

Centerville Walking Tour



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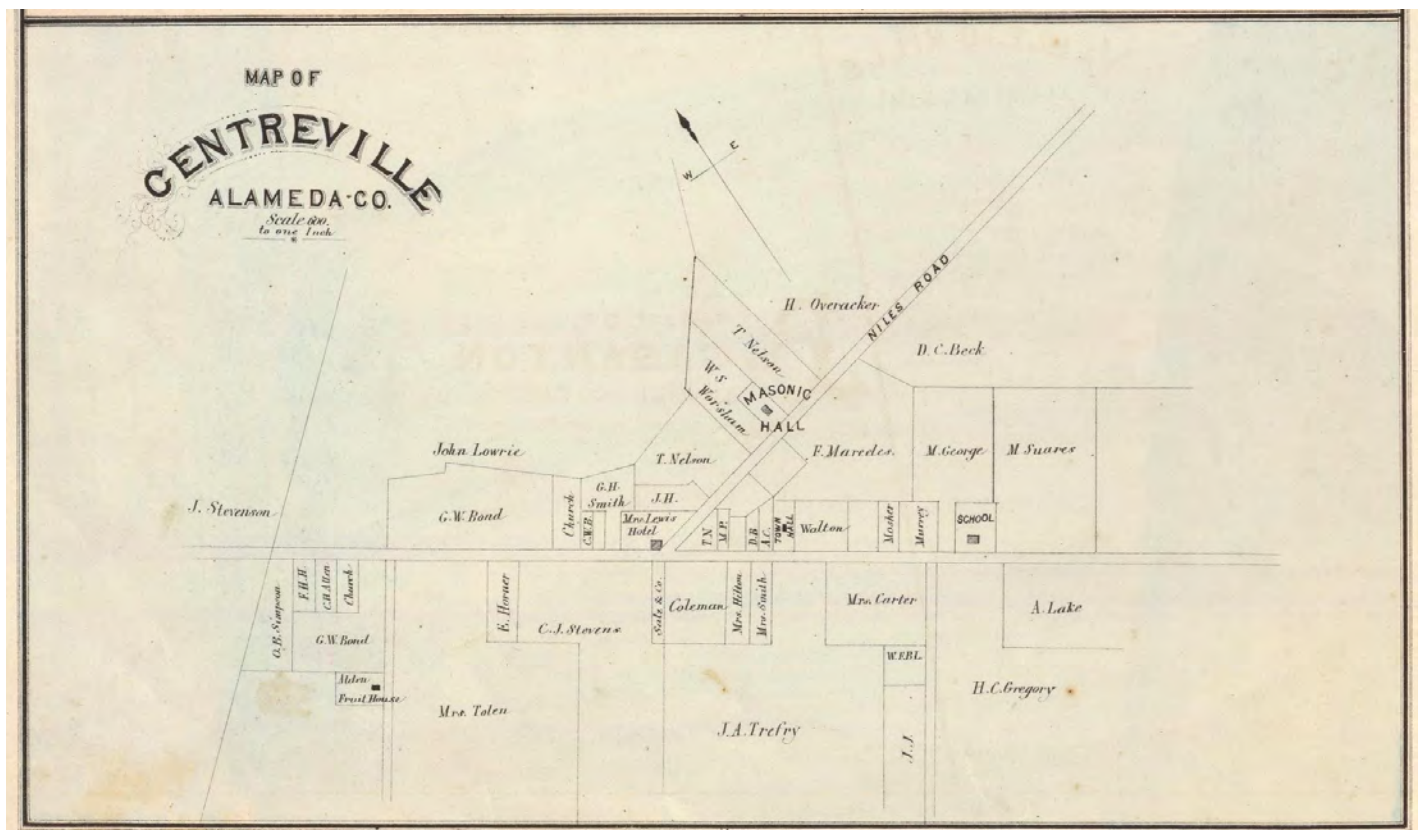
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Origins of Centerville

Centerville was created about halfway between Mission San Jose and Alvarado, on the road between those two towns, and where the road from Niles to Newark crossed the road from Oakland to San Jose. It was founded in 1850 when George Lloyd and Frank Pepe built homes. That same year, John Horner built a school house, that was also used for Mormon and other religious services. In 1852, Capt. George Bond and Stacy Horner also built homes in Centerville and Capt. Bond opened the first store. In 1854, a second store was opened by Mr. Clemens. The Centerville Presbyterian church was organized in 1853 by W. W. Brier, with a brick church built in 1855. St. James Episcopal church was built in 1867. The town expanded in the 1860's with more stores opening and two hotels being built. The United States hotel was built in 1858 and the Gregory House hotel was built in 1869.

Centerville became the center of Washington Township when the Alameda County court for the area was located there. Criminals from Alvarado to Mission San Jose faced the judge in Centerville. In the 1920's the courthouse was built on Peralta and Martha. When Fremont incorporated, it kept the court and moved it to Walnut and Paseo Padre. The first courthouse in Centerville was constructed in 1916 just behind the stores on Main St. On Sept. 10, 1951, a new courthouse was dedicated just off of Peralta east of Paseo Padre Blvd. Later that year the Alameda County library moved into the same building complex.

Most of the existing buildings in Centerville were built after 1906. Over the years, fire destroyed quite a number of older wooden buildings, but demolition also occurred to those that were in the way of development. For every building on the tour, there is a good chance that a previous building existed on the site.



Introduction

The Centerville Walking Tour runs along Fremont Blvd, from Central to Thornton Avenue. It is best to walk the opposite side of the street from the buildings being described, getting a better view of them in context with other buildings. Start the tour in front of Holy Spirit Church near the intersection of Central Avenue and Fremont Blvd.

This tour is based on historical research, using tools like old photographs, phone books, Chamber of Commerce books, history books, and newspapers. A number of long time residents were interviewed for their memories of the different buildings and businesses. Despite hours of research, this tour can only scratch the surface of the history of Centerville. This document is also a best-effort, meaning that it is the best document for the time and research material available.

All recent photographs were taken in 2006, so businesses in the buildings may have changed since then.

Fremont Blvd

Before the incorporation of Fremont in 1956, Fremont Blvd was known as Main Street, as it was the main street through Centerville. Addresses were labeled South from south of the railroad tracks and North on the north side of the railroad tracks. To help future researchers, where possible the older Main Street address have been listed next to the current addresses.

The road was compacted dirt until it was paved in 1930. Until the Nimitz Freeway was built through Fremont in 1958, Fremont Blvd. was part of Highway 17. The highway was a major route from Oakland to San Jose.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank those that have helped with this walking tour : Knute Furtado, Janet Cronbach, Barbara Baxter, Kathleen Schuler, Al Minard and Gus Morrison.

West side of Fremont Blvd

Start the tour in front of the Holy Spirit Church, just opposite of Central Avenue.

Holman House and Medical Office

37575 Fremont Blvd.

Built in 1927, this was the home and office of Dr. George Stevenson Holeman. It was designed by Williams & Wastell and built by George Asmussen for about \$15,000. About 1949, Dr. Guy Romito took over Dr. Holeman's practice and purchased the building. Dr. Romito sold the building in 1983 and it was converted into a business building.



Furtado House

37553 Fremont Blvd.

Built between 1925-27, this house was built for William J. Furtado. William and his wife, Mary, were both born to Portuguese immigrants from the Azores. William was a farmer who later became a partner in the Furtado-Bettencourt Ford dealership in Centerville. His wife lived in the house until the 1960's. The house has been through a number of owners since then and is currently used for offices.



Souza House

37531 Fremont Blvd.

Probably built in the late 1920's, this was the home of Frank Souza. Of Portuguese descent, he worked for PG&E. His wife lived in the house until the early 1970's.



Minerva

37463-71 Fremont Blvd. (168/170 S. Main)

The lot was originally the home of Max Stevenson in the 1930's. The building was built in 1954 for Berkeley Savings and cost \$100,000. It also included a Sprouse-Reitz variety store. The bank later became American Savings & Loan. In 1965, the whole building was the Centerville Library. A fire gutted the library in 1974. About 1979, Minerva's opened on the right side of the building and has been there since.



Century House

37447 Fremont Blvd. (160. S. Main)

Built in 1932 for Frank Botelho as the Chapel of the Palms Mortuary. The mortuary business was started in 1902 by George Botelho. George died in 1913, and his brother Frank took over the business. Lois and Dallas Paul purchased the building and business in 1937. In 1974, Bill Aboumarad Sr. purchased the building and it has housed a number of businesses over the years.



Performing Arts Academy & TaxCare

37439/37433 Fremont Blvd. (158/156 S. Main)

The building was probably built in the 1930's. From 1941 to 1951 it was the Centerville Library. It was later the Daily Review branch office in the left side and State Farm Insurance on the right. In 1962, Charlie Holliday was located in the right side of the building. Later Les Tre Chic Spa was in the building.



Masonic Lodge

37425-19 Fremont Blvd. (150/154 S. Main)

Built in 1911 for Alameda Lodge #167 of the Accepted and Free Masons. The first Masonic lodge was built on Peralta in 1866. In 1911, the lodge decided to erect a new building. The building was designed by Starbuck & Wilde of Oakland. It was constructed by Robert Irvine of Irvington. The building was officially opened on February 12, 1912. The ground floor was rented out and the upper floor was used for Masonic meetings. In 1912, Otto Hirsch opened a department store on the ground floor. In 1947, the ground floor was occupied by Kirkish Furniture and Safeway grocery store. In 1958, the building housed the Centerville Department Store, Howard's Mensware, and Western Auto. In 1962, Ledeen's Office Supply was located in the building. In the 1970's, the left side was a Yamaha motorcycle shop.



Center Theater

37411 Fremont Blvd. (146 S. Main)

Built in 1945, the Center Theater cost \$50,000 and was developed by the Salih Brothers (Lee, Fred & Harry). The theater has 700 seats that includes a balcony. The building was designed by Alexander A. Cantin of San Francisco. The theater closed in 1973. It reopened in 1977 as the Cine Azteca showing Spanish-language films, but closed in the mid-1980's. Next it was opened as ABC Center until 1992. That same year, the theater was reopened as the Naz, by Shiraz Javani, showing Indian movies. The Naz closed in 2000. There are two parts of the front on the building that have been rented out for businesses. In 1947, the left part was Sid's Pharmacy and the other side was Centerville Auto Parts. In 1958, Michael's Credit Jewlers was located in the left side.



Lily's Beauty Care

37397 Fremont Blvd.

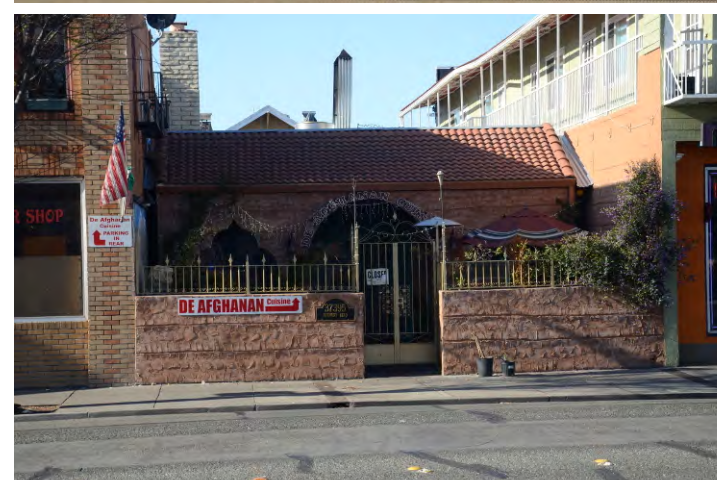
In 1965, this was a restaurant called Tasty Taco. In the 1970's, it was Cabrillo Realty Co. It was later Payless Cigarettes.



De Afghanan Cuisine

37395 Fremont Blvd. (142 S. Main)

Jack & Violet Klein owned a bar and restaurant in 1947, known as Kleine's Restaurant & Cocktails. The building originally fronted the street. Between 1968 and 1972 the building was changed so it was set back from the street. Sometime in the early 1990's it became an Afghanistan restaurant. In its early days, there was an unofficial rule that the bar was off limits to local teachers and they did not want to be seen coming or going from the bar.



Metro PCS/Dream Hookah Lounge

37381-83 Fremont Blvd.

About 1915, this was a 3 story building that housed J. S. Bell's Auto Supply, that sold Empire Tires. Signs also listed "Bell's Gasoline" and "Monogram and other oils". The sign also listed "Bakery, Lunch & Ice Cream Parlor." In 1947, it was the Peerles Stage Depot that was also a sandwich shop, owned by Frank and Louise Partlow. The date of construction of the current building is unclear.



Gold Finger Jewelry

37377 Fremont Blvd.

About 1915, there existed a small building at this location, with an Italianate front that was typical for the time. In 1947, it was the "Sportsman Barber Shop" owned by Joseph Silva. It continued as a barber shop into the 1960's.

Hawes Building

37353-71 Fremont Blvd. (128 S. Main)

Built about 1906 for Frank T. Hawes, who was in business selling general merchandise. He owned the building and business until 1919. The post office was located in the building until about 1926. The building has three locations for businesses on the ground floor, and originally a large public hall upstairs. SPRSI used the second floor. The different occupants on the ground floor have been, a general store, a saloon, a grocery store, Centerville Reality, a telephone office, etc. In 1941, Henry and Alice Miller had a dry cleaning business and moved it into the building when they purchased the building in 1965. Henry erected a sign on the building that read "Alice Miller Building" as a surprise for his wife. In 1962, Donut Nook, Dr. John Austin, and Centerville Shoe Shop was located in the building.

Hallers Pharmacy

37317-23 Fremont Blvd.

In 1961, this building housed Crocker-Anglo Bank. Sometime, probably in the early 1970's, it transitioned to the law office of Edward Quaresma, who was a judge for Washington Township from 1949 to 1966. After retirement he went into private practice until he passed away in 1985. He was involved in the founding of Washington Hospital and Fremont Bank. He had an office in Niles, but at some point he opened an office in Centerville. Joining him in practice were other lawyers, Benya, Hall, Connich, O'Hara & Nixon, and that law firm stayed in the building until at least 1992. After that, Hallers Pharmacy took over the building.



El Patio

37331 Fremont Blvd. (112 S. Main)

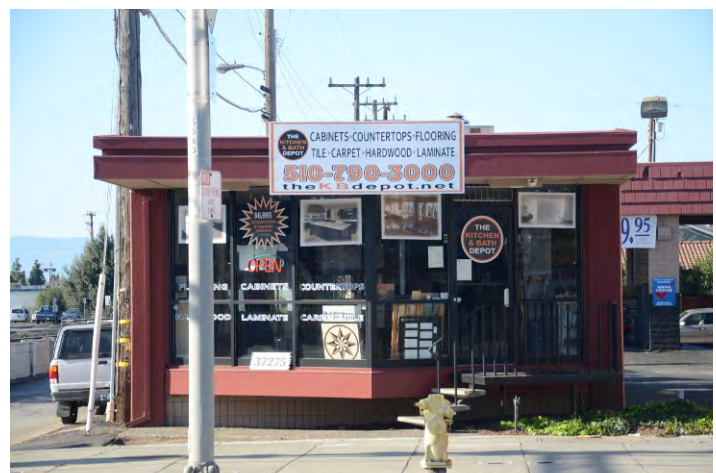
The parking lot was the location of the Ogden House, the first hotel in Centerville. This building burned in 1866, was rebuilt and burned again in 1869. The Gregory House was built in 1869 by Henry C. Gregory. Where the current building stands, was a livery that was run along with the hotel. Henry's wife, Mary, was the cook and became known for her chicken dinners. Henry passed away in 1906 after letting others take over the management of the hotel. It was later known as Gregory Hotel or Hotel Gregory. In the 1930's, it was a tavern and rooming house. It was demolished in 1949 to make way for a new market. The Centerville Food Market was built in 1949. The market moved to the Glenmore shopping center in 1973. The building was completely remodeled before "El Patio" relocated to this site.



The Kitchen & Bath Depot

37275 Fremont Blvd.

In 1958, Acme Auto Parts was at this location, but was probably part of an older building. Dr. John R. Austin moved to it in 1967 and was there into the 1980's. Later it was Discount Electronics. It is unclear when this building was built.



Setty Dental/ Medical Evaluations

37259-63 Fremont Blvd. (102 - 110 N. Main)

In 1947, there was one building that occupied the space of this building and the one to the left. This building housed Walton Drugs and Excelsior Bakery. In 1958, Excelsior Bakery was still in the building along with Neilson Hardware and Acme Auto Parts. At some point the left side of the building was demolished. The left over building was given a new facade that extended the front of the building and the back of the building was seismically retrofitted. The large building behind the front building was the county courthouse.



Bank of Centerville

37251 Fremont Blvd.

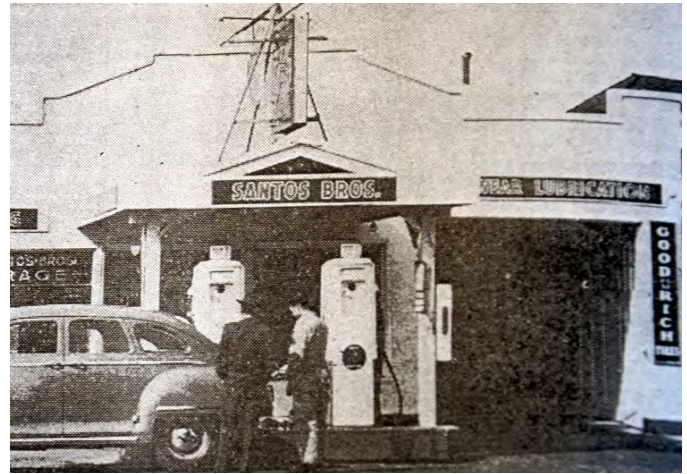
Built about 1906 for the Bank of Centerville. The bank was incorporated in 1905, by John Mattos, Frank Dusterberry and Joseph Dias. In 1920, the bank's name was changed to First National Bank of Centerville. In 1921, the bank was purchased by the Bank of Italy. Needing a large building, the Bank of Italy built a new building at the then corner of Peralta and Main Street. The building was then used as the law office of John Mattos Jr. until his retirement in 1931. Attorney Allen G. Norris, a recent graduate of Berkeley, took over the building and used it until he retired in 1963. In 1967, the building was leased to a janitorial supply company. Judge Norris sold the building in 1971 to Lewis and Pearl Underwood, who ran business of Underwood & Underwood Insurance. This business operated until 1998. About 2000, the building received seismic re-enforcement.



Dhillons Auto Repair

37247 Fremont Blvd. (116 N. Main)

Built in 1935 as a automobile showroom and service station for Frank Madruga and designed by Miller & Warnecke of Oakland. In 1939, the machine shop & garage area was erected. Frank Madruga and machinist Herman Mau operated as Madruga & Mau a car dealer and car repair business. The gas station was originally known as Centerville Garage and Associated Service Station. Later the showroom area was leased out to Ed Rose. In 1947, it was a Chrysler and Plymouth dealership run by the Santos Brothers. In 1948, Clarence Dutra took over the service station and it was known as Dutra's Richfield Station, soon after he purchased the building from Madruga. In 1982, the building was sold to Edward Schuck, who used it for Schuck's Transmission.



Bonde Way

Centerville Pioneer Cemetery

The Centerville Presbyterian Church acquired the property in 1855 and soon established a cemetery. The first Presbyterian Church was built in late 1855 as a brick building. The 1868 earthquake severely damaged the building and a new wooden church was built. In 1956, a new church was build on Central Avenue and the old building was abandoned. In 1994, the vacant building was destroyed by arson. The steeple was saved and is currently in storage. The cemetery was put in place around the church building.



Mathieson Butcher Shop

3850 Bonde Way

Originally on Main Street and built between 1890 and 1900, it was moved in 1910 to make way for the railroad. It served as a butcher shop before and after it was moved. In the 1960's and 70's, it was a bus depot for Peerless and Greyhound bus lines. It was torn down after 2006.



Japanese Language School

3810 Bonde Way

Originally on Main Street, it was moved in 1910 to make way for the railroad. It was used as a Japanese Language School for Japanese field workers and their children in the 1920's and 30's. In the 1970's, it was used for housing Filipino farm workers. After that, it was Ranoa Enterprises, a Filipino market. It is currently used as a residence. Dortehea Lange did come to Centerville to photograph Japanese residents heading for the interment camps, but it is not known if she photographed around this building.



Back to Fremont Blvd.

Miawand Market

37235 Fremont Blvd.

This building was the Centerville Electric & Pump, owned by Tony Ennis. The business started in 1925. The building may have been built in 1925. The business moved out of the building in the mid-1960's. In the 1970's it was the Dicker Furniture store. Later it was a thrift store and then Miawand Market took over in 1991.



The Church in Fremont

37167 Fremont Blvd.

California Black Walnut Tree in front of the building is the only Fremont Landmark tree on the tour.



Centerville Dental Care / KFC

37149 Fremont Blvd. (156 N. Main)

This lot originally had a number of houses on it in the 1930's. One of the houses was used by the Hospital Service League, known as the "pink ladies", who volunteer for Washington Hospital. They ran a business called the Cheery Budget Shop, a thrift store to raise funds for the hospital. In 1962, it was the location of Edgrin Motors a Chrysler / Plymouth dealership. The building was owned by John Santos. Later there was was a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise on the right hand side of the lot, from the 1970's to about 2000. This was raised and the newer buildings were built.



Der Weinerschnitzel

37119 Fremont Blvd.

Built in the WeinerSchnitzel style of the 1960's, this franchise has been here since that time. The only major change in the building is the enclosure of the seating at the front. Before that there was Victorian house, owned by the family that owned the Gregory House. It burned down in the 1940's.



Bogies

37085 Fremont Blvd. (180 N. Main)

The Bauhofer family started a business in 1927 where the Fremont Hub is today. In 1938, they opened the Cloverdale Creamery. They no longer operated as a dairy, and they expanded their milk processing and deliver service. They opened a retail store with milk products that included a resaurant with ice cream and sandwiches. In the back of the building, ice cream was made using their own milk. The business was a fixture of Centerville for over 60 years. The Creamery closed in 2001. In 2005, Fremont Flowers moved into the building. It is now Bogies Pet Supply and Dog Grooming.



East Side of Fremont Blvd.

Carls Jr.

37000 Fremont Blvd. (199 N. Main)

This was the original location of Central Chevrolet, established in 1937 by Romeo Brunelli and Mr. Calcagno. The dealership was known for holding events when the new Chevy cars were coming out, putting drapes in the showroom window, so no one could see the new cars until they were unveiled. In the late 60's or early 70's, the business moved to Thorton Ave, just next to the freeway.



Center Square Shopping Center

The Center Square Shopping Center was opened in 1955 and was the largest shopping center in Washington Township at the time. It had Lucky's grocery, Walters Owl/Rexall drug, Gift Lane, Josephs Mensware, Mar-Val Dresses, Center Square Cleaners, Center Kiddie Shop, Buttercrust Bakery & Restaurant, and Dale Hardware. Dale hardware expanded behind the center. Later, Comet Auto Supply moved into the far end of the center.

Bank of America

37120 Fremont Blvd. (175 N. Main)

This building was built about 1953 for Bank of America after it out grew the building next to the railroad tracks. It was later the final location of Scenario Games.

Next on the property was a strip of commercial buildings that included a bar and restaurant, with George's Shell Station. The southern area of property was McElroy Lumber, then Logan Motors, then King Arthur Toyota in 1970 and later Fremont Ford.

Appliance Store

37350 Fremont Blvd. (107 N. Main)

This building was built for Furtado-Bettencourt Ford. Then Joe Adams Ford took over the building until 1955. Then it was Turner Ford, then Dave Grier Dodge. In 1970 it was Township Auto Supply. After that, was a grocery store with a small bakery in the back. It is now Appliance Parts Distributor.



Centerville Horsecar

In 1881, a rail line was put in between Newark and Centerville. The line was only 3 miles long, ending just before Fremont Blvd, comprised of a single passenger car pulled by a single horse. If pulling freight cars, additional horses were added.

Passengers were charged 10 cents for ride between Centerville and Newark. The line lasted until a main railroad line was put through Centerville running from the central valley to San Jose. The last run was made May 28, 1909.



Centerville Train Depot & Bill Ball Plaza

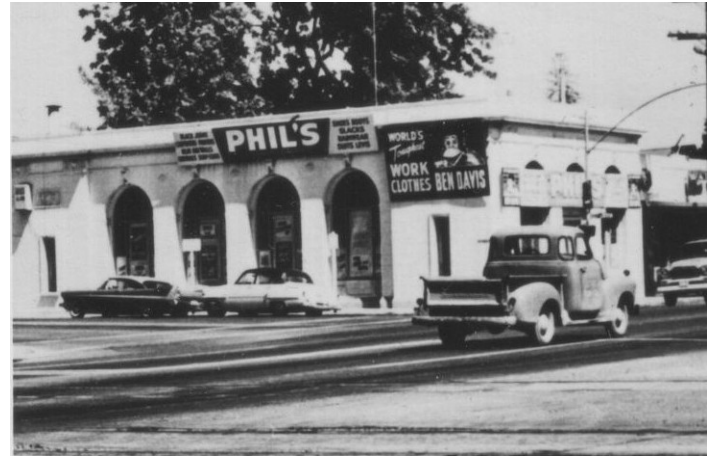
Also known as Centerville Civic Plaza. Bill Ball was Fremont Mayor from 1989 to 1994. The first building at this location was the Horner Schoolhouse, built in 1850. It was later moved to Irvington. Next was the United States Hotel. This was later moved a mile south on Fremont Blvd.. The first passenger train arrival in Centerville on May 29, 1909. The station was a boxcar and many complaints were registered by the local residents. In September, 1910, the Centerville Train Depot was built. The depot serviced Centerville with multiple trains per day. The last passenger service was on March 29, 1940, and the depot was used strictly for freight. On September 30, 1961, the Southern Pacific railroad retired the depot, and it was used to house a number of stores. By 1991, the depot was empty and showing its age. On June 4, 1993, train service returned to Fremont. In December 1993, the City of Fremont acquired the depot and started restoration of the building, putting it back into use as depot for passenger service. The depot was move from the south side of the tracks to the north side to service passengers. In 1910, the first Centerville Library opened in a building located on Main Street, just to the south of the train station. It moved out of that building in 1923.



Computer World / Bank of Italy

37312 Fremont Blvd. (105 S. Main Street)

This building was built in 1922 for the Bank of Italy when it had outgrown the other building on Main Street. Later, the bank changed its name to Bank of America. When it out grew this building, it moved north to the Center Square shopping center, probably around 1955. Later in the 1950's, Phil's Clothing was located in the building. Note that Peralta Blvd used to be on the north side of this building.



Color Me Mine

37324 Fremont Blvd. (107 S. Main)

This building was built for the California Savings Bank, probably in the late 1960's or early 1970's. The previous building was Hilmer Meats that was there in the 1940's. In the 1950's, Walton's TV was located in the earlier building.



Sizzler

37358 Fremont Blvd.

Starting about 1971, this building was a Sizzler Restaurant and continued well in the 1980's. Later it was a succession of different restaurants, including a Asian restaurant. It is currently vacant and has been for some time. Located in a previous building, in generally the same location in 1958, was Kellogg Music Supply and Township Auto Supply.



Hair Saloon

37490-94 Fremont Blvd. (137 S. Main)

In the 1940's, this building housed Redhimer market. In the 1950's, the left side of the building was the Shanhi Cafe and the right side was Sid's Pharmacy.



Hoagy Steaks

37404 Fremont Blvd. (141 S. Main)

In the 1940's, a building on this site housed Gilstap's Five & Dime store. In 1955, the building housed a drug store and Al's Liquor Store. In 1958 it was the Hobbes & Gygax Real Estate office. From 1966 until 1984, Round Table Pizza was located here.



Fire Station

37412 Fremont Blvd. (143 S. Main)

Built in 1954 for the Centerville Fire Protection District and designed by Sorensen & Ellsworth of Niles and built by C. E. Hopper at a cost of about \$50,000. After incorporation, the fire station was taken over by the Fremont Fire Department. The building went from Centerville Fire Station #1 to Fremont Fire Station #6. The building replaced a fire station that was built in 1920.



Yuk Wah

37418 Fremont Blvd. (155 S. Main)

Built on this site in 1868 was the Centerville Town Hall. The town hall was funded by women in Centerville. It had a bowling alley in the basement. The land was sold in 1946 and the building was torn down. The date on the current building is unknown. In the 1960's, Yuk Wah opened. This building was the Centerville Post Office.



Afghan Bazaar

37422 Fremont Blvd. (161 S. Main Street)

From 1937 to 1974, the Sunrise Bakery, owned by Laurence and Emiline Rose, was located in this building.

Sam's Food and Liquor

37436/37440 Fremont Blvd

From 1955 to at least 1977, Regal Liquors was located in the building. The building has continued as a liquor store.

Empty Lot

In 1958, Jim's TV & Radio Repair was located here. In 1963, it was a Chevron gas station.

Round Table Pizza

37462-80 Fremont Blvd.

In 1963, Gygax Realty was in this building along with a barber shop, although it could be an older building. The Daily Review was in the building in 1958. Fremont Cycle Center was located in this building as early as 1967 and they moved out in the 1990's. In 1984, Round Table Pizza moved into the south side of the building and has been there ever since. The Fremont Argus was located in the building in the yearly 2000's.

Hope Station

37482 Fremont Blvd. (179 S. Main)

In the 1940's, Frank Madruga's Garage was located on this site. During the 50's and 60's it was Bearcat Liquors and Bearcat Club. The current building was built for Kenny's Shoes, probably in the late 1960's or early 1970's. It was later a medical supply store and is currently a thrift store.



Holy Spirit Church

37588 Fremont Blvd. (209 S. Main)

Built in 1922, the church building replaced the original 1886 wooden building, which was destroyed by fire in 1919. It was originally known as Holy Ghost Church and was the second Catholic church in Fremont (after Mission San Jose). Its first parishioners were mostly Portuguese and the first services were in Portuguese. A rectory was built next to the church in 1887. In 1913-14, the parish hall was built. The cornerstone for the new church was laid in April 1921 and the building was dedicated February 26, 1922. A new two-story Spanish-style rectory was built in 1927. The church school was opened in 1956. A rear addition to the church was added in 1969.

