



# DIGNOWITY HILL

## HISTORY

Dignowity Hill was the first exclusive residential area in San Antonio, preceding King William and Laurel Heights. Due to its high elevation, proximity to downtown, the size of the lots, and lack of water, which required residents to construct large water collecting systems, Dignowity Hill began as an upper-class residential area. Settled as estates with one house per block in the 1850s on an 80-foot hill overlooking downtown San Antonio, Dignowity Hill was named for Dr. Anthony Michael Dignowity, a Czechoslovakian immigrant and abolitionist.

The arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1877 began another phase in the development of the Dignowity Hill neighborhood. The area became a hub for new railroad-related industry. In

1890, an iron works factory and the streetcar service trolley line along Burnet Street arrived to the area, while sewer and water became available by 1903. By 1914, the neighborhood was surrounded by industry on the north and west, commerce on the south and modest homes on the east. The area began to transform in the 1920s, as wealthy families moved to newer housing areas, thus, leading to the subdivision of estate lots for the construction of newer, smaller houses. By 1930, most of the large original homes had been destroyed. Mr. Dignowity died in 1875, his house, Harmony House, was torn down in and replaced with a city park in 1926. ■

## TODAY

Today Dignowity Hill is a vibrant and diverse community, often described as “the next King William” because of its proximity to downtown, its abundance of relatively affordable historic homes, and its residents’ commitment to revitalizing the area through the activities of the Dignowity Hill Neighborhood Association. The area’s many treasures, in addition to its beautiful houses, include: Dignowity Hill Park, which hosts the yearly Pushcart Derby; the sprawling Fairchild Pool and Tennis Center; the historic Hays Street Bridge, which the city is converting into a hike/bike corridor; and one of the largest concentrations of historic cemeteries in the nation. The neighborhood

extends east-west from North New Braunfels Street to IH 37 and north-south from Sherman Street to Commerce Street. A slightly smaller section of the neighborhood, radiating from its namesake park, has been designated a historic district by the City of San Antonio; its north-south boundaries are roughly contiguous with those of the neighborhood while its east-west boundaries are North Palmetto Street and North Cherry Street. For more information about the neighborhood association, to attend one of our monthly meetings, or to join please visit the association’s Web site at [DignowityHill.org](http://DignowityHill.org) or contact the association’s treasurer, Kate Green, at [kateg1@hotmail.com](mailto:kateg1@hotmail.com) or 210-223-0474. ■



DIGNOWITY HILL  
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION