EDWARD W. BUSHYHEAD and JOHN ROLLIN RIDGE, Cherokee Editors in California

By Carolyn Thomas Foreman

Two of the Cherokee Indians who went to California during the gold rush remained there and became well-known and honored citizens whose histories are recalled at intervals in newspaper stories published about them in their adopted state. Edward W. Bushyhead and John Rollin Ridge joined the gold-seekers in 1850. Both suffered severe hardships to which they were not accustomed since they had been reared in comfort, one in the Indian Territory and the other in Arkansas.

Edward Wilkerson Bushyhead, born in Cleveland, Tennessee, March 2, 1832, was the son of the Rev. Jesse Bushyhead and Eliza Wilkerson Bushyhead. He was only seven years old when the Cherokees were ruthlessly forced from their comfortable homes in Georgia by white people who were determined to possess themselves of the land of the Indians. Jesse Bushyhead, one of the best-loved and most highly respected men of his nation, led a party of one thousand of his people into the wilderness; this journey was one of terrible hardships, not the least being a delay of one month on the east bank of the Mississippi River, where the ice running madly, prevented the outcasts from proceeding on their way. When the western side of the river was reached a sister was born to young "Ned" Bushyhead and from the place of her birth she was named Missouri, preceded by Eliza in honor of her mother.²

¹History of San Diego County . . . Lewis Publishing Company (Chicago, 1890), p. 273.

²For an account of Eliza Missouri Bushyhead Alberty see Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. IX, No. 1, (March, 1931), pp. 43-55. Judge Henry M. Furman in a report to the Grand Lodge A. F. & A. M. of Indian Territory at its 31st annual communication reported: “Allow me to commend to you as an example of pure charity a noble woman . . . a Cherokee Indian, and the widow of a Master Mason. She lives at Tahlequah and is affectionately called by every one ‘Aunt Eliza’ . . . while we have been professing Masonry this woman has been living
The Bushyhead family, with other Indians, settled near the Arkansas line at a place called Breadtown because rations were issued there when the Cherokee refugees arrived from the East. This location later became known as Baptist Mission. There the Cherokee Messenger was published and the mission contributed substantially to the advancement of the Cherokees. The Rev. Jesse Bushyhead was chief justice of the Cherokee Nation at the time of his death in 1844.

That same year young Edward Bushyhead learned the printer's trade and no doubt helped to set type on the Cherokee Messenger, first issued in August, 1844—the first periodical published in the present State of Oklahoma. Later Bushyhead worked at his trade in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

"In 1850 he crossed the plains to California, stopping near Placerville, El Dorado Co., . . . a year afterward removed to Tuolumne Co., and followed mining there two years, and afterward in Calaveras Co. In the latter place he engaged in printing until 1868" when he removed to San Diego, "bringing with him printing-office material, with which he started the San Diego Union."

In connection with William Jeff Gatewood, Bushyhead had been publishing a newspaper at San Andreas, Calaveras County, where he acted as foreman. Their outfit reached San Diego September 19, 1868 and Bushyhead was so unimpressed with the place that he would not allow his name to appear at the masthead. J. N. Briseno, office boy of the establishment, was given as the publisher. The equipment consisted of an old Washington hand press and a good assortment of type. The office was in a frame building next door to the parsonage in Old Town, the earliest settled portion of San Diego.

On October 3 the partners issued a prospectus for their paper in which they stated that no political tirades or personal abuse

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Masonry. As royal blood flows through her veins as ever came from the heart of any queen. . . Let her memory be perpetuated and handed down as a sweet and precious legacy and as an example to posterity. . . . I trust that the Grand Lodge will erect a monument to her memory upon our Orphans' Home grounds with her figure upon its top holding an orphan child in her arms. . ." Mrs. Alberty is said to have reared and educated at least twenty orphans.

"History of San Diego County, pp. 273-74."
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would ever appear in its columns. Politically, the paper was to be neutral. The first number of the San Diego Union appeared October 10, 1868. It was a four-page, six-column quarto and contained fifteen and a half columns of reading matter, well set up and printed. The Union had a hard struggle with a subscription list of slightly less than a thousand and poor advertising patronage.

Gatewood sold his interest in the Union to Charles P. Taggart in May, 1869, the firm becoming Taggart and Bushyhead. Prosperity followed this change and Taggart soon bought out Frederick A. Taylor, late of San Francisco. The sheet was enlarged to seven columns on January 20, 1869, and on May 12, William S. Dodge became Bushyhead's partner.

The office of the Union was moved June 23, 1870, and on the 30th of that month the paper was issued from Horton's Addition to the city of San Diego. The building stood at the southeast corner of Fourth and D streets. On September 22, 1870, Dodge retired being succeeded by Douglas Gunn who had previously been a printer and reporter on the Union. A great achievement of the paper was the printing in full of the president's message, which was received by telegraph, "A piece of newspaper enterprise never before attempted by any 'country paper' in the United States."

In the spring of 1871 there were only two daily papers in Southern California when Bushyhead and his partner brought out the first daily in San Diego, March 20, 1871. Strenuous days followed for the publishers who were obliged to work like slaves to make a success of their enterprise. They paid out $1,200 for telegraph news the first year and $2,000 the following year. This partnership had lasted almost three years when Bushyhead retired in June, 1873, receiving $5,000 as his share of the business.

Publication of the weekly edition of the Union was continued and the publishers advertised April 1, 1871, that "The Daily Union is now delivered at every inhabited house in San Diego

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*History of San Diego County, 1542-1907 . . . by William E. Smythe, San Diego, 1907, pp. 479-484.
*Ibid.
*Ibid.
save three.” The yearly subscription was $10.00. For some time John P. Young was on the staff of the Union and he later became managing editor of the San Francisco Chronicle.7

From 1875 to 1882 Bushyhead served as deputy sheriff of San Diego County.8 He was then elected sheriff by the Republican Party and he was re-elected in 1884,9 having been nominated both times by acclamation. Bushyhead became an Odd Fellow in 1861 and he was also a Knight Templar. On July 1, 1889 he became a partner in the printing firm of Gould, Hutton & Company. He was married on December 14, 1876, to Mrs. Helen Corey Nichols, who was born in New York, August 13, 1839. The ceremony was held at the Lick House in San Francisco and the vows read by Hon. E. D. Wheeler. Bushyhead built a residence at 1114 Cedar Street, San Diego, at the corner of Third Street.10

Bushyhead was chief of police of San Diego11 and he was said to be “. . . a hard worker, a generous man and a warm-hearted friend.”12 Mr. and Mrs. Bushyhead adopted a daughter whom they named Cora but she lived only a few years. After


8“Mr. Bushyhead has lately made a tour of eastern, western and southern states, spending most of the winter in Washington. He is a newspaper manager of ability and as a job printer has no superior on the coast . . .” The Daily Union (date missing) wrote: “Mr. Bushyhead is an old liner in Democracy, a Southerner by birth, a sympathizer with secession . . . But the base use to what they call Democracy in his country has been put has driven him from his old party. He is now a Republican, or, more properly, a liberal Democrat . . .”

9“Mr. Edward W. Bushyhead, the nominee for sheriff, is well known to every voter in the county as an upright, straightforward man, honorable in all his dealings, sincere in his relations to others, and true to every obligation resting upon a good citizen. He is a man of remarkable executive ability, fine business capacity, great decision of character, and unquestioned courage.” (Daily Union, date missing). The San Bernardino Index wrote of Bushyhead when he was renominated for sheriff: “No better man could have been selected. Thoroughly honest, cool, brave and intrepid in times of danger; patient, wary and sagacious when on the trail of a criminal; courteous and gentle . . . generous almost to lavishness, he is a true type of a thorough American gentleman . . .”

10History of San Diego County . . . Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago 1890, p. 274.

11“We feel personally gratified at the election of E. W. Bushyhead as chief of police of San Diego. Ned Bushyhead is one of nature’s noblemen. He is square as a die. As true as Toledo steel. As brave as Paladin. As generous as a child. He never knew the meaning of fear . . .” (Redlands Citrograph—date missing).

12It is a well known fact that Bushyhead was the means of bringing to justice many of the notorious and desperate criminals in California.
her death a place was always set for her at the table as Mrs. Bushyhead was a spiritualist and she believed the girl was still with them. Mrs. Bushyhead was the next to go. Her death occurring July 26, 1901 at her home, 3123 C Street. She was sixty-two years of age and had lived in San Diego thirty-two years. Her remains were sent to Los Angeles for cremation according to the Evening Tribune, July 26, 1901.

Edward W. Bushyhead died suddenly on March 4, 1907, at Alpine where he had lived for several months hoping to benefit his health. He was seventy-five years old and his friends were numbered by the hundreds. In interviewing persons who knew him in San Diego the author was impressed by the high regard in which the memory of Mr. Bushyhead was held. One of his old friends on the Union remarked that if there are any more Cherokees like "Ned" Bushyhead in Oklahoma that they would be happy to have them come to San Diego to live.

Mr. Bushyhead’s remains were at Johnson & Connell’s Chapel at D and Seventh Street, San Diego until the body was shipped to Tahlequah, Indian Territory, the home of his sister, Mrs. Eliza Bushyhead Alberty, where it was interred in the family burying ground.13 He rests with his brother, Chief Dennis Wolf Bushyhead; his sisters Mrs. Nancy Bushyhead McNair and Mrs. Eliza Missouri Bushyhead Alberty and her husband, Bluford Alberty.

JOHN ROLLIN RIDGE

Accounts of John Rollin Ridge, published in Oklahoma, describe him as a poet and fail to relate that he was one of the foremost editors of his day in the great state of California; that he was a magazine writer of note and a politician in a limited way. After a comprehensive search through the newspaper files and archives of California the writer has attempted to show herein the prominent position held by this Cherokee Indian in the state of his adoption.

The life span of Ridge carried him from his birthplace in the Eastern Cherokee Nation to his grave in California by way of Indian Territory and Arkansas. It is likely that his life

13The San Diego Union, March 5, 1907, p. 5, col. 4; ibid., March 6, 1907, p. 14, col. 5.
would have been passed among his own people except for the murder of his brilliant father, John Ridge, as a result of a political feud among the Cherokees.

Rollin Ridge, as he was called by his family, was the eldest son of John Ridge and Sarah Northrup Ridge whose marriage at Cornwall, Connecticut created a great stir in the conservative New England village because of the Indian blood of the bridegroom. He was born on his father’s estate “east of the Oss-te-nar-ly” in Georgia, March 19, 1827. His Indian name was Cheesquat-a-law-ny or Yellow Bird. The Ridge home was a large two-story house provided with every comfort and the boy attended a school built by his father and presided over by Miss Sophia Sawyer, a New England missionary, who made her home with the family. When Rollin was ten years old the school was discontinued owing to the disturbed state of affairs in the Cherokee Nation and the forced removal of his people to the West.

After the family was settled in the new Cherokee Nation, John Ridge provided another school building and Miss Sawyer resumed her teaching of the Ridge children with other young people of the neighborhood, invited to join the classes. At the age of twelve Rollin witnessed the tragic death of his father, stabbed to death in the presence of his wife and children, at his home on Honey Creek, June 22, 1839.

Mrs. Ridge, panic stricken by the murder of her husband, her father-in-law and their cousin, Elias Boudinot, hastily removed her children to Fayetteville, Arkansas where she established a new home. She was accompanied by the faithful Sophia Sawyer who started a school which proved to be one of the most popular establishments of the state, in its time. Young Ridge attended school for two years after which he went to Great Barrington, Massachusetts to continue his education. He was 14

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14 “... the school which John Rollin Ridge attended in Great Barrington in 1841-43 was probably the Great Barrington Academy, for that is the school which seems to have been in existence there during that period. The school is mentioned in Part I of Charles J. Taylor’s History of Great Barrington, 1928, p. 312. He says: ‘The Great Barrington Academy, erected in 1841, by an association of citizens, incorporated for that purpose, was first placed in charge of the late James Sedgwick, who continued as its principal for eight or nine years, but eventually removed to Alabama. It was afterwards superintended for several years by a number of different teachers, without proving very successful, and was finally converted into a dwelling house.’ (American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts, February 18, 1936).
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oblighed to return to Arkansas on account of ill health and his education was continued under the tutelage of the Rev. Cephas Washbourne, missionary to the Cherokees.†

In 1847 Ridge was married to Elizabeth Wilson in the Cherokee Nation and a daughter was born whom they called Alice.‡ Several writers have stated that Ridge became involved in the still acute political feud in his nation, which resulted in his killing one of the enemies of his party but a contemporary account of the unfortunate affair published in the Fort Smith Herald, Wednesday, June 6, 1849 (editorial page, col. 5), gives an entirely different version. Ridge fled to Missouri, leaving his wife and baby daughter in Arkansas. The story in the Fort Smith newspaper, copied from the Arkansas Intelligencer (Van Buren) related: "Fatal Recontre (sic) in the Cherokee Nation. We have been favored by a gentleman with the following account of a rencontre that came off, a short time since, between David Kell and Rollin Ridge, which proved fatal to the former:

"'Ridge missing his stallion, went to Kell’s and enquired if he had been seen. ‘There is a gelding,’ said Kell, pointing to the animal, standing near a pool of blood. ‘Who made him so,’ said Ridge. ‘I did,’ replied K., ‘and am willing to stand by my deeds with my life.’ Ridge sprang from his horse to the ground. — Kell motioned to approach, when Ridge remarked that the disparity of their strength forbade that they should fight in close contact, ‘and,’ said he, drawing a pistol, ‘if you approach me, you will lose your life.’ Kell advanced. ‘Stand back Kell,’ said Ridge, ‘advance any farther, and you die.’ Kell advanced, and soon lay dead.’"

"This account is from a respectable source; yet it is too imperfect and partial to be considered as entirely reliable until

† Autobiography in the preface to Poems by John R. Ridge (San Francisco, 1868).
‡ Notes on John Rollin Ridge in California State Library, Sacramento, furnished by his daughter Alice Bird Ridge Beatty (Mrs. Francis G. Beatty).
§ Sarah Bird Northrup Ridge wrote to Stand Watie from Osage Prairie, October 22, 1844: "If Mr. Kell has not yet brought the mules, & horses he promised to deliver to you on the first of this month I wish you, or John to see that he brings them soon, I need the mules now." (University of Oklahoma, Phillips Collection). According to Starr’s History of the Cherokee Indians, David Kell was the brother of James, Andrew, John, Elizabeth, Rebecca, and Nannie Kell and his wife was Dorcas Corban, nee Duncan. In 1847 he was listed as a judge of Delaware District in the Cherokee Nation (pages 442, 284).
further particulars are heard. Our informant does not say how
the difference originated between these men, who heretofore oc-
cupied a respectable standing in the community.—Ark. Intelli-
gencer.

"The above statement is substantially what was told us by
the Physician who attended upon Kell.—Ed. Herald."

Ridge, at Springfield, Missouri, soon found himself sadly
in need of funds. He was wholly dependent on the bounty of
his grandmother Ridge and he was irked by the refusal of his
mother to consider his return to the Nation, as she feared another
tragedy. No doubt the women were glad to finance his passage
to California with the party of Missouri gold-seekers. He was
to have been tried for murder in 1849 or the spring of 1850, and
his absence relieved his family of acute anxiety as to his
fate. Ridge wrote his cousin Stand Watie that his life in Cali-
forina had been followed by bad luck and that he had "worked
harder than any slave I ever owned. . . ."

He first engaged in mining in Shasta County, California
and during his residence in that state he made his home at Marys-
ville, Weaverville, Red Bluff, Sacramento, San Francisco, and
Grass Valley. California proudly claims him as her own and
it is true that he lived in that state for seventeen years; wrote
many of his poems there; became a well-known editor, as well as
a contributor to the best magazines published in the state, and
he sleeps beneath her soil beside his wife and daughter.

Ridge "... had started on his first journey to the mining
camps along Trinity river from Junction City to Taylor's Flat.
We met and passed the night in the North Fork Hotel." Ridge
invited all present in the bar room to drink "pulled out a buck-
skin gold-dust sack nearly a foot long, remarking that on his
return from down the river it would be filled to the brim with
coin and gold dust."
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Rollin Ridge "... figured conspicuously during the first fifteen years of California history." He was "different from any man I ever knew. He could be your warmest friend without ever giving an intimation of it." "No California newspaper of any political persuasion was handled with more dignity or true, manly bearing" than the Marysville National Democrat when Ridge was the editor. ... he deprecated dueling, at least with fire-arms, but he could fight as well as write and when Conmy, editor of the Shasta Courier called Ridge, then editor of the Trinity National, the 'Cayuse' editor Ridge met him in Andy Cusick's saloon in Shasta ... reached out, and with one hand dipped Conmy's nose into the top of his glass, then bathed his either cheek in the fluid that had escaped on the bar."

Ridge was described as a handsome man, of splendid physique and noble bearing. He had jet black hair and large dark eyes. In 1852 a weekly newspaper was started in San Francisco by J. McDonough Foard and Rollin M. Daggett. Horace Greeley spoke of this publication as "... the most remarkable paper" and "'John R. Ridge, a half Cherokee and the handsomest man I ever saw, was quite a poet, and wrote for us under the name of 'Yellow Bird.'" This paper was called the Golden Era and Ridge had for fellow-contributors to its pages, Francis Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Joaquin Miller, Charles Warren Stoddard, and Orpheus C. Kerr.


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21Ibid., p. 128.
22Ibid., p. 130.
23The Story of the Files, a Review of California Writers and Literature by Ella Sterling Cummins, 1893, pp. 14-17.
The young Cherokee first engaged in journalism in Marysville\textsuperscript{26} and next at Sacramento where he was the first editor of the \textit{Sacramento Bee}, which was started in February, 1857 and has been for years one of the most important newspapers in the state. Ridge then returned to Marysville where he edited the \textit{Express} in 1858,\textsuperscript{27} and later the \textit{National Democrat}. “He was one of the first editors in California to denounce secession as treason and to insist that the Government must resist it with force if necessary.

“Ridge made a reputation as a dignified, courteous and forcible political writer . . . had a cultivated taste in letters, was a noted shot, and made many warm friendships . . .”\textsuperscript{28} Colonel Richard Rust, on July 26, 1857, resigned the editorial chair of the \textit{California Express} at Marysville to John R. Ridge. On November 6, of that year, W. F. Hicks and Company became the proprietors of the \textit{Express} and they continued Ridge in editorial control of their publication until he resigned on August 4, 1858.\textsuperscript{29}

James Allen sold his interest in the \textit{Marysville Daily News} to Ridge, August 12, 1858 and he changed the name of the paper to the \textit{Daily National Democrat}. This newspaper was established January 9, 1858 and when Ridge became the editor it had become “an advocate of Douglas Democracy. He continued in control of this paper until April 23, 1861, when he retired.”\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Hutching’s California Magazine} announced in August, 1858: “We are going to the Fair to be held at Marysville during the present month . . . The arrangements of the Fair are being conducted by such men as . . . John R. Ridge, and other equally competent heads.”\textsuperscript{31} The same magazine in the issue for October, 1859, gave an account

\textsuperscript{26}The first city directory of Marysville, published by Hale and Emory, August, 1853, gives the address of Ridge as the Tremont House. This hotel, owned by Haskin and Humphrey, was situated on Second Street.

\textsuperscript{27}“\textit{The Express} is the oldest living paper in Marysville . . . In 1856 it opposed the action of the Vigilance Committee.” (\textit{A History of California Newspapers}, 1927, p. 190).


\textsuperscript{29}\textit{History of Yuba County, California}, Thompson and West, Oakland, 1879, p. 74, col. 3.

\textsuperscript{30}\textit{Idem}, p. 74. Ridge also edited the \textit{Marysville Appeal} and the Red Bluff \textit{Beacon} (Notes by Alice Bird Ridge Beatty).

of the annual celebration of the Society of California, held on September 9, the day of the state’s admission to the Union, at which J. C. Duncan read the poem of the day written for the event by John R. Ridge, the talented editor of the *Marysville Democrat*.

During the campaign of Lincoln and Douglas in 1861 Ridge was the political editor of the *San Francisco Herald* and he was an ardent supporter of the "Little Giant." At that time Ridge was a candidate for the position of state printer of California, having been nominated at the convention held at Sacramento, July 4, 1861. He moved to Weaverville, Trinity County in 1863, where he founded the *Trinity National* but he soon retired as he found that Democrats were not in favor there.

Ridge, on June 17, 1864, bought a one-fourth interest in the *Grass Valley National* and edited it in connection with W. S. Byrne. This newspaper appeared as a daily on August 1, 1864. Ridge "... employed the classical education which his Puritan mother had given him in literary and journalistic labors. After filling editorial positions in various cities for several years, he came to Grass Valley in the early sixties and became editor of the *Grass Valley National*. Although professedly an adherent of the cause of the Union, he was violently anti-Lincoln and his bitter writing probably advanced the project of founding the [Grass Valley] Union. He is the one who caned the Union's first publisher, M. Blumenthal..."

"The story of John Rollin Ridge is so romantic that it has been used as a historical basis for a summer novel lately published in California." Ridge "was undoubtedly a poet, and no California library—private or public—should be considered complete which omits [his] little volume of soul stirring verse... He was

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32Vol. IV, No. 4, p. 100.
33California Historical Quarterly, June, 1931, p. 367, note 118.
34Overland Magazine, August, 1904, p. 129.
36The Morning Union, Grass Valley and Nevada City, California, Sunday, October 28, 1934, p. 10, cols. 3 and 4.
37The Story of the Files, a Review of California Writers and Literature by Ella Sterling Cummins, p. 49.
no imitator, but a profound study in himself. No more beautiful lines were ever written to a wife than those . . . addressed ‘To Lizzie . . . She stood an angel in my sight.’ ’’ 38

Ridge’s cousin, Frank Boudinot was a member of the Lyster Operatic Company which gave sixty-four consecutive evening performances in San Francisco. The season began in May, 1859 at McGuire’s Opera House and the Bohemian Girl, Sonnambula, Fille du Regiment, Fra Diavolo, The Beggar’s Opera, Barbier de Seville, and Figaro were presented.39 Charles E. DeLong in his Journals, 1854-63, writes of attending a performance of the Bohemian Girl after which he went with Ridge to see Greeley. Ridge was then editor of the Marysville National Democrat.40

All the years of his exile Ridge longed to return to his own people and he would probably have taken a chance on being tried for murder had it not been for the pleadings of his mother. The only time he ever took an active part in the affairs of the Cherokee Nation was when he went to Washington in 1866 as a member of the delegation representing the southern branch of his people. The commission was made up of Elias Cornelius Boudinot, Stand Watie, and his son Saladin Watie, William Penn Adair, Richard Fields, Joseph Absolom Scales and John Rollin Ridge who served as chairman of the delegation. Bitter dissensions arose among the delegates and Boudinot made ugly charges against Adair, Ridge and young Watie in a letter to his uncle Stand Watie, written from Washington, December 2, 1866. This quarrel, which was really a family affair, was responsible for the failure of the mission.41

Ridge reached home the last of December, 1866 and was cordially received by the citizens of Grass Valley. He was reported to have been in Washington several months and to have been greatly improved in health by the trip east.42 His days were drawing to a close however, and he died at Grass Valley on Oc-

38Idem, p. 51.
40California Historical Quarterly, June, 1931, p. 173.
October 5, 1867, from brain fever resulting from softening of the brain." The Union contained the following account of Ridge's death: "A dispatch from the Bee, dated Grass Valley, October 7th says: 'John R. Ridge, editor of the Grass Valley Daily National, died at this place, Saturday last, at ten o'clock of brain fever. He is to be buried this afternoon at three o'clock. Ridge was well known in this State as connected with several journals . . . a man of good education and undoubted poetical talent.'"

After Ridge's death the San Francisco Bulletin wrote: "He was the editor of the California American, a 'Know-Nothing' daily here from January 2, 1856, to February 11, 1857, and in the latter month, when the Bee started, was its first editor . . . Returning to Marysville, he edited the Express . . . he later edited a new paper, the National Democrat . . . Edited the San Francisco Herald and took the side of the peace democracy though he never recanted his position about secession.' This journal told of his visit to Washington to confer with the president relative to the interests of the Cherokee Nation and that "The attachment shown him by the Cherokees then in Washington was said to have been something remarkable.'" This was followed by Ridge's poem "'Mary, Queen of the Scots.'"

That Rollin Ridge is not forgotten in his adopted state is shown by newspaper stories about him that appear at frequent intervals. The San Francisco Chronicle, Thursday, September 28, 1920 (p. 14, col. 8) related that William Fred. Bade, president of the Sierra Club of San Francisco had spent two days in Grass Valley to gather and preserve data concerning the author of the celebrated poem, "'Mount Shasta.'"

The June 12, 1921 issue of the San Francisco Examiner (p. 16N, col. 1) contains an article headed "'Indian Poet's Body Rests in Grass Valley. Footprints of Forty-Niners Surround Grave of State's Remarkable Man of Genius. A low and unprepossessing tree planted by his own hand in a half-abandoned cemetery in this old California mining town . . . [shades] the grave of John Rollin Ridge, the remarkable man of Cherokee blood whose writ-

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**Sacramento Daily Union**, October 8, 1867, p. 2, col. 2. Editorial Notes copied from Daily Alta California.

**Ibid.**
ings of half a century ago were declared by high authorities to show the fire of actual genius. Recently a small party of Ridge's admirers sought out the grave and read 'Mount Shasta' which the poet wrote by the light of a miner's candle after he had toiled long hours in the placers.' Ridge had described himself as "... the grandson of Chief Ka-nun-ta-cla-ge [The lion who walks by night] and Princess Se-hoya." On July 3, 1921, the San Francisco Chronicle (p. C5, col. 6) printed almost the same story headed "Lonely Tree in Mining Camp Cemetery Marks Resting Place of Remarkable Indian Poet" and the San Francisco Examiner of Sunday, January 7, 1923 (p. 16 N, col. 1) printed a story of Ridge's burial place in Grass Valley, under an oak tree and described him as the "Most brilliant man of letters, save Josiah Royce," who ever lived in Nevada County." It recounts that he crossed the plains in 1850 to the placer mines of Nevada County and the paper contains a picture of the poet.

In 1868 the Poems of John R. Ridge were collected and published in San Francisco by Henry Payot & Company. The volume has 137 pages and copies are preserved in the rare book collections of the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California; in the State Library, Sacramento and there is a copy displayed in a case in the office of the Bret Harte Inn at Grass Valley. A copy is owned by the Oklahoma Historical Society and several copies are the proud possessions of Ridge's relatives in Oklahoma.

Mrs. Ridge survived until November 7, 1906, dying at the age of 76; Alice Ridge Beatty, the daughter, died August 30, 1912. She was 64, and she survived her husband, Francis G. Beatty who died December 14, 1908 at the age of 64. Eight relatives and

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Josiah Royce, eminent philosopher, author and educator was born at Grass Valley, California, November 20, 1855. His death occurred in 1916 and the citizens of his native town have honored his memory with a handsome tablet in the public library.

Miss Minnie Brand of Nevada City was a music pupil of Mrs. Beatty's and she belonged to a music club organized by her. Mrs. Beatty called the club Ka-nun-ta-cla-ge after Major Ridge, her great grandfather. She was a talented musician and a pupil of Robert Tolmie, a noted teacher in San Francisco, who had studied under Leschetizky. Mrs. Beatty was unlike her father in appearance, being small-boned and inclined to stoutness. Her fingers became twisted with rheumatism but she never lost her ability to play the piano. She was noted for her wit and was a popular citizen of Grass Valley.
connections are buried beside the poet in Green Wood Cemetery near Grass Valley. Andrew J. Ridge, brother of the poet, died August 17, 1900 at the age of 65; his widow, Helen C. (Doom) Ridge died October 27, 1921, aged 81; John R. Ridge died December 3, 1894 at the age of 37 and Jessica R. Nivens died October 7, 1909 at 45 years of age. Frances Doom sleeps beside the Ridges as she was a sister of Mrs. Andrew J. Ridge. This much-loved woman was the librarian at Grass Valley for many years and she has been sadly missed since her death January 10, 1933, at the age of 86 years.

The editor-poet’s grave is now marked by a granite boulder with a bronze tablet, which was erected May 16, 1933 by the Historic Landmarks Committee of the Native Sons of the Golden West. The erection of this monument was brought about largely through the efforts of Mr. Edmund G. Kinyon, managing editor of the Morning Union of Grass Valley. The inscription reads: “John Rollin Ridge. California Poet. Author of ‘Mount Shasta’ and other poems. Born March 19, 1827 in Cherokee Nation, near what is now Rome, Georgia. Died in Grass Valley, October 5, 1867. In grateful memory . . .”

JOHN ROLLIN RIDGE BIBLIOGRAPHY


Andrew Jackson Ridge was born in 1835 in the eastern Cherokee country. He moved west with his parents and after a college course he studied law and removed to Austin, Texas, where he married Miss Helen Doom. In 1887 and again in 1893 Ridge visited Indian Territory and made many warm friends at Vinita where he spent most of the time. He moved to Grass Valley because it was the home of his brother. The end of his life came on August 17, 1900, at Berkeley, California, while visiting his daughter. A newspaper at Grass Valley stated: “A. J. Ridge is dead; one of the country’s ablest attorneys passes to an unknown world.

“Many men have practiced at the Nevada county bar . . . but it is doubtful if any of them were endowed with a greater judicial mind than A. J. Ridge. He was a man of great ability, and his services were in great demand on many occasions where important cases came up in the courts. Mr. Ridge was a man of genial disposition, and a scholarly gentleman; liberal in his views and above all honorable and just in his dealings with his fellow men. There is great sorrow felt over his loss by the bar of the county and citizens in general.” He was the last member of the family of John Ridge.
POEMS

“Yuba City” by Yellow Bird. This poem was found in the Marysville Herald in 1850. 12 stanzas (Benjamin Hayes Scrapbook. Yuba City, March 23, 1864). Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.


“The waves that murmur at our feet,” Pamphlets on the College of California, San Francisco, 1861, pp. 51-54.

Poem delivered at Marysville Fair, September 6, 1860, Grass Valley Union.

Poem delivered at Metropolitan Theatre, San Francisco, July 4, 1861 in Golden Era, July 7, 1861; Alta California, July 6, 1861.

“Maid of the Mountains,” Golden Era, August 14, 1861.


“The Humbolt River,” Hesperian, Vol. 4, p. 21; Vol. 4, p. 82.


ARTICLES


North American Indians, Hesperian, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 51-60 (April, 1862).

"The Cherokees, Their History—Present Condition and Future Prospects," by John R. Ridge, *The Northern Standard*, Clarksville, Red River County, Texas, January 20, 1849, p. 4, cols. 1 and 2. This article was written December 8, 1848.
EDWARD WILK ERSON BUSHYHEAD
From a photograph belonging to Mrs. Carolyn McNair McSpadden, Tahlequah
JOHN ROLLIN RIDGE

From a group picture taken of the Cherokee delegation in Washington in 1866.
Property of Mrs. Ann Scott Henson, Muskogee, Oklahoma.