that dates from at least the 1500’s. This trail goes from Travelers Rest near Toccoa, GA to Loudon near Knoxville, TN. It is likely, that all Indians knew about the site and probably stopped to visit it on their travels.

**Energy Lines or Fields**

One new feature being found but so far only in the Southern Appalachian Mountains is what we are calling “Energy Lines” or “Energy Fields.” These features seem to be lines of energy that cause the rods to swing outwardly. The rods remain at 90 degrees to either side of the holder and together form a 180 degree alignment with the field. These fields of energy have been found on Oglethorpe Mountain and along the Indian Trail on the Southern Appalachian Mountain range. We placed a compass on top of the energy field and the compass was not affected so this is not some magnetic line.

A dozen of more of these fields have been found. They do not all point in the same directions and they are difficult to analyze. Several of them have been followed using the rods since the rods continue to react along the field. On several occasions where these were found, one or more Indian graves were located right on the energy field.

This unknown feature is going to take a great deal more research before we can understand it. We also need to see if we can find similar fields in other parts of the country.