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MUSEUM, Lafayette, OR, since 1969  
 Hours - Sat & Sun 2 to 4 pm  
 (or by appt: 662-3788, 864-2589)

**YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

FEBRUARY

1992

MEETING Tuesday, February 11, at the Dayton Christian Church, Fifth & Church Sts., Dayton. POT LUCK DINNER at 12 o'clock noon. Bring own table service. Visitors always welcome.

PROGRAM Who was Martin Miller? and other bits of Dayton history, presented by Donna Kindred.

REMEMBER WHEN



We've had some very interesting programs on the history of our county and state. If you have suggestions for programs or bits of history to submit, send to the Museum, address on reverse side, or contact an officer. The membership mailings (225) will be reviewed soon. Dues of \$5. per individual are payable to Mary Ogden, Financial Sec'y., P.O. Bx 273, Amity, OR 97101. The Historical Society appreciates the interest of those in far off places, and others who cannot attend meetings.



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## THE COVE ORCHARD SINK HOLE

by George W. Williams

This is an account of the Cove Orchard sink hole, where a railroad steam engine disappeared in 1894. The information was provided by Gordon Zimmerman of Yamhill, OR.

The sink hole is one-half mile north of Cove Orchard between the railroad and the highway. It is at the point where Highway 47 veers away from the railroad and immediately returns to the railroad right-of-way. It is the exact point between the water flowing north to the Tualatin River and flowing south to the Yamhill River.

The railroad tracks have been removed but the rail bed is still evident. The sink hole is about 10 ft. x 25 ft.--right by the rail bed. This is about 25 feet west. In the early days nothing would grow on it. Now the vegetation is quite high.

In the spring or fall of 1894, Gordon's father, George Zimmerman, and Willie Little (W.C. Little was later a carpenter who built many buildings in the Yamhill-Carlton area, including the elevator at the railroad tracks in Yamhill) stopped at the derailment of the engine, before going to school. The weather was good. At that time the front part of the engine was in the sink hole. When they returned after school, two steam engines, with hooks, had disconnected the wood-filled tender. They pulled on the engine until dark but the more they pulled the lower it got.

When the railroad was built about 1871, the Indians told Gaston not to build over the sink hole--build around it. In 1914 the line was electrified and high amounts of old concrete, piling, and rock were dumped on both sides of the right-of-way. In 1919 George Zimmerman was farming the area east of the sink hole. By the middle 20's most of the wet area next to the tracks became farmable.

Highway 47 was built in the early 20's. George Zimmerman persuaded the state highway department to put in curves to go around the sink hole.

During World War I and after, there were several passenger trains every day. The railroad company kept dumping into the sinkhole area through the 60's and 70's because of the heavy logging traffic.

The railroad is now abandoned and the right-of-way in the vicinity of the sink hole is still sinking, as well as the field east of the line.