

ARIZONA VOTES TO SECEDE

Tucson Follows Mesilla's Lead

La Mesilla New Territorial Capitol

March 28, 1861
Arizona Citizen, Tucson, Arizona - The streets resounded with cheering and cowboy fireworks this afternoon as word spread of the vote to form the Confederate Territory of Arizona.

"Today, we join our brothers and sisters in eastern Arizona in forming the Arizona Territory, Confederate States of America," convention chairman Mayor Mark Aldrich announced during a short speech to an enthusiastic crowd.



Our fellow eastern Arizonians voted to join the Confederacy at their convention held in La Mesilla on March 16. Arizona Territory, CSA shall encompass those lands south of the 34th parallel to the Mexican border, and east of the Colorado River to the Texas border (the 103rd parallel). La Mesilla has been chosen as the territorial capitol. Elections for governor and the territorial leadership shall be held in July of this year.

This is not the first convention called to organize Arizona as a territory. There are naysayers yet today reminding the elated that the Confederacy has yet to recognize and act upon the wishes of the citizenry here. Official requests and convention votes to recognize Arizona as a Territory of the Union were held in 1850, 1854 and 1856. The United States Congress denied each request for territorial status.

There has been a growing dissatisfaction with the present territorial government. Those of power sitting in Santa Fe have repeatedly proven their ability to protect and provide for their own while intentionally and selfishly withholding aid and concern for us. During his short speech, Aldrich lashed out at the recent decision by the Federal Congress to cancel the mail contract over the Butterfield Stage route and move it north through Santa Fe. It is a widely held belief in these parts that Congress moved the mail route north to traverse through Santa Fe solely at the urging of (and personal gain for) Congressman Wight.

"They don't care about us. We shall no longer suffer these indignities at the hands of politicians thousands of miles to the east who act with little

concern for our public welfare." Aldrich, one of the wealthiest mercantiles here in Tucson, was loudly cheered following his brief comments.

Today's ordinance will be forwarded to President Jefferson Davis later this year. John H. Reagan, Texas Congressman and Postmaster General of the Confederacy has promised that he will personally present the ordinance and a bill requesting that Arizona be recognized as a Confederate Territory this Fall to the Confederate Congress.

We have printed the Territorial Ordinance in its entirety for all of our readers:

"WHEREAS, a sectional party of the North has disregarded the Constitution of the United States, violated the rights of the Southern States, and heaped wrongs and indignities upon their people; and WHEREAS, the Government of the United States has heretofore failed to give us adequate protection against the savages within our midst and has denied us an administration of the laws, and that security for life, liberty, and property which is due from all governments to the people; and WHEREAS, it is an inherent, inalienable right in all people to modify, alter, or abolish their form of government whenever it fails in the legitimate objects of its institution, or when it is subversive thereof; and WHEREAS, in a government of federated, sovereign States, each State has a right to withdraw from the confederacy whenever the *treaty* by which the league is formed, is broken; and WHEREAS, the Territories belonging to said league in common should be divided when the league is broken, and should be attached to the separating States according to their geographical position and political identity; and WHEREAS, Arizona naturally belongs to the Confederate States of America (who have rightfully and lawfully withdrawn from said league), both geographically and politically, by ties of a common interest and a common cause; and WHEREAS we, the citizens of that part of New Mexico called Arizona, in the present distracted state of political affairs between the North and the South, deem it our duty as citizens of the United States to make known our opinions and intentions; therefore be it...

RESOLVED, That our feelings and interests are with the Southern States, and that although we deplore the division of the Union, yet we cordially indorse the course pursued by the seceded Southern States.

RESOLVED, That geographically and naturally we are bound to the South, and to her we look for protection; and as the Southern States have formed a Confederacy, it is our earnest desire to be attached to that Confederacy as a Territory.

RESOLVED, That we do not desire to be attached as a Territory to any State seceding separately from the Union, but to and under the protection of a Confederacy of the Southern States.

RESOLVED, That the recent enactment of the Federal Congress, removing the mail service from the Atlantic to the Pacific States from the Southern to the Central or Northern route, is another powerful reason for us

to ask the Southern Confederate States of America for a continuation of the postal service over the Butterfield or El Paso route, at the earliest period.

RESOLVED, That it shall be the duty of the President of this Convention to order an election for a delegate to the Congress of the Confederate States of America, when he is informed that the States composing said Confederacy have ordered an election for members of Congress.

RESOLVED, That we will not recognize the present Black Republican Administration, and that we will resist any officers appointed to this Territory by said Administration with whatever means in our power.

RESOLVED, That the citizens residing in the western portion of this Territory are invited to join us in this movement.

RESOLVED, That the proceedings of this Convention be published in the *Mesilla Times*, and that a copy thereof be forwarded to the President of the Congress of the Confederate States of America, with the request that the same be laid before Congress."

Author's Note: President Jefferson Davis signed the bill February 14, 1862, exactly 50 years before Arizona became a state. However, Arizona never actually became a Confederate state.

A special thank you to Dakota Livesay, Publisher of [Chronicle of the Old West](#) for allowing me to reprint verbatim from the March 2013 issue.