

De Luz Farmers Raise Bumper Crop Of Peace, Quiet And Contentment

(Continued from B-1)

Luz had dreams of being the New World's Bordeaux or Burgundy — Garnsey's wife Freddy nodded.

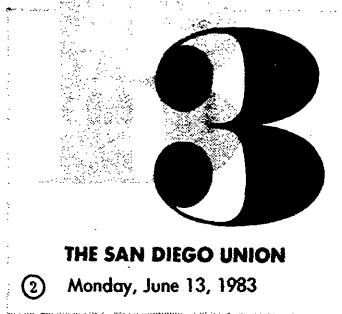
"In the valley there is no country club," she said. "No golf course. No shopping mall. No all-night nothing. This is the place to stay by yourself."

Garnsey, now that the squirrel was gone and contentment was as high as an elephant's eye, raised his hands to heaven. His blue jeans bore no boutique fading but were decorated by pancake-sized polka dots of wet dirt. This is a man who has wrestled with nature for three generations — no motorized vehicle came to these acres until 1926, and then it was a Model A Ford fitted with a homemade back box to become a one-dog-sized pickup.

But Garnsey is the maker and keeper of books of wildflower photographs and with Freddy produced a Stephen who is their joy and now a man sent by the U.S. Department of Agriculture around the world to teach the globe to grow things better so folks in less contented valleys will not starve.

Garnsey eyed the hills around. The hills are green but with rocks sprouting like acne. The couple have Mr. Blandings-Builds-His-Dreamhouse white-walled and red tile-roofed houses erected in times of lesser mortgage rates and with avocado groves — once so profitable, but this season much in the red due to over-production.

"They build up there because the land is cheaper," Garnsey said. Down here on the floor of the valley, he said, he sold 40 acres five years ago for \$3,500 an acre. "Last year the



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same land sold for \$14,000 an acre," he said.

Garnsey's acreage looks like the happily-ever-after end of an American dream. And it might be so. There is a four-wheel-drive Scout car, a camper and — the reward of the year the Garnseys netted \$100,000 on gourds alone — a Mercedes 300.

Freddy said the camper "is necessary because we like to buzz about. We're going to Switzerland this year. The Scout's necessary because it's a long way to market. And the Mercedes? Well, a couple needs a social vehicle."

Her husband dug with a boot — the Sears or Montgomery Ward leather-and-steel work model and no whirly stitching and python skin — two inches deep through dry gray dirt and hit the wet brown earth that brought his grandfathers into the valley.

"And we've always prized the people. My neighbor over there," said Garnsey, gesturing south a mile or so, "well, he's one of my best friends. Real close friend. So close that, well, he's had us over to dinner at least

twice in the past five years."

Garnsey seemed overcome by the neighborliness of it all.

He was not being sarcastic or New Yorker magazine smart or untrue. Garnsey was showing life as it is in the Valley of De Luz.

A half hour closer to San Diego, through Fallbrook and down Highway 15, there is the sort of life as seen at Lawrence Welk's village, with golf course and shops such as one selling Christmas decor as remembered from 1888 and a life-size statue of Welk and a Champagne Boulevard without so much as a cigarette wrapper marring its verges.

The road from Fallbrook to the valley differs. Here there are beer cans, leftovers of Memorial Day visits by coastal folk and other alien beings. The pavement itself is more darned than any sock. Here are rural mailboxes of such vintage that some have no names on them — and need none. More than one box has bullet holes, a badge of the rural life led by boys allowed the use of a pickup and a 22.

In the valley, says Garnsey, the first cash crop a century ago was wood for the stoves of San Diego and Los Angeles. They tried grapes, but "it all was just a mess by the time the horse-drawn wagons got it to market." There was not enough well water for citrus. "And there wasn't enough water to make the Fallbrook banks smile," Garnsey said.

When he reached young manhood, his father needed a \$1,500 loan. But the Fallbrook banker explained what father knew. North of the Santa Margarita, wells produced too little water because blue granite forma-



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Life sits well with Freddy and Felix Garnsey in peaceful and prosperous De Luz Valley.

tions blocked deep-well drilling. Now, south of the river, just how much money do you want and here's where you sign.

"Well, the banker knew my mama and my papa and my grandfather and grandma and here I was, the next generation north of the river, in the shallow-well country," Garnsey recalled. "But he had seen me grow and did the unbankerly thing and let me have the \$1,500."

Later, as drilling became more sophisticated, Garnsey and his neighbors learned how to drill through blue granite. Up came water enough for peaches and bankers.

"Oh, the rich folks from Orange County, they may come and build on the hills — but down here, on the valley floor, life goes on as before." Freddy and Felix nodded at each other.

"Like the time Mr. Meyer, the

shoemaker, and old Charlie Dicey decided to give another of their community parties and Mr. Meyer would barbecue the turkey if Charlie provided the bird. So, unknownst to Mr. Meyer, Charlie stole one of Mr. Meyer's turkeys that night and next morning presented it to Mr. Meyer, who barbecued it and everyone ate it and the whole valley has talked since then about Mr. Meyer roasting what he didn't know was his own turkey."

Garnsey grinned at the memory. When did it happen?

"Oh," said Garnsey. "Before I was born."

And then, he said, there was the time the valley was divided over what to do about the schoolhouse; "something or other; what it was, no one remembers — but how it was, we all remember."

Garnsey said, "Well, a majority took one side and they were going to

win the vote. So the other side, the minority, they just kept their mouths shut and did no campaigning or orating or anything. So by voting day, the majority knew it was winning and some of them didn't even bother to show up to vote.

"So the minority waited until late afternoon, just before the poll closed. And only then did they vote, swarm in and voted to a man. They won."

Garnsey laughed. "The majority found out they'd lost and were so mad that a lot of them got on their horses and rode the 70 miles south to San Diego to get the county officials to undo the vote.

"Well, San Diego didn't upset the vote. After all, De Luz-to-San Diego is a lot farther away than Mexico." He grinned. "We do have a grand life in the valley."

And when did the vote happen? "Before I was born," Garnsey said.