

# Interviews with Gale Cunningham

On June 24, 2022, local historians Tom and Suki Glenn conducted an in-depth interview with long-time De Luz resident, Gale and Greg Cunningham. The interview, recorded as multiple audio files (m4a), provides a rich tapestry of stories and anecdotes about the community.

## 1. Gale Cunningham.m4a. First Interview

Gale names several residents who moved out in the 1970's: Peggy and Don Durling, the Fischers, and the Rocks, the Welburns, and the Cunningham's all moved out the same summer. We had a big picnic at the school. We had the picnic for several years. Then it became the high land and the low land.



Then they (the people in the De Luz Heights) wanted to do their own picnic. They had a lake up there. Greg talks about he doesn't know how they were able to get all the subdivisions in the Height.

Greg tells about a story Edith told him about family that lived near the back gate where the eucalyptus trees are on De Luz Road, that a little girl is buried there. She got bit by a rattlesnake. The grave was destroyed when the road was widened. She died because the parents didn't believe in going to a doctor.

Ella Thorpe was a biology teacher from Los Angeles and was washed down the river in a flood. He had the Stoskopf place. They debate about the story of how he drowned. Gales tells about how she was afraid to cross the flooding creek with Greg in the car. There are several stories about crossing the creek on the swinging bridge behind the hotel.

She gives me a folder with news clippings about setting up the De Luz Ecology Center.

The very first school was on the Day property.



The second school was on the Bleeker property near a palm tree and giant oak tree.



Mrs. Dinsen story.

Gale tells stories about teaching at the school and about several teachers that taught at the school.

The quiet of De Luz on Sundays.

Gale asks me where I lived before I came to De Luz and I discuss living in Laguna canyon and teaching at the Farm School. Then about how Tom and I met with the bees.

Greg talks about Edith and Art, he is famous for his corned beef he made in a crock.

How to be self sufficient.

Gale Cunningham teaching at De Luz Ecology

Peach orchard

Discussion about the new well on our property. The original hand dug well that Greg and Danielle fix.

De Luz Creek discussion and the decline of indigenous trees.

Gale's discussion about teaching at the De Luz School when the road flooded, took out the road and she taught all the children including teenagers and some problems she had with them.



## 2. Gale Cunningham2.m4a. Second Interview

The interview starts with a discussion looking at a map about Don Day and whether he was one of the original Days' that are buried a the cemetery. (Upon further research we found out that he was not related. His property is at the hairpin turn on De Luz Road.

He is the Don Day on the picnic map, first page. He is not related to the Day's buried a the cemetery.)

Greg brings up that one of the grandfathers committed suicide at the reservoir. It could be Gramp Day. (A newspaper article states that he did drown but it was accidental (see article below, see page 4). Gramp Day is buried at the cemetery and he had the unique gravestone that we believe he made himself.

Discussion of the different property owners for Butler ranch and Fern Creek, Camp Retreat, Rock's property, Schaver (relatives of the Cunningham's, the gold miner Kuhn's, questions about how he died and the story of his car.)

Barbara Bisbee Bradford story about the Kuhn's mine.

Shaver owned different properties. One piece was bought from the Garnsey's (became



### **BLAST, FIRE KILL ELDERLY COUNTY MAN**

A 73-year-old man died yesterday morning in a gasoline explosion and fire at his residence in an isolated area of northern San Diego County.

He was identified by the coroner's office as John Kuhn's, who lived alone in a small rock house in the De Luz area north of Fallbrook.

Sheriff's deputies said Kuhn's was found burned to death just outside his residence after the explosion and fire, apparently caused when he attempted to light a wood stove with the gasoline.

Woosley's). Aunt Ida had property near Camp Retreat. The store at the Camp Retreat served the illegal workers in De Luz because they couldn't go to town to shop. The store carried rice and beans, band-aids, candy for the kids, other sundries, and beer. It was a place where the workers could gather and socialize. Budweiser delivered beer to the store and it was the only place in the county where they delivered.

Gale talks about workers from Mexico who lived on a shack at the bottom of the hill near her.

One store owner, Mr. Port in town sold clothes to the workers in De Luz. Everybody out here bought things for their workers. Scott Gorden lent me the public school attendance records for the De Luz School. Discussion of the different school districts out here: De Luz, Tenaja, and Recluse. Since this recording we have found out that the Recluse District was up the Tenaja Truck Trail. Also I had the census records for this area. On the Deluzhistory.com website see De Luz School - Ecology and De Luz Public School Register to see the attendance records. Under First Settlers there is the Timeline of De Luz, Census, and 1976 Local Directory to see who was in De Luz through the years.

The cabin that used to be across the river from Pendleton (where the eucalyptus trees are today) belonged to Ron Hammerton's grandfather. Ron's mother, Norita (Becky) Dugger, went to the De Luz School in 1944.



Norita Dugger and sister

Rock house on Kuhn's property rebuilt by Wes Doriffi

Discussion about who owns the Law property, at the corner of Calle Roxanne and De Luz Road and they had the property for three or four generations.

Richard Cline's grandfather had the Clines' property and they had mules or miniature horses. Mathews property discussion.

Discussion about Indians and bears. Chris Evens told the story about the bears.

More about the Hammertons.

Edith's story about the oak trees and the Luseño Indians.

Discussion of how the De Luz homesteaders were able to procure their homesteads.

According to the Southern California Rancher, July 1951, "Probably by accident, since no accurate surveys were made by the settlers, the Spaniards owning these three nearby ranchos failed to claim the best lands of the whole area - a large tract of extending north of San Luis Rey River to the present Riverside county line, and embracing the highly valuable and fertile Fallbrook district, Rainbow, and De Luz. It was sort of a wedge between the three



ranchos, or in Spanish “desecho” or the part leftover. But the Fallbrook-Rainbow-De Luz district was open at the time of the American occupation of California so was settled by homesteaders, now and then a squatter or claim jumper.

Gales parents were married on Camp Pendleton.

Discussion of Edith’s ashes being spread. Edith Mitchell’s granddaughter, Carol came to help with it.

Gale talks about Stella Shaver being one of Edith’s best friends would smoke under the quince tree and other stories. And what a great lady Edith was.

The Durling’s would know about the wells in the area.

A Halloween memory from Gale Cunningham

“On Halloween we would load all the kids (in costume) in a pick up truck and go to the Garnsey’s. Teddy would make apple cider and cookies.

Felix had games for the kids. Bobbing for apples was a favorite.

I think the Garnseys looked forward to it as much as the kids.

Edith and Art Mitchell would usually stop by.

Riding in the back of a pickup and bobbing for apples....different times.”

Gale

