

Swimming In Railroad Tank

Orville Dingler, Storyteller

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

2001

Orville Dingler was born on his mother's birthday, November 16 in Weiser, Idaho. This was a big deal for his older sister, Belle, who would later always say, "*What a great birthday present for Mom!*" He was the second oldest of four children born to Fred and Maude (Abernathy) Dingler both of whom had been born in Missouri. Maude was a little bitty girl when she traveled with her folks across the plains from Missouri to Montana.

- Father* - Fred Dingler born 1881 in Missouri.
- Mother* - Maude (Abernathy) Dingler born November 16, 1882 in Missouri.
- Children:* - Belle Dingler born 1900 in Montana.
- Orville Dingler born November 16, 1904 in Weiser, Idaho.
- Juanita Ella Dingler born February 2, 1907 in Grants Pass, Oregon.
- Ethel Minerva Dingler born 1909 in Grants Pass, Oregon.

A rustic 20-foot diameter wooden water tank was a local feature along the railroad about a half-mile south of Tunnel No. 9 (see Photo 5). It was located by a creek that was the tank's source of water. The tank had a spout which was used by the steam driven trains when they got low on water. On the outside of the tank there was a wooden ladder up to the top of the tank. One time some kids, including Orville, went up the ladder to the roof of the tank. One of the kids took off his shirt and another took off his shoes, and eventually they were all stark naked. Giggling like a bunch of girls they climbed down a ladder fixed inside the tank to swim in the 15 feet of water there. Orville was the first one to get his feet wet. He told his dad about their swimming adventure and his dad said, "*I don't want to every hear about you going near that tank anymore. What would you have done if the spout had been opened to put water into a train?*"

Walker, Mike. April 9, 2001, Revised July 23, 2001. *Orville Dingler's Hugo Memories: 1910 - 1920*. Education Chair for Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society. Hugo, OR.

What Torpedoes?

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Seven-year old Orville was a second grader at the Hugo School during the 1911 - 1912 school year. He had a new teacher, Miss Gertie Cahill. Miss Cahill had been a former student at Hugo as her family was local and had a big ranch by the McKys on Quartz Creek Road about a half mile from the school.

Orville got in trouble one time walking home from school. He and three Potter children were traveling home from school on the tracks to Tunnel No. 9 when they met a flag man. He told them to get off the tracks and out of harm's way of the men working there. His attitude made Orville mad, but he did what he was told. As the children continued walking home they found

the flag man's speeder that he had left with a box of torpedoes on it. To the other children's dismay Orville grabbed about a dozen torpedoes and carried them away. Orville was still mad at the flag man and eventually he placed 10 torpedoes, one by one each about a foot apart from the others, on the tracks. All the kids were home at the tunnel when the train came through. His dad, Fred Dinger, came home that night and told Orville he wanted to talk to him. "*Where did you get the torpedoes?*" Orville responded, "*What torpedoes?*" But, he knew the game was up. His dad said, "*Cut it out; we both know what we are talking about.*" Orville "fessed -up" and said he did it because he was mad that the flag man got smart with him and the Potter kids, and told them they could not walk that way. May be he should not have done it, but he had.

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