

# MY PLACE

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# **Introduction**

This is a story about California's history told by different children in different times. Some of the landmarks have stayed the same, even though the place has changed in other ways over the years.



# Pre-Native Americans

Seven thousand, seven hundred seventy-one years ago, around what is now San Francisco Bay, were only animals and plants. Fish were swimming frantically away from predators. A wolf was hunting for meat as her cubs got hungrier and hungrier. Squirrels were scavenging for nuts. The air was crisp, but clouds were getting ready to rain. It was as cold and foggy as always. Tall trees dripped water onto the underbrush. From the bay, rose a series of mountains. Grassy valleys grew between mountains covered in pine trees and redwoods. Not a single person could be heard or seen.

Animals were everywhere. Fish, such as Rockfishes, could be seen swimming up and down rivers, searching for something to eat, play with, or an area to sleep in. Wolves could be found hunting or scavenging for meat to keep the family satisfied. Squirrels would usually be in the forest, sleeping or finding nuts. These animals are magnificent in many ways.

The Northern Coastal Region was cold. The sun was peeking through the clouds, but fog quickly covered it. It was starting to drizzle and rain. The wind whistled through the trees and leaves blew everywhere. The Northern Coastal Region's weather was misty and usually wet.

Plants grew in many places. Trees shivered as rain plopped down onto their branches. Tall mountains that were filled with grass grew pines and redwood trees, both of which nourished the land with food and oxygen. All was peaceful in the Northern Coastal Region.





# Native Americans

**H**ello. My name is Anakausuen. The date is 7/6/1679. I live in the Cahuilla tribe in the San Jacinto Mountains. I love picking acorns with my family and making acorn flour. I love eating deer meat, but my mother thinks I shouldn't eat it because I feel sick at night. Sometimes I look into the deep night sky and think about my grandmother. I fall asleep. I see the ceremony. My grandmother. The chief is burning up the kishumnawat and singing the traditional song when someone dies. My mother is crying. My father stands still, watching and listening. He is stiff, but I can see his hands trembling. I stare at my grandmother. I keep thinking "She's alive. She's alive." But I know it's not true. I wake up in a cold sweat. It's a new day.

I hope to tell my father about the dream today. I don't know how he'll react. He might not like it. I hop out of my tipi and slowly toward the people making pots (my father is there) and he says "míyaxwe!" (hello). I say the same and say, "Father, I have this recurring dream." My father looks at me and asks me what it is. I tell him everything. I tell him about the ceremony. I tell him what I'm thinking. I tell him about every movement. Every sound. All the emotions. Do you know what he says? "I have the same dream as you do." And goes back to work. What?? Really? That's it? I shouldn't argue. I think that means he agrees. I guess I should make a pot with my father. I get lost in my thoughts. I make so many pots!! Hours pass. It's already night. I finally snap out of my thoughts and run to the kish. I quickly eat dinner and go to my tipi. I slowly close my eyes, and everything goes black. I know if I sleep long enough, I'll get to make a kish tomorrow.

Today, I made a kish with my father. He looked at something in the distance. I took a glance. I saw someone, but I looked away, wishing they didn't see me. My father told me he needed to go somewhere. I couldn't make the kish by myself, so I walked over to my friends and made baskets.

As I walked, I could see my father “talking” to these people. But no one understood what they were saying. They kept pointing to the kishes. They were all riding these creatures with long hair. But little did I know that these men would soon turn on us. Little did I know that people would be killed. Whipped. Harassed. Fought. Noosed. However you want to put it, we would be hurt. We would have to change our names. We would even have to build over and over again. I decide to change directions to our kish. I sit down on my tipi and try to piece it together. When I finally decide to give up, it’s already night. I breathe in and breathe out. I am asleep. Tomorrow will be heck. Good night.





# Missions

**H**ello. My name is Sofía, formerly Anakausuen. I live in Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa. The date is 3/5/1781. I can remember that sad, lonely day I was taken from my tipi and separated from my tribe. I screamed and kicked and called out for my father and mother, but I knew they weren't going to answer back. It was just me and that ill-bred person in a hat with a weapon. I was forced to a place with a cover on the structure. I heard bells and the people in hats carrying weapons and whips pushed me and other members of my tribe to a small quarter. I ate a small portion of food and was told to sleep on the floor. I lay on the stone-cold floor and looked at the sky. The night sky was clear with a reddish tint.

5:00 a.m., and I'm up. No one is happy. Everyone's tired. Me? I'm growing more and more despondent. I am not fond of Christianity. I need my parents. I need my friends. All-day, every day, I weave cloth and make soap. I wake up, pray, eat, work and sleep. I am getting sicker and sicker. I pray that everything will be okay again. I am getting tired of all of this nonsensical work. I do it every day. I never get a break. I wish I could be Him. God. I would take those cretinous little people and turn them into pieces of paper I could just cut and throw away. But instead, that's how I'm treated. I feel like I've just fallen off a cliff. Slowly falling, and falling.... Until I hit the ground. The stone-hard ground. Like the one in the room, I sleep in. And then I realize I'm there. I'm in that room. I realize I'm tired and this is my only chance to sleep. And so I do. And I'm falling and falling....

Into a new day. 5:00a.m., again. Mission bell rings to call us for church duty. After the prayer, we eat a little and all of us get forced to the same old structure (that I now call "the working room") and weave. Most days we weave, weave and weave. On other days we mash a flower and stir

hot oil to make soap. Mash and stir. Mash and stir. On top of working without pay, we get whipped and hit over the slightest infraction of their rules... That's it. That's what I will do. I have a big intention of burning the mission. I will start a fire at night and burn the whole place down. I really don't know what will happen next, but I hope it's something good.







# Rancho Era

¡Hola! My name is Camila. The date is February 15, 1845. I am 19 years old. I live in San Jose, Alta California with my mother, my brother, and my 3 sisters. I am the oldest in the family (with the exception of my mother). My family owns the hacienda and rancho, and we are extremely thankful for the great and powerful Governor Siedman to give us this land. We have more than 100 workers, and most of them are vaqueros.

On the rancho, all of us have many things to do. I host fiestas and compete in horse-racing contests. I have competed in about 15 contests, and I've won 10! I am most famous for doing tricks in front of a crowd.

Of course, the most important thing on our ranch is our animals. We have five hundred head of cattle, a hundred horses, seventy-five goats, fifty sheep and some pigs. We also grow wheat, corn, barley, peas and beans. Some of our workers make blankets, nails, and horseshoes. They are very busy!

On the rancho, though, we can't get everything we need. Luckily, we have more hides and tallows than we can use! So, when we see American or British ships pass by, we flag them down. If we're lucky, we can get tea, coffee, sugar, spices, raisins, molasses, hardware, boots, and shoes. I especially look forward to the sugar! When we can't get it, I feel sad.

Unlike other rancho owners, I and my family pay our workers. Most other rancho owners only give them clothes, things to eat, and a home. We give all those things, but since our workers are poor women and Indians, we think they should have a chance to improve themselves. I've noticed on our rancho, that everybody works a lot harder than on the other ranchos I've visited. Maybe one day, one of them will own a rancho of their own. I look up to a famous rancho owner, Juana Briones. She came to the town of Yerba Buena with nothing.

She saved money by selling fruits and vegetables. She managed to buy her own rancho. Everyone knows her because she will give medical help to whoever needs it. I hope one day to be half the woman she is.

Working on the rancho is hard, but it can be rewarding. Whenever I get down, I think about a coming fiesta and how happy my whole family will be celebrating together. I love my rancho, El Pollo Murado.





# Gold Rush

**H**i! My name is Willow Scott, and the date is January 1, 1850. I am the sole owner of The Union Inn, Washington Street, San Francisco. Believe it or not, before I came to San Francisco, I owned no property and I had no money. I couldn't even get a marriage proposal! The only thing I had going for me was that I could cook and carry on a conversation.

I first heard of the discovery of gold in California, the same way most people did, from President Polk's address to Congress. I lived in New York City, but things were not going so well for me. I scraped together every last penny I could to board a ship bound for San Francisco. It took many months before I arrived.

I wasted no time after I arrived in San Francisco making my way to the mining camps. People thought nothing of paying top dollar for me to cook and clean for them. I went from being poor to nearly rich in the space of a couple of months!

Life in the camps was not so great. Miners spent all day digging through mud looking for little specks of gold dust. Some people found riches, but most people didn't. However, whether they made money or not, I got paid just the same.

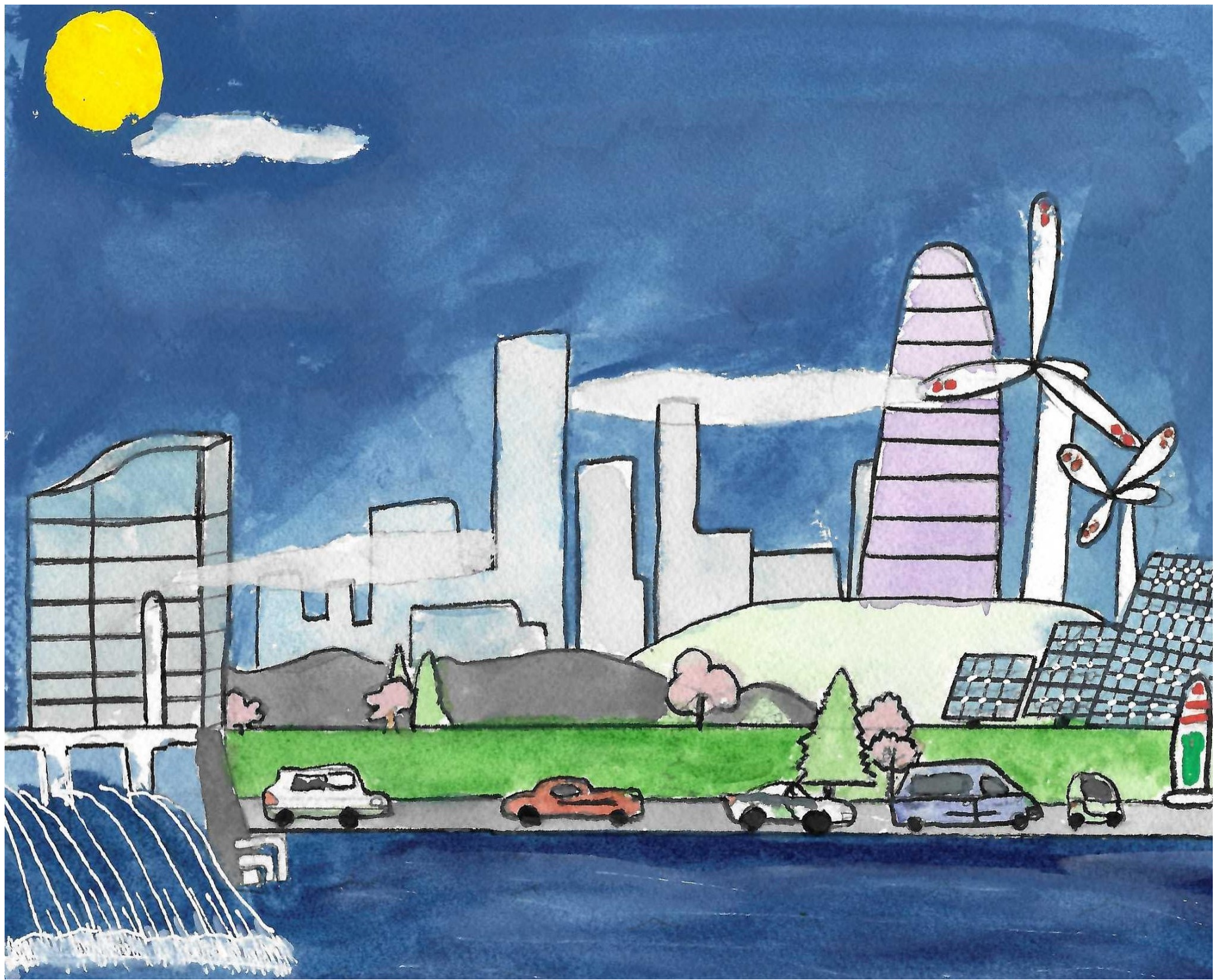
It wasn't long before I got an offer to run a boarding house in San Francisco. San Francisco had changed so much just in the few months that I spent at the camps. First of all, there were so many people! Second of all, there were so many ships! Lastly, there were so many new buildings going up in so many different directions, that it was hard to make heads or tails of the new city.

But there was something else that was new to this city, and that was a crime. San Francisco had become so dangerous that I feared for my life just walking down the street!



Some people got so fed up with it that they banded together in groups and tried to take the law into their own hands. I've heard some men talk about California being formed into a state. I hope that happens real soon.

I've been very lucky in San Francisco. I am the proud owner of my very own business. I don't think there's anywhere else in the whole world where a gal like me could have even half of what I have now. Sometimes, I think about the miners in those camps and where they are now. I bet quite a few of them are flat broke or worse. But some of them are my respected friends and neighbors in San Francisco. Some of them have houses as nice as any that I ever saw in New York. That's how it is in this part of the world. Some people win big, and some lose it all.



# Future

**H**ello! My name is Genesis. The date is May 16, 2050. I am a stock market analyst at the age of 37. I specialize in investment in California's economy. I am happy to report that California's future looks very, very bright. California solved its energy crisis by long-term planning. California made an investment to cut down on its waste and produce renewable energy. This has made California the leader in clean technology throughout the world.

A lot of people said it would be too expensive to make the change. That was because California used to have budget deficits all the time! But luckily, California passed a lot of laws to raise revenue by taxing the richest Californians. That has helped to pay for a green technology revolution!

California still has its challenges! Not everybody in the world has gotten on board with renewable energy. Since we all share the same planet, we are all affected by global warming that resulted. For example, there hasn't been snow in Lake Tahoe for many years. Some areas of California that were once covered with fruits and vegetables are now a giant dust bowl. (Yuck!)

However, unlike a lot of other places in this world, California can at least look to the future instead of thinking about the past. Because non-renewable energy ran out in other places, California's investment into renewable energy has meant we can keep plugging in our new iPhone 36s! California's companies never have to worry about the cost or availability of power. That means no interruptions of business. That's really good for stocks! And that's really good for me!

If I had one thing to say to myself in the past, it would be: Yes, you become a multi-billionaire. But, if you don't stop using non-renewable energy resources right now, you'll delay a great future source of California's wealth. And if you don't reduce waste and recycle religiously, you'll delay uncovering California's wonderful natural beauty. There's no time to lose!

# Author's Page

Anna Pavitt is a 4th grader (in 2021) living in San Francisco, California. Anna's other writing projects include a biography on Charles Darwin, Rosa Parks, and Rosalind Franklin. She also wrote short stories such as Big Bad Wolf, Performing Your Best, Thanksgiving Stories, and The Ghost of Elm Street. Anna wrote many other essays, opinion pieces, and stories throughout the years of studying at Alamo Elementary School of San Francisco.

She would like to dedicate this book to her awesome parents, Ben and Helene, her loving grandparents, Lynne and Mike, and her wonderful teacher, Mr. Siedman. She is grateful for their kindness, support, and encouragement.