



The San Diego Union/Barry Fitzsimmons

Dennis Durling looks over his family's wholesale citrus nursery from a rock high above DeLuz.

## Outback: Despite map, DeLuz is there

Continued from B-1

who got sick on the way," said Mary Ann Kiel, who sold her first piece of DeLuz property (40 acres) for Fallbrook's Landmark Wayman Co. 20 years ago.

"Some people go around a few of those curves and pretty soon they say, 'I have gone far enough,' and I have to drive them back," Kiel said. "DeLuz is just too much country for some people."

For others, it is just what the doctor ordered.

Mae and Jack Craven are relative newcomers to DeLuz. He is a pharmacist in Fallbrook.

"Jack may have a hectic day at work," Mae Craven said, "but once he hits the road all of the tension seems to dissipate, and when he gets home he's relaxed."

Relaxation comes easy in DeLuz. Someone said once he went to DeLuz and left with the feeling of "peace in my heart." For the most part, the living is easy. Always has been.

It once was part of the huge Santa Margarita las Flores Rancho of Pio and Andreas Pico, and got its name, romantics like to think, because it is the canyon Of Light: DeLuz.

Perhaps closer to the fact can be found in the "California Gazetteer" (American Historical Publications Inc.), which reported the community was named for an early settler, a Mr. Luce, an Englishman who maintained livestock at his *corral de Luce*, which local dialect eventually corrupted to DeLuz.

The Luce house is gone, but a building opened as a boarding house in 1830 by Lemon Judson from Vermont still stands. Judson operated Judson's Warm Mineral Springs there and claimed to cure things like catarrh, which people in DeLuz don't complain much about anymore; probably something in the water.

Theodora Sophia Louisa Garnsey (call her Teddy) has lived in DeLuz 53 years; her husband, Felix, more than 70 years. They have raised gourds, grapes, peaches, olives, all irrigated from abundant springs on their bottom land.

Water can be as much a menace as a blessing in DeLuz. The Garnseys and others in the lowlands were cut off for three weeks by the



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Felix and "Teddy" Garnsey have lived in DeLuz, population 250, for a combined 123 years.

big flood in 1978.

However, as long as it knows its place, water serves the people of DeLuz's bottom land quite nicely.

Eleanor and Bob Durling, just down the road from the Garnseys, plant 6,000 citrus trees a year in their wholesale nursery, potting them in five- and 15-gallon cans for sale at retail nurseries throughout Southern California.

"There is good water here," Eleanor Durling said. The Durlings have farmed their DeLuz land since 1972 "when we got shoved out of Whittier and Orange County," Eleanor Durling said of the seambursting commercial and residential development in those areas.

There has been some shoving-out in DeLuz, too, but for just the opposite reason.

The post office was closed in 1955 in an economy move. The 5-by-7-foot clapboard structure looks like a child's playhouse. It reportedly was the nation's smallest post office, kept small on purpose so it could be moved to the property of the postmaster as that job changed

hands.

Now it has been given a paint job and as a museum piece shares the old school ground with the ecology center that used to be the DeLuz School.

The one-room schoolhouse was built in 1927 and closed in 1968 because it was judged unsafe in earthquakes. The volunteer fire department was disbanded in 1982 because it had too little to do.

The state Division of Forestry now handles brush fires in DeLuz. Residents are responsible for their own buildings.

Felix Garnsey saw his first fire in DeLuz when he was 8, and through boy's eyes "it seemed like the whole canyon was burning." Garnsey said fire in the backcountry is a continuing worry to DeLuz residents.

"We could join the Fallbrook fire district," he said, "but that would cost \$100,000 and we wouldn't even get a fire station. They'd have to come out from town when there was a fire."

The Garnseys seem resigned to

continue fending for themselves. They have no immediate plans to leave what they call "the canyon."

"Me in a condominium?" Teddy Garnsey asked scornfully when that move was suggested. Her husband, however, does not shut the door to the possibility.

"The closer I get to 100," said Felix Garnsey, 77, "the more I think I might want to move off the place. But I'm not close enough yet."

Dust hangs in the bright sunshine when a car stops near the Garnseys. It is where the pavement ends, and the county has a sign there dismissing all responsibility for its maintenance.

Ihor Miro lives on the paved part, not too far from there, but he wants to move. He has a 3,100-square-foot home on 14 acres of land.

"It is most beautiful here," Miro said, "but our place is too big and now the drive to work seems too far."

Miro has lived in DeLuz since 1974. He manages an appliance store in Escondido, a 70-mile round-trip he makes every day, and every day, he said, it seems to get longer and longer.

Barbara and Milton Loy live in DeLuz Heights, a development of 100 homes on the hills served by the DeLuz Heights Municipal Water District, which pulls in aqueduct water to irrigate the many avocado groves there.

Barbara Loy, 59, spent her professional life working as a secretary and in technical publications at Hughes Aircraft Co., three miles from Los Angeles International Airport. Milton Loy, 72, is a retired Los Angeles police sergeant. They married 3½ years ago and moved to long-held Loy family land in DeLuz.

"He worried about the isolation for me here," Barbara Loy said of her husband, "after all those years in the city. He worried that it would be too much for me, but I just love DeLuz."

"Actually, I am amazed at myself that I don't miss all of the action I was used to for so many years in the city. But I hear things here I never heard before."