



# **Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta: Celebrated California Bandit (The Western Frontier Library Series)**

*John Rollin Ridge*

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In 1854, a Cherokee Indian called Yellow Bird (better known as John Rollin Ridge) launched in this book the myth of Joaquin Murieta, based on the California criminal career of a 19th century Mexican bandit. Today this folk hero has been written into state histories, sensationalized in books, poems, and articles throughout America, Spain, France, Chile, and Mexico, and made into a motion picture.

The Ridge account is here reproduced from the only known copy of the first edition, owned by Thomas W. Streeter, of Morristown, New Jersey. According to it, the passionate, wronged Murieta organized an outlaw company numbering over 2,000 men, who for two years terrorized gold-rush Californians by kidnapping, bank robberies, cattle thefts, and murders. So bloodthirsty as to be considered five men, Joaquin was aided by several hardy subordinates, including the sadistic cutthroat, "Three-Fingered Jack." Finally, the state legislature authorized organization of the Mounted Rangers to capture the outlaws. The drama is fittingly climaxed by the ensuing chase, "good, gory" battle, and the shocking fate of the badmen.

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