

100 Broadway - Notes and Chronology by Steve Schoenherr June 18, 2012

The corner of National and D Street was first occupied by the Idle Hour Cafe at 100 Broadway in 1933 (National Avenue name changed to Broadway in 1955). The restaurant became Bob's Coffee Shop in Oct. 1950. Robert Crowther was a Navy cook in WWII, became a manager of Keith's in National City, bought the Cottage Inn at 88 National in 1948, then sold it to start his coffee shop in 1950. In 1952 Bob opened Bob's Waffle Shop at Broadway and J Street. He then expanded to coffee shops in El Cajon, Calexico, El Centro, and on El Cajon Boulevard. Bob Crowther was a director of the Chamber of Commerce, president of the Lion's Club and Boy's Club and the Downtown Association. Bob's Coffee Shop was a landmark on Broadway until it was sold in 1969 to Richard Agee and became AG's Coffee Shop. In Apr. 1972 it became the Pepper Tree restaurant. In 1989 it became Zorbas Greek Buffet.



Zorbas at 100 Broadway, southwest corner at D Street.

Until 1920, Broadway was only a dirt pathway through the lemon groves of a rural Chula Vista. Prohibition changed all that. The Volstead Act that closed saloons in American Jan. 16, 1920, did not close them in Tijuana. Thousands drove their Model-Ts across the Sweetwater River down Broadway to the "Gate" at the "Line" with Mexico. The growing traffic on Broadway focused attention of Chula Vista's new "Main Street" in the age of the automobile. The first gas station between Mexico and San Diego opened in 1923 on the southeast corner of Broadway and J Street. It was midway between the two population centers, so Edwin and Anna Wilson called it the Midway Service Station. They started with a single pump for Union gasoline, but business was so good they added a second pump. There were other auto service stations in town. Karl Helm and Herb Bryant on F Street repaired cars and tires and sold oil and gas in cans, as did Herb Sprague at his service station on Broadway north of F Street. But the Midway was the first to sell only a major oil company's brand of gas from a roadside

pump. By the end of the decade there were over a dozen gas stations in the city and on Broadway. Broadway became more important with the growth of bus lines. The Sutherland Stage Company began to run its buses on Broadway from San Diego to Ensenada in 1920. It took advantage of the rush to Mexico during Prohibition to gamble and drink. The 27-passenger yellow Sutherland bus, built by Yellow Coach of Chicago, would stop at Palm City, where a short distance west on Palm Avenue was a collection of bars called Whiskey Flats for those who did not want to go all the way to Tijuana. Sutherland added bus stops in Chula Vista at K Street and E Street, picking up more passengers on the "Road to Hell." Across the street from the Sutherland bus station at Broadway and E Street was another new feature on the Boulevard. Ross Conforth came from Indiana in 1924 and bought 20 acres on the west side of National Ave at E Street. Here he built the first auto court in Chula Vista. This was the ancestor of the motels and hotels that later would line Broadway. These early auto camps were primitive, often just tents grouped around an outhouse. By 1929, two more auto courts were built on Broadway. Wilfred Bradley built the Agua Vista Motor Court near D Street where a small commercial center was developing, with a grocery and gas station. The Chula Vista Auto Court was at G Street, where John Odom had a gas station and grocery store. (from Schoenherr, Chula Vista Centennial, Chapter 2)



Odom's gas station and grocery store and auto court at National and G Street ca. 1933

1923/04/20 - National Ave paving ordinance passed (Star, Apr. 9, 1948). The California Construction Company completed paving National Avenue by October 1924, and received payment of \$9607.48 (Minutes of the Board of Trustees, Oct. 23 1924.) Curbs and sidewalks were installed July 1926 between D and E Streets. (Minutes of the Board of Trustees, July 6, 1926.)

1925 - Flamingo Cafe opened at 396 Broadway, next to Odom's Chula Vista Auto Court. It was the first restaurant on National Avenue (Star-News, Feb. 23, 1969, and June 26, 1975.)

1925/04/10 - Shenandoah Tract developed by R. M. Pray and Louise Pray, west of National bet D and Flower (Subdivision Map 1831, filed Apr. 10, 1925, Engineering Department, City of Chula Vista.)

1925/08/14 - W. H. Guptil and R. A. Conforth bought 5 acres lemons at NW corner National and F St, orchard was owned by Griefe estate, "is one of the most desirable pieces for sub-division on the avenue having a frontage on National and F St." They have visions of a business district on the main highway. Conforth has already made extensive investments near corner of E and Natl in the way of an auto camp and oil station. Mr. Guptil has property on F st also. The Service Garage at Natl and E advertised "When you wreck 'em, our tow car will drag you in and fix 'em" (Star Aug. 14, 1925.)

1927 - The southwest corner of National and D Street was empty until the construction of the Shenandoah tract. The grocery of William and Sarah Bowman was listed at 100 National Avenue in the 1927 City Directory.

1929 - Heldenbrand Floyd A (Grace) service sta 100 National av (City Directory)

1930 - Watson & Cunningtham (F A Watson J H Cunningham) gas sta 100 National Av (City Directory)

1933 - Grace C. Hunter (widow of F W Grace) operated a restaurant at 100 National in the 1933 City Directory, and this probably became the Idle Hour Cafe in October.



Idle Hour Cafe from Chula Vista Star Oct. 6, 1933

1933/10/06 - Idle Hour Cafe under new management, National Avenue at D St - "Mr. and Mrs. Jame Guerin have taken over the management of the Idle Hour Cafe at National Avenue and D Street, and will feature a special spaghetti dinner every Saturday. The cafe had been repainted inside and will also be given a coat of paint on the outside and other wise generally improved. Special steak orders, noon lunches and sandwiches will also be served. The new proprietors announce they will handle a popular line of beer on draught and will keep open until 2 o'clock every morning. A small dance floor is being fitted up." (Star, Oct. 6, 1933.)

1934 - Home Service Station (W H Sheckels, G W Thompson) 100 National av (City Directory)

1935 - Perry, Geo W (Lillian) grocer 100 National av (City Directory)

1935 - Brown, Jas C (Essie) gas sta 100 National av (City Directory)

1936 - Lincoln, Frank gas sta 100 National av -- (City Directory)

1940 - Bradley, Waymon (Pauline) gas sta 100 National av (City Directory)



Featuring:
Enchiladas... Tacos... Tamales
AND OTHER MEXICAN DISHES
Also Steaks, Chops and Southern Fried Chicken
BEER — SOFT DRINKS — VISIT OUR DELICATESSEN

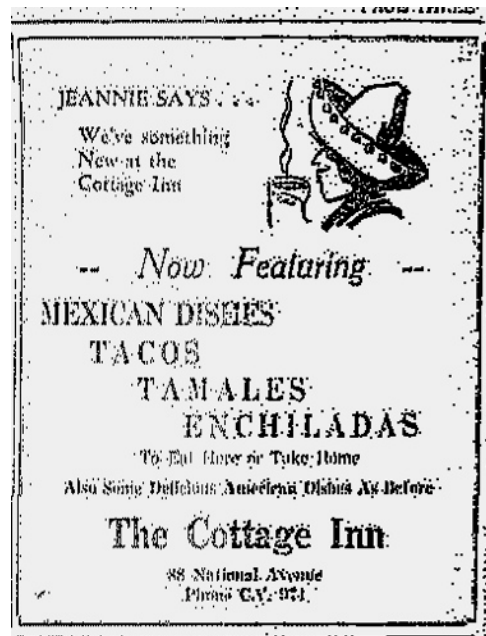
LA FONDA
100 NATIONAL AVENUE

La Fonda from Chula Vista Star June 29, 1945

1945/06/08 - Jose Garcia opened La Fonda cafe in the bldg at 100 National Ave recently built by Stanley Scherer. Garcia is a California native, has worked last year as photographer on the Rohrcrafter weekly publication at Rohr. He operated a cafe in Chicago before that. (Star, June 8, 1945.)

1946/05/10 - Early yesterday morning Warren Murray McCollock, 24, murdered his flancee, Shirley Mosher, 20, and Immedlatly shot and killed himself. This was on National Avenue at Casselman St, one block north of D St., when McCollock drove into the La Fonda Cafe, she jumped from the car to the street asking for help, but he threw her to ground and held her down with his foot while putting two shots in her body, then shot himself. The couple had spent the night driving between NC and Tijuana, he wanted to marry her, when worked at Carnation ice cream plant on El Cajon and he was dishonorably discharged soldier. (Star, May 10, 1946)

1947/02/21 - Kay's Beauty Shop at 53 Madison Ave, corner of Chula Vista St (Star, Feb. 21, 1947.)



Cottage Inn at 88 National from Star 1947/6/29

1947/10/17 - Cottage Inn at 88 National Avenue ad - "Jeannie says . . . We've something new at the Cottage Inn. Now Featuring Mexican dishes, tacos, tamales, enchiladas. Also Same Delicious American Dishes as Before." (Star, Oct. 17, 1947.)

1948/06/25 - Cottage Inn cafe at 88 National Avenue served Mexican food (Star, June 25, 1948.)

1950 - Grey, Walter J Co (W J Grey) printers 88 National (City Directory)

1950 - Kay's Beauty Shop (Mrs K M Carlson) 100 National av (City Directory)

1950 - Crowther, Robt R (Juanita) h359a Roosevelt (City Directory)

1950 - Robert Roland Crowther came to Pasadena, California, in 1935 from Charter Oak, Iowa, where he was born on June 24, 1918. He had been raised on a farm and came west to make his fortune. He went to work as a cook at the first Van de Camps Restaurant where he met Juanita Dorothy Virginia Rehkemper (born July 9, 1915, in St. Louis, Missouri). They were married May 24, 1937, and had two children: Lynn Annette who was born October 1, 1938, in Pasadena, California;

and Gary Dale born September 12, 1945, in Chula Vista. Robert (Bob), Juanita, and Lynn moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee, to manage Bethay's Restaurant in 1942. Bob was drafted into the Navy in 1943 and the family returned to Pasadena. When Bob finished boot camp, he was stationed in San Diego, and they moved to a trailer park at National Avenue (now Broadway and F Street in Chula Vista. Bob was a cook in the Navy, and while in the Navy he worked at Keith's Drive-in, National City, and later became manager. After his discharge in 1945, he continued working for Keith's and helped to open a new Keith's on El Cajon Boulevard. Bob left Keith's to start his own restaurant, purchasing the Cottage Inn at Broadway and D Street in Chula Vista in 1948. He later sold the Cottage Inn and purchased what became Bob's Coffee Shop across the street. He became known for his homemade biscuits and pies and for having the first Mexican restaurant in town. (Family, Friends, and Homes, 1991, pp. 59-60.)

1950/10/26 - Bob Crowther opened Bob's Coffee Shop at 100 National Ave, was formerly in the Cottage Inn located a block north (Star, Oct. 29, 1950.)

NOW OPEN ALL NIGHT



Sunday Plate Special

Roast \$ **1.10**

Prime Rib

OF CHOICE BEEF

Complete Dinner—Soup to Dessert

Includes Vegetables, Potatoes, Our Own Fresh Baked Biscuits, Butter, Homemade Pie or Ice Cream and Coffee.

Growing With Chula Vista



... and now ready to serve you

...a WAFFLE and Chicken Pie Shop
at 679 National Avenue

featuring . . . (hot from our own oven)

INDIVIDUAL CHICKEN PIES
Served with Vegetable, Potatoes and Salad

Made from wire-raised 100% milk fed chickens stewed to a turn and diced into their natural gravy. Fast baked in flakey pastry. Nutritious and satisfying. A delicacy we are confident you will relish.

Chicken Pies **35¢**
To Take Home **70¢**

Try them unbaked in your home freezer. Frozen, they can be kept handy for that quick meal or unexpected guests.

Complete Service -- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

RAY STILES, Manager

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from Star 1951/8/23 and 1952/2/28

1952/02/28 - Bob's opened a Waffle and Chicken Pie Shop at 679 National Ave, (ad) - Ray Stiles is manager of Bob's Waffle and Chicken Pie Shop opening this weekend. Bob's originally opened in CV at 100 National Ave as Bob's Coffee Shop in Nov. 1950. In March 1951 he doubled the capacity of the coffee shop and acquired a meat market in SD, all three places owned by Bob Crowther (Star Feb. 28, 1952.)

1952 - Robert Roland Crowther - In 1952 Bob opened Bob's Waffle Shop at Broadway and J. He then expanded to coffee shops in El Cajon, Calexico, El Centro, and on El Cajon Boulevard. Bob & Juanita moved to Calexico in 1967 where he owned and operated Bob's Ember Glo until 1977. Bob and Juanita then purchased a home on Center Street in Chula Vista just in time to host their

granddaughter Carleen's wedding in their back yard. This home has been the scene of four family weddings: Carleen's, grandson Scott Schmidt (1983), step-granddaughter' Karen Cooper (1984), and son Gary (1984). Bob was active in the Lion's Club of Chula Vista and president in 1965, 1966, and 1967. He was also president of the Boys Club in 1967. The couple celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1987 with their family and friends. Juanita and her children liked to go camping at Green Valley Falls which they did for many summers. 'Imperial Beach was a favorite beach and usually was the scene of a "last day of school" party. Juanita loved gardening and when they lived on Roosevelt Street, people often stopped to admire her beautiful flowers. She was also active in the Lioness Club for many years. Their family is very precious to Bpb and Juanita, and they spend as much time as possible with them. This is a large family, as their daughter Lynn has three children and seven grandchildren, and their son Gary has a daughter. Lynn's children: Kenneth Dale Schmidt, born September 15, 1978; Carleen Michele, born November 19, 1959; and Scott Krisley, born May 4, 1961; seven grandchildren. Son Gary Dale was born November 12, 1945, in Chula Vista and has one daughter, Wendy Elaine, born July 16, 1972. (Family, Friends, and Homes, 1991, pp. 59-60.)

1955/05/16 - STREET NAME CHANGE - Public hearing tonight on proposed name change of National Avenue to Broadway. "Throughout the entire United States, the name Broadway is synonomous with the major street in any city. That is the reason we chose Broadway. Our feeling is that when outsiders hear the name Broadway in relation to Chula Vista, they will know immediately that it is the city's major street." (J. C. Crain, president of the National Avenue Businessmen's Association, who presented petitions signed by 90% of the avenue property owners and businessmen) (Star-News, May 16, 1955.) RESOLUTION No. 1726, changing name of National Avenue to Broadway, was read in full, passed, adopted and approved. (City Council Minutes, June 14, 1955.)

DINE
OUT
WITH THE FAMILY
Labor Day

Bob's Coffee Shop

The family will appreciate your thoughtfulness in dining here. The superb cuisine, deft service and congenial atmosphere leave nothing to be desired. Yet, your check will be on the modest side.

BOB'S COFFEE SHOP
100 Broadway, Chula Vista GA 2-0542

Christmas Greetings

Bob's Coffee Shop

Christmas Is Everyone's Holiday
And to Everyone We Send Our
Good Wishes for a Merry Yuletide

BOB'S CHULA VISTA CALIFORNIA
Coffee and Waffle Shops
100 National Ave.
829 National Ave.

Closed Wednesday 2 p.m. and All Day Christmas

from Star 1957/08/29 and 1952/12/25

1957/08/29 - (photo) Bob's Coffee Shop - "Dine out with the family Labor Day" - 100 Broadway (Star-News, Aug. 29, 1957.)

1957/10/31 - Bob's at 100 Broadway now selling Tunies - ad (Star-News, Oct. 31, 1957.)

<p>Welcome to Chula Vista's Newest Industry . . .</p> <h1>TUNIES, Inc.</h1> <p>Makers of</p> <h2>TUNIES</h2> <p>... a sea food treat ... contains no meat ... that looks and tastes like a hot dog!</p> <p>ENJOY</p> <p>Tunies and Sauerkraut and Tunies on a Bun</p> <p>Starting Tomorrow, Friday, at</p> <h1>BOB'S</h1> <p>100 Broadway, Chula Vista</p>	<p>BY GEORGE! WE'RE HAVING A BIRTHDAY</p> <p>THIS MONTH TOO . . . and We're Going To</p> <h2>CELEBRATE</h2> <p>For a Week (Sun., Feb. 11 thru Sat., Feb. 17)</p> <p>. . . AT ALL 3</p> <h3>BOB'S COFFEE SHOPS</h3> <p>We Are Chopping Prices BACK 11 YEARS</p> <p>Featuring</p> <h3>Bob's Original Menu</h3> <hr/> <p>EXAMPLES</p> <table border="0"><tr><td>ROAST SIRLOIN OF BEEF</td><td>70¢</td></tr><tr><td>COMBINATION MEXICAN PLATE</td><td>75¢</td></tr><tr><td>HOMEMADE PIE</td><td>15¢</td></tr><tr><td>COFFEE</td><td>5¢</td></tr></table> <hr/> <h3>BOB'S COFFEE SHOPS</h3> <h2>11th BIRTHDAY</h2> <p>100 Broadway Chula Vista GA-2-0542 5832 El Cajon Blvd. San Diego JU-3-2393 1185 East Main St. El Cajon HI-4-8921</p>	ROAST SIRLOIN OF BEEF	70¢	COMBINATION MEXICAN PLATE	75¢	HOMEMADE PIE	15¢	COFFEE	5¢
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from Star 1957/10/31 and 1962/02/11

1962/02/11 - Bob's Coffee House will celebrate 11th anniv with menus of orig 1951 prices at all 3 restaurants in CV, El Cajon, SD. The first Bob's was at 100 Broadway in CV when coffee was a nickel. Bob Crowther lives in Bonita, has been pres of Downtown Association, director of CofC, VP of Boys Club (Star-News, Feb. 11, 1962.)

1969 - Bob's Coffee Shop was sold 1969, a landmark at 100 Broadway for 16 years, been sold by Robert Crowther of Bob's Enterprises of CV. Buyer Richard Agee of AG's Coffee Shop at 4th and F said he will continue both restaurants, will put up new sign changing name from Bob's to AG's Coffee Shop. (Star-News Feb. 27, 1969.)

1972/05/04 - A couple of guys who are too dumb to know when to quit are going to re-open their Pepper Tree restaurant at 100 Broadway, Chula Vista, next Thursday. Restaurateurs Carlos Galindo and Gene Silber were literally wiped out when a fire gutted their restaurant last Nov. 29. Total bill for the damage was \$85,000. It sparkles with Mexican wrought iron lamps, fancy booths that customers enter from one side and waitresses serve from the other, and little touches and flashes here and there that say "Old Mexico" in the grand manner. four years. Silber was formerly a milkman. Builder C.B. Holly of National City rebuilt the new The new Pepper Tree restaurant. The new building . . . The pair did just that. Seating capacity is 140 persons, which includes a banquet room for 50. "We've even got

parking for 65 cars," said Galindo, who manages the Chula Vista place while his partner runs a restaurant of the same name in San Diego. The partners said they'll feature both Mexican and American food - with a full selection of both kinds of dishes. They will also sell food to take out. "We make virtually everything we sell right on the premises," said Galindo. "Our tamales are homemade, for example. And we feature a "House of Acapulco tostada" which combines a flour tortilla with specially-roasted meat, sauce, guacamole, cheese and lettuce -- a treat we invented ourselves!" Galindo said he's also come up with a "taco salad" which mixes lettuce, taco chips, beans, meat, lettuce, cheese and tomato. "It's a winner," he enthuses. Galindo and Silber bought the business from Chula Vista restaurateur (AG's, The Glenn) Dick Agee in April. (Star News, May 4, 1972.)

TRY OUR
CARNITAS
...Jalisco Style!

<p style="text-align: center;">PEPPER TREE STEAK SPECIAL</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NEW YORK OR SPENCER STEAK</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$1.89</p> <p style="text-align: center;">with potatoes, vegetable, roll butter</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CAROUSEL STEAK SPECIAL</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8 Oz. RIB STEAK</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$2.25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">with rice beans, enchilada and taco</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">TRY OUR TOSTADA ACAPULCO</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BEER</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BREAKFAST 79¢ every morning!</p>
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FINE MEXICAN FOOD
FINE AMERICAN FOOD
BREAKFAST LUNCH DINNER

100 BROADWAY

CHULA VISTA
OPEN 7 DAYS

6 a.m. 'til midnight
Fri. & Sat. 'til 3 a.m.

422-0542

from Star 1972/6/1

1989 - Zorbas Greek Buffet, 100 Broadway at D St (site of Bob's Coffee Shop 1953-69)