

# **The Story of San Ramon**

## A Play for Third Grades by Gail Kameron

### **Cast of Characters:**

Bill  
Sally  
Peter  
Mayor  
Councilwoman 1  
Councilwoman 2  
Councilman 1  
Councilman 2  
Saber toothed cat  
Mastodon  
Camel  
Giant sloth  
Indian man 1  
Indian man 2  
Indian woman 1  
Indian woman 2  
Pedro Fages  
Father Crespi  
Jose Maria Amador  
Christian Wiedemann  
David Glass  
James Witt Dougherty  
Minerva Harlan:  
Leo Norris  
Student 1  
Student 2  
Student 3  
Student 4  
Student 5  
Student 6

### **SETTING:**

A park in San Ramon. The mayor of San Ramon and some city council members have come to the park to talk about adding a playground when, all of a sudden, three people come running over.

**Bill:** Hello. My name is Bill and I am afraid my two friends and I are lost. We just got off the freeway, but we haven't the slightest idea where we are. This is Sally and this is Peter. Could you please help us?

**Mayor:** Why we would be happy to help you. You are in San Ramon and I am the mayor and these are my city council members. Where is it that you want to go?

**Sally:** I am happy to meet you Mr. Mayor. My name is Sally and this is Peter. Actually we are from New York and we are touring the United States. We know that we are in Northern California, but that is about all that we know.

**Peter:** Yes, we have traveled all across the United States. We are trying to learn as much as possible about our country. Would you have the time to tell us a little about San Ramon.

**Mayor:** We would be happy to. In fact I just happen to have my book on San Ramon with me so I will be able to answer just about any question that you might have. My city council members also have their books, so they will also be able to help. Let's sit down over here in the shade and talk about our beautiful city.

**Sally:** Oh thank you. We each have a list of questions that we are trying to answer for each place that we visit. Let's see, here is my first question. Could you tell us about our location?

**Mayor:** We are located in the San Ramon Valley along with the town of Danville and Alamo. You will also find Blackhawk and Diablo in the San Ramon Valley. The San Ramon Valley is located in the East Bay of the San Francisco Bay Area. Our major physical feature is our beautiful Mt. Diablo which you can see off in the distance.

**Councilwoman I:** Mr. Mayor, I just happen to have a large map where we can show these young people exactly where they are. ( Councilwoman takes a pointer and points out Mt. Diablo, and the cities and towns of the San Ramon Valley and the cities that surround the valley.)

**Bill:** How interesting. I like history. Can you tell me a little about the history of this area?

**Mayor:** Yes, I sure can. First I want you to close your eyes and I am going to take you back millions of years ago. Are your eyes closed and are your imaginations working?

### **ENTER PREHISTORIC ANIMALS**

(Four prehistoric animals walk out on stage. Students have large posters of prehistoric animals in front of them and they each talk about themselves.)

**Saber toothed cat:** I am the saber toothed cat. (He says very proudly.) I am smaller than the lions you see in the zoo, but I am more powerfully built. Look at my long fangs. I use them for stabbing and slashing all of the large animals that I like to eat, and boy do I like to eat.

**Mastodons:** I am a mastodon. Look at my four beautiful tusks that are nine feet long. I am not as large as the elephants you see in your local zoo, but I am **plenty** big. I have gotten so big by eating plenty of delicious, green grass.

**Camel:** Hello. Have you ever seen an animal as big as I am? (With lots of expression) I am a camel and I am eighteen feet tall. I am the tallest camel ever found. It is great that I am so tall because I can eat leaves at the very tops of trees.

**Giant Sloth:** Hello, I am the giant sloth. I eat leaves. A lot of animals would like to eat me, but they are afraid of my giant claws, also I am hard to eat because of my coat contains heavy bony plates.

**Peter:** If these animals are extinct how do you know that they lived here?

**Councilman 1:** We know that they lived here because we have found their bones. On the south slope of Mt., Diablo there is a place called the Blackhawk Ranch Quarry. This was once a watering hole where animals came to drink. Many of these animals got stuck in the mud and died. Scientists took their bones and put them together like a puzzle. This is how we know that they lived here.

**Sally:** Wow. With my eyes closed I could really see those animals. What about Indians? Were there any Indians in this area?

**Councilman 2:** Yes, there were. Let's close our eyes again while I tell you about the Indians. The Seunen tribes lived in San Ramon and Dublin. The name was given to the tribe by the Spanish. They lived in groups of 50 to 250 people. They depended on the plants and trees that grew here and the animals that roamed our hills and valleys.

**ENTER FOUR INDIANS.**

**Indian woman 1:** I understand that you would like to know about the native people that occupied San Ramon. Much of my time is spent gathering and preparing food for my family. The women and children of my tribe spend many hours of each day in food preparation. Acorns are one of our most important foods. We spend many hours gathering acorns and then we dry them, leach out the sour taste with water, and then pound them into flour. Sometimes I make acorn pancakes and sometimes I make acorn mush. We have acorns at every meal and sometimes if we are lucky we have meat from animals that the men from our tribe have caught. We also gather berries, seeds and nuts.

**Indian man 1:** I would like to tell you about our houses. We use willow branches that we bend for our shelters or houses. We tie grass on the bundles to keep the cold and wind out. There is a hole in the center to let out the smoke from our fires. Sometimes more than one family will occupy one of these houses. Our homes are warm and snug on winter nights.

**Indian woman 3:** As you can see I am weaving a basket. This is a cooking basket and I will weave it so tightly that I will be able to put water in it. We use baskets for everything, even cooking. We don't actually put a basket on the fire. We heat stones in the fire and then we put them in a basket full of water with acorn flour to make acorn mush. Acorn mush is so delicious.

**Indian man 4:** We have lived in this valley for 5,000 years. To the north of us live the Tatcan Indians and sometimes we get together and trade things. We enjoy these times because we see old friends, share food, and dance. We lived in peace for many years and then the Spanish came.

I remember the day that they came. We were so frightened because they were riding horses and at first I thought they were terrible beasts. I had never seen a horse before and then we realized that it was not a beast, but a man and an animal. The Spanish had long sticks that made a terrible noise, and I soon learned that the sticks were called guns. They came from a country far away called Spain, and they were exploring our area. Pedro Fages was an explorer and he came looking for different routes through our land, and with him was Father Juan Crespi who came to baptize us. Also with them was Gabriel Moraga who named our mountain, Mt. Diablo. There were also some soldiers. We were very curious about these men and we traded some of our food for some of their clothes.

## **EXIT THE INDIANS**

**Peter:** Fascinating. What happened to the Indians after the Spanish came?

**Councilwoman 2:** In 1834, a few years after the first explorers came, the Spanish built a mission in Fremont called Mission San Jose. The Spanish convinced many of the Indians living in the San Ramon Valley to live at the mission. These Indians traded in their Indians ways for Spanish ways. Imagine changing your food, your language, your religion, your clothes from Indian to Spanish. Some of the Indians did not like the Spanish ways and they tried to leave, but the Spanish would not let them. Many Indians died because they caught a lot of the diseases that the Spanish had brought from Spain like small pox and measles.

**Bill:** How sad. What happened to the Indians?

**Councilwoman 2:** It is sad what happened to the Indians. Spain and Mexico had a war and Mexico won. Mexico divided up the missions lands and gave large tracts of land to soldiers who had helped settle California. These large tracks of land were called ranchos. Many of the Indians went to work for the newly formed ranchos, but some went off to live in the hills often stealing cattle and sheep from the ranchos. The land that had been home to the Indians now belonged to the ranchos.

**Sally:** What was it like to live on a rancho?

**Councilman 2:** Let's visit one and find out.

## **ENTER JOSE AMADOR**

**Jose Maria Amador:** My name is Senor Jose Maria Amador and I was given this large tract of land called San Ramon Rancho. On my ranch are thousands of cattle who graze freely because there are no fences. We butcher some of the cattle for meat, but mostly we sell the hides and tallow and then buy goods that we need. My wife likes to buy silk

for her dresses and I like to buy equipment for my rancho. There is no school for my children. I know how to read, so I teach my children. Every year we have a round-up and we brand our cattle and then usually we invite our friends and neighbors over for a fiesta. Why don't you come to our fiesta? We always have a good time.

### **ENTER SETTLERS.**

(People come from backstage wearing cowboy hats and kerchiefs and girls wear long skirts. Mayor, city council member and students join in. They shake hands with each other.)

**Jose Amador:** Let's do the Mexican hat dance. (Music plays and everyone dances. People with hats on throw their hats into the air. All bow and everyone except the students and city council member leave the stage.)

**Peter:** What fun. I wish I could have lived during that time. So what happened next?

**Mayor:** In 1848 gold was discovered in California and thousands of people came to seek their fortunes. Some became rich, but most didn't find gold. They found good land instead. Much of the land was on the ranchos, but because the ranchos were so large there was not much people could do about it, so the squatters stayed and farmed. Mexico and the United States had a war in 1848 and the United States won. California became a state in 1850.

**Bill:** What happened after California became a state?

**Councilman 1:** Many people came to San Ramon to start farms. In 1880 the people who came here called San Ramon "Limerick" because many settlers were from Ireland. The first village developed near the corner of today's Deerfield Road and San Ramon Valley Boulevard. A post office was put in a general store, and soon after, many pioneers built homes, farms and ranches in Limerick.

### **ENTER PIONEERS**

(San Ramon Pioneers enter and mix with the city council members and students)

**Mayor:** Here are some of our early settlers. Let them tell their story.

**Christian Wiedemann:** I came around Cape Horn in 1865, and my oh my what a trip that was. But I can tell you it was well worth it when I saw all of this beautiful land. We built a house near what is now Norris Canyon Road, in fact our house still stands. On my ranch I grew hay, grain, and the most beautiful grapes you have ever seen. Back in those days people needed firewood, so I would load up my wagon with wood, and sell it in town.

**James Witt Dougherty:** I bought 10,000 acres of land from Senor Amador in 1853 for \$2:20 an acre. That's right, you heard me, \$2.20 an acre. I was so happy with my purchase that I convinced a lot of my friends to pack their bags and move to this "land of opportunity" from Tennessee. My wife, Elizabeth, and I lived in the Amador two-story adobe house for many years, until an earthquake destroyed it in 1861. I am proud to say

that Dublin was called Dougherty's Station for many years until someone decided that, because many settlers had come from Dublin, that the name should be changed to Dublin. I am buried in Dublin with my favorite dog.

**David Glass:** I came to California and to the San Ramon Valley in 1850. I opened a store near Walnut Creek and then I bought 718 acres 3 miles south of the village of San Ramon where I built a fine house. You can still see my wonderful house on San Ramon Valley Blvd. I loved this area and I worked to promote the community. I helped found the new Presbyterian Church and I also worked on a committee to bring the railroad to San Ramon. Elizabeth and I raised 7 beautiful children in this wonderful area. That's right, seven children.

**Leo Norris:** My family and I were actually the first American pioneers to move to San Ramon in 1850. I bought 4,000 acres of land from Senor Amador. William Lynch helped me build the first frame house in the San Ramon Valley, using redwoods from Oakland. In 1851 we put in the first barley crop planted in the San Ramon Valley. I am proud to say that a canyon and road are named after me.

**Minerva Harlan:** I came to California as a single woman in 1846, and I can tell you that there were few women here at that time. I married Joel Harlan and we settled down and started our family. Life was quiet and peaceful until gold was discovered. I can't even begin to tell you how life changed. People were just pouring in all hoping to get rich. We opened up a store in Coloma and did a little prospecting. In 1852, we came to the San Ramon Valley. We bought some land from Leo Norris and decided that we were home.

## **EXIT PIONEERS**

**Sally:** Pretty interesting. It sounds like this was an area of great farming and ranching.

**Mayor:** Yes, indeed it was. In 1891 the Southern Pacific Railroad came and San Ramon was the end of the line for nearly 20 years. This was wonderful for the ranchers and farmers because now they could ship their crops. More people came and soon there was a school, churches, community hall, saloons, a jail, and a blacksmith shop.

**Bill:** Wow, San Ramon has had an interesting history. What about San Ramon now?

**Councilman 2:** I so glad that you asked because we are so proud of our city. I would like to invite some of our local students to tell you about our great city.

## **ENTER STUDENTS**

**Student 1:** My parents decided to come to San Ramon because of jobs. Both of my parents work in Bishop Ranch Business Park. It takes them about 10 minutes to get to work. When all of the jobs are filled there can be 28,000 people working in the Bishop Ranch, but more and more companies will come in the future. I hope I can get a job in the Bishop Ranch when I grow up.

**Student 2:** My parents moved to San Ramon because they wanted me to go to a good school. Our schools rank among the top 10% of California school districts. I love my school because \_\_\_\_\_.

**Student 3:** We came here because of the climate. My mother doesn't like cold weather. There is no snow, very little rain, and temperatures are pretty mild. This means that we can be outside most of the time, and I hardly ever have to have my mom drive me to school because it is raining.

**Student 4:** My dad wanted to move here because there is so much to do. Sometimes we hike up Mt. Diablo, and sometimes we ride our bikes on the Iron Horse Trail. My mom likes to go out to dinner to all of the many restaurants that are in San Ramon and I like to go to the movies on Saturday afternoon. Every year we go to the Art and Wind Festival to see the large kites and we also always go to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration to see the spectacular Sky Concert Fireworks Show. And just about any Saturday you can find one of my brothers or sisters at one of our parks playing tennis, or swimming or even riding their skateboard. Even my dog gets to visit the dog park on Bollinger where he can run and play with other dogs. And of course my whole family likes to visit the San Ramon Library to pick out books. I love San Ramon and I never want to leave.

**Student 5:** My mother wanted to move to San Ramon because all of her friends live here. There are about 45,000 people living in San Ramon and my mother knows just about everybody.

**Student 6:** My dad wanted to move to San Ramon because he likes how the city is run. San Ramon was incorporated in 1983 which means that the people of San Ramon have a say regarding how their city is run. My dad went to a city council meeting once to say that he thought we should have a traffic light near our house. And the following year they put one in..

**Sally:** Wow. I think I want to move to San Ramon. Thank you so much for all of your time.

**Bill:** This has been a wonderful afternoon. I have learned so much. Thank you.

**Peter:** I can't wait to tell my friends in New York about San Ramon. We had better go because we have many places to visit. Thank you so much for all of your time and the wonderful information.

**(All students enter the stage and shake hands with the students. All people faced forward and sing Beautiful San Ramon to a song of their choice. Students bow and leave the stage.)**

## **Dear Teachers:**

Every year after Kathie Petrie's class has finished their study of Danville they put on a play. The children in her class usually take several parts and they also write songs to go with different sections of the play. Kathie usually invites the mayor of Danville and city council members and often they come. The students in Kathie's class dress in costumes and put the play on for the entire school. We all look forward to this play.

I have taken ideas from Kathie's play, but I have written it for San Ramon. There are a lot of parts in this play and I might suggest that you divide it up and perhaps two or even three classes put on this play. I would also suggest that you invite the mayor and members of the city council.

**Using a map.** I would have the students make a large map to show where San Ramon is located. You could make a local map, or you could make a map that would show how San Ramon relates to San Francisco. This map could be used from year to year.

**Prehistoric animals:** You could create prehistoric animals in different ways. You could make puppets, or you could take two pieces of poster paper and stuff with newspaper to make a three-D effect. You could also just make a large animal on poster board and the student could have a cut-out for his face so you could hear him/her speaking. Animals could be used year after year. You could make up a song to go with the animals and they could also do a dance. Be creative.

**Parts:** If you do with one class students can have more than one part. To eliminate memorizing too much the mayor and city council members could have the play written on their big books, so they could just read along. The students have their questions and they could also have scripts so they could just read their parts. If you are doing with more than one class divide up the parts so there are two Sallys and two Mayors etc. I have always been amazed at how well students memorize parts.

**Script:** Don't hesitate to change the play to meet your needs or make the play personal to your class. Class could pick out prehistoric animals that they want to do. Students at the end could feature reasons why they like San Ramon.

**Sets:** I don't think it is necessary to have sets, but you could have a mural with Mt. Diablo. You could add to that mural, Indian homes, a mission, an adobe house, pioneer buildings, and symbols of modern day San Ramon. These could be added and taken off as needed.

Have fun and good luck,

Gail Kameron