

History & Legends of Freeborn County Who Is This Man?

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By B. Jackson

History Quiz: Who -

Was born on July 23, 1808, number seven of eight children?

Was the grandson of a Baptist preacher?

As a child, helped to make bricks for the home his father was building?

Started college when he was 13 but dropped out one session short of graduation when his father died?

Farmed and clerked in a country store until he was appointed to the U.S. Military Academy?

Excelled in math, philosophy, chemistry, and engineering?

Explored, surveyed, and mapped the Blackhawk Purchase in 1835?

Wrote a booklet called "Notes on the Wisconsin Territory with reference to the Iowa District, or Blackhawk Purchase"?

Influenced the naming of Iowa through the use of the Indian word meaning "beautiful land"?

Married Ellen Showmaker and later laid out a town site in Iowa and named it Ellenborough?

Surveyed the roadway for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in Maryland and Pennsylvania in 1839?

Was forced to place his son with relatives when his wife died of tuberculosis?

Served as acting Secretary of War under President Tyler but left the position because of a strained political situation?

Married Catherine Heath and he and Catherine had four children?

Was the first member of the Episcopal Church founded in Knoxville in 1844?

Served as city engineer of Knoxville from 1840 to 1854?

Served as an engineer in the Cumberland Gap area and earned the respect of Union officers by his skillful design and construction of defense systems?

Helped to plan the system of defense for Chattanooga?

Knew that his oldest son was serving aboard the Harriet Lane, the first U.S. Navy vessel to fire a gun in the Civil War?

Watched the battle in Galveston harbor between a confederate gunboat and the Harriet Lane?

Read the Episcopal service during a truce declared for the funeral of his son and his superior officer?

Spent the remainder of the war serving as the Confederate cotton bureau agent paying for arms brought in from Mexico and working on fortifications at Gonzales, Texas?

Lost his property, position, and citizenship because of the war?

Received the honorary rank of "Colonel" in 1879?

In that same year, he was invited to Albert Lea, Minnesota, as honored guest at a meeting of old settlers. There he addressed the people of the town named after him and viewed the lake that also bears his name.

"Colonel" Albert Miller Lea, died in Corsicana, Texas on Jan. 30, 1891. He was 84 years old.