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### Title

Biographical References to Charley Parkhurst: Charley Parkhurst and Her Times

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# Biographical References to Charley Parkhurst

Compiled by

**Stanley D. Stevens**

Map Librarian

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on the occasion of his talk, January 5, 1993, to the

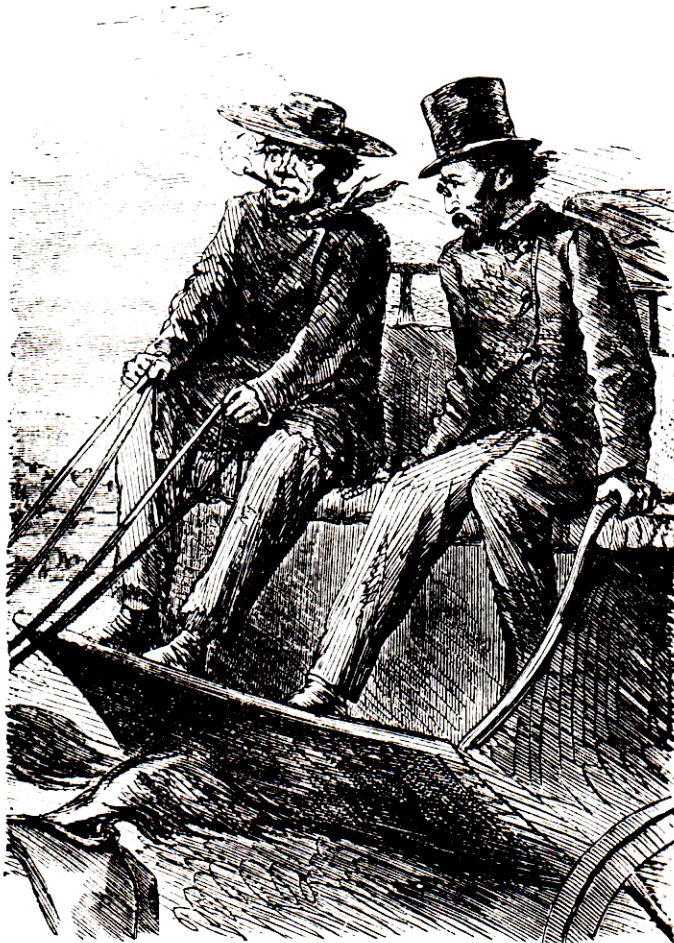
**American Business Women Association**

**Charley Parkhurst Chapter**

Santa Cruz County, California

about

## “Charley Parkhurst and Her Times”



OLD CHARLIE.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

### Charles Darkey Parkhurst

Born: 1812 New Hampshire  
Died: 1879-12-28 Santa Cruz County, California  
Age: 67  
Cause: Cancer of the mouth

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Source: *Santa Cruz County Place Names* Donald T. Clark pg. 78-79

**Cockeyed Charlie Road** Generally I have not included roads, streets and highways in this dictionary unless they were named on USGS topographical sheets. But I have included this insignificant, former street that has completely lost its identity. I found no other way in which I could include the story of one of the county's most colorful characters.

"In 1892," according to Leon Rowland (Rowland Files-under Aptos), "[Claus] Spreckels gave a right of way to [F.A.] Hihn for Loma Prieta railroad in consideration for dropping claims for a public road over Cockeyed Charlie road and Ward road." I have yet to find this road portrayed on a map, and its location can only be determined as somewhere north of Aptos.

Obviously the road was named for **Charley Darkey Parkhurst**, a legendary, rough, stage coach driver, with a black patch over the left eye, who became well-known for exploits in the Sierra Nevada and in the Santa Cruz, Watsonville and San Juan Bautista area. Upon Parkhurst's death, it was discovered that *he* was a *she*. In 1955 the Pajaro Valley Historical Association marked her grave with a monument:

Charley Darkey Parkhurst  
1812-1878  
Noted Whip of the Gold Rush Days  
Drove Stage over Mt. Madonna in  
Early Days of Valley. Last Run  
San Juan to Santa Cruz. Death in  
Cabin Near the 7 Mile House  
Revealed "One Eyed Charlie,"  
A Woman, The First to Vote  
in the U. S. Nov. 3, 1858.

"Historians have called Charley Darkey Parkhurst: Charles Parkhurst, D. B. Ransom, 'Six-Horse Charley,' 'One-Eyed Charley,' 'Cockeyed Charley,' and 'Old Charley.'"--MacDonald (1973, p.26). Unfortunately several writers have confused "Cockeyed Charley" with "Mountain Charley" McKiernan.

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Source: *Santa Cruz County Place Names* Donald T. Clark pg. 338-339

**Seven Mile House** A former stage coach stop and hotel that served the Santa Cruz to Watsonville stage line and stood on the old Santa Cruz and Watsonville

Road (now Freedom Boulevard) near present-day Day Valley Road. It is unknown when the house was built, but it was in business in 1875. *The Pacific Coast Business Directory for 1876-1977* (published in 1875) listed Jacob Steiglemann as operating a hotel at the community of SEVEN MILE HOUSE, Santa Cruz County, 13 miles south of Santa Cruz. Paulson (1875, p.225) reports J. Steigleman as operating a saloon and a hotel on the Santa Cruz Road, 13 miles from Santa Cruz. *The Great Register of Santa Cruz County, 1876* lists Jacob Steigleman, a native of Bavaria, Hotelkeeper, Corralitos, naturalized in San Francisco, 1867, registered in Santa Cruz County in 1867. Patricia Stoker (1974, p. 18) in her biography of Charley Parkhurst states that "Charley resettled on a small tract of land purchased in 1864 near the Seven Mile House on the road from Watsonville to Santa Cruz." See also Cockeyed Charlie Road. Named because of its location seven miles from Watsonville. It was also known as Steiglemanns Half Way House. See also Five Mile House.

Source: *Great Register, Santa Cruz County.* [1866-1875 folio 165]

NUMBER.	NAME.	AGE.	Country of Nativity.	OCCUPATION.
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1039	<i>Parkhurst, Charles Darkey</i>	55	<i>New Hampshire</i>	<i>Farmer</i>
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DATE.	NATURALIZED.	
	PLACE.	BY WHAT COURT.

[blank]	[blank]	[blank]
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DATE OF REGISTRATION.	SWORN.	CANCELLATION.
<i>April 25, 1867</i>	<i>Sworn</i>	<i>Not voted for 3 yrs Cancelled</i>

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There is a possibility that Charles Darkey Parkhurst voted in the next election, held November 5, 1872.

Source: *The Pajaronian*. 1872-11-14 2:2

**Official Returns--Santa Cruz County, Nov. 5, 1872.**

**Santa Cruz**—Grant, 431; Greeley, 185; Houghton, 424; Kewen, 207; Railroad, yes, 587; Railroad, no, 36.

**Soquel**—Grant, 133; Greeley, 54; Houghton, 123; Kewen, 67; Railroad, yes, 133 ; Railroad, no, 55.

**Scott's Valley**—Grant, 35; Greeley, 21; Houghton, 31 ; Kewen, 27 ; Railroad, yes, 38; Railroad, no, 21.

**New Years**—Grant, 41 ; Greeley, 7 ; Houghton, 41 ; Kewen, 9 ; Railroad, yes, 41 ; Railroad, no, 9.

**San Lorenzo**—Grant, 61; Greeley, 39; Houghton, 54; Kewen, 48 ; Railroad, yes, 87; Railroad, no, 16.

**Corralitos**—Grant, 41 ; Greeley, 7 ; Houghton, 41 ; Kewen, 9; Railroad, yes, 41 ; Railroad, no, 9.

**Pajaro**—Grant, 287 ; Greeley, 131 ; Houghton, 283 ; Kewen, 143 ; Railroad, yes, 13; Railroad, no, 395.

**Totals**—Grant, 1029; Greeley, 436 ; Houghton, 996; Kewen, 535; Railroad, yes, 927; Railroad, no, 564.

**Majorities**—Grant, 559 ; Houghton, 431 ; Railroad, yes, 353.

O'Conner got 37 votes in the county....

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Source: *The Coachman Was A Lady : The story of the life of Charley Parkhurst* by Mabel Rowe Curtis. Published by The Pajaro Valley Historical Association, Watsonville, California [n.d.] Pg. 9

“During this period of his life, Charley decided to declare his citizenship and on the Great Register of Santa Cruz County, California in 1867 is listed:

“Charley Darkey Parkhurst, age 55, occupation farmer, native New Hampshire, residence, Soquel.”

This establishes his birthdate as 1812. At an election held in Soquel on November 3, 1868, it shows him casting his first recorded vote, (9) making Charley Parkhurst the first woman to vote in the United States.”

[Curtis' footnote (9) is:] 9.—Wyoming, first state to have Woman's Suffrage. 1869.

[Which is true; California granted full suffrage in 1911, and the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution became law in August 1920.]

**POLL LIST,**

Containing the Names and E enrollment  
(sic) of all persons resident in the various  
Precincts in the County of Santa Cruz,  
State of California, registered up to  
October 4th,-1868, and entitled to vote  
at the Presidential Election:

**Soquel Precinct.**

NO.	NAME.	AGE.
.....		
197	Parkhurst, Charles Darkey ....	55
.....		

N.B.

[General Ulysses S. Grant won Santa Cruz County by a vote of 1153 to 737, a majority of 416 votes. He was President of the U.S. 1869-77.]

Source: Santa Cruz County Official Records [searched 12/29/92]

*Index to Deeds*

<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Grantee</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Vol. &amp; Pg. No.</u>
Charles Zoellin	Parkhurst, Charles D.	Nov. 13, 1873	19 / 74

<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Grantee</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Vol. &amp; Pg. No.</u>
Parkhurst, C. D.	Frank Souz[a]	Jan. 31, 1877	22 / 541

<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Grantee</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Vol. &amp; Pg. No.</u>
Souza, Frank & Marianna Isabella	Frederico de Souza da Cunha [or <u>Cunna</u> as it appears in the text of the Deed]	Nov. 26, 1880	26 / 629

**Summary of Sales**

<u>Date of Sale/Purchase</u>	<u>Sale/Purchase Price</u>	<u>Years/Months Held</u>	<u>Profit/ (Loss)</u>
November 13, 1873	\$600.		
January 31, 1877	\$915.	3 yrs. 2-1/2 mo.	\$315. +52.5%
November 26, 1880	\$750.	2 yrs. 11 mos.	(\$165.) (-18%)

Grantor  
Charles Zoellin

Grantee  
Parkhurst, Charles D.

Date  
Nov. 13, 1873

Vol. & Pg. No.  
19 / 74

This Indenture, made the thirteenth day of November in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and seventy three, between **Charles Zoellin** of the County of Santa Cruz State of California, party of the first part and **Charles D. Parkhurst**, the part of the second part, Witnesseth, that the said party of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of **Six Hundred Dollars gold coin** of the United States of America to him in hand paid by the said party of the second part, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged has granted, bargained, sold and conveyed, and by these presents does grant bargain sell and convey unto the said party of the second part and to his heirs and assigns forever, all that certain lot piece or parcel of land situate lying and being in the County of Santa Cruz, State of California and bounded and particularly described as follows, to wit —

Being a portion of the **Rancho Corralitos** and beginning at a post in a fence marked with a cross < + > from which the West end of a culvert across the County road leading from Santa Cruz to Watsonville bears North 54° East 50 links distant running thence South 24° 53' East 8 10/100 chains thence South 31 1/2° East 5 89/100 chains, thence South 40° 20' East 6 85/100 chains to Station from which a Witness post — in a fence bears South 75 1/2° West 52 links distant thence South 76 1/4° West 14 90/100 chains to Station on the West boundary of Corralitos Grant — thence North 28° 34' 18 60/100 chains to Station thence North 69° East — to place of beginning being **25 3/4 acres** a little more or less of the S.E. portion of the tract conveyed by **W. H. Patterson** to **Ernest Zoellin** by deed bearing date Oct. 25th 1870 & recorded in Vol. 14 page 334 Santa Cruz Co. Records and to party of first part by **Ernest Zoellin** by deed recorded in Vol. 14 page 498.

Together with all and singular the tenements hereditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in any wise appertaining, and the reversion and revisions, remainder and remainders rents issues and profits thereof and also all the estate, right, title, interest, property, homestead, possession, claim and demand whatsoever, as well in law as in equity of the said party of the first part, or in or to the said premises, and every part and parcel thereof with the appurtenances.

To have and to hold, all and singular, the said premises, together with the appurtenances unto the said party of the second part **his** heirs and assigns forever.

In witness whereof, the said party of the first part has here unto set his hand and seal the day and year first above written.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered in }  
the presence of }  
State of California }  
County of Santa Cruz } S.S.

/s/ Charles Zoellin \_\_\_\_\_  
| Seal |

[notarized by his statement:]  
L. D. Holbrook  
Notary Public

Filed for Record at the Request of C. D. Parkhurst  
June 3 A.D. 1875 at 20 min past 7 P.M. Recorded June 30 1875

<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Grantee</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Vol. &amp; Pg. No.</u>
Parkhurst, C. D.	Frank Souz[a]	Jan. 31, 1877	22 / 541 & 542

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**\$915**            31 January 1877, Charles D. Parkhurst sold to Frank Souza the same  
**25 3/4 acres:**

“On this 31st day of January A. D. eighteen hundred and seventy-seven, before me, L. D. Holbrook a Notary Public, personally appeared **Charles D. Parkhurst**, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument and **he** acknowledged to me that **he** executed the same. ....”

Filed at request of Grantee, February 2 A. D. 1877  
Recorded Feb. 22, 1877

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<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Grantee</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Vol. &amp; Pg. No.</u>
Souza, Frank & Marianna Isabella	Frederico de Souza da Cunha [or <u>Cunna</u> as it appears in the text of the Deed]	Nov. 26, 1880	26 / 629

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**\$750.**            **25 3/4 acres**            same as conveyed by Charles D. Parkhurst to  
Frank Souza by deed dated January 31st 1880 [sic.  
i.e., 1877] ... recorded in Vol. 22 of deeds pg. 541

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Source:            **Browne, J[ohn] Ross**, 1821-1875.

Adventures in the Apache Country: a tour through Arizona and Sonora, with notes on the silver regions of Nevada. Illustrated by the author. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1871. Reprinted by Promontory Press, New York, 1974.

[Note: Hart, pg. 54, indicates 1869 as original date of publication.]

Illustrations of stagecoaches:

- pg. 295: *Night Scene in the Sierras.*
- pg. 309: *Rather Dusty.* Stagecoach whip, six horses, six passengers.
- pg. 316: *A General Smash.*
- pg. 332: *Old Charlie.*
- pg. 326: *Dangerous Boulders*

SCPL 917.9

B 81

from “Crossing the Sierras.” Chapter XXXI. beginning pg. 303:

[September 1863]

“Arrived at length in Sacramento...; trunks and knapsacks are vindictively hurled into the baggage-car of the Folsom train; ... and the locomotive frets and fizzes on its iron way to Folsom [Folsom, California].

“... The town of Folsom itself has grown somewhat within the past four years, in consequence of the trade passing through it on the way to Washoe [Washoe Mining



Region, Nevada *with his destination at* : Virginia City, Storey County, Nevada]. ... Teaming and staging are the grand features of enterprise in this lively little place, and teamsters and stage-drivers the most prominent public characters. The language spoken by this class of the population is a mixture of horse, mule, and ox, with a strong human infusion of blasphemy. Something perhaps in the difficulties and vexations that beset their occupation gives them rather a ferocious expression of countenance, and it is not always an easy matter to mollify the asperities of their nature.

[*asperity* n. pl. *asperities* 1. Roughness or harshness, as of surface, sound, style, etc. 2. Something uneven, harsh, or rough. 3. Bitterness or sharpness of temper; harsh feelings.]

“As most passengers desire to get an outside seat, except when it rains, it is highly important that you should proceed at once to secure the favorable consideration of the superintendent, who is a gentleman of great suavity and politeness, considering his position. Should you fail in that, I warn you not to climb up on the fore-wheel with any hope of getting the seat of honor alongside the driver; for whether you be a Minister plenipotentiary or a member of the Common Council he will exercise the right pertaining to his craft—order you down, and then enjoy your discomfiture for a distance of ten miles. I have seen respectable men cling to the front railing of stages, with their feet uneasily balanced on the forewheels, for over half an hour—men worth probably fifty thousand dollars in stocks—and then seen them fail—utterly, miserably, and ingloriously fail—to get a seat. I have seen drivers of stages laugh and chuckle by the hour with some sympathizing chum picked up at the last moment; and I have heard these despotic men say they had a good notion to let every body ride on top, for then the stage would be pretty certain to capsize and break a few legs and arms. Why stage-drivers, who are paid a liberal stipend per month for putting passengers over the public highways, should be so vindictively hostile to the travelling community surpasses my comprehension.

“The scene on the arrival of the cars is quite inspiring. Stages backed up in a long row; prancing horses in front; swearing and sweating porters, baggage-masters, drivers, and passengers all about and behind; ...

“It was 5 o'clock P.M., just three hours after the usual time, ... when we took our places on the stages, and girded up our loins for the trip across the mountains. I was the lucky recipient of an outside seat. The seat of honor, by the side of that exalted dignitary the driver, was accorded me by the “polite and gentlemanly agent.”

**“The driver was Charlie. Of course every body knows Charlie—the same Old Charlie who has driven all over the roads in California, and never capsized any body but himself.** On that occasion he broke several of his ribs, or as he expressed it to me, “Bust his sides in.” I was proud and happy to sit by the side of Charlie—especially as the road was supposed to be a little undulating even by its best friends. Possibly I may have travelled over worse roads than the first ten miles out of Placerville. If so, they must have been in Iceland; for there are not many quite so bad on the continent of North America. I speak of what the road was at the close of summer, cut up by heavy teams, a foot deep with dust, and abounding in holes and pitfalls big enough to swallow a thousand stages and six thousand horses without inconvenience to itself. There are places, over which we passed after dark, where I am sure the road is three miles wide, and every acre of it a model stage-trap; where it branches off over hills, and along the sides of hills, and

into deep cañons, and up hills again; dark, dismal places in the midst of great forests of pine, where the horses seem to be eternally plunging over precipices and the stage following them with a crashing noise, horribly suggestive of cracked skulls and broken bones. But I had implicit confidence in Old Charlie. The way he handled the reins and peered through the clouds of dust and volumes of darkness, and saw trees and stumps and boulders of rock and horses' ears, when I could scarcely see my own hand before me, was a miracle of stage-driving. "Git acoup!" was the warning cry of this old stager. "Git along, my beauties!" was the natural outpouring of the poetry that filled his capacious soul.

"Do many people get killed on this route?" said I to Charlie, as we made a sudden lurch in the dark and bowled along the edge of a fearful precipice.

"Nary a kill that I know of. Some of the drivers mashes 'em once in a while, but that's whisky or bad drivin'. Last summer a few stages went over the grade, but nobody was hurt bad—only a few legs'n arms broken. Them was opposition stages. Pioneer stages, as a gen'r'l thing, travels on the road. Git acoup!"

"Is it possible? Why, I have read horrible stories of the people crushed to death going over these mountains!"

"Very likely—they kill 'em quite lively on the Henness route. Git along, my beauties! Drivers only break their legs a little on this route; that is, some of the opposition boys did it last summer; but our company's very strict; they won't keep drivers, as a gen'r'l thing, that gets drunk and mashes up stages. Git acoup, Jake! Git along, Mack! 'Twon't pay; 'tain't a good investment for man nor beast. A stage is worth more'n two thousand dollars, and legs costs heavy besides. You Jake, git!"

"How in the world can you see your way through this dust?"

"Smell it. Fact is, I've travelled over these mountains so often I can tell where the road is by the sound of the wheels. When they rattle I'm on hard ground; when they don't rattle I gen'r'lly look over the side to see where she's agoing."

"Have you any other signs?"

"Backer's another sign; when I'm a little skeer'd I chaw more'n ordinary. Then I know the road's bad."

"Don't you get tired driving over the same road so often?"

"Well, I do—kalklate to quit the business next trip. I'm getting well on in years, you see, and don't like it so well as I used to, afore I was busted in!"

"How long have you driven stage?"

"Nigh on to thirty years, an' I'm no better off now than when I commenced. Pay's small; work heavy; gettin' old; rheumatism in the bones; nobody to look out for used-up stage-drivers; kick the bucket one of these days, and that's the last of Old Charlie."

"Why, you must have made plenty of friends during so long a career of staging?"

"Oh yes, plenty of 'em; see 'em to-day, gone to-morrow! Git along!"

And so passed the long hours of the night, Charlie and I gossiping pleasantly about the risks and charms, and mysteries of the stage-driving profession. A hard life is that of the stage-driver; a life of exposure and peril, and wear and tear, such as few other men experience in this world. You, my good friend, who cross the Sierras of California once or twice in a life-time, imagine you have done great things—you boast of your qualities as a traveller; you have passed unscathed through the piercing night air; have scarcely shuddered at the narrow bridges, or winced at the fearful precipices. You have braved all the dangers of the trip, and can afford to slap yourself complacently on the leg in proof of the fact that you are

still sound. But think of old Charlie! He has crossed the mountains a thousand times; crossed when the roads were at their worst; by night and by day; in storm and gloom and darkness; through snow and sleet and rain, and burning suns and dust; back and forth; subject to the risks of different teams and different stages; his life balanced on the temper of a horse or the strength of a screw. This is a career worthy the consideration of the heedless world! Who thinks of old Charlie? Where is the gazette to herald his achievements? What pen is there to trumpet his praises?

**All hail to thee, Old Charlie! Never shall it be said that ingratitude is one of my vices. Here, in these illuminated pages your name shall be rescued from oblivion. Sweet and gentle ladies shall pay the tribute of admiration to your manly features; and honest men shall award you honor, to whom honor is due. For in the vicissitudes of my career have I not found brave and sterling qualities in all classes of men; heroes whose names are never known; hearts and souls, human effections, and the fear of God in the bodies of stagedrivers?** [to pg. 314, para. 2]

.....

[pg. 318, para 2:] Imagine yourself seated in front of the stage, by the side of that genial old whipster, Charlie, who knows every foot of the way, and upon whom you can implicitly rely for the safety of your life and limbs. Holding the reins with a firm hand, and casting a penetrating eye ahead, he cracks his whip, and away go the horses with inspiring velocity—six magnificent chestnuts, superbly adorned with flowing manes and tails. The stillness of the night is pleasantly broken by their measured tread, and the rattle of the wheels over the gravel echoes through the wild rifts and openings of the cañon like a voice from the civilized world telling of human enterprise. Down, and still down, we plunge into the gloomy depths of the abyss; the ghostly forms of trees looming up on our left; to the right, rising far beyond the range of vision, the towering heights of the Sierras; and ever and anon yawning gulfs in front and bottomless pits of darkness still threatening to devour. The road turns and winds like a serpent, sometimes apparently running into a huge bank of granite boulders, then whirling suddenly, and plunging into a shimmering wilderness of rocks and trees, where destruction seems inevitable. Yet onward dash the horses, with an instinct so admirable in its precision that it seems for the time superior to human intelligence. They never swerve from the track; through the fretwork of light and darkness they pursue their way with unrivalled ease and grace; sweeping around the narrow turns; now coursing along on the extreme edge of the precipice, or closely hugging the upper bank as the road winds to the right or the left; now plunging down and whirling with marvellous sagacity over the narrow bridges that span the ravines, often where there is neither rail nor post to mark the way, ever true to the slightest touch of the reins, and ever obedient to the voice of the driver. **Is it a wonder that Old Charlie loves his horses and talks of his teams with a kind of paternal affection—that he knows them by heart, and holds converse with them through the long watches of the night as with human friends?**

[bottom of pg. 322:] As we approached Strawberry [Strawberry Flat, California], I am free to admit that I became somewhat nervous. A lurking suspicion took possession of me that I was recognized by the driver, Old Charlie; though I took particular pains to join with him in abusing that vile slanderer Ross Browne, whose Peep at Washoe had aroused the indignation of every publican on the route. Charlie

admitted that he had never read any of this fellow's productions, but he believed him to be the Prince of Liars on general principles; an assertion in which I naturally coincided, with an internal reservation that it was strange how angry it made people to have the truth told about them. "Lord, Lord, Charlie," said I, handing him a cigar, "how this world is given to lying!" By this time we were at Strawberry, and I saw that I had to face the music."

[pg. 324, para 3:] "All aboard!"—a new voice, a new face, and a new driver. I bade good-bye to Charlie, and hoped we might meet again in the next world, if not in this."

Note: James Hart, *Companion to California*, pg. 54, provides a brief biographical sketch of "BROWNE, J[ohn] Ross (1821-75), born in Ireland, was brought to Kentucky [at] age 11, and as a young man became a shorthand reporter for the U.S. Senate. .... After three months in California (1849) he found his post gone but got another for himself as the official reporter of the Constitutional Convention that led to California's statehood."

A definitive and comprehensive biography and bibliography of J. Ross Browne is the book *A Western Panorama 1849-1875 the travels, writings and influence of J. Ross Browne on the Pacific Coast, and in Texas, Nevada, Arizona and Baja California, as the first Mining Commissioner, and Minister to China* by David Michael Goodman. Glendale, California : Arthur H. Clark Co., 1966. UCSC McHenry Library: F 865 .B898 G6



THE AUTHOR'S RECEPTION ON HIS RETURN TO VIRGINIA CITY

From Browne's sketch in *Harper's Magazine*, June 1865.

From: *A Western Panorama 1849-1875 ...* by David Michael Goodman p. 175

Note Stage Coach with Charley in driver's seat.

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Source: *Santa Cruz Sentinel* 1871-09-02 4:1

The Poll List for the October election contained the name of *Parkhurst, Charles Darkey*.

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Source: *Santa Cruz Sentinel* 1880-01-03 3:5

### **Charley Parkhurst a Woman.**

In the Court calendar of this county frequently appeared "Hihn vs. Parkhurst" and "Parkhurst vs. Hihn," and this same Parkhurst was placed on the Great Register in 1867, then aged 55 years. Last Saturday this Parkhurst died on the Moss ranch, six miles this side of Watsonville, of cancer of the mouth, and in laying out the body the discovery was made that the supposed he was a perfectly formed she. "Charley's" real name is not know. Thirty-two years ago she is represented to have been a stage-driver in Providence, R.I. Coming to California in 1849 she engaged in stage-driving in different parts of this State, at one time killing a highwayman who attempted to rob the stage she was in charge of. At a very early period she drove stage between San Jose and Santa Cruz via San Juan. Many years ago she retired from the whip and engaged in farming at Soquel, chopping in the woods during the winter. Being thrifty, industrious and economical, temperate and a full hand at any employment in which she engaged, often taking the heart of a tree from genuine masculines of double her avoirdupois, her accumulations were regular and her wealth considerable at the time of her death, which took place in a lonely cabin, with no one near and her secret her own. Why this woman should live a life of disguise, always afraid her sex would be discovered, doing the work of a man, may never be known. A mother she is represented to have been, and it may date back to that proud eminence from which virtuous women alone can fall, fall by the deception of some man monster, but there must have been a cause, a mighty cause. Who shall longer say that a woman can not labor and vote like a man?

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Source: *Santa Cruz Sentinel* 1880-02-21 1:9

### **Charley Parkhurst,**

---

A few weeks ago we printed an account from the Santa Cruz SENTINEL of the death in that county of a well known person styled Charley Parkhurst, but who, at death, was found to be a woman, and on whose body was discovered evidence that she had been a mother. The files of *The Gazette*, the predecessor of *The Times and Gazette*, shed some light on this affair, and we are indebted to Judge H. A. Schofield, who was then editor of *The Gazette*, for directing our attention to the subjoined paragraph, which appeared originally in *The Gazette* of April the 18th, 1868 [sic, 1869?] and which Judge Schofield says refers to the individual subsequently known as Charley Parkhurst:

Much has appeared in the various newspapers throughout the country during the last two months, in regard to the wonderful revelations concerning the man-woman, **Ellen Burnham**, an account of which first appeared in the *LaCrosse Democrat*, the celebrated Brick Pomeroy's paper. At first the whole story was doubted by almost every one, but the main facts related have since been abundantly substantiated by reliable authority, with the exception that **Ellen Burnham** was never a mother, which fact takes off a large portion of the romance.

We have recently come into the possession of facts relating to a case, which is perhaps fully as wonderful as the above mentioned case. The story as we have it from our informant is this: Some twelve or fourteen years ago, when this [San Mateo County] was a portion of San Francisco county, there was a young man running a two-horse stage from Redwood City to Searsville. The man's name is withheld for good reasons; but all the old residents of this section no doubt remember him well, as a stirring, industrious business man. In 1855 or 1856, he drew off his stage from the Searsville route and went into the southerly part of the State, but eventually settled down in Watsonville, Santa Cruz county, and engaged in other pursuits, at which place he still resides, or did at last accounts.

He had always remained single, and no suspicions were ever raised as to his sex until a short time ago, when circumstances over which he found it impracticable to control, revealed the long hidden secret. The young gentleman who used to drive the Searsville stage gave birth to a child. The matter was known to but a very few friends at the time, and the whole thing was hushed up, as the child lived but a very few hours, or was dead when born, we are not positive which. The mother did not change her attire and still passes for a man as before, and, although looking slightly feminine, still not enough so as to raise any suspicion that she was not what she pretends to be.—*Times and Gazette*.

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Source: *Santa Cruz Sentinel* 1880-02-21 4:1

### **The Early Life of the Female Stage Driver.**

The Providence, R. I., *Journal* has the following to reference to the early life of Charley Parkhurst, the woman stage driver, who died near Watsonville several weeks ago:

The article in regard to Charley Parkhurst in the *Journal* of this morning has been quite the topic of talk to-day. He lived here for a good many years, and was exceedingly popular with his associates and with the people for whom he worked. He was considered one of the best drivers in the city, and his services were sought by the best people. Quite a number of the wealthy families always depended upon having him for a driver if they ordered a stable team. His early history is a little obscure. He told one of his associates that he came from New Hampshire, but he did not tell the name of the town. He told others that he came from the poor-house at Worcester, from which he had run away. The truth is quite likely to be that he came from some part of New Hampshire to Worcester, and fell into the hands of the officers of the poor while there.

The story goes that while in the poor-house he discovered that boys have a great advantage over girls in the battle of life, and he desired to become a boy. He

borrowed a suit of boy's clothes and eloped with them from the poor-house. In the character of a boy he went to work in Ebeneza Balch's stable at Worcester, and remained there until Mr. Balch moved to Providence. Charley had proved himself faithful and efficient, and Mr. Balch brought him to the What Cheer stables, then in the rear of the Franklin House. Charley soon became an expert whip. His judgment as to what could and what could not be done with a wagon was always sound, and his pleasant manner won him friends everywhere. After working for Mr. Balch a number of years, Parkhurst went to Georgia, and drove a stage for a time. He did not like Georgia, however, and one day he reappeared among his old friends in Providence. He was at once engaged by William Hayden and worked for him a number of years. He then hired himself to Charles H. Child, whose stable was where Campbell's now is. He drove the best team in the stable. The horses were gray, exactly matched, and it was quite a sight to see Charley drive them through a crowd. He always took care of this team himself. He was fond of a six-in-hand, and called it nothing but fun to handle four spirited hourses. He was never known to have more than he could do with his team, but once. He went with six horses and twenty-five couples to a dance at Pawtucket one dreadfully cold night. Coming home the air was so cold and the horses so frantic, that Charley's hands became numb, and he had to get Liberty Childs to drive the leaders, while he took charge of the other four horses.

He had in the stable a room which he furnished quite nicely, and where he could generally be found when not on duty. About 1849, James Burch [James E. Birch] and Frank Stevens went to California and started a stage line [see Hart's *A Companion to California* : "California State Company" pgs. 64-65]. After a year or two they sent for Charley to come and drive for them. He had saved \$700 or \$800, the gold fever was pretty strong at the time, and about 1851 he decided to go. He drove for Burch and Stevens awhile, and then went upon the great stage route across the continent. His career in California has already been given.

His old friends here have manifested the greatest interest in his success on the Pacific Coast, and one of them summed the matter up very concisely. He said: "Well, there wan't no reason why Charley should not get on well. He understood his business; he was pleasant and stiddy and sober, and with them any feller can do well."

The only people who have any occasion to be disturbed by the career of Charley Parkhurst are the gentlemen who have so much to say about "woman's sphere" and "the weaker vessal." It is beyond question that one of the soberest, pleasantest, most expert drivers in this State, and one of the most celebrated of the world-famed California stage drivers was a woman. And is it not true that what woman had done woman can do?

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Source:        *Santa Cruz Sentinel*        1880-10-1        3:4

—"Charley Parkhurst" used to be with Hank Monk a good deal in early days and when Hank heard the report that Charley had turned out to be a woman, he was so overcome for several minutes that he gasped for breath, and drawled out: "Je—hosaphat! I camped out with Parkie once for over a week, and we slept on the same buffalo robe right along; wonder if Curly Bill's been playin' me the same way."

—*Carson Appeal*.

“Charley ‘ Parkhurst.

Everybody knows “One-eyed Charley,” the popular stage-driver of the olden time, who used to drive stage between San Juan and Santa Cruz via Watsonville. He wrote his full name “Charles D. Parkhurst.” Of late years he has lived on a ranch between Watsonville and Aptos. He was afflicted with a cancer in the throat and saw Mr. Plumm, the Soquel cancer doctor, who said his medicine would cure the cancer but that the operation would so swell the throat that he could not breathe. Plumm told him to get a silver tube from San Francisco, have it inserted in the windpipe below the cancer (a common operation, known as tracheotomy), to breathe through during the operation and he would cure him. But Charley wouldn’t do it and on Monday last he died. A Mr. Woodward, who lives on a ranch near Soquel, attended him during the 35 days of his last illness, and laid him out after his death. It was then that he discovered that “Charley” was a woman. Mr. Woodward and Mr. O’Neil, the undertaker, good authority, assert that it was a woman, and furthermore, that at sometime she must have been a mother. Charley had laid by some little money, having some deposited in the Watsonville bank. He left his money to Mr. Harmon, of San Juan, giving him an order for the certificate of deposit and other documents which had been left in Stoesser’s safe. Charley was buried in a lot which Mr. Stoesser holds in the Protestant burying ground. Stoesser keeps the lot for the benefit of any friend of his who may wish to be buried there, his family lot being the other cemetery.—Transcript.

**C. H. A. S. McLAUGHLIN'S**  
*(Late California Stage Company's U. S. Mail.*  
**Daily Line of Concord Coaches.**  
LEAVES the Plaza, (San Francisco), every morning, (Sundays NOT excepted) at 8 o'clock, A. M.  
for REDWOODS, SAN MATEO, SANTA CLARA and SAN JOSE.  
Returning, leaves San Jose every morning at 7 o'clock.  
Coaches leave Oakland every day for Union City, Mission of San Jose, Warm Springs, and San Jose City, on the arrival of the 10 o'clock boat.  
Returning, leave San Jose daily, at 7 o'clock, A. M., arriving at Oakland in time for the half-past 12 o'clock, boat for San Francisco.

**MONTEREY AND SANTA CRUZ LINES,**  
RUN AS FOLLOWS:  
Leaves San Jose for Monterey every morning at 6 o'clock, A. M.  
Returning, leaves Monterey every morning at half past 5 o'clock, A. M.  
Leaves San Juan for Watsonville and Santa Cruz every day at noon.  
Returning leaves Santa Cruz for Watsonville San Juan, Monterey, San Jose and San Francisco every morning at 5 o'clock, A. M.  
C. McLAUGHLIN, Proprietor  
N. B.—Passengers called for and left in any part of the city.  
je 14 11



**Bibliographical References to**  
Works about  
**Charley Parkhurst**  
and  
**J. Ross Browne**

Compiled by

**Stanley D. Stevens**

Map Librarian

University Library

University of California—Santa Cruz

on the occasion of his talk, January 5, 1993, to the

**American Business Women Association**

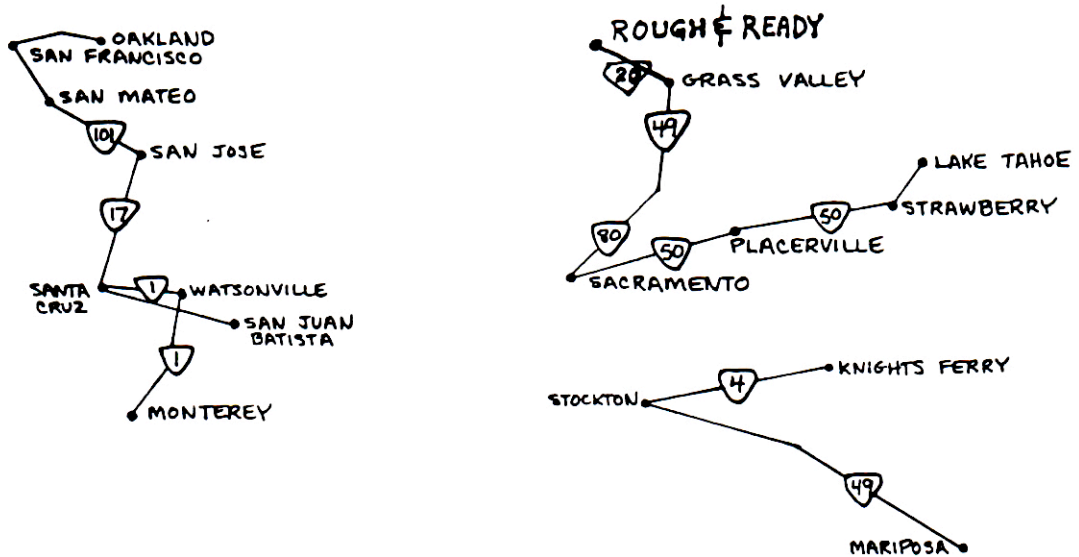
**Charley Parkhurst Chapter**

Santa Cruz County, California

about

**“Charley Parkhurst and Her Times”**

**Main Stage Routes Driven by Parkhurst  
from 1851 - 75**



From: *Cockeyed Charley Parkhurst - The West's Most Unusual Stagewhip*,  
by Craig MacDonald - p. 16

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Curtis, Mabel Rowe.

**The coachman was a lady; the story of the life of Charley Parkhurst.** Watsonville, Calif., Pajaro Valley Historical Association, 1959.

Description: 16 p. illus. 24 cm.  
Subjects: Parkhurst, Charlotte Darkey, 1812-1879.  
Other entries: Pajaro Valley Historical Association.  
United States California Watsonville (1959)  
Call numbers: UCSC Spec Coll F869.S723C87 Santa Cruziana

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MacDonald, Craig.

**Cockeyed Charley Parkhurst, the West's most unusual stagewhip.**  
Palmer Lake, Colo., Filter Press, 1973.

Description: iv, 44p. illus. 22cm.  
Notes: Bibliography: p.43.  
Subjects: Parkhurst, Charley Darkey, 1812-1879.  
Call numbers: UCSC McHenry F869.S723M32 Maps Ref  
UCSC Spec Coll F869.S723M32 Santa Cruziana

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Pfingst, Edward Porter, 1894-

**Scattered leaves in Pajaro Valley history**, gathered by Edward P. Pfingst. [1957?]

Description: 39 l. illus. 37cm.  
Notes: "A talk given at the Watsonville Rotary Club January 23rd, 1957."  
Xerox copy of typescript. Includes bibliographical references.  
Contents: The Watsonville Transportation Company.--**The story of Charley Darkey Parkhurst.**--Watsonville's sugar factory.  
Subjects: Parkhurst, Charley Darkey, 1812-1879.  
Spreckels, Claus, 1828-1908.  
Pajaro Valley Consolidated Railway Company.  
Watsonville Transportation Company.  
Western Beet Sugar Company. Pajaro Valley (Calif.) -- History.  
Call numbers: UCSC Spec Coll F868.P34P45 1957a Oversize Santa Cruziana

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**Selected papers on the history of Santa Cruz County. 1974.**

Description: 83 l. illus. (part col.) 29cm.  
Notes: "Papers selected from those written for: History X409--History of Santa Cruz County [given by] Elizabeth Spedding Calciano."  
Xerox copy of typescript. Includes bibliographies.  
Contents: Earthquakes in the lives of Santa Cruzans by R.W. Beach. --  
The people of the West by C.M. Kessler.--  
**The burden of Charley Parkhurst by P.H. Stoker.**  
Subjects: Parkhurst, Charley Darkey, 1812-1879.  
Costanoan Indians.  
Earthquakes -- California -- Santa Cruz County.  
Santa Cruz County (Calif.) -- History.  
Other entries: Calciano, Elizabeth Spedding, 1939-  
Beach, R. Wesley. Earthquakes in the lives of Santa Cruzans. 1974.  
Kessler, Cristina Mary. People of the West. 1974.  
Stoker, Patricia Haden. Burden of Charley Parkhurst. 1974.  
Call numbers: UCSC Spec Coll F868.S3S432 1974a Santa Cruziana  
MICROFILM ONLY TO BE USED.  
Original shelved as: F858.C21.v.26:5a.x. Printing master.

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Goodman, David Michael.

**A western panorama, 1849-1875; the travels, writings, and influence of J. Ross Browne on the Pacific Coast, and in Texas, Nevada, Arizona and Baja California, as the first mining commissioner and Minister to China.** Glendale, Calif., A.H. Clark Co., 1966.

Description: 328 p. illus., facsims., maps (1 fold.) port. 25 cm.  
Series: Western frontiersmen series ; 13.  
Notes: Includes index.  
"A chronological bibliography of the writings of J. Ross Browne": p.[299]-306  
**Bibliography:** p. [307]-315.  
Subjects: Browne, J. Ross (John Ross), 1821-1875.  
West (U.S.) -- History.  
Call numbers: UCSC McHenry F865.B898 G6

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Lone, E. Miriam (Emma Miriam), 1872-1953.

**Check-list of first editions of the works of John Ross Browne, California pioneer : with a chronology 1821-1872 [i.e. 1875] / compiled by E. Miriam Lone.** New York : L.C. Harper, 1930.

Description: 16 p. : port. ; 24 cm.  
Notes: Date on t.p. changed in ms. from 1872 to 1875.  
Subjects: Browne, J. Ross (John Ross), 1821-1875 -- Bibliography.  
Call numbers: UCB Bancroft Z8124.15.L84  
Note: Bancroft has 2 copies. Copy 2, in original wrappers. Inscribed by Isabel B. Nichols (Mrs. William B. Nichols), great granddaughter of John Ross Browne, to Lina Browne; with notes by Lina Browne.  
Provenance: **John Ross Browne papers.**  
UCLA Spec Coll Z 8124.15 L84  
UCSD Central F 865 .B898z L66 1930 Spec Coll Ref

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McConnell, Ward E.

**J. Ross Browne -- bonanza reporter, by Ward E. McConnell, official reporter, native son of the Golden West.**

Found in: *National Shorthand Reporter*. Detroit, Mich., 1946. vol. VIII, no. 1, p. 3-5  
Subjects: Browne, J. Ross (John Ross), 1821-1875.  
Call numbers: UCB Bancroft F860.B82M2  
Note: Detached copy.

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**Missing pieces from the mosaic of J. Ross Browne's career.** Washington, D.C. : U.S. Customs Service, 1988.

Description: 28 p. : ill. ; 22 x 28 cm.  
Series: Historical study ; #9.  
Doc Numbers: Govt Doc No.: T 17.27:9 GPO Item No.: 950-P  
Notes: Cover title. Shipping list no.: 89-729-P. "July 1988"--P. [4] of cover.  
Includes bibliographical references.  
Subjects: Browne, J. Ross (John Ross), 1821-1875.  
U.S. Customs Service -- Officials and employees -- History.  
Customs administration -- California -- History.  
Customs administration -- United States -- History.  
Other entries: U.S. Customs Service. Historical study (U.S. Customs Service) ; # 9.  
Call numbers: UCB Documents F865.B898 M579 1988  
UCSD Central T 17.27:9 Documents United States  
CSL Main Lib T 17.27:9 Govt Pubs

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Rather, Lois, 1905-

**J. Ross Browne, adventurer / Lois Rather.** Oakland, CA : Rather Press, 1978.

Description: 110 p. : ill. ; 27 cm.  
Notes: "Of an edition of 150 this is no. 87."  
Includes bibliographical references and index.  
Subjects: Browne, J. Ross (John Ross), 1821-1875.  
Voyages and travels. Pioneers -- California -- Biography.  
Businessmen -- California -- Biography.  
California -- Description and travel -- 1848-1869.  
California -- Biography.  
Call numbers: UCB Bancroft x F865.B9 R3  
Note: The Bancroft Library has copy no. 17.  
UCB Main F865.B898 .R37  
UCI Main Lib F865.B898 R37 Spec Coll  
UCLA Spec Coll F 865 B898 R37  
UCR Rivera F865.B76 R37 Spec Coll  
UCSB Library F865.B898 R37 Wyles Coll  
UCSD Central F865.B898 R37 Spec Coll Rare  
CSL Main Lib PS 1145 B3 Z7 c,2 California  
CSL Main Lib PS 1145 B3 Z7 c,2 California Non Circ

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Rock, Francis J. (Francis John)

**J. Ross Browne : a biography ...** / by Francis J. Rock.. Washington, D.C. : Catholic University of America, 1929.

Description: x, 80 p. ; 24 cm.  
Notes: Thesis (PH. D.)--Catholic University of America, 1929.  
Bibliography: 73-78.  
Microfilm. Berkeley, Calif. : University of California, Library Photographic Service, 1989. 1 microfilm reel ; 35 mm.  
Subjects: Browne, J. Ross (John Ross), 1821-1875.  
Other entries: United States District of Columbia Washington (1929)  
Call numbers: UCB Bancroft MICROFILM F864.R69  
Note: Positive microfilm. UCB MasterNeg 89-1405  
Note: Original shelved as: F864.R69. Printing master (shelved with Main's negatives).  
UCD Main Lib PS1145.B3 R6  
UCLA Spec Coll PS 1145 B3R5  
UCSB Library PS1145.B3 R6 1929 Wyles Coll Note: Photocopy.  
CSL Main Lib B R8824r General Coll  
CSL Main Lib B R8824r California Non Circ  
UCR Rivera PS1145.B3 R6 1976

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Walker, Franklin Dickerson, 1900-

**Irreverent pilgrims; Melville, Browne, and Mark Twain in the Holy Land**, by Franklin Walker. Seattle, University of Washington Press [1974]

Description: xii, 234 p. illus. 22 cm.  
Notes: Includes bibliographical references.  
Subjects: Melville, Herman, 1819-1891  
Browne, J. Ross (John Ross), 1821-1875  
Twain, Mark, 1835-1910  
Innocents abroad.  
Palestine -- Description and travel.  
Call numbers: UCSC McHenry DS107.W16

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Winther, Oscar Osburn, 1903-1970.

**Via western express & stagecoach.** Stanford University, Stanford University Press [c1945]

Description: 158 p. illus. 27 cm.  
Notes: "Bibliographical note": p. 149-150.  
Subjects: Express service -- California.  
Coaching -- California.  
California -- History.  
Call numbers: UCB Main F864.W63 UCSB Library F864.W52  
UCD Main Lib F864.W83 UCSD Central F864.W83  
UCI Main Lib F864.W83 CSL Main Lib q 979.4 W78 California  
UCLA URL \* F 864 W73v UCR Rivera F864.W57

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