



Chula Vista Photo Studio

Chula Vista Photo Studio was founded in 1940 by Julius Homer Gillie. "Gillie" started his career in photography by taking pictures of children on a pony, pony pictures. From 1935 to 1940 he and his five crews would travel the US with Shetland ponies and photograph children on the ponies in western outfits. This successful business brought he and his wife Patricia to Chula Vista, where in 1940, he opened Chula Vista Photo Studio and Supplies.

In 1942 Gillie moved the studio across the street to its current location. The state of the art studio not only took portraits of the people of Chula Vista, but also supplied the blossoming hobbyist market with a complete line cameras, accessories and darkroom supplies. Gillie passed away in the late 2000's at the age of 101.

In 1970 Michael Armbrust, a longtime employee, purchased the studio from Gillie. The studio was well established and had many loyal customers including photographing the high school seniors from many of the area high schools. Mike photographed many of the area families and their weddings as well as most of the photographs for the City and the other businesses. He also was teaching photography at Southwestern College during the 1970's. Mike is currently enjoying his retirement.

Sometime around the early 1970's the camera and supplies were moved out of the Studio and into their own store space a couple of doors to the North. This was the start of Chula Vista Photo Supply. Both Businesses flourished for many years. The Supply store was eventually sold and continued to operate with many different owners until it closed in the summer of 2010.

In 2007 Chula Vista Photo Studio was purchased by Ian Trotter, an employee since 1988. The Studio continues to photograph many of the high school seniors in the area as well and families, weddings, sports teams, and much more. The studio still does many of the photos for the City and for businesses all around San Diego County. Chula Vista Photo also does photo restoration and other digital photography work for customers that require high-end digital work.

In 2011 the front of the studio got a face lift has been restored as close to its original 1942 look as possible. Even the blue porthole is the original piece of glass. The Studio will continue to produce high quality work at an affordable price for many years to come.