

# Interviews and photos of Dick Wright and relatives

On April 19, 2024, local historians Tom and Suki Glenn conducted an in-depth interview with long-time De Luz resident, Dick Wright. The interview, recorded as multiple audio files (m4a), provides a rich tapestry of stories and anecdotes about the community.



Dick Wright 2024



Paul Chaplin Burdick  
Dick Wright's Grandfather



Michael Lorenzo Light  
Dick Wright's Great Grandfather

While some information overlaps across the recordings, each interview offers unique perspectives and tangents that delve into various aspects of De Luz's history.

## 1. Wright 4-19 newer map.m4a

The first interview with Dick Wright delves into the history of Fallbrook, including a detailed discussion of his hand-drawn map featuring his Uncle Buck's residence and the Gripe beekeeping operation. Wright shares personal family history, recalling the ruined train tracks, the historic Corego adobe, and the area's abundant steelhead trout. He also describes a round house at the 6-mile marker, a devastating house fire in 1985, and his property search that ultimately led to the purchase of land on De Luz Murrieta Road. The interview concludes with vivid descriptions of the wildlife that once inhabited the area.

## 2. Wright 4-19 oaks railroad.m4a

Wright continues by exploring the unique characteristics of the area's oak trees, including their hybridization and comparison to deciduous oaks found in Colorado. He further elaborates on the map detailed on page 3, sharing personal anecdotes about his early life. Having grown up visiting the area from Long Beach since the age of four, he developed a deep connection to the land. Wright's entrepreneurial spirit led him to own a nursery in Los Alamitos, where he sold plants through mail order before acquiring a two-acre property on De Luz Road.

## 3. Wright 4-19 road nursery vfdept.m4a

Dick Wright was a lifelong Southern Californian with deep roots in the region. A native of Long Beach, his father was a founding member of the prestigious Long Beach Cactus Club. Exhibiting entrepreneurial flair from a young age, Wright saved his allowance to purchase a guinea pig. By his teens, his business acumen was evident as he bred and sold over 300 guinea pigs. Demonstrating remarkable foresight, he transformed guinea pig manure into a valuable resource, using it to cultivate a diverse plant collection sourced from around the globe. Together with his wife, Ruth, Wright operated a thriving nursery at the six-mile mark on De Luz Rd, until it was destroyed by fire. A dedicated community member, he answered the call to serve as a volunteer firefighter with the De Luz Volunteer Fire Department at the impressive age of 72.

On July 2, 2024 we returned to clarify some of the information from the April 19th interviews.

### **1. Interview titled “Dick Wright map.m4a.”**

Dick Wright, a longtime De Luz resident, offers a captivating glimpse into the region’s past through a recent interview. Wright’s grandfather, Paul Chaplan Burdick, owned an expansive 80-acre parcel bordering Eli Creek, just north of the town of Fallbrook. On a hand-drawn map, Wright points out the location of his Uncle Buck’s house, a central figure in the family’s history. The creek served as a playground for Wright and his brother, who followed its course to the confluence with Santa Margarita River. Their adventures extended to the nearby, mutilated railroad tracks, remnants of a bygone era.

Deeper into the interview, Wright unveils detailed maps that bring the past to life. The cabin, the Coregos, an adobe structure, and a dairy with a tunnel beneath the road are marked. These landmarks, along with the dairy featured on a separate map, provide a vivid portrait of the family’s agricultural endeavors. Uncle Buck, whose full name is Paul Dwayne Burdick, made daily treks from his home to milk the cows. Wright’s narrative is punctuated by tales of other family members and the profound impact of a devastating fire in 1901. The interview concludes with a poignant account of the family’s land being claimed by eminent domain for water district purposes.

Dick Wright’s firsthand accounts and detailed maps offer an invaluable window into the history of Eli Creek and the surrounding area. His legacy as a storyteller ensures that the stories of his family and their connection to the land will continue to inspire and inform future generations.

### **2. Interview titled “Wright Family History.m4a.”**

Dick Wright was born Clarence Wright in Oxnard, California, his grandfather, Paul Chaplin Burdick, a native of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, played a pivotal role in shaping Wright’s destiny.

Wright’s deep connection to the land is evident in his detailed knowledge of the area surrounding Eli Creek. Armed with a 1927 topographical map, he vividly recounts the region’s transformation over time. The once-thriving train station near De Luz Road and Sandia Creek, now a relic of the past, serves as a poignant reminder of the area’s early development.

A skilled storyteller, Wright shares tales of his childhood spent in a cabin on the property, a life marked by self-sufficiency. He raised chickens, relied on a hand-dug well, and ingeniously constructed a reservoir that is filled by homemade hydraulic pump.

Tragedy struck in 1949 when a devastating fire, fueled by the nearby Fallbrook dump, consumed the cabin and much of the property. Despite this setback, Wright’s resilience shone through. He relocated to Oceanside, married Ruthie at the age of 21, and continued to be drawn to the land.

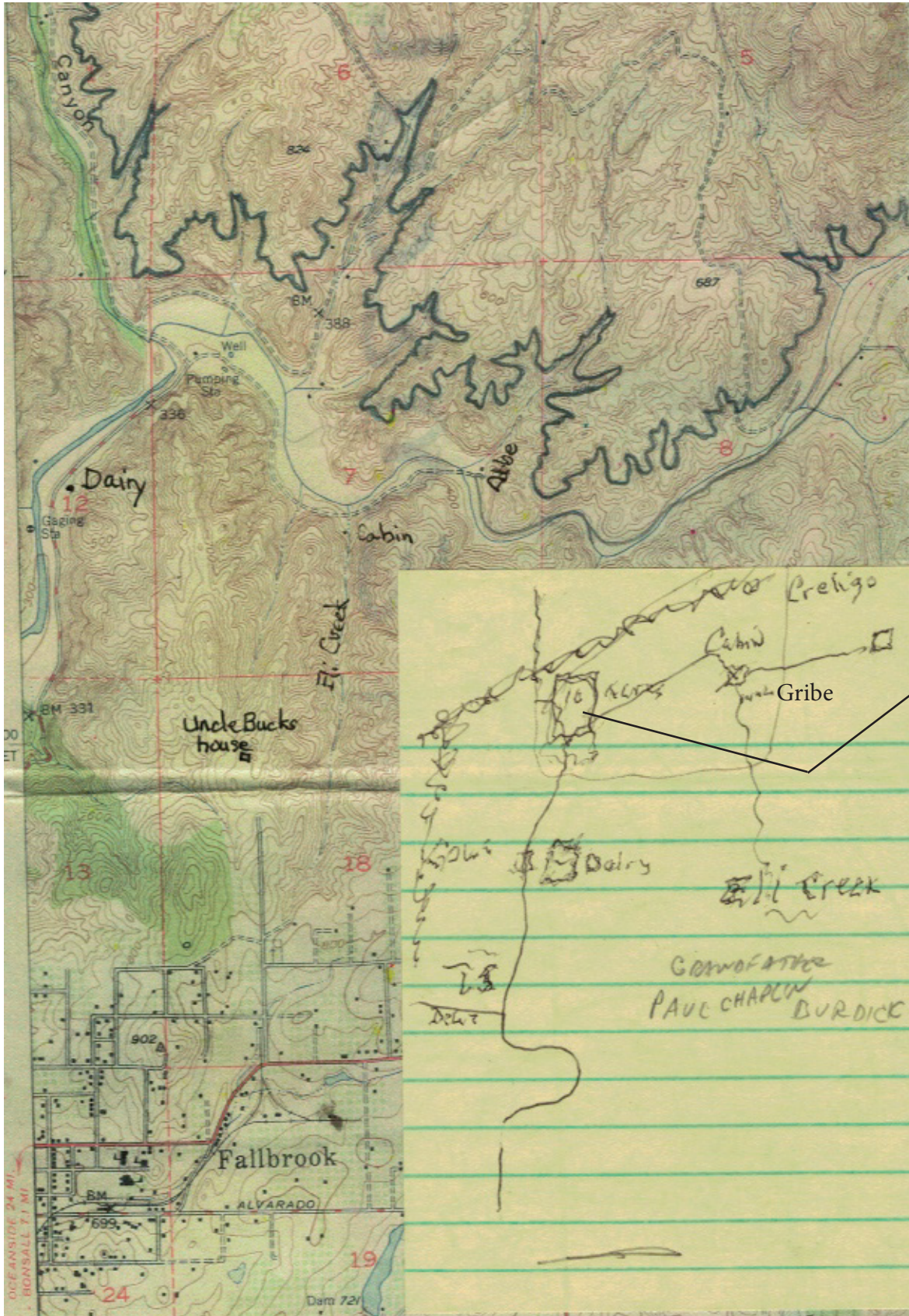
Wright’s narratives are peppered with vivid descriptions of local characters and places. Gribes, a beekeeper, and the old road washed out by the Santa Margarita River are just a few of the colorful details that bring the past to life. His account of the dairy operation, complete with a tunnel for the cows to cross beneath the road, offers a glimpse into the agricultural challenges and ingenuity of the time.

The story of the Fallbrook Water District’s attempt to acquire 70 acres for a dam project underscores the complexities of land ownership and water rights in the region. Wright’s determination to protect his property is a testament to his enduring connection to the land.

Dick Wright’s life is a living archive of De Luz history. His stories, combined with the detailed maps, offer an invaluable resource for understanding the region’s evolution. Through his eyes, we witness the transformation of a wilderness into a thriving community.



Topographical map from 1927



Hand drawn map by Dick Wright.

The 10 acres is the property Grandpa Burdick sold off that Dick discusses in two interviews on July 2, 2024, titled "Dick Wright map.m4a and Wright Family History.m4a" Gribe is the bee-keeper discussed in the interview.



Map of Fallbrook and the area discussed in the interviews above

