

Features



"THERE'S NOTHING SPECIAL about us," Theodora Garnsey says, "except that we've been around so long!" Above, she and Felix relax during the 1982 Oldtimers' Picnic.

PIONEERS

Teddy and Felix Garnsey recall early days near Fallbrook

By Lorgene Bell

Members of Zion Lutheran Church, Fallbrook, were surprised recently to find a full page in the Fallbrook newspaper featuring Felix Garnsey, of Thousand Oaks Ranch, Deluz. Felix is a member of Zion church, and was honored as "Pioneer of the Year" by the Fallbrook Historical Society.

The newspaper carried his interesting history, going back for three generations. It told of his two grandfathers, James L. Garnsey and Harry K. Day, who, in 1880, homesteaded in the beautiful wooded countryside between two Spanish grants. They were among the early settlers of the area.

In those early days, crops had to be "dry" raisins, brandy, wine, dried apricots, wood and charcoal. These were shipped by rail to Los Angeles.

When mail service began in 1882, "Gramp Day" delivered the mail three times a week by horse and buggy. It was a three-hour trip with three river crossings. Felix frequently accompanied his grandfather on these trips.

In 1916 Louis J. Garnsey, Felix's father, built an 8' x 10' post office on his property and became the area Postmaster. Once known as the smallest complete post office in the world, the building is now used as a tool shed on an adjoining ranch. Today mail comes via Fallbrook on a daily basis.

A wooden framed school was built in 1888, and Felix is recorded as being the last graduate of that school, which was razed in 1927. Enrollment was small so families in the area boarded foster children to keep the attendance up. Teddy Garnsey recalls that the School Board always tried to hire a teacher with a good-sized family of her own.

Felix left the homestead to attend Santa Ana College, where he met Teddy, daughter of Teacher Ernst Mueller, who taught at St. John's Lutheran

school in Orange from 1902-1920. Teddy was born in Orange and lived there until she was 18 years of age.

When the depression came in the 1930's and life was a matter of survival on one's own, Felix gave up his accounting courses and night banking to take over the family ranch, deep in mortgages. Teddy taught in a Burbank junior high school. They were married in 1934 and, according to Teddy, that partnership still seems like a good idea.

Life on the ranch was strictly pioneer style and completely void of modern conveniences, but Teddy recalls that they ate "high off the hog" with butter and cream in almost everything, fresh vegetables, rich ice cream, venison, wild pigeons, doves and quail and lots of fish from the Oceanside boat.

The Garnseys managed between their busy work load to do some "500" playing and attend monthly dances, as well as hunting, hiking and visiting. In 1937, their son, Stephen, was born. Teddy tells how his buggy was often plunked onto the pickup so mama could help pack muscat grapes, the ranch's principal crop of the time; table grapes were hauled to Orange County stores.

The isolation of the ranch made it difficult for Felix and his family to get to church. There were no Lutheran Services in the Fallbrook area until 1949 and for many years the Garnseys had to travel to Escondido, or to Oceanside, when they could. Teddy, in particular, found this situation difficult and missed her former close association with the church.

The following years brought many improvements and changes in their home, ranch, and the whole country. This resulted in additional changes in the Garnsey's life style. In the 1960's they were able to become increasingly more active in church and did

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FROM THE FAMILY ALBUM, the above picture shows the original Garnsey house, left, built by Gramp Day in the 1880's. The tiny structure fronting the house is the post office built in 1916. It was once

known as the smallest complete post office in the world. The shed at the right, built in 1909 to store muscat raisins, is now the central room of the Garnsey's present home.

MORE ABOUT PIONEERS

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volunteer work for the Soil Conservation, Hospital Auxiliary, and could engage in some of their hobbies and more social activities. Felix has received a plaque for 28 years of volunteer Soil Conservation work.

Last year, when Teddy reached 75, some 35 Zion ladies turned out for a surprise birthday luncheon for her at the Country Club. She is one of the charter members of Zion and at the time of the 25th anniversary of Zion Church, it was Teddy who dug into the

The Rev. Mark C. Behring was installed in 1978 at Zion as resident pastor, one year prior to the 25th anniversary and 17 years after the completion of the Zion church building and dedication.

Now in their 70s and happy, they are engaging in some traveling and enjoy caring for some cattle and much gardening on their remaining 96-acre ranch. They have time for their hobby of color photography and extra grandparent trips to visit their two grandchildren. Lisa and Mike. Teddy writes in her most

recent Christmas letter. "The Lord has richly blessed us each day and we are thankful."

Zion Lutheran congregation can thank the Lord, too, for putting Felix and Teddy in its midst. They are active church workers, upright citizens, good friends, helpful neighbors, and they show concern for all. They are a good example of the joy and contentment which comes from knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and living in the way of the Lord. Their whole life style is one of witnessing for Christ.



# Character

## DeLuz family history

By BETTE KREPELIN

"There's a lot of history tucked away in all those canyons and hills out DeLuz way," wrote one observer in 1977.

A name that weaves through that history like a golden thread in a fine tapestry is Garnsey. Tracing that thread reveals much of the DeLuz story from the 1880's to the present.

Felix and Teddy Garnsey of Thousand Oaks Ranch are the third generation to farm the rich soil of DeLuz. They do not seek attention from the press, but have kindly consented for me to use 100 years of their family history and personal experiences to tell the story of DeLuz.

The first settler of DeLuz is reported to have been a Mr. Spring, who lived on the land by Judson Mineral Springs in 1861.

### Staked claims

In the early 1880's homesteaders began to come to DeLuz to stake their claims in the beautiful, wooded countryside located between two Spanish grants, Santa Rosa and Santa Margarita.

Among these early settlers were Harry K. Day and James Louis Garnsey, grandfathers of Felix Garnsey.

James L. Garnsey, a pioneer of Santa Ana and a successful brick maker, retired to his DeLuz acreage to keep bees. The combs were shipped to Los Angeles.

Day's first crop was the wood he cut and cleared with real horsepower, and later grapes, which he dried into raisins.

Crops in those early days had to be "dry": raisins, brandy, wine, dried apricots, wood and charcoal. They were shipped by rail to Los Angeles from a station located where DeLuz Creek and the Santa



HISTORIC PHOTO  
Garnsey ranch  
built in the 1880s  
occupied by Jar  
children Felix,

### Mail service

Mail service began in 1882 with private families acting as postmaster. From 1910 to 1916, the post office was located under the outside stairway of the Regan property, now McManus.

"Gramp Day" and his mare Wanda delivered the mail three times weekly, on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. It was a three-hour trip in horse and buggy with nine river crossings. "In rainy weather Gramp put the mail and packages on the seat beside him and his feet up on the dashboard as the water



**Margarita River meet.**

DeLuz was also a tourist attraction in the late 1800's and early 1900's. People came to bathe in Judson's Warm Mineral Springs, five miles from the DeLuz Station on California Southern Railroad.

According to the "History of San Bernardino and San Diego County," 1883:

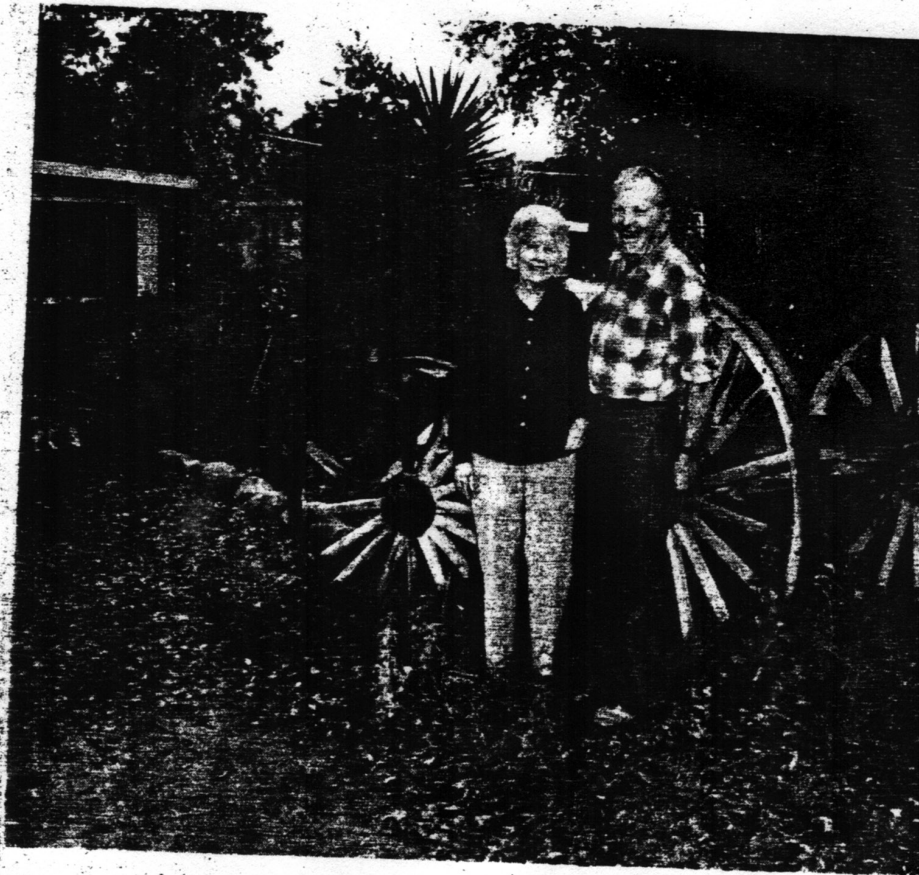
"The Springs are celebrated for making many remarkable cures of rheumatism, neuralgia, deafness, and for all characters of humors. They have been highly esteemed by the Indians for many years. . . Their temperature fluctuates from 80 to 90 degrees. . . They are becoming very popular as a summer resort, by business men and families who desire to camp, bathe, hunt and rusticate in the mountains, amid pleasant scenes, in order to recuperate."

came into his busy, busy Margaret Regan King in a 1964 letter in which she reminisced about her girlhood in DeLuz.

Young Felix Garnsey often accompanied his grandfather on these trips, and says with a grin, "For years we looked on Fallbrook as the gateway to our community."

In 1916 Louis J. Garnsey, Felix's father, built the eight-by-eight foot post office which became known as the "smallest complete post office in the world" on his property, and became postmaster.

This was the home of the DeLuz post office until 1930. It was moved several times between 1930 and 1955 when it closed and mail started coming via Fallbrook on a daily basis. The old post office is now used as a tool shed on the



**THE GARNSEYS TODAY—** Felix and Teddy Garnsey pose in front of antique wagon wheels at their DeLuz property. A portion of the present ranch house appears at the left edge of the photograph.



# y spans 100 years



The first house on the property (at left under trees) was built by Frank Day and later occupied by Edith Garnsey and Harry. The post office

building built in 1916 is shown standing in the yard (left foreground) and the shed at right, built in 1907, was used to store muscat raisins. That shed is now the center room in the present home of Felix and Teddy Garnsey.

McManus property.

In the 1880's the original DeLuz school classes were held in a small building on the Day property. A wooden framed school was built in 1896 on the Wilmot acreage near the west fork of DeLuz Creek.

## Torn down

The Garnsey is recorded as the last and only building in 1922 of this school, which was torn down in 1927.

Built in the same year, the new building was a one-room school encompassing eight grades. Enrollment was

## The 1930's

During the Great Depression life was a matter of survival. On your own, that is. I taught junior high in Burbank while Felix gave up accounting courses and night banking to take over the family ranch, deep in mortgages. We were married in 1934, and now that partnership still seems like a good idea.

Life was pioneer-style: adjusting to kerosene lamps, outdoor plumbing, sad irons, cranky wood stove, "drip" refrigeration from an olla over a screen cage covered with gunny sacks, doing laundry with washboard over an open fire (later there was a machine with Briggs-Stratton motor), making butter and cottage cheese, and "making do."

The road was dirt, narrow, and not fit in rain. But we ate "high on the hog" with Pansy's butter and cream in most everything, fresh vegetables, rich ice cream, venison, wild pigeons, wild doves, quail at times and lots of fish from the Ocean side boat.

We played "300" with three couples, had monthly dances at the one-room school, did much hunting, hiking and visiting.

Best of all, Stephen was born in 1937, and his buggy was often slung onto the pickup so mama could help pack out muscat



boarded foster children to keep the attendance up.

Teddy Garnsey recalls that the school board always tried to hire a teacher with a good sized family of her own. One teacher on the 1890 school register had seven children.

DeLuz School was closed in 1968 because it did not meet the Field Act earthquake protection standards. Since that time DeLuz children have been bused to Fallbrook schools. The Fallbrook board brought the schoolhouse up to earthquake safe standards, and uses it as a nature study center.

Teddy Garnsey best tells the DeLuz story over the last 50 years in her 1981 Christmas letter, "Remembering" in which she looks back over the life she and Felix Garnsey have shared.

The following are excerpts from that letter:



grapes, our principal crop; table grapes were hauled to Orange County stores.

Groceries cost \$2.31 in April 1935 and \$19.17 in May.

It rained 43 inches in 1936-37, followed by the worst heat wave ever.

### The 1940's

World War II gave Felix a 4-F status, and we raised extra vegetables for market. We and friends kept the pressure cooker busy, totaling over 1000 quarts of fruits and vegetables in one summer. Peaches were canned, water-bath, over an open fire, 50 quarts to a tub!

Grape prices rose from the 50 to 60 cent average to as much as \$5 a lug, and mortgages were slowly paid off. Robin and Babcock peaches, and walnuts kept harvests going from June to Thanksgiving.

Improvements were made: Kohler light plant, sleeping porch converted to a bedroom, and new equipment. 1949 was really memorable: snow in January, an earthen dam for irrigation built in spring, and a week-long, disastrous forest fire in September.

### The 1950's

These were full years. Wildflowers were prolific after the '49 fire, and we began photographing in color (still our main hobby.)

In 1950 we grew blackeyes, grapes, peaches and nuts. After 17 years of marriage we had electricity, and what a revolution in house and fields! Because we raised so much, neighbors and high school boys couldn't do all the work, so we hired Mexicans through the Bracero program and built housing. Workers were protected by contracts with both governments, and they could stay only six months.

Steve was always his dad's right hand man; often his buddies helped pick fruit; little boys pasted labels on boxes and learned to work.

The Seniors had their all-night party here in June, 1954, just as we had rebuilt the house, with the work done between crops.

We had some cattle, drilled a new well in 1956, and wished we hadn't tried strawberries for two years.

In 1958, when Steve finished UCR, he and Rosalee were married, and a year later moved to Davis; Rosie taught in Dixon, and Steve got his Ph.D. in plant pathology.

### The 1960's

New directions! Hard-rock drilling replaced dug wells, and we put in five wells. Peaches were taken out, and though we had grapes (now on U-pick), cattle and blackeyes, we added Indian corn, ornamental gourds and hardshell gourds. We hit the boom in inedibles and could splurge some. A camper vacation in Hawaii was delightful.

The incredible experience was the 52 inches of rain in '68-69 for a 60 year flood which did terrific damage; it took months of work to restore the dam.

Happily, Lisa was born in 1963 and Mike in 1966. What a joy they've been. Delta was always ready to fly these grandparents!

During these years we were increasingly active in church, Farm Bureau, Soil Conservation, Hospital Auxiliary and social activities.

### The 1970's

We sold the citrus and canyon acreage and gave up on the delicious Alexandria muscats because of Pierce's disease and the thieving from wild animals. We miss the fruit and the U-pickers.

We did hardshell gourds wholesale and retail and shipped 22 to 40 foot containers to Hawaii. We met wonderful young people and artists and hated semi-retiring in 1977, but we wanted more freedom to travel.

There was a dreadful fire storm in 1975. Then 100-year floods, with 132 inches of rain in '78 and '80, with widespread damage. Sadly, the old dam is full of sand and debris from the hills and developments.

### The 1980's

We're in our 70's and happy. Pleasures so far: the oomph to handle "the 96" with some cattle and much gardening; extra grandparenting, trips, Felix has a plaque for 28 years of volunteer Soil Conservation work, and one for Pioneer of the Year from Fallbrook Historical Society.

The Lord has richly blessed us each day, and we're thankful. The land remains unspoiled and essentially unchanged today from the land that James Garnsey and Harry Day homesteaded 100 years ago.