

The days of hickory stick in early school days may be past, but the days of the cherry gad, or divining rod are still spoken of when it comes to finding hard water wells. This thought was expressed in a veiled way a few days ago by a pioneer well driller, George Hart, of Rosedale in Fenelon Townshp. He has drilled hundreds and hundreds of wells and at times has resorted to the use of the cherry gad.

Well digging is a pioneer industry. George Hart remembers when he was a farm lad, living in the Hart settlement at Mount Horeb, when a pump manufacturer and well digger by the name of Jack Daniels was known for miles around as an expert. Dennis had his place of business on Russell street, a door east of the Kiwanis arena and for a time he displayed his pumps at his home on Lindsay street south, immediately south of the CNR tracks. The Sylvester Manufacturing Company also made pumps as well as being pioneers in the manufacture of plows, reapers and plow points.

Well digging has become big business especially since the local area has increased in population.

“Many changes have taken

place in the thirty years I have been drilling wells", said Mr. Hart. "Where we once bought well tubing for 50 cents a foot, now the pipe costs us \$2.50 a foot. However, there is more money in circulation today. I find farmers among the best people to work for. They know what they want, demand good service and are willing to pay."

The old wooden pump is rapidly disappearing from the barn yard, or even in the villages, and the pumps of today are iron and are much easier to handle. Repairs can be made more easily and they also have more permanency. "There used to be an all-wood pump at Powles Corner. Even the head was made of wood, but it has now disappeared" he said.

Mr. Hart and his two sons have established a large business and today their trade has extended to many summer resort areas and also to far away places, to North Bay, to King-

ston, Oshawa, Ajax, Peterboro and other districts. The average depth of wells today is in the neighbourhood of 30 feet, but many times the drill has penetrated Mother earth to a depth of 60 feet.

According to Mr. Hart the operator can generally find a stream or creek of water below the surface of the earth by examining the terrain, watching for good gravel beds and scanning rock areas.

"Swinnis made a good pump, and I still come across a number of Sylvester pumps", said Mr. Hart. He also said that many farmers today install wells and operate them by means of push buttons and electricity instead of manual labour.

Mr. Hart's memory is excellent regarding the old days at Mount Horeb where a number of Hart families, the Deyell's, the Moore's, Hicksons, Armstrong's and others congregated at the old general store run by a gentleman named Elliott, and nearby was a blacksmith shop and a church.

Similar old landmarks in the vicinity were located at Fleetwood, Frankfort, Janetville and Bethany. Bethany is still one of the largest villages in the area.

The gentleman interviewed had heard the story published by friends of the well-known "Soc" Jelly Banyan fame, a man who became a millionaire, but he never before heard of the Ann Hart who was reported to have been the only woman to hold up a stage coach in the Southern United States and had been tried for shooting down a man in the holdup. "That may be one of those far-stretched Yankee stories", he said, "but I don't think it was a Hart from Mount Horeb."



George Hart of Rosedale, a pioneer well digger, reminisces with Ford Moynes. —Photo by John Boyd

