

My name is Dewey Gifford, and I was a farmer and rancher in Fruita from 1928 until 1969. For much of that time, we had no running water, electricity, or telephone. There was little cash to be had from farming, so I had to be away when I was young. I worked on the state roads, herded sheep, and ran cattle in the South Desert. But the most pleasant memories I have were those of family, farming and friends here in Fruita. Until 1940, we used all teams and horse-drawn implements, mostly for growing and cutting alfalfa for animal feed. The orchards of course, took a lot of work, but we had beautiful fruit: apricots, peaches, pears, apples, plums and cherries. We trucked a lot of it out of Fruita for cash sale or traded for grain with other farmers near Loa and Lyman. All my children were raised here, and attended the one-room school. Life wasn't much different from 1880, when pioneers first settled here. You had to be very self-sufficient to make it. Most everybody here had been raised as Latter Day Saints, but some weren't very active. We held Sunday School over in the schoolhouse. The eight or so families here got along pretty good, considering the isolation. Oh, we didn't agree on everything; I remember Cass Mulford supported Hoover while I was a Roosevelt man, myself. Both men and women worked hard here, but we took time to play. Our family enjoyed high country hunts and fishing. The women quilted. We read a lot in the winter and enjoyed baseball in the summer. We saw few travelers here until after 1937, when the park came. Most were cattlemen and sheep herders. There were huge herds of sheep trailing through Fruita in those days. For me, Fruita was paradise. I will never forget it.