

THE PEOPLE.

Three men were responsible for making *The San Diego Union* a reality. Their background and stories reflect the wide cultural and ethnic diversity of early San Diego.

COL. WILLIAM JEFFERSON “JEFF” GATEWOOD.
(1830-1888).

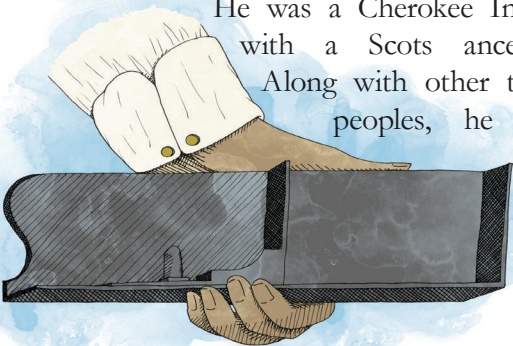
Gatewood was an attorney born in Illinois, whose father was a close friend and colleague of Abraham Lincoln. After moving to the California Gold Country, he became District Attorney of Calaveras County. He married Mary Crosthwaite, sister of San Diego pioneer Philip Crosthwaite. Tragedy occurred in 1859, when Gatewood fatally shot a man in a duel over a political argument. Crosthwaite persuaded him to move his newspaper from San Andreas to San Diego. He also founded the *San Diego World* in 1872. As an attorney, he unsuccessfully argued against moving the county seat from Old Town to New Town. His home is thought to be at 2515 San Diego Avenue, across from the Whaley House.

EDWARD “NED” WILKERSON BUSHYHEAD.
(1832-1907)

Bushyhead's early life was marked by tragedy.

He was a Cherokee Indian with a Scots ancestor.

Along with other tribal peoples, he was



forced to walk “The Trail of Tears” when the Cherokee Nation was uprooted from its traditional lands in Tennessee and forcibly relocated to what is now Oklahoma in 1838. Many of his people died on the journey. His brother became tribal chief. Bushyhead ran a newspaper in Oklahoma and later worked for Gatewood at the *San Andreas Register*, before moving the press to San Diego. After a career in the newspaper industry, Bushyhead served as both sheriff and chief of police in San Diego. He was remembered as, “a hard worker, generous man, and a warm-hearted friend.” After his death he was laid to rest in the Cherokee tribal cemetery in Oklahoma. His 1887 home was moved to Heritage Park where it may be seen today.

JOSÉ NARCISO BRISEÑO.
(1850-1915)

Briseño was originally the young “printer’s devil” when the *Union* began operation in 1868. The first edition listed him as publisher because Bushyhead thought the newspaper might fail and he did not want the reputation of being associated with a failed business. The newspaper was a success and eventually Briseño’s name was removed as publisher. Briseño was either born in the Gold Fields of California or emigrated shortly after he was born in Chile. He was noted for his sense of humor and is alleged to have been the author of many amusing pieces in the *San Diego World*. He was fluent in both his native Spanish and English. He married Mary Dolores, a daughter of the noted Irish immigrant Philip Crosthwaite.

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The San Diego Union Printing Office Museum was restored with the generous support of the *San Diego Union-Tribune* and the Copley Foundation.



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Illustrations by Megan Curtis.

The San Diego Union Building.

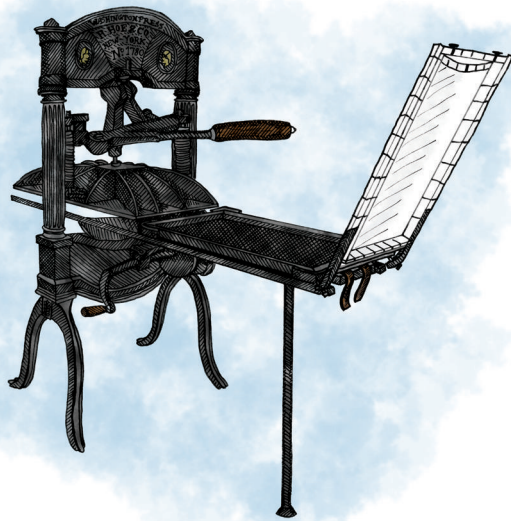
Date Built: Circa 1850.
Interpretive Period: American.
Restored in 1968.

THE BUILDING.

The building is believed to have been erected about 1850 on land owned by Miguel Pedrorena or a member of his family. Col. William J. Gatewood, the proprietor of the *San Diego Union*, rented the building from Manuel de Pedrorena, Jr.

This may be the first frame building constructed in San Diego. Some of the framework was probably shipped from New England around Cape Horn—a common practice at the time.

Through the years remodeling and deterioration changed the building. A restoration project in 1968, was sponsored by the Union Tribune Publishing Company. Orvel B. Johnson, one of the nation's leading restoration specialists, supervised the work. He spent months researching how the building looked in the 1860s. Workers were guided by old photographs as well as existing physical evidence. Wherever possible, existing materials were preserved. Approximately 70 percent of the original structure is intact. Some of the floor boards are



those laid when the *San Diego Union's* first home was built. The color and type of paint to use on the walls was determined by carefully removing existing paint layer by layer. The square nails used in the restoration are similar to those used when the building was constructed.

The printing equipment and other furnishings are typical of the mid-1800s. The Washington hand press is the same type of press used to print the first edition of the *San Diego Union*. It stands in the same place as the press of William J. Gatewood. The location was determined from ink stained soil beneath the building

THE STORY.

San Diego's first newspaper, the weekly *San Diego Herald* ceased operations in 1860. San Diego was without a newspaper until publication of the *San Diego Union* in 1868.

Early that year, Philip Crosthwaite, a San Diego pioneer, visited his sister in San Andreas, a gold town near Sacramento, and enthusiastically described the prospects of San Diego to newspaper editor/publisher Jeff Gatewood. He closed the *San Andreas Register* and moved all of the printing equipment to San Diego.

Gatewood formed a partnership with Edward W. Bushyhead, a San Andreas miner and printer, and employed José Narciso Briseño.

Gatewood came overland to San Diego while Bushyhead and Briseño packed up the massive Washington hand press, printer's paraphernalia, and "a very good assortment of type" and traveled south by steamer.

The newspapers in the 1800s were typically advocates for a particular political party or the mouthpiece of a particular politician. The *San Diego*



Union was also an advocate for the development of San Diego. As Col. Gatewood wrote in the Prospectus that announced the new paper:

"Neither political tirades, nor personal abuse will find place in the columns of the Union. As my object...is to publish to the world the advantages of the harbor, climate and soil of this vicinity, I hope that no imposition, exaggeration or prevarication will ever be tolerated by those who may afford local information to the Union. In my humble judgment they need no such subterfuges; but the plain, unvarnished truth of our harbor, climate and soil is all that need be told, to insure the wonder and win the admiration of the world."

Newspapers bound together a United States that stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Editors would gather news from ship captains, other newspapers, and the talk in the markets, shops, and saloons. The first edition of the *San Diego Union* came off the press on October 10, 1868.

MYSTERIES.

- Workers in the 1960s discovered two old letters addressed to Edward Bushyhead, the partner of William J. Gatewood and *The San Diego Union's* first editor hidden in the walls of The San Diego Union. How did they get there?
- Why was the price of the newspaper first set at 12 ½ cents? Could it be that many people in San Diego paid with silver dollars cut into eight "bits?"

DID YOU KNOW?

- Printers' ink got its dark color from lamp black made from soot scraped off oil lamps.
- Young boys learning to become printers were called "Printer's Devils" because their faces would be smudged black with ink.
- The press operators who pulled the big lever on the printing press would develop larger muscles on the side of their bodies they used for pulling.

CAN YOU FIND?

- A large desk used by President Ulysses Grant.
- A safe painted with a landscape and the date of the newspaper's first edition.
- Portraits of George Washington & Benjamin Franklin painted in gold.