

## James Garnsey's house across from Cottonwood Creek

In the 1980s, Felix Garnsey, our neighbor, kindly offered to take Tom and Suki Glenn on a trip up the Tenaja Truck Trail in his trusty Scout jeep. During our journey, he pointed out the foundation of a house that had once belonged to his grandfather, James Garnsey. James, who had retired to De Luz to raise bees, previously resided in Santa Ana, where he owned a brickyard that played a crucial role in constructing the city. To fuel his brickyard, he hauled firewood from De Luz via train. His brickyard had a kiln to turn the De Luz oak trees into charcoal.

While recently hiking up the Tenaja, we encountered the remains of James Garnsey's house. The presence of Vinca plants and yellow sour grass blossoms, which are not native to the area, were growing along the road and gave away the presence of the old homestead. The foundation included a rock and mortar wall with steps leading to the top, and an enclosed area housing a large tank and a smaller barrel. In the enclosure there was also a bathtub and two standpipes of different sizes.



Upon sharing our discoveries with a long time resident, Greg Cunningham, we learned of two individuals, Langston and Fischer, who had fixed up the house to live in while their houses were being built. Sadly, the house, along with thousands of acres of land in De Luz, was destroyed by a devastating wildfire in 1975. The house stood across the road and upstream from Frog Pond, a lake constructed by Felix Garnsey for the purpose of irrigating downstream crops. In the late seventies Frog Pond was filled in by silt after a series of large storms.

Along the west side of the Tenaja Truck Trail there are remnants of an aqueduct made from cement pipes. Most likely this had water flowing from Frog Pond to another still existing reservoir just above fields planted farther down on the old Garnsey property. Felix was well known as an expert engineer and very concerned about soil conservation. His water projects are impressive.

