

Rexall Drugstore in Chula Vista



This photo from 1930 shows the Rexall drug store on Third Avenue next to the Melville building that was on the corner of F Street. The 3-arch Spanish-style roof was built in 1923. It was the oldest in town, began Sept. 15, 1910 by Wigginton Bros, then bought by H. D. DeForest Smith 1917 and became a Rexall in 1923. Jimmie Zurcher took over in 1930, and was his death in 1969.

1910 - Benj. F. Wigginton came to Chula Vista in 1910 and went into business with his brother James to open the first drug store in town (later became Rexall). (Chula Vista Star Prosperity Edition, Dec. 18, 1925.)

1912 - Rexall Drug Store full page ad, James. E. Zurcher, owner, "The Original Rexall Drug Store, Chula Vista. . . is the city's oldest drug store." (Chula Vista Star, July 9, 1948.)

1912/10/01 - Druggist's Permit issued to Benj. F and Jas. W. Wigginton, Druggists of Chula Vista, CA, permitting said persons to keep for sale and sell into liquors under the provisions of Ordinance #11. (Minutes of the Board of Trustees, Oct. 1, 1912.)

1915 - DeForrest Smith was born 1870 in Connecticut, at age 20 became a druggist, married in 1901, came to Chula Vista in 1915 because his wife's parents were in San Diego. He retired from drug business 1937, is member of OPA ration board, CV Planning Commission, nickname "Zipper" (Chula Vista Star, Friday, Dec. 19, 1945)

1915/09/07 - Application of H. DeForrest Smith for druggist's permit was approved. (City Council Minutes, Minutes of the Board of Trustees, Chula Vista, California.)

1919 - The James Byers family consisted of six girls and one boy. Daughter Violet Marvin Byers (1900-1989) worked in the drug store owned by Mr. and Mrs. DeForest Smith. She won a Nash automobile for being the most productive clerk in the Rexall Drug Stores. She married Isaac Chutor who retired after many years at the Post Office. (Family, Friends, and Homes, 1991, p. 35.)

1919/08/15 - H. DeForrest Smith has been very busy departmentalizing his drug store which adds very much to the looks of the store. (Chula Vista Star, August 15, 1932.)

1919/09/05 - Alma Chambers has replaced Miss Marvin Byers in Smith drug store who hope to become a U. S. govt stenographer. (Chula Vista Star, Sept. 5, 1932.)

1919/11/03 - Miss Byers back working at Smith Drug Store, Miss Chambers found work too confining. (Chula Vista Star, Nov. 4, 1932.)

1919/11/21- The one cent sale at Smith Drug store was a complete success, doubling the amount taken in last year. (Chula Vista Star, Nov. 25, 1932.)

1920 - Smith Drug Store listed at 311 Third av. (City Directory, 1920.)

1920/02/06 - Rexall 30th birthday sale, located at 307 Third av. (Chula Vista Star, 1933/02/03)

1920/02/20 - The Bliss business block, occupied by the Smith Drug Store and W. H. Peters grocery was bought by Pete Popievallo for \$5000 and he will enl bldg. [this is the bldg with notch in roof] (Chula Vista Star, Feb. 16, 1940.)

1920/04/16 - One-Cent sale last week at Smith's Drug Store. (Chula Vista Star, Apr. 21, 1933.)

1920/08/19 - Mary Kennedy was at one time assistant at Smith Drug Store. (Chula Vista Star, Aug. 11, 1933.)

1920/09/03 - Mr. Smith of Smith's Drug Store says that Rexall stores are taking a straw vote for president, 4 yrs ago 9 million votes in 9 days predicted Wils election. The ballot box is in Smith's store. (Chula Vista Star, Sept. 8, 1933.)



picture of Smith's new Rexall drug store (Chula Vista Star, Dec. 18, 1925).

1923/11/09 - The new Smith drug store bldg to open in Dec., the store room he now occupies has been leased to the jeweler Mr. Truax and Miss Aganette H her hem stitching and fancy work and millinery dept. (Chula Vista Star, Nov. 12, 1943.)

1925 - Rexall Drug Store is owned by H. DeForrest Smith, who came to Chula Vista in 1915, and he put up the present building 2 yrs ago [in 1923]. Of the Rexalls in the country, only 65 Ace stores had higher sales than Smith. He is the local distributor of Kennedy radio sets, "the Royalty of Radio." (Chula Vis Prosperity Edition, Dec. 18, 1925.)

1927 - James Edward "Jimmie" Zurcher was born in Ohio in 1910. His father, Charles L. Zurcher, came to CV 1916 and worked as clerk at Peters Feed Store, lived at 350 Church Avenue, died in 1952 at age 67. Jimmie began work at H. DeForest Smith's drugstore at age 17 in summer of 1927. That drugstore was the oldest in town, began Sept. 15, 1910 by Wigginton Bros, then bought by H. D. DeForest Smith 1917 and became a Rexall in 1923. Jimmie took over in 1930 when Smith retired. But Jimmie was laid low with polio, slowly regained his health and resumed duties in the drugstore on crutches in 1937 when he officially bought the drugstore and became its sole owner. Jimmie emphasized advertising, added a cosmetics section, lengthened the fountain, remodeled in 1938, and by 1945 Zurcher's Rexall drugstore was 1st in state and 2nd in nation in sales volume. His chief hobby was deep-sea fishing, so he began the annual free fish fry at his drugstore from the year's first marlin caught serving up to 240 customers. He was one of the 10 charter members in 1936 of the Chula Vista Sportfishing Club that owned and operated its own boat, the Cee Vee. He and his wife Lois had twins, Jimmie Jr. and Jeanette, born in 1934. He began a regular Reel and Gun column in the weekly Star newspaper in 1937, and was a founder of the South Bay Pistol and Revolver Club in 1938, only club south of LA with its own range paid by members, located one mile south of city limits. He was one of the 5 businessmen who formed the Merchants Association in 1937. Zurcher developed a subdivision at Hilltop and E Street in 1950, and built a house in 1951 at 60 E Street, just below the Boltz house at 52 E Street and next to the Ed Cord house at 66 E Street built in 1953. Zurcher also bought a lemon ranch behind Ella B. Allen school. (Star-News, Apr. 23, 1937; Sept. 22, 1939; Sept. 26, 1941; June 29, 1945; Sept. 20, 1946; Mar. 2, 1950; Jan. 10, 1952. Schnepf, interview July 31, 2010. Wolfe Vert. File, San

Diego Historical Society.)

1930 - Jimmie Zurcher gets high tribute in 1946 Rexall magazine. Jimmie began work at H. DeForest Smith drug store at age 17 in summer of 1927. He took over in 1930 when Smith retired. But Jimmie was laid low with polio, slowly regained his health and resumed duties in the drug store on crutches in 1937. Jimmie emphasized advertising and sales rose from \$35,000 in 1935 to \$53,000 in 1937. he lengthened the fountain. His chief hobby is deep-sea fishing, so he began the annual free fish fry from the year's first marlin caught. Number served ranges from 163 to 240. He has 12-year old twins, Jimmie Jr. and Jeanette. In 1937 he had 3 salesmen, now has 21 employees. (The Star-News, Sept. 20, 1946.)



Jimmie Zurcher (CV Star, Jan.



View of Third Avenue Businesses and Palm Plaza in 1937. Melville building is in the left side of the photo along with other shops and the post office. Rexall Drug Store, Dutch Lunch Liquor (Chula Vista Library CENT 0077)

1938/05/20 - Zurcher has remodeled drugstore. (Chula Vista Star, May 20, 1938.)

Capacity Business! But It Was 'On The House'.



The "customers" ate in relays at Smith's Drug store fountain Tuesday when Jimmie Zurcher staged his annual free swordfish dinner. Yes, it's annual, Jimmie says, providing he gets a fish each year, and can resist the temptation to hang it on the wall.

Fish dinner at the Rexall Soca Fountain. (Chula Vista Star, Sept. 02, 1938.)

1939/09/01 - photo of Zurcher with swordfish 188 lbs on front of his car . (Chula Vista Star, Sept. 1, 1939.)

1945/06/29 - Zurcher Rexall drug stroe 1st in state and 2nd in nation in sales volume. (Chula Vista Star, June 29, 1945.)

1948/07/09 - Rexall Drug Store full page ad, James. E. Zurcher, owner, "The Original Rexall Drug Store, Chula Vista. . . is the city's oldest drug store." The Rexall in Imperial Beach at 123 Palm Ave near the Life Guard station. La Tienda at Bonita, owned by the Sweetwater Fruit Co. is the third Rexall. (Chula V July 9, 1948.)

1945/07/20 - P. Ferrantelli to build new store building at Third and Center in 1945 and will replace 4 old frame bldgs, occupied by Yellow Cab, shoe repair, Cafe, Robinson's Dept Store. Acc to DeForest Smith who ran the Rexall drug store for 35 yrs, these old bldgs were prob built by the Wigginton brothers, Be who operated Chula Vista's first drug store where Robinson's has been for 27 years. Jim Wigginton later opened a drug store at corner of Third and F where drug store is now located. He later moved to the bldg now occupied by Ross Stationary, which he sold to Mr. Smith in 1915. "Mr. Smith commented that the rooms now occupied by a cafe and shoe store, have in the best of his knowledge always been used for this purpose, although under different management. T a depot in the center of Third Ave, about in front of the four store buildings now scheduled to be removed. However, after the 1916 flood, the railroad replac service to CV with the present track across the Sweetwater near Bay Blvd, then come up F st with the present swing over to old tracks near Third and Parkw city soon afterwards converted the portion of the street south of F st into park purposes and planted those lovely big palms which are now so traditionally C' Chula Vista Star, July 20, 1945.)

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE ENABLES US CONSTANTLY TO IMPROVE OUR SERVICES TO YOU IN THE SOUTH BAY AREA



↑ THEN

THE above picture was taken of the Rexall Drug Store shortly after the first prescription was filled on September 15, 1910. The Wagoner Brothers owned and operated the store until 1917 when H. D. DeForest bought it. In the same year Mr. Smith moved the store to the building which is now known as Ross Stationery store.

↓ IN 1923 a new Rexall Store was built by the owner and operator, Mr. Smith. In 1927 Mr. Smith sold the Rexall to James E. Zurcher, the present owner. That same year Mr. Zurcher completely remodeled the store to better accommodate Chula Vista needs. Not until 1972 was the store changed — when again it was remodeled to its present appearance.

NOW ↓

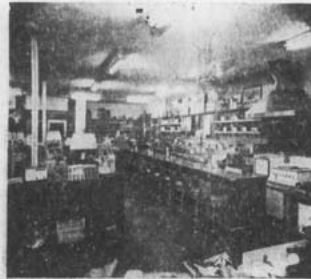


REXALL DRUG, CHULA VISTA

THIS REXALL DRUG STORE has constantly striven to maintain the high standards of service and top quality in merchandise for which Rexall stores are noted. The Chula Vista Rexall carries the largest stock of drug store merchandise in the South Bay area. In addition to having two registered pharmacists on duty seven days a week there is a complete restaurant serving three delicious meals a day, Sundays excepted.



JAMES E. ZURCHER
Owner
Rexall Drug Stores



LA TIENDA IN BONITA

IN Bonita Shopping Center three miles east of Chula Vista it is La Tienda for your drug and sundry needs. Like all stores in small communities La Tienda carries more than the usual merchandise in order to be of greater service to the community — even fishing tackle and camping equipment! The home cooked meals are something to long remember.

GET ACQUAINTED
WITH YOUR LOCAL
REXALL STORE
TODAY

The
Rexall Drug
Stores
JAMES E. ZURCHER
OWNER

307 Third Avenue
CHULA VISTA
Phone: H-3-5331
Hours: 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

LA TIENDA
The Friendly Sundry
Store in BONITA

123 Palm Avenue
IMPERIAL BEACH
Phone: H-3-7194
Hours: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

DEDICATION of the new Chula Vista high school is the result of long years of planning by many far-thinking persons. All progress is the result of planning for the future, and to keep planning ahead of this fast growing South Bay Area is a major project.

It has been our effort to build, remodel, and improve fast enough and constant enough to provide everyone with the most modern, most convenient, best stocked drug stores possible.

By your reception of our efforts in the three stores; Chula Vista, Imperial Beach, and Bonita, you have approved our planning for the future.

Our efforts will be untiring in continuing our planning for the future. We sincerely hope you will continue to make our Rexall Drug Store your Rexall Drug Store in the future as you have done regularly in the past.



REXALL DRUG STORE IN IMPERIAL BEACH

THIS latest of Zurcher drug stores was opened at Imperial Beach in the summer of 1949, and has operated since under the able management of H. F. Carlson, a registered pharmacist. Good food with special menus daily enhance the popularity of this resort drug store. Naturally, a large stock of drugs, sundries and other merchandise is carried at all times.



Rexall Drug Store ad by James Zurcher. (Chula Vista Star, March 2, 1950.)

1953/06/18 - Rexall Drug Store of Zurcher remodeled, prescription dept has doubled in space, more display cases for cosmetic items (Chula Vista Star, Jun 1953.)

1969 - Jimmie Zurcher died.

1973 - Rexall closed its store on Third Avenue.
