

Lewis Owings

(September 6, 1820-August 20, 1875)

Dr. **Lewis S. Owings** was a medical doctor and politician in the New Mexico and Arizona territories. He was chosen twice for the role of Provisional Governor for the territory of Arizona by conventions seeking to organize the territory—by *both* Pre Civil War Union and Confederate delegations!

In 1860 Owings was chosen as Provisional Governor of "Arizona Territory"—a region including New Mexico and Arizona—in an organization convention at Tucson. The Convention subsequently petitioned the United States Congress for recognition of their government, but the impending conflicts of the American Civil War in the east distracted Washington's attention away from what was then a remote frontier outpost. Owings nevertheless proceeded to carry out the functions of a *de facto* governor in the largely unorganized territory and established three militia companies to protect residents from Indian raids and border smugglers.

In March 1861 with the onset of the Civil War, the secession conventions were called in the southern portions of the territory at Mesilla and Tucson. The conventions established the Confederate Territory of Arizona and Owings was elected its first Provisional Governor. He held the post until August 1, 1861, when the Confederate Arizona Territory was reorganized and declared south of the 34th Parallel by John Baylor, who then assumed the role of Territorial Governor.

In 1862 following Baylor's ouster and the Confederate retreat from the territory following the Union victory at the Battle of Glorieta Pass, Owings was again appointed Governor of the territory and held the post in exile in San Antonio, Texas, until the end of the war.