

# Historic Downtown Walking Tour

## 1 Danville Depot

205 RAILROAD AVE  
VICTORIAN STICK 1891

The first San Ramon Branch Line Southern Pacific train arrived on June 7, 1891. Farmers built warehouses next to the tracks and were able to ship crops in all kinds of weather. The depot building is now the Museum of the San Ramon Valley.

## 2 Veterans Memorial Building

400 HARTZ AVE  
NEO CLASSICAL REVIVAL 1925

This building was constructed, at a cost of \$18,000, to commemorate the San Ramon Valley's World War I veterans. Today it is used for meetings and events, by dedicated VFW, American Legion members and others. Commemorative plaques from the Danville Women's Club are placed at the front.

## 3 Danville Meat Market

114 E. PROSPECT AVE  
CLASSIC REVIVAL 1924

This Lawrence family building was originally used as a meat warehouse and market.

## 4 Elliott's Bar

369 HARTZ AVE  
FALSE FRONT COMMERCIAL 1912

Established by Hiram Elliott in 1907 on the corner of Diablo Road and Front Street. The bar moved to its present location in 1912. During prohibition, Elliott's became the Danville Ice Cream Parlor because Elliott was a law-abiding man.

## 5 McDonald's Drug Store

345-349 HARTZ AVE  
SPANISH ECLECTIC CIRCA 1922

The first floor was a drug store, ice cream fountain and news depot that also sold candy, phonographs and records. The McDonald family lived on the second floor.

## 6 Firehouse Building

340-356 HARTZ AVE  
MISSION REVIVAL 1925

The Danville Fire Protection District purchased this lot for \$600. It cost approximately \$5,000 to build the station. Volunteer firemen could hear the siren as far away as Alamo. The Town of Danville installed a plaque to remember volunteer firemen.

## 7 Pynn's Drygoods Store

327 HARTZ AVE | VICTORIAN  
(STICK EASTLAKE) 1921

The original building is one of the oldest buildings constructed for commercial use in downtown Danville. The building also once housed Danville's first beauty parlor and a harness shop.

## 8 St. Isidore Catholic Church (site)

SE CORNER OF LINDA MESA AND HARTZ  
ROMANESQUE 1911

Dedicated in 1910, this Romanesque church served the first Danville parish. It was razed in 1963.

## 9 Elliott House

146 DIABLO ROAD NEOCLASSIC  
ROWHOUSE 1909

This home is situated on a large lot facing the County Road, now called Diablo Road.

## 10 The Old Oak Tree Valley Oak

DIABLO ROAD CIRCA 1600's

Estimated to be over 350 years old, the tree is surrounded by a structural brace to prevent the branches from falling. The tree is a symbol for Danville, as well as its most notable landmark.

## 11 Close Family House & Property

DIABLO RD, FRONT ST,  
HARTZ AVE

The Close family home was located west of Front Street on Diablo Road, surrounded by gardens. Their ice cream socials were well-known. Several Close-owned 19th century commercial buildings faced Front Street.

## 12 Fredrickson House

172 E. PROSPECT AVE  
COL. REV./QUEEN ANNE COTTAGE  
1909

This house, first located where the Veterans Memorial Building now stands, moved to its current location in 1922. In 1978, the house was converted into a retail shop.

## 13 Danville Post Office (site)

145 E. PROSPECT AVE AND 169 E.  
PROSPECT AVE 1940's

Built by Dr. John Blemer in 1946, 161 Prospect was the modern Danville Post Office after World War II. The American eagle and mail slot from the 1950s post office have been integrated into the new Prospector's Square building.

## 14 Cohen/Vecki House

169 FRONT STREET  
GOTHIC REVIVAL 1866

This house was built for Michael and Matilda Cohen who had a general store on Front Street, the town's main street for 50 years. The subsequent owners, Victor and Claire Vecki, lived in this house from 1906 until the late 1930s. Dr. Victor Vecki was Danville's first dentist.

## 15 Danville Presbyterian Church

201 FRONT STREET  
SPANISH REVIVAL 1876

The original Contra Costa Presbyterian Church was built in 1876 on this site. This structure burned on May 27, 1932, and a new church building was constructed in the Mission Revival style. In 1989, the Town of Danville restored the building which became the Town Meeting Hall.

## 16 Grange Hall

233 FRONT STREET  
COLONIAL REVIVAL 1874

The Grange Hall was built by a national organization of farmers. In 1913, that building was raised up and became the second floor of a new fraternal and social club. The Grange initiated the first public library and high school. Today, the Town of Danville owns the building, which has a theater and offices.



DANVILLE HOTEL

FOR MORE HISTORIC IMAGES, VISIT  
[danville.ca.gov/walkingtour](http://danville.ca.gov/walkingtour)

**17 Danville Grammar School (site)**  
CIRCA 1870's

The Danville grammar schools on this site, west of Front Street, had classes from the first to the eighth grade. In 1896 a new building was constructed. The no-nonsense teacher A. J. Young was in charge from 1883-1900.

**18 Eugene O'Neill Commemorative**  
FRONT STREET PARK 2005

Nobel prize-winning playwright Eugene O'Neill lived at Tao House in the hills west of Danville from 1937-1944 and wrote his final great plays there. Interpretive panels on his life and plays are included. Call the National Park Service at 925-838-0249 for a reserved tour of Tao House.

**19 Eddy House**  
500 HARTZ AVE | QUEEN ANNE COTTAGE CIRCA 1903

The original San Ramon Valley Union High School was located in a house east of this site, beginning with 30 students.

**20 Shuey/Podva House**  
100 SCHOOL STREET VICTORIAN/STICK/EASTLAKE 1892

Original owners John and Lelia Shuey owned a general store and the hay and grain warehouses west of the Danville Depot. He was the postmaster from 1889-1893. Le May and Cecil Podva lived in the home from 1938 until 1999. Branagh Development preserved and restored the home and constructed an addition.

**21 Bert Read House**  
571 HARTZ AVE  
VICTORIAN CIRCA 1900's

Bert Read was a constable in the 1920's. He lived here with his wife Ramona. The Doyle Family preserved the home and now use it as a law office.

**22 Cabral House**  
551 HARTZ AVE  
CA BUNGALOW 1926

Tony Cabral built this house, which has never been altered. It includes the characteristic porch pillars, low-pitched front gable roof and double-hung windows.

**23 Hartz House**  
455 HARTZ AVE  
NEOCLASSIC ROWHOUSE CIRCA 1910

John and Catharina Hartz owned 220 acres in Danville, stretching from behind the buildings on Front Street to the base of Las Trampas. They sold 8 ½ acres to Southern Pacific for the railroad station, then subdivided the remainder into 74 lots. Thus, Hartz Avenue began. The Hartz family lived in this house during retirement.

**24 Freitas House**  
439 HARTZ AVE CIRCA 1890's  
VICTORIAN/QUEEN ANNE COTTAGE

Joseph Freitas built this house for his bride Annie Regello in 1913. She died six months later of tuberculosis. Four years later, he married Julia Noia and lived here three more years before moving to his ranch, east of Danville.

**25 Dodge House**  
425 HARTZ AVE CIRCA 1890's  
VICTORIAN/QUEEN ANNE COTTAGE

The Dodge family lived here for 37 years. Mrs. Emma Dodge was the postmaster of Danville between 1913 and 1933. Her husband was blind and would get the mail at the train station and deliver it to his wife.

**26 Danville Hotel/McCauley House**  
411 HARTZ AVE  
VICTORIAN STICK 1892

The two-story hotel, now painted red with white trim, was built after the railroad came to Danville. The hotel originally faced Railroad Avenue. When it was evident that Hartz Avenue would be the main street, the hotel was turned around and moved to this location in 1927.

The McCauley family ran the hotel. Their one-story house sits to the south of the hotel today, and is considered to have transition style between Queen Anne Cottage and Colonial Revival.

**27 George Foster House**  
402 HARTZ AVE  
CA BUNGALOW CIRCA 1926

George and Minnie Foster lived in this Stick/Eastlake style house. Mr. Foster worked for WPA, a federal public works program during the Depression. He helped grade the high school track. They were also foster parents.

**28 Joe Foster House/Original Danville Emporium Site**

404 HARTZ AVE  
CA BUNGALOW CIRCA 1900'S

Joseph and Annie Foster lived in back of the Emporium by 1914. Annie Foster had a kitchen fire which burned down the Emporium and two other houses in 1926. The existing two craftsman style houses were built after the fire. Some prices around 1922: 1 ladies waist - \$1.23; 1 pair bloomers - \$50¢; 1 pair white silk gloves - \$75¢; 1 pair boys underdrawers - \$30¢; 1 bungalow apron - \$75¢; 1 house dress - \$1.20.

This historic walking tour content is a collaboration of the Danville Heritage Resource Commission and the Museum of the San Ramon Valley. For more information or to learn more about the history of the San Ramon Valley, contact the Museum in the Danville Depot. The Museum has changing and permanent exhibits, a research library, and a museum store. Docents are available for downtown and cemetery tours.

Call (925) 837-3750 to schedule a tour.

[www.danville.ca.gov/walkingtour](http://www.danville.ca.gov/walkingtour)  
[www.museumsv.org](http://www.museumsv.org)

## HISTORIC DANVILLE TOURS

### Walking Tour (Museum of San Ramon Valley)

205 Railroad Ave | 837-3750

### Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site

Tour Shuttle — 205 Railroad Ave | 838-0249

### Veterans Memorial Building

400 Hartz Ave | 314-3490

### Alamo Cemetery Tour

912 El Portal | 837-3750