





# CHARLEY PARKHURST

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Artwork by Mor Erlich

Produced by History UnErased, Inc.

**Kathleen Barker (she/her)** has over 20 years of experience as a museum and library educator. Kathleen is History UnErased's program director and researcher, author, and the host of "Deep Dives and Backstories" episodes from *UnErasing LGBTQ History and Identities: A Podcast*.

She is also co-author of History UnErased's Intersections & Connections supplemental U.S. history, civics, and social studies curriculum.

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She is also co-author of History UnErased's Intersections & Connections supplemental U.S. history, civics, and social studies curriculum.

**Mor Erlich (he/him/Mor)** is an animator based in NYC, who has been creating educational LGBTQ+ content since 2011. As an advocate for trans and queer youth, Mor has lead affirming gender and identity workshops for schools and families internationally. Mor created The Dragtivity Book for Drag Queen Story Hour NYC, the queer variety web series called Sez Me, as well as promotional and introduction videos for History UnErased.

**History UnErased** is a national education non-profit, founded by educators for educators, entirely dedicated to putting LGBTQ history in its rightful place — the classroom — and uniting all "We the People" with a more complete story of America.

GLITTERING GOLD WAS DISCOVERED AT SUTTER'S MILL IN THE RUGGED TERRAIN OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA,

IN 1848,

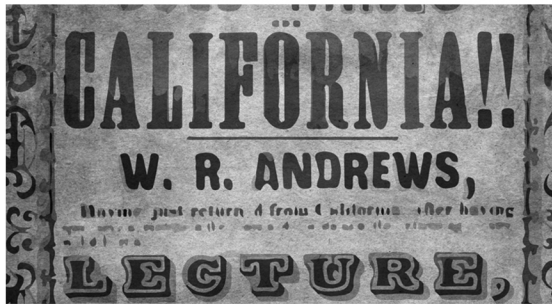


AND

# THE GOLD RUSH BEGAN!

LIKE THOUSANDS OF OTHERS, CHARLEY PARKHURST WENT WEST IN SEARCH OF GREATER OPPORTUNITY

AND GOLD!



BUT INSTEAD OF PANNING FOR GOLD...

HE EARNED HIS GOLD



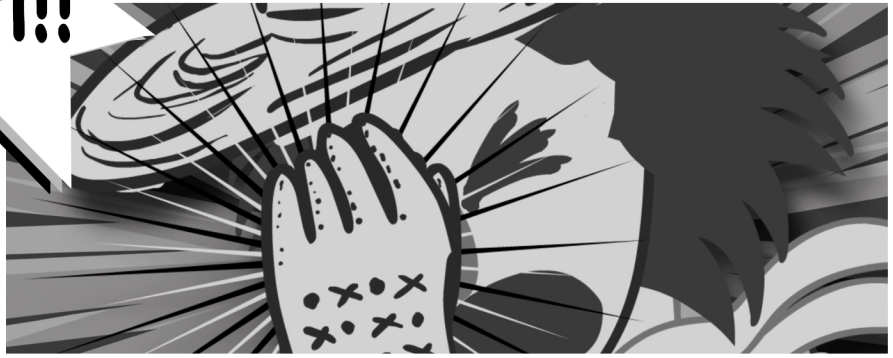
BY TRANSPORTING THE PROSPECTORS.



HE EARNED THE MONIKER "ONE-EYED CHARLEY" AFTER LOSING AN EYE WHEN SHOEING ONE OF HIS HORSES,



AGH!!



AND WAS ALSO KNOWN AS "SIX-HORSE" CHARLEY

FOR HIS DEFT HANDLING OF LARGE TEAMS OF HORSES.



CHARLEY HAD LEGENDARY STATUS AS A STAGECOACH DRIVER. THESE DRIVERS, OR "WHIPS" AS THEY WERE CALLED, WERE THE CELEBRITIES OF THE TIME PERIOD!



HE WAS SO FAMOUS THAT IN

**IN 1848,**

CHARLEY WAS FEATURED IN AN ARTICLE IN HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE, A VERY POPULAR AND WELL-READ PUBLICATION.



THE AUTHOR, JOHN ROSS BROWN, TRAVELED WITH CHARLEY THROUGHOUT NORTHERN CALIFORNIA



AND WROTE ABOUT HOW HE NAVIGATED THE MOST CHALLENGING MOUNTAIN ROADS WITH EXCEPTIONAL COMMAND OF THE HORSES AND STAGECOACH. EVEN IN THE SNOW!



# CHARLEY PARKHURST

## HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

No. CIV.—JANUARY, 1877—Vol. XVIII

TROPICAL JOURNEYS.—By ORAN

### "Boss of the Road"



### "One-Eyed Charley"

THE return from Portobello to Aspinwall was accomplished with a dash of the pen. We set sail—we arrived. But embodied in that dash were certain incidents which it will be necessary to relate in order to the full understanding of certain circumstances which are to follow. Of first importance was an acquaintance formed with Colonel Totten, the Chief Engineer, and Mr. Conter, the General Superintendent, of the Panama Railroad.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856, by Harper and Brothers, in the Clerk's Office of the United States Court for the Southern District of New York.

Vol. XVIII—No. 104.—K

ACCORDING TO LEGEND, WHEN THE NOTORIOUS BANDIT NAMED SUGARFOOT ATTEMPTED TO HOLD UP HIS STAGECOACH,



CHARLEY WHIPPED THE HORSES INTO A FIERCE GALLOP



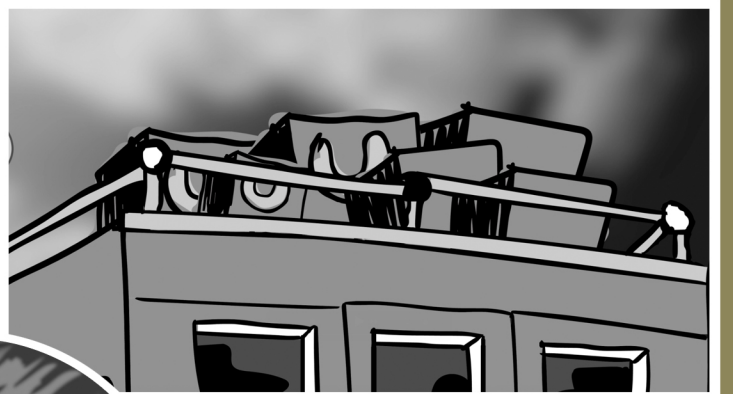
AND BARRELED STRAIGHT THROUGH THE AMBUSH WITHOUT HESITATION,



SAVING HIS PASSENGERS



AND PROTECTING THEIR POSSESSIONS FROM A ROBBERY.



BY THE  
1870s,

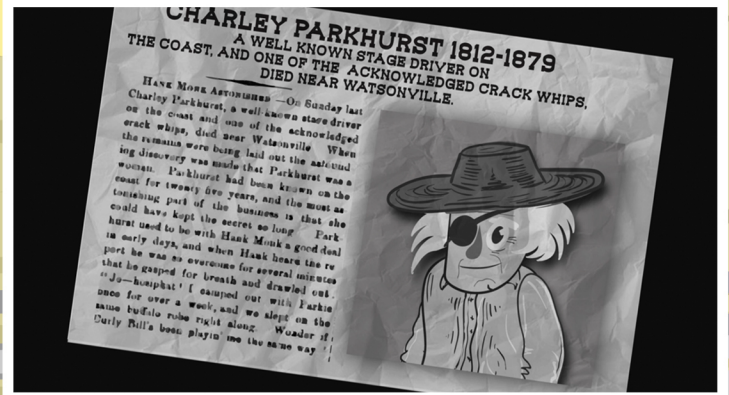
HE LEFT STAGECOACH DRIVING BEHIND



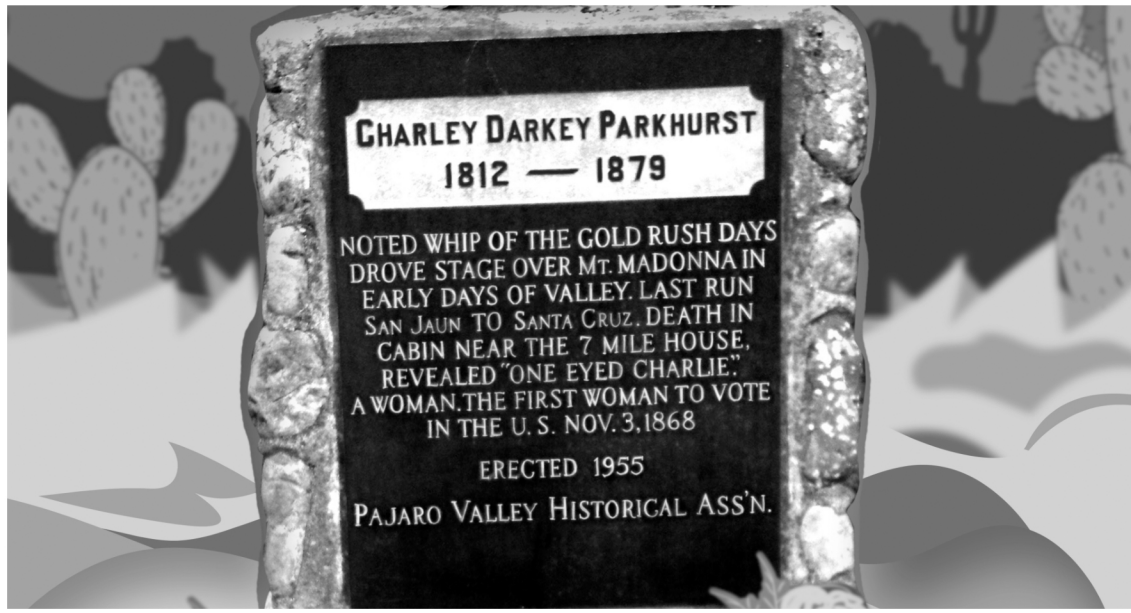
AND BOUGHT A SMALL RANCH IN THE  
SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS.



CHARLEY PARKHURST DIED ON DECEMBER 28, 1879.



CHARLEY PARKHURST'S GRAVESTONE, ERECTED IN 1955 IN WATSONVILLE'S PIONEER CEMETERY IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, MYSTERIOUSLY READS:



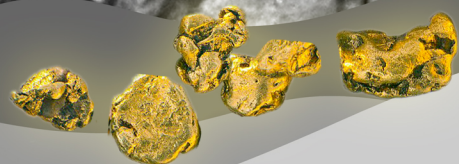
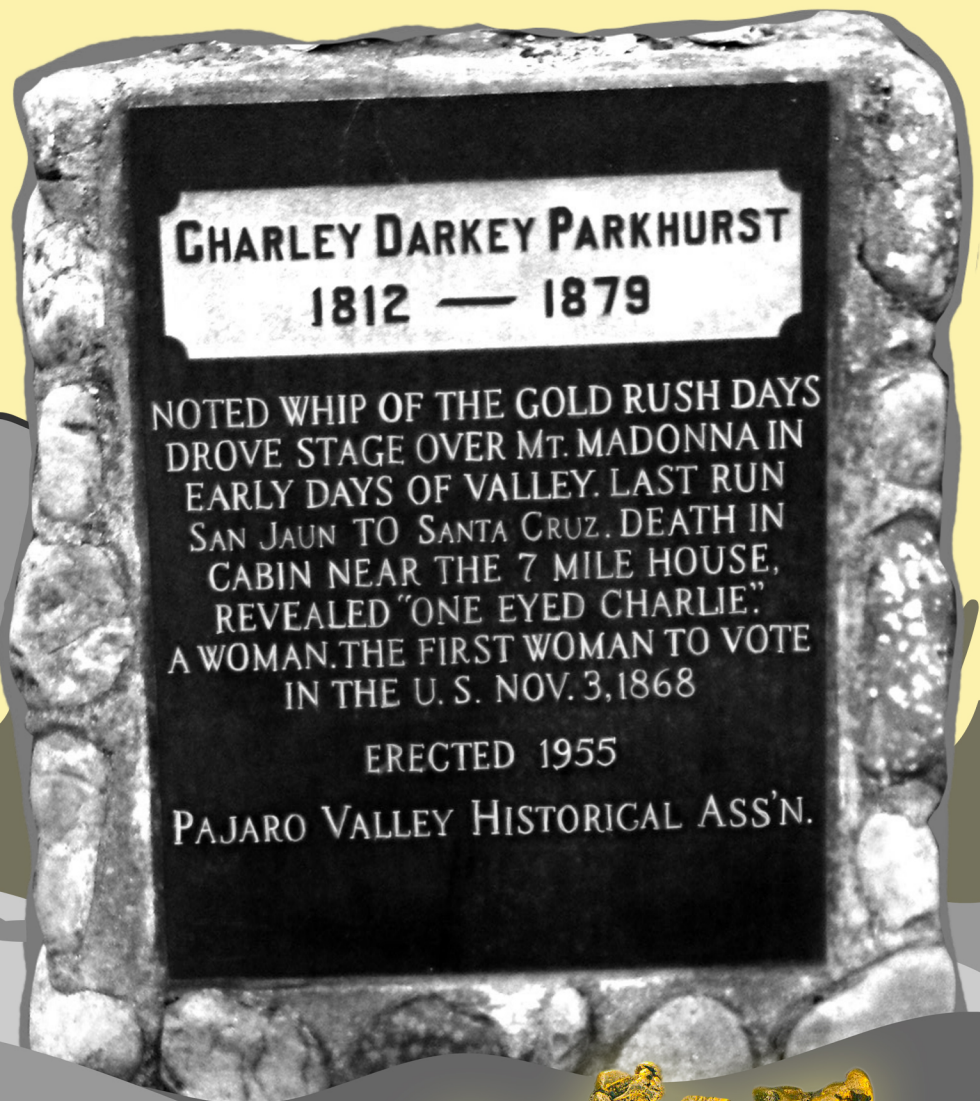
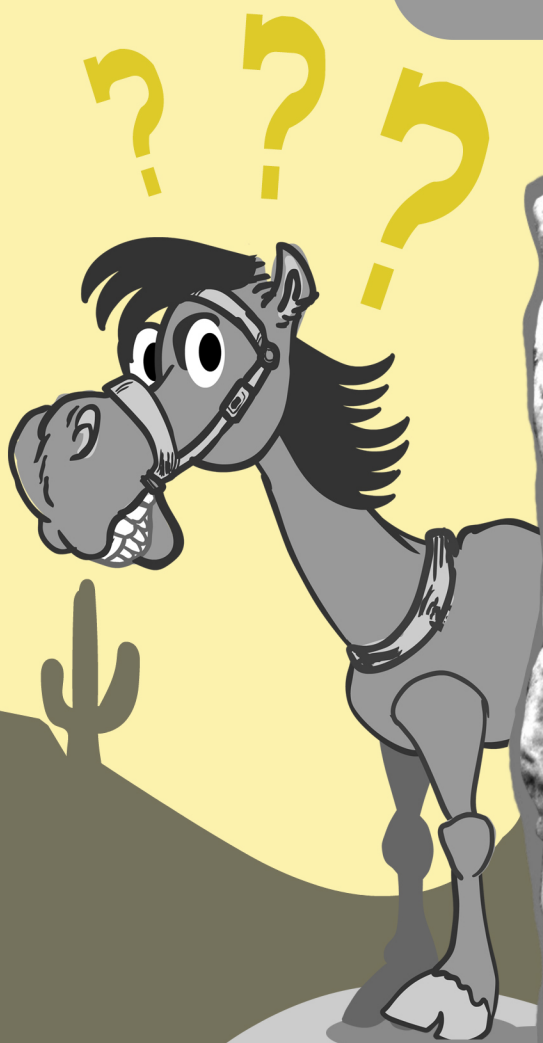
"NOTED WHIP OF THE GOLD RUSH DAYS. DROVE A STAGE OVER MT. MADONNA IN EARLY DAYS OF VALLEY. LAST RUN SAN JUAN TO SANTA CRUZ. DEATH IN A CABIN NEAR THE 7 MILE HOUSE, REVEALED "ONE EYED CHARLIE", A WOMAN. THE FIRST WOMAN TO VOTE IN THE U.S. NOV. 3, 1868."

# QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

1. WHAT QUESTIONS MIGHT A VISITOR TO THE CEMETERY HAVE ABOUT THIS GRAVESTONE AND CHARLEY PARKHURST'S LIFE?

2. WHAT MIGHT CHARLEY THINK ABOUT THIS INSCRIPTION?

3. HOW DID CHARLEY LEARN HOW TO DRIVE A STAGECOACH?  
READ ON!



# VOCABULARY ABOUT TAKING CARE OF HORSES

**A livery stable** is a business that boards, feeds, and cares for horses for a fee. Historically, liverys served as a rental hub for horses, carriages, and sleighs, acting like a "hotel" for travelers. Common in the 19th century, they were similar to modern parking garages or car rental agencies.

**Mucking stalls** means cleaning out a horse's living space by removing dirty bedding, manure, and soiled hay, then replacing it with fresh, clean bedding.

**Tacking a horse** means putting all the riding equipment on a horse before you ride — this includes horseshoes, the saddle, which goes on the horse's back, and the bridle, which goes on its head to help the rider steer.

## BACKGROUND ABOUT ONE-EYED CHARLEY:

In 1812, Charlotte Darkey Parkhurst was born in either Lebanon, New Hampshire, or Sharon, Vermont. Baby Charlotte was abandoned by her parents and spent her early childhood years in an orphanage. Around age 12, Charlotte donned boys' clothing, ran away, and became Charley Parkhurst!

Charley traveled to Worcester, Massachusetts, and found employment at a livery stable.

In exchange for food, clothing, and housing, Charley took care of the horses: mucking the stalls, tacking the horses, and cleaning the carriages.

The stable owner, Ebenezer Balch, eventually relocated to Providence, Rhode Island, and brought Charley with him. He taught Charley how to handle horses and command a stagecoach team.

By the 1840s, Charley began earning money as a stagecoach driver and quickly built a reputation as one of the most capable drivers in the profession, working the Providence, Rhode Island, to Worcester, Massachusetts route.

Fast forward to 1848, when gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill. At the time, the only way to reach the California gold fields was on foot or on the back of a horse or a mule. Recognizing a great money-making opportunity, some of Charley's co-workers moved to California and started the California Stage Company.

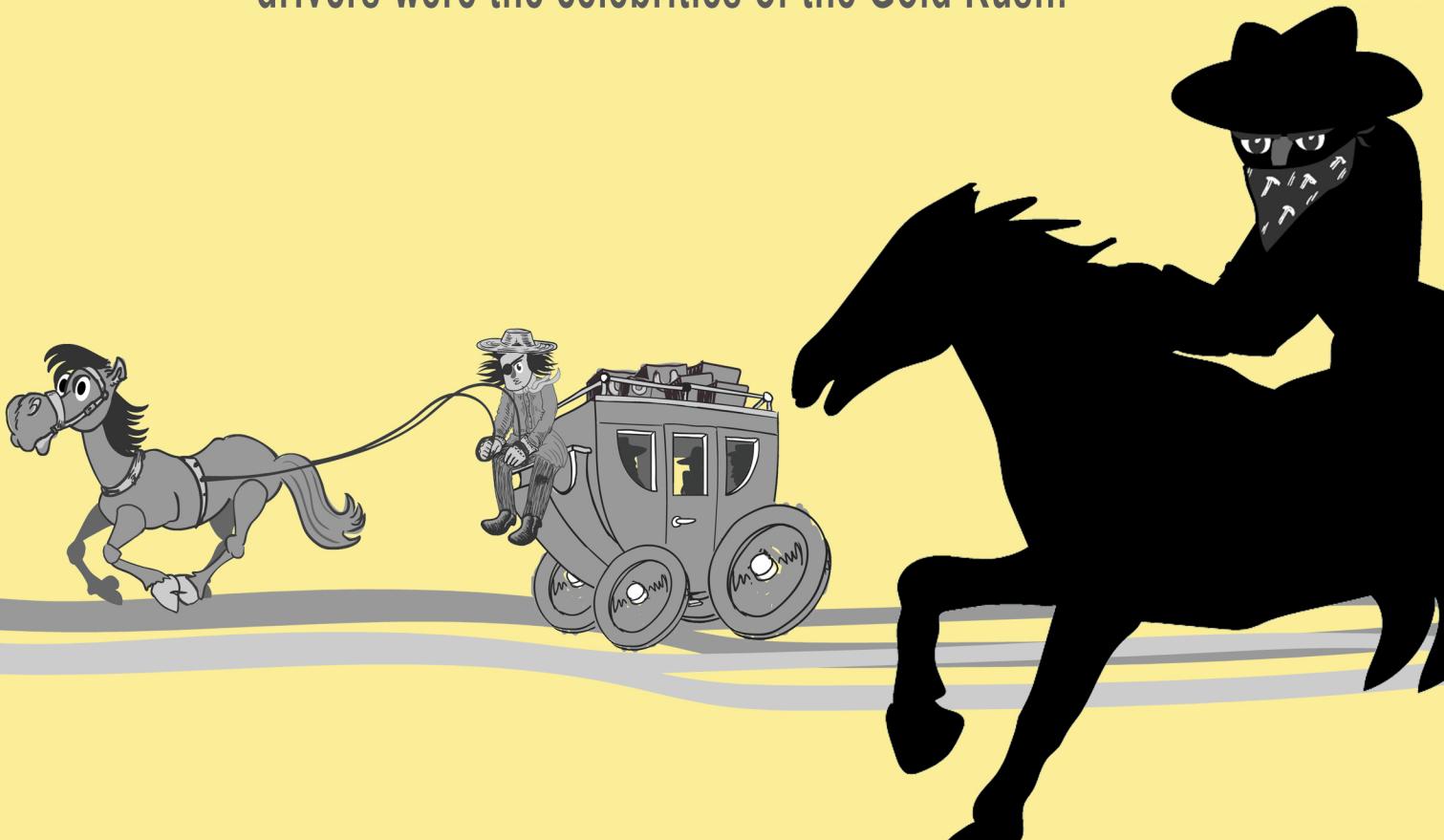
So, Charley headed into the Wild West to join them! Charley transported all sorts of passengers, including prospectors, politicians, and even a few prisoners, around the San Francisco Bay area and the Sierra Nevada Mountains. And you know the rest of the story about Charley Parkhurst's remarkable life!

# THE WILD AND DANGEROUS WORLD OF STAGECOACH DRIVERS!

Stagecoaches were basically wooden boxes on wooden wheels, protected from road damage with an iron hoop, and pulled by teams of four to six horses. The routes through the rugged terrain needed a series of "stages" or stops, roughly 10 to 20 miles apart, where coaches would change horses and/or drivers, and passengers could rest and resupply.

Passengers were crowded together on wooden benches while they inhaled dust from the road. They often endured extreme temperatures and weather, and the passengers and their driver might go days without a good night's sleep. Traveling by stagecoach was not just uncomfortable; it was dangerous: they might crash on mountain passes, be attacked by bandits, and the horses might run away and leave them stranded!

The men who drove these coaches were well-respected, and often called "whips", or "reinsmen". The drivers needed extraordinary skill and nerves of steel, as well as incredible strength, to control the horses and keep their passengers and valuable cargo safe. It is understandable why stagecoach drivers were the celebrities of the Gold Rush!



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Since 2015, History UnErased has partnered with thousands of schools and districts across the country to improve the education all students receive in their mainstream U.S. history, civics, and social studies education.

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**UnErased.org**

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