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**CONTRIBUTIONS OF ALBERT MILLER LEA
TO THE LITERATURE OF IOWA HISTORY**

**BY
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THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ALBERT MILLER LEA TO THE LITERATURE OF IOWA HISTORY¹

[This essay was awarded the seventy-five dollar prize offered in 1909 by the Iowa Society of the Colonial Dames of America for the best essay in Iowa history. The essay has been revised for publication.—EDITOR.]

The contributions of Albert Miller Lea to the literature of Iowa history are neither voluminous nor critical. They consist chiefly of a small book of forty-five pages, two maps, and two reports; but, having been written during the formative period of beginnings, they have an historical importance which is out of proportion to their critical character. The little book gave the State its name; the reports were the bases of legislation and large appropriations by Congress; and the maps served as guides to settlers for a long period of years.

Albert Miller Lea was a Lieutenant in the United States Army and an accomplished civil engineer — a man of varied attainments and remarkable foresight. He was born in 1807 at Lea Springs — a place not far distant from Knoxville, Tennessee. His father was a merchant who at one time held the position of Register of the Land Office in the State of Franklin;² and his mother was one Clara Wisdom, who is described by her son Albert as a “wise and prudent” woman.

¹ The writer desires to express his thanks to Professor Benj. F. Shambaugh for the assistance and helpful suggestions given in the preparation of this essay, to Mr. A. N. Harbert of Cedar Rapids for the use of his materials relating to Albert M. Lea, and to Dr. Louis Pelzer and Mr. Kenneth Colgrove for kindly reading and criticising the essay.

² *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, January, 1892, p. 201.

Lea also describes his father as “positive, dictatorial, domineering, and sagacious.”

The early education of Lieutenant Lea was received in the common schools of Knoxville. Later he entered college, and was within one session of graduation when he was compelled to give up his studies on account of poor health. Within a year, however, he had regained his health and in 1827 received an appointment to the Military Academy at West Point.³ Four years later, on July 1, 1831, Lieutenant Lea graduated from this institution (ranking fifth in a class of thirty-seven) and was assigned, after a short furlough, to the United States Army.⁴

The commission to the Military Academy proved to be the turning point in Lea's career; for instead of becoming a planter and land owner, as did many of his associates, he entered the army, came west, and directed several large engineering undertakings,⁵ giving the best part of his life in the service of the Government. The three years following his graduation were spent in going from one part of the country to another on various topographical and scientific

³ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, January, 1892, pp. 201, 202.

Lea received this appointment from Senator H. L. White, who was a competitor of Martin Van Buren in 1836.

⁴ Letter to Senator Wm. B. Allison from the Record and Pension Office, January 15, 1904.

"Albert Miller Lea was a cadet at the United States Military Academy from July 1, 1827, to July 1, 1831, when he was graduated and appointed brevet 2nd Lieutenant of Artillery. He was transferred to the 7th Infantry August 11, 1831, and was promoted 2nd Lieutenant March 4, 1833; was appointed 2nd Lieutenant, 1st Dragoons, July 1, 1834, to rank from March 4, 1833, and his resignation was accepted to take effect May 31, 1836."

Lea was on leave of absence from February 1, 1836, to the date of his resignation. This letter is in the collection of Mr. A. N. Harbert of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

⁵ Among the engineering services performed were the following:

- A. Drew plans for first locomotive ever constructed by the Baldwins.
- B. Famous survey of the B. & O. R. R. where a cut was constructed by the use of geologic bedding.
- C. Survey of the Tennessee River.

See *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, January, 1892, for a complete list.

duties.⁶ This kind of work, which carried him from the Great Lakes to the Gulf and from Oklahoma to the mountains of Tennessee, gave him a vast amount of valuable information concerning the pioneers and the West. Finally, however, he was ordered for a second time to Fort Gibson,⁷ there to attach himself to the First United States Dragoons — a regiment formed at the close of the Black Hawk War.

Upon his arrival at Fort Gibson in the autumn of 1834, Lea was ordered by Colonel Henry Dodge to a point near the present site of Bellevue, Nebraska, to pay the Indians a certain amount of merchandise which was due them.⁸

When he had completed this task he returned to Fort Gibson only to find that his company, with two others, was located at a new post⁹ on the Upper Mississippi, hundreds of miles away. He immediately set out to join his command, taking the last boat of the season going north from St. Louis, and in a few days reached the town of Keokuk. The present prosperous city was then only “a substantial stone building, used as a trading station, the only house on the west bank for many miles below and three hundred miles above.”¹⁰ This was Lea’s first view of the country to which, within two years, he was to give the name “Iowa”. A few days later he reported at Fort Des Moines, near the present town of Montrose, where he took charge of his company.

On the 9th of March, 1835, orders¹¹ were received by

⁶ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, January, 1892, p. 202.

⁷ Lieutenant Lea first reported at Fort Gibson in 1832.— See *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, January, 1892, pp. 200-205.

⁸ For a full account, see an article entitled *Early Explorations in Iowa* in the *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 538.

⁹ This new post was Fort Des Moines No. 1.— See *Annals of Iowa*, Third Series, Vol. III, Nos. 5-6, April-July, 1898, p. 351.

¹⁰ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 541.

¹¹ *Annals of Iowa*, Third Series, Vol. III, Nos. 5-6, April-July, 1898, p. 355.

Lieutenant Colonel Kearney to proceed with his command up the Des Moines River to a certain point near the Raccoon Forks and from there in a northeasterly direction to the Mississippi. From the latter place the command was to march westward until the Des Moines River was again reached, when a return should be made to Fort Des Moines. Accordingly, on June 7, 1835, the troop, consisting of about 150 mounted men, started on the march for the purposes of exploration and of impressing the Indians with the power of the United States government.¹² It was on this expedition that Lieutenant Lea "voluntarily assumed the duties of topographer and chronicler";¹³ and to this fact we owe many fine descriptions of the original condition of the Iowa prairies as well as the *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*.

The line of march followed as nearly as possible the divide between the Des Moines and Skunk rivers. Being in the springtime, the ground was still very wet and soft, owing to the excessive rainfall. The troop proceeded slowly, covering only from fifteen to twenty miles a day.¹⁴ But with the single discomfort of excessive rainfall, it was an ideal time of the year to make the trip, as the weather in other respects was favorable to both men and horses. The scenery, too, was magnificent; and Lieutenant Lea wrote that "the grass and streams were beautiful and strawberries so abundant as to make the whole tract red for miles".¹⁵ Game was also plentiful, and wild fowl was a part of nearly every meal. At a place near the present site of the city of Oskaloosa "a small herd of buffalo"¹⁶ was encountered.

¹² *Annals of Iowa*, Third Series, Vol. III, Nos. 5-6, April-July, 1898, p. 355.

¹³ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 546

¹⁴ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 547.

¹⁵ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 547.

¹⁶ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 548.

Concerning this incident Lieutenant Lea wrote: "It was the first and only time I have seen the lordly beast in his home, and probably the last time he appeared in that region."¹⁷ The various pests were in evidence then as now, for at one place Lea declares that "after my tent was pitched we killed four rattlesnakes within it, and the next day I had a bath in a pool, occupied by mosquitos so large that I pressed one in my journal, and carried for years as a specimen of the luxuriant growth of the plains."¹⁸

When the expedition had proceeded as far as the place where Boone is now located, the order was given to march in a northeasterly direction to the Mississippi,¹⁹ where a steamboat with fresh supplies awaited their arrival. After a rest of a few days on the banks of the Mississippi near Lake Pepin in Minnesota, the march was again taken up, this time directly westward to the district of the lakes of Minnesota. One of these, Lake Albert Lea,²⁰ perpetuates the name of the Lieutenant. This region was one "of lakes and open groves of oak, beautiful as English parks"; and when writing of it in later years Lieutenant Lea de-

¹⁷ This same incident is mentioned in a journal of this march in the following words:

"[Wednesday, June the Twenty-Fourth]

24 Marched 25 miles & encamped on the banks of the Iway a small stream 30 yards broad. This day for the first this season we saw Buffalo. Killed 5 or 6 — many of our men are recruits from the North & never saw a Buffalo before & therefore to them a Buffalo chase was something remarkable. This day was spent in eating Buffalo beef & sleep."—THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, Vol. VII, No. 3, July, 1909, p. 368.

¹⁸ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 548.

¹⁹ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 548.

Near the present site of Boone the troop camped "one night near a flint and gravel covered conical peak, sixty feet above the plain". This is easily found to-day, a short way south of Boone.

²⁰ This lake was named by Mr. J. N. Nicollet, a surveyor, and also a friend of Lea.—See *Executive Documents*, Document No. 52, 2nd Session, 28th Congress, Vol. II, p. 73. Also *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 549.

clared, that "Possibly, some day, I may again ride over that trail; and I might well wish that my freed spirit could leave this green earth with the impression made just fifty-five years ago, as I gazed and sketched, when halted for our noon rest on the shaded and grassy shore of Lake Albert Lea."²¹ Finally, the Des Moines headwaters were reached and the march turned southward, entering the present State in the neighborhood of Swea City.²²

By slow degrees the troop made its way to the Raccoon Forks,²³ near a place where the capital of Iowa is now located, but which at that time was simply "a grassy and spongy meadow with a bubbling spring in the midst."²⁴ At this place, too, Lieutenant Lea was ordered to descend the Des Moines River in a canoe,²⁵ to take soundings, and to report upon the practicability of navigating keel boats over its course. This proved to be a very arduous task; but Lieutenant Lea reached the Fort several days before the main body of troops, who returned leisurely by land in the latter part of August.²⁶

After writing his report upon the Des Moines River, Lieutenant Lea resigned from the army and hastened to Baltimore where he published the *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*. Two years later, in 1838, he again came to the Iowa

²¹ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 549.

²² The exact location can not be definitely stated. The route was on the west side of the river in this locality.

²³ A journal, kept during this campaign, may be found in THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, Vol. VII, No. 3, July, 1909, p. 331.

²⁴ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 549.

²⁵ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 550; *Annals of Iowa*, Third Series, Vol. III, p. 356, also an article by General Parrott on p. 374.

In a letter to Hon. T. S. Parvin, written April 4, 1890, Lieutenant Lea says: "I made a survey, in a canoe, of Des Moines river, from Rac[e]joon down, in 1835."

²⁶ See map in Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*.

country as the United States Commissioner to determine the boundary between the State of Missouri and the Territory of Iowa.²⁷ When this task was completed Lieutenant Lea entered the employ of large corporations in the capacity of chief engineer.²⁸ At the outbreak of the Civil War he followed his old friend Robert E. Lee into the Confederacy, where he completed four years of active service.²⁹ When peace was eventually declared, he was practically ruined financially; and in this condition he sought a new country, moving to Corsicana, Texas, where he lived until his death in 1890.

The contributions of Albert M. Lea to the literature of Iowa history are based upon his two trips to the Iowa country: (1) the march of the Dragoons in 1835; and (2) his work as a member of the boundary commission of 1838. Upon both occasions Lieutenant Lea left a report and a map; and these occupy a prominent place in the earliest literature of the Commonwealth.

THE REPORT ON THE DES MOINES RIVER .

The first of Lea's contributions in point of time is the *Report on the Des Moines River* which was made in 1835. Upon arriving at Fort Des Moines after the campaign with the Dragoons, Lieutenant Lea made a comprehensive report which included, besides the general conclusions, all the soundings, measurements, and notes of important features

²⁷ *Executive Documents*, House Document No. 38, 3rd Session, 27th Congress. This document is also found in the *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. II, No. 1, January, 1886, p. 193.

²⁸ Lieutenant Lea was for a number of years City Engineer of Knoxville, Tennessee, and later of Galveston, Texas.—See Lea's Autobiography in *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, January, 1892, p. 200.

²⁹ The best account of this period of Lieutenant Lea's life is found under the title of *Colonel Lea's Reminiscences*, a series of articles published in *The Freeborn County Standard*, of Albert Lea, Minnesota, from January to May, 1890.

from the Raccoon to the Mississippi. Unfortunately this report, which was written in 1835 (and which was the first contribution relating to Iowa penned by Lea) can not be found. It seems to have been used as a basis for legislation; for in speaking of the report its author says: "The manuscript was published by Congress in 1835-6 without the map, and the original is in Adjutant-General's office. It was the foundation of all the appropriations for Des Moines under the care of my classmate, Sam R. Curtis."³⁰ The evidence of the commanding officer also states that the report was actually transmitted; for in the order book of Lieutenant-Colonel Kearney we find this statement: "I send you his [Lea's] report."³¹

Despite this seemingly conclusive evidence of its existence, the document, which related to the Des Moines River, its characteristics, its commercial and economic value, has not been located either in the records of the War Department³² or among the papers of the office of the Adjutant-General of the State of Iowa.³³ Its historical importance can not, therefore, be estimated.

It was in connection with this report that Lieutenant Lea drew a map which was used, with some changes, in his *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*. In speaking of the making of this

³⁰ Letter written on April 4, 1890, by Albert M. Lea to Honorable T. S. Parvin.

³¹ Order of Lieutenant-Colonel Kearney.— Found in an article prepared by the War Department for *Annals of Iowa*, Third Series, Vol. III, p. 356.

³² Letter from War Department, December 3, 1908.

"The report made by Lieutenant Albert M. Lea, of the 1st U. S. Dragoons, in 1835, relative to the Des Moines river is not found in the Department." Also a letter from the War Department to W. B. Allison on August 23, 1904: "An exhaustive examination of the records on file in this office has resulted in failure to find any report made by Albert M. Lea."

³³ Letter written to A. N. Harbert by Adjutant-General M. H. Byers on July 20, 1901: "There are no reports from him [A. M. Lea] on file and indeed his name is not found on any papers on file."

map Lieutenant Lea says: "Without delay, I mapped the river and wrote a report on its character and capabilities, which was forwarded to the Adjutant-General; and then it occurred to me that I could get an outline of the region between the Mississippi and Missouri, and by filling it in with my sketches, the whole route having been carefully meandered, as I did the river, I could make a map that would interest the public, gain me some reputation and perhaps a little money." When the map was finished, however, the post commander, Lieutenant Colonel Kearney, sent for it and even refused its maker a copy. The next year, after much difficulty, Lieutenant Lea obtained a copy of his map from the proper officials in Washington and had it lithographed for the *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*.³⁴

NOTES ON WISCONSIN TERRITORY

The second and perhaps the most important of Lea's contributions to the literature of Iowa history is the *Notes on Wisconsin Territory* — a small book of forty-five pages. When in 1836 Lieutenant Lea returned to Baltimore from his campaign with the Dragoons so many inquiries for information concerning the western country were addressed to him³⁵ that he decided to write a concise and accurate account of the land to which so many immigrants were bound and over which the Dragoons had made their march.

Such a task was an easy undertaking for Lieutenant Lea, since he had secured much information of the West during his travels and his services with the army. The demand, too, for a book of this kind promised to be large, as hundreds of settlers were flocking to the western country. Accordingly, Lea wrote an account of the region which was

³⁴ *Early Explorations in Iowa in the Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. V, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 550.

³⁵ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, the preface.

then a part of the original Territory of Wisconsin and lying west of the Mississippi River.

When this was finished the author went to Washington, D. C., where, after much persuasion he managed to secure a copy of the map which has been described above and which had been made at the close of the march in the year 1835. The map and manuscript were then taken to Philadelphia where the book was published. Lea later described the publication of this valuable book in this manner:— “One thousand copies with the map were put up by my friend, H. S. Tanner, to whom I paid thirty-seven and a half cents per copy, and put them on sale at a dollar. Being quite ignorant of the book trade I assumed the sales myself, sent a few copies by mail, and five hundred in a trunk as freight to Arthur Bridgman of Burlington, an accomplished merchant. The last I heard of them was on a little steamboat stranded on a sandbank in the Ohio.”³⁶ The book indeed is quite rare, and less than a score of copies are known to be in existence.³⁷

The book is small, three and a half by six inches, bound in pale blue board cover, and contains, besides a map of the country described, forty-five finely printed pages. The full title of this interesting little contribution is *Notes On The Wisconsin Territory; particularly with reference to the Iowa District or Black Hawk Purchase*. It was written, as the author declares in the preface, “to place within the reach of the public, correct information in regard to a very

³⁶ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 552.

³⁷ A partial list of the owners of these books is the following: L. A. Brewer, Cedar Rapids; T. J. Fitzpatrick, Iowa City; Mr. Blair, Kossuth; The Masonic Library, Cedar Rapids; The Davenport Academy of Science, Davenport; Historical Department of Iowa, Des Moines; State Historical Society, Iowa City; and A. N. Harbert, Cedar Rapids.

Mr. Earl Swem, Assistant State Librarian of Richmond, Virginia, can furnish a complete list of the owners of copies of this book.

interesting portion of the Western Country''.³⁸ The contents, too, are confined to subjects which would interest "the emigrant, the speculator, and the legislator."³⁹ A more complete work was planned, but the author never had the inclination nor the desire to finish it.⁴⁰

The *Notes on Wisconsin Territory* consists of three general chapters or divisions. The first division gives a general description of the country; the second part explains the water courses, the local divisions, and the form of government; while in the last chapter the reader finds a description of the various towns, landings, and roads.

The country to which the author limited himself was a part of the original Territory of Wisconsin which he chose to call the "Iowa District"—a strip of land "about 190 miles in length, 50 miles wide near each end, and 40 miles wide near the middle opposite to Rock Island; and would make a parallelogram of 180 by 50 miles equivalent to 9000 square miles."⁴¹ This strip of country had been practically unsettled before the year 1832, being alternately in the possession of various tribes of Indians, but chiefly of the Sacs and Foxes. At the close of the Black Hawk War in 1832 this country was obtained from the Indians and the date of the latter's removal placed at June 1, 1833. The treaty of cession was made at Davenport, General Scott being the chief negotiator on the part of the United States.⁴² As a result the ceded area was popularly known as "Scott's Purchase" or, later, as the "Black Hawk Purchase".

The treaty was barely signed when several families and miners, who had been hovering on the east bank of the

³⁸ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, the preface.

³⁹ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, the preface.

⁴⁰ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, the preface.

⁴¹ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, Chap. I, p. 8.

⁴² Salter's *Iowa: The First Free State in the Louisiana Purchase*, p. 155.

Mississippi, crossed over and established themselves on the choicest parts of the District; but these people "were dispossessed by order of government".⁴³ Nevertheless many white families remained and some even went so far as to put in crops.⁴⁴

The climate of the Iowa District is first described, the different seasons and their varying aspects beautifully pictured. The winds were of especial importance in the opinion of the author, being as fresh and bracing as the sea-breezes and very much less chilling. "The prevailing winds", he writes, "are from the southwest. I have known the wind at Rock Island, to remain constant in that quarter for three weeks successively".⁴⁵ The salubrity of the climate was variable according to the locality. Lea thought that from the mouth of the Des Moines until the great bend of the Mississippi was reached there was liable to be much fever; but from Rock Island northward he knew of no healthier place in the world.

The descriptions of the various seasons furnish one of the most interesting parts of the book, and also an opportunity for comparison with the seasons of the present day. As a proof that winter is not changing to any appreciable extent, the description by Lieutenant Lea, written seventy-three years ago, may be cited. "*The Winter*", he declares, "is generally dry, cold, and bracing; the waters are all bridged with ice; the snow is frequently deep enough to afford good sleighing."⁴⁶

Spring was the least desirable of any of the seasons, being "a succession of rains, blows, and chills." The same characteristics were in evidence then as now, for Lea writes

⁴³ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 8.

⁴⁴ Shambaugh's *History of the Constitutions of Iowa*, p. 38.

⁴⁵ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 8.

⁴⁶ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 9.

that "We have no gradual gliding from cold to warm; it is snowy — then stormy — then balmy and delightful."⁴⁷

Summer was a season in which all the conditions were favorable to a rapid growth of vegetation. The appearance of the country during this season was very beautiful, as all the grasses and flowers grew luxuriantly.

Autumn, however, was described by Lieutenant Lea as being "the most delightful of all the seasons of the year." His description of this season, written in 1836, would apply to-day with equal truthfulness. "The heat of the summer is over by the middle of August; and from that time till December, we have almost one continuous succession of bright clear delightful sunny days. Nothing can exceed the beauty of Summer and Autumn in this country, where, on one hand, we have the expansive prairie strewed with flowers still growing; and on the other, the forests which skirt it, presenting all the varieties of colour incident to the fading foliage of a thousand different trees."⁴⁸

The soil and the character of the country are presented in detail, and the writer gives his opinions as to the best crops for the various soils. Indian corn, he believes, was "peculiarly adapted" to the low lands of this district.

"The general appearance of the country", declares Lea, "is one of great beauty. It may be represented as one grand rolling prairie, along one side of which flows the mightiest river in the world and through which numerous navigable streams pursue their devious way to the ocean".⁴⁹ In another place this same area is claimed by the author to be superior, all things considered, to any other part of the United States.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 9.

⁴⁸ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 10.

⁴⁹ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 11.

⁵⁰ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 12.

The distribution of timber, water, and prairie was one of the unique features of this District. The beauty of the country seemed to have charmed Lieutenant Lea, for at the close of his description of its general appearance he writes:

Could I present to the mind of the reader that view of this country that is now before my eyes, he would not deem my assertion unfounded. He would see the broad Mississippi with its ten thousand islands, flowing gently and lingeringly along one entire side of this District, as if in regret at leaving so delightful a region; he would see half a dozen navigable rivers taking their sources in distant regions, and gradually accumulating their waters as they glide steadily along through this favoured region to pay their tribute to the great "Father of Waters"; he would see innumerable creeks and rivulets meandering through rich pasturages, where now the domestic ox has taken the place of the untamed bison; he would see here and there neat groves of oak, and elm, and walnut, half shading half concealing beautiful little lakes that mirror back their waiving branches; he would see neat looking prairies of two or three miles in extent, and apparently enclosed by woods on all sides, and along the borders of which are ranged the neat hewed log cabins of the emigrants with their fields stretching far into the prairies, where their herds are luxuriating on the native grass; he would see villages springing up, as by magic, along the banks of the rivers, and even far into the interior; and he would see the swift moving steam-boats, as they ply up and down the Mississippi, to supply the wants of the settlers, to take away their surplus produce, or to bring an accession to this growing population, anxious to participate in the enjoyment of nature's bounties, here so liberally dispensed.⁵¹

The mineral resources were described as abundant, comprising coal, lead, limestone, zinc, and clay. Lea believed these were the greatest assets of the country. The chief mineral wealth at that time, however, was in the lead industry which was in a thriving condition in and near Dubuque. "Here", writes Lea, "are capital, western enterprise, for-

⁵¹ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 12.

eign experience, and Yankee ingenuity combined; and they have brought to their assistance the powers of both water and steam. The smelting establishments have recently been much improved and are now conducted with scientific accuracy, yielding seventy or eighty per cent of lead from the native sulphuret.’⁵²

The larger game was rapidly beginning to disappear when this book was written, but the writer mentions deer, “some bear”, and buffalo. The wild turkey, grouse and the wild duck were the most numerous of the wild fowls; and fish of all varieties were found in the numerous rivers. Spearing the fish in the rapids was a favorite sport and large strings of pike, pickerel, catfish, and trout were to be had.

Agricultural products, being least in importance at this time, are only briefly mentioned. The chief product then, as now, was corn or maize, of which the yellow varieties were considered the most certain and produced from forty to seventy-five bushels per acre. Wheat and oats were very easily grown, the latter usually yielding from “sixty to seventy-five bushels per acre.”⁵³ Potatoes, too, were one of the most important crops of the period. The stock-raising industry was still unknown, and Lea predicted that “The growing of stock of various kinds will doubtless be extensively pursued, as few countries afford more facilities for such purposes”⁵⁴— a prophecy which has been abundantly fulfilled.

Lea estimated that the population in 1835 was sixteen thousand, representing every State in the Union. No higher compliment could have been paid them than the one given in the *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*. “The char-

⁵² Lea’s *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 41.

⁵³ Lea’s *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 13.

⁵⁴ Lea’s *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 13.

acter of this population is such", says the author, "as is rarely found in our newly acquired Territories. With very few exceptions there is not a more orderly, industrious, active, painstaking population west of the Alleghanies, than is this in the Iowa District. . . . For intelligence, I boldly assert that they are not surpassed, as a body, by an equal number of citizens of any country in the world".⁵⁵ Even in the mining camps very little disorder was found, and "the District is forever free from slavery"⁵⁶— a condition which was a blessing in the judgment of the author.

"The trade of the District", writes Lea, "is confined almost entirely to the grand thorough-fare of the Mississippi". There were ten or twelve steamboats which carried the lead and farm products to St. Louis, which was the only market of any importance. It took three or four days for one of these boats to run from St. Louis to the Lead Mines and as a consequence there was a boat each way daily. The railroad was several hundred miles from Iowa at this time but we are told that a railroad was being pushed westward from New York along "the southern shore of Lake Erie" to Chicago and thence to the Mississippi. "This work", writes Lea, "would place the center of the Iowa District within sixty hours of the city of New York; and if any of the 'down-easters' think this project chimerical, let them take a tour of a few weeks to the Upper Mississippi, and they will agree with me, that it is already demanded by the interests of the country."⁵⁷

To the student of Iowa history the *Notes on Wisconsin Territory* is also interesting since it gives the first unofficial account of the organization of the District, which in 1835 was composed of the two counties of Dubuque and Demoine.

⁵⁵ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 14.

⁵⁶ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 14.

⁵⁷ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 17.

At the time of the writing of the book the government of the District was in disorder. The Territory of Michigan had assumed the form of a State government; and the Territory of Wisconsin, to which the Iowa District was later attached, was not yet formed. The Claim Association, too,⁵⁸ which was an extra-legal institution, is described by the author as an organization made by the people of the District who "have entered into an agreement to support each other in their claims against any unjust action of the government or against any attempt at improper speculation by capitalists at a distance. And those who know the potency of such leagues will feel perfectly assured, that whatever is protected by this one, will be safe from molestation."⁵⁹

Decidedly the most interesting part of the first chapter, as well as of the whole book, is the references made to the name "Iowa". It is now agreed that it was the publication of this book which brought the name "Iowa" into general use. One prominent writer precisely summarizes this opinion in the statement: "It cannot of course be said with absolute certainty that the name 'Iowa District' was used for the first time in this book. On the contrary it is altogether probable that this was not the case. But since the name was fixed and made generally prevalent through the publication of Lieutenant Lea's book and map, it is proper and accurate to say that Lieutenant Lea is the father of the expression 'Iowa District' ".⁶⁰

The manner in which Lea came by the name "Iowa" is given in the book itself. The name was not taken, as some

⁵⁸ For a full account of the Claim Association see Shambaugh's *Claim Association of Johnson County*; and also Shambaugh's *History of the Constitutions of Iowa*.

⁵⁹ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 18.

⁶⁰ See article by Benjamin F. Shambaugh in *Annals of Iowa*, Third Series, Vol. III, p. 641.

have claimed, from Iowa County in Wisconsin. On this point Lieutenant Lea tells us that "the District under review has been often called 'Scott's Purchase', and it is sometimes called the 'Black Hawk Purchase', but from the extent and beauty of the Iowa River which runs centrally through the District, and gives character to most of it, the name of that stream being both euphonious and appropriate has been given to the District itself".⁶¹

The name as applied to the river was spelled "Ioway"⁶² and extends back a hundred years or more when the French spelled it "Aouway". In later years, after the State was formed, Lieutenant Lea tried to have the spelling changed to "Ioway", which as he declares "it ought to have been".⁶³

His descriptions of the waterways furnish the student with much valuable information, as most of the streams have the same names as in 1835, very few having been changed since then. The Skunk River, however, bore at that time the more dignified name of Chicaqua,⁶⁴ and the Iowa was oftentimes known as the Bison or Buffalo.⁶⁵

The Mississippi is given the most attention as that river was the great thoroughfare of the period. Next in importance is the Des Moines River and its tributaries, which are also described in detail. The various bends, rapids, and fording places are outlined, and any deposits of minerals or stone are also mentioned. The contiguous lands and their value for future settlement are described and estimated.

The Iowa River was the favorite of Lieutenant Lea and he

⁶¹ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 8.

⁶² *Annals of Iowa*, Third Series, Vol. III, p. 641.

⁶³ Letter of A. M. Lea to Editor H. G. Day of Albert Lea, Minnesota, dated January 1, 1890.—In collection of Mr. A. N. Harbert of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

⁶⁴ See the map in Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*.

⁶⁵ See the map in Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*.

never mentions it without becoming enthusiastic. He declares "it presents to the imagination the finest picture on earth." Other rivers which the writer describes are the "Pine", the "Wabesapinica", the "Great Mequoquetoia", the "Tetes des Morts", and the "Penaca or Turkey river". Other small creeks and sloughs are also mentioned, which had no importance except as landmarks.

Two tracts of land which were the subjects of much speculation are discussed by Lea. The first of these is the "Half-Breed Tract", a portion of land lying in the angle between the Des Moines and the Mississippi rivers. The history of this tract is related from the time of the treaty of 1824 with the Sauk and Fox Indians. Not only is the soil of this tract described, but the various small streams are mentioned, the conditions of its inhabitants explained, and the validity of the land titles discussed.

The second tract is that strip of land known as "The Indian Reserve", or "Keokuk's Reserve". This comprised a strip of land along the Iowa River containing four hundred square miles. At this time the Indians had removed in large numbers and the whites were eagerly awaiting a chance to seize upon some of the choicest parts of the District.

The descriptions of the towns are of exceeding interest, since the struggling little villages of that day are now in many instances thriving cities; while in other cases no remnant remains of what promised to be prosperous and wealthy communities. Keokuk was a town which derived its chief importance from the rapids in the Mississippi, for all boats were forced to stop and change their freight.⁶⁶ The town lots were held in common by the owners of the "Half-Breed Tract".

⁶⁶ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 35.

Fort Des Moines, now no longer in existence, was then an important place.⁶⁷ A good landing was located here, and much fine farming country was close by. A legend claimed that this was the location of an old French settlement; and some remains of such a settlement were to be found.

Madison (Fort Madison) was located upon the site of old Fort Madison, which had been burned during the War of 1812. This town had been laid out in 1835 and gave great promise of growth.⁶⁸

Burlington was a town of four hundred inhabitants and was beginning to boom. Lots were being bought and sold with remarkable briskness, and the town impressed one as a rich business center.⁶⁹

Iowa,⁷⁰ "a town to be laid out", and located at the great bend of the Mississippi, between Davenport and Muscatine, is mentioned as the future metropolis of the District.⁷¹ "Should the seat of Government of the future State of Iowa be located on the Mississippi, it would probably be fixed at Iowa. . . . And if it be located in the interior, it must be near the Iowa river". This proved to be the case, as the seat of government was located at Iowa City.⁷²

Considerable attention is given to Davenport, "a town

⁶⁷ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 35.

⁶⁸ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 35.

⁶⁹ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 36.

⁷⁰ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 37.

Lieutenant Lea had bought a large strip of land at the mouth of the Pine River and had platted the District. Later he organized a ferry and immigration company, but lacked the necessary capital to carry his project through. A letter written by Lieutenant Lea's daughter, Lida L. Lea, on January 5, 1904, says: "He [A. M. Lea] had some 'wild lands' for which he refused \$30,000 and afterwards forgot—in other business enterprises,—and allowed to be sold for the taxes".—See *Acts of the Territorial Assembly of Iowa for 1840-1841 for the Articles of Incorporation*, Chapter 63.

⁷¹ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, pp. 37, 38.

⁷² This forecast is typical of those made by Lea and shows the accuracy and care usually exhibited in his writings.

just laid out on a reserve belonging to Antoine Leclair".⁷³ The most interesting part of the description of this town has historical significance in regard to the location of the capital city. "The town", says Lea, "is laid out on a liberal scale, with a view to its becoming a large city. Three public squares have been reserved from sale, one of which, it is supposed by the proprietors, will be occupied by the public buildings of the future State of Iowa; for they confidently predict that the seat of Government of this forthcoming commonwealth will be no other than the city of Davenport itself. *Nous verrons*".⁷⁴

Dubuque (or Du Buque as it was then spelled) was the most prosperous of any of these towns;⁷⁵ for besides a population of over 1200 it had twenty-five dry goods stores, numerous groceries, four taverns, a court house, a jail, and three churches. It was claimed that the art of mining was "more skilfully practised at these mines than in any other part of the world".⁷⁶

Many other towns are mentioned which have long since ceased to exist. Among this class of towns was Catfish, a small town laid out in 1832 in the region of the mines south of Dubuque.

Riprow was another small town of which Lieutenant Lea declared "here are some of the finest smelting establishments in the world."

Kasey's, a town to be laid out by a gentleman bearing that name, was on the present site of the city of Muscatine. As this was close to the town of Iowa, in which Lea was interested, the town of Kasey's was not given a very alluring write-up.

⁷³ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 39.

⁷⁴ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 39.

⁷⁵ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 41.

⁷⁶ Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, p. 41.

THE MAP OF THE IOWA DISTRICT

In connection with the *Notes on Wisconsin Territory* is a map of the District of which mention has already been made; and this was one of the two maps of the Iowa country drawn by Lieutenant Lea. It is "a Map of Wisconsin Territory, compiled from Tanner's map of United States, from surveys of public lands and Indian boundaries, from personal reconnoissance and from original information derived from explorers and traders".⁷⁷ Among the latter was Captain Nathan Boone, a son of the famous Daniel Boone and an intimate friend of Lieutenant Lea.⁷⁸ It was largely through Boone's aid that Lea secured the information concerning the river courses and the Indian lands which made the map one of the most accurate of the period.⁷⁹

The map is interesting, in the first place, from a mechanical standpoint. It is small, about 16 by 22 inches, and very finely drawn. The coloring is excellently done in bright shades⁸⁰ and the engraving is perfect. Upon it we see some of the roads then in existence, all the towns, and a few of the winding Indian trails. We can also see the streams with their old-time spelling — although most of the rivers bear the same names as at present.

⁷⁷ Lea had not traveled over western Iowa, which at that time had never been explored, and it was necessary to use the information of trappers and traders.

⁷⁸ Nathan Boone was Captain of Company H of the First United States Dragoons. In 1832 he had surveyed the Neutral Strip, a tract of land forty miles wide which divided the Sioux and the Sac and Fox tribes of Indians.— *Annals of Iowa*, Third Series, Vol. VII, p. 436.

⁷⁹ Other maps of this District during this period are John Plumbe's and J. H. Colton's maps of 1839; J. H. Colton's and Jesse Williams' maps of 1840; Newhall's map of 1841; Willard Barrow's map of 1845.— See THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, Vol. I, p. 82.

⁸⁰ The coloring of the early maps was in very bright shades and their lasting qualities were very great.

One of the most interesting features of the map is the route taken by the Dragoons in 1835.⁸¹ This is very clearly shown, with the camping places, the distances covered daily, and any peculiar geographical formations plainly marked. Among the latter is a high mound located a short distance below the present city of Boone.⁸² A large part of the present States of Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota is also outlined. The completeness, the accuracy, and the simplicity of the map caused it to be generally used both by the government⁸³ and by individuals.

THE REPORT ON THE IOWA-MISSOURI BOUNDARY

Next in importance to the *Notes on Wisconsin Territory* as a contribution to the literature of Iowa history is the report made by Lieutenant Lea as United States Commissioner to locate the Iowa-Missouri boundary. When the Territory of Iowa was created by an act of Congress on June 12, 1838,⁸⁴ a controversy with the State of Missouri had already arisen concerning the boundaries of the two jurisdictions. Accordingly, on the 18th of June Congress passed an act which empowered the President of the United States to cause the southern boundary of Iowa to be ascertained and marked.⁸⁵ This act provided for the appointment of a commissioner who should work with a commissioner from the Territory of Iowa and one from the State of Missouri. Following the provisions of this law, President Van Buren appointed Lieutenant Lea as Commissioner for

⁸¹ This route covered over 1100 miles.—See *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 535.

⁸² See note 18 above.

⁸³ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 550. cf. note 92.

⁸⁴ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. V, p. 235.

⁸⁵ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. V, p. 248.

the United States;⁸⁶ and Governor Lucas appointed Dr. James Davis.⁸⁷ But Governor Boggs of Missouri failed to appoint a man to represent his State.

As soon as Lieutenant Lea received his appointment he hastened to St. Louis, arriving there on September 1, 1838.⁸⁸ After securing the necessary amount of help and instruments he came north to Keokuk, and there he met the Iowa commissioner. These two spent most of the winter in examining and surveying the country, and in going over the various documents connected with the history of the controversy.⁸⁹ Finally, on the 19th of January, 1839, Lieutenant Lea submitted his report to the General Land Office. It was printed as an Executive Document and used extensively in the debates in Congress.⁹⁰

This report is remarkable in many respects, and for some years was the most important and most widely known work of Lieutenant Lea. It is concise, gives a full and accurate history of the land in dispute, and states clearly the issues which Congress must decide.

After an introduction outlining the work done by the commissioners, a history of the tract in dispute is given.⁹¹ It

⁸⁶ *Executive Documents*, House Document No. 38, Third Session, 27th Congress, p. 5; also Gue's *History of Iowa*, Vol. I, p. 175.

⁸⁷ Gue's *History of Iowa*, Vol. I, p. 175.

⁸⁸ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, January, 1892, p. 204.

⁸⁹ Among these documents may be noted the following: Act creating State of Missouri; Act creating Territory of Missouri; several important letters; copies of a Spanish Land Grant. The latter is a copy of one of the four land grants made by the Spanish Government from territory now within the limits of the State of Iowa. It is signed by the Governor, Zenon Trudeau, and reads:

“St. Louis, le 30 Mars, 1799.

“Il est permis à Mr. Louis Honoré d s'établir au haut du rapide de la rivière Des Moines.”

⁹⁰ See files of the *Congressional Globe* for this period, 1838-1848.

⁹¹ *Report on the Iowa-Missouri Boundary* in the *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. II, No. 1, January, 1886, p. 193.

relates how in 1808 the Osage Indians ceded this land, comprising the northern part of Missouri, to the United States government. A few years later, in 1816, Colonel John C. Sullivan surveyed these lands and ran a line which was commonly considered the northern boundary of Missouri. This line started at the "Old Northwest Corner", a point one hundred miles due north of the mouth of the Kansas River, and was supposed to run due east to the "Des Moines Rapids". But owing to carelessness in correcting the needle, the line run by Colonel Sullivan was two and one-half degrees north of east when the Des Moines River was reached.⁹²

Four years later, in 1820 when the people of Missouri formed a State, they used the words "to correspond with the Indian boundary line"⁹³ in their petition to Congress; and thus the dispute arose. Missouri claimed that the "Des Moines Rapids" were in the River Des Moines, while Iowa claimed that the phrase referred to those rapids above Keokuk in the Mississippi or "Les rapids de la rivière Des Moines" of the French period.

Four lines at once presented themselves for the consideration of the commissioners; and these were carefully examined. First, there was the old Indian boundary or Sullivan's line which extended west to the Missouri River. Second, there was the parallel of latitude passing through the Old Northwest Corner of the Indian boundary. Third, there was the parallel of latitude passing through the Des Moines rapids in the Mississippi. And fourth, there was the parallel of latitude passing through the rapids in the Des Moines River at the Great Bend, near the present site of Keosauqua.

⁹² *Report on the Iowa-Missouri Boundary in the Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. II, No. 1, January, 1886, p. 194.

⁹³ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. III, p. 545.

The first line appeared to be the just one and the line commonly used; but it did not conform to the law, which called for a "parallel of latitude".⁹⁴ And though the other three lines were parallels of latitude, yet they failed to pass through the required rapids or the Old Northwest Corner. Lieutenant Lea concluded that the old Indian boundary, or Sullivan's line, "is the equitable and proper northern boundary of the State of Missouri; but that the terms of the law do not allow the Commissioner to adopt that line."⁹⁵

This report on the Missouri-Iowa boundary caused much discussion in Congress. The committee to which it was referred was unable to settle the question, and for a period lasting over ten years it was a subject of much debate in both houses. Congress at last found itself unable to settle the question and the case was taken to the United States Supreme Court, where the opinions and sound judgment of Lea, as exhibited in the report, were affirmed by the decision⁹⁶ handed down by Mr. Justice Catron, who said in part: "This court doth therefore see proper to decree, and accordingly order, adjudge, and decree, that the true and northern boundary line of the State of Missouri and the true southern line of the State of Iowa, is the line run and marked in 1816 by John C. Sullivan".⁹⁷

A map of the Iowa country accompanies the report and is the second drawn of this section by Lieutenant Lea.⁹⁸ It is large, about 24 by 36 inches in size, and shows northern Missouri and the lower one-third of Iowa. The most interesting features of the map are the different lines which

⁹⁴ *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. III, p. 545.

⁹⁵ *Executive Documents*, House Document No. 38, 3rd Session, 27th Congress. Also *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. II, No. 1, January, 1886, p. 193.

⁹⁶ Found in 7 *Howard* 660.

⁹⁷ 7 *Howard* 679.

⁹⁸ *Executive Documents*, House Document No. 38, 3rd Session, 27th Congress.

were in dispute. These lines are so drawn that the issues present themselves without a word of explanation. The map is decidedly superior to the one which is found in the *Notes on Wisconsin Territory* in that it is more accurately drawn, the rivers, too, having their permanent names by this time.

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

Those already mentioned comprise the most important contributions of Albert Miller Lea to the literature of Iowa history; but there are some other writings of lesser importance which should be noticed. Among these lesser contributions the most important is the autobiography of Lieutenant Lea⁹⁹ which was published in the *Iowa Historical Record*. This contribution explains some of the conditions which existed at the time of Lea's work in Iowa and gives a graphic account of Iowa pioneer life.¹⁰⁰ An article of nearly the same importance is also found in the same publication and is entitled *Early Explorations in Iowa*.¹⁰¹ This gives in a conversational manner the story of the march of the Dragoons in 1835, and is considered by most students as the best account of the march ever written.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ A longer autobiography was prepared by Lieutenant Lea for the Minnesota Historical Society and published by the Albert Lea, Minnesota, *Freeborn County Standard*, on March 13, 1879.

¹⁰⁰ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, January, 1892, p. 200.

¹⁰¹ *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 535.

¹⁰² *A Journal*. An important and very valuable document came to light in the autumn of 1908 at Madrid, Iowa, where it was claimed that Albert M. Lea was the author. The title of the document was the "Journal of different Marches Made by the Dragoons in the years 1834 and 5 with some remarks". It was in a faded handwriting, signed "L—", and agreed so perfectly with the known facts that very few questioned its authorship by Lieutenant Lea. But upon close examination of the manuscript many features came to light which proved beyond a doubt that it was not written by the gifted Lieutenant. In the first place, the journal of 1834, which describes day by day the march of the Dragoons into the Pawnee country, could not possibly have been written

In 1890 Lieutenant Lea wrote a series of articles for a paper¹⁰³ published in Albert Lea, Minnesota, which deal not only with the early history of Iowa, but also relate to the Civil War and to incidents in the life of the author.¹⁰⁴ Some

by Lea for he did not join that regiment until its return to Fort Gibson in the autumn of 1834.

The Journal of 1835, moreover, was not written by Lieutenant Lea, for it gives a daily account of the marches from the Raccoon Forks to Fort Des Moines No. 1. Since Lieutenant Lea covered this distance in a canoe upon the Des Moines River, and was not with the troops over that portion of the march, it was an impossibility for him to keep such a record.

There are also other evidences in the body of the text to prove that it did not owe its authorship to Lieutenant Lea. Nor is external evidence lacking to prove this statement; for the handwriting, the rhetoric, the orders of the commanding officers, all go to show that Albert M. Lea did not write these journals.

However, the fact that they were written by an unknown man, who signed himself "L—" does not in the least lessen their value. They compare accurately with the known and reliable sources concerning the march, such as the map in the *Notes on Wisconsin Territory* and the account given by Lea in a magazine article. In fact they touch upon phases overlooked by Lieutenant Lea himself and must be considered as a valuable addition to the literature of the early history of Iowa.

The Journal has been edited by Louis Pelzer and published in full in the July, 1909, number of THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS.

Lieutenant Lea has described his trip from the present site of Des Moines to Fort Des Moines No. 1, in the *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 550, in these words: "The next morning, a bright Sunday, I got orders to reconnoitre the Des Moines river, by descending it in a canoe, to ascertain the practicability of navigation with keel boats, with a view to the establishment of a military port. A goodly cottonwood was selected, my men set to work with a will, and at sunrise Tuesday I bade adieu to the camp, and aided by a soldier and an Indian, started on my toilsome task, sounding all shoals, taking courses with a pocket compass, estimating distances from bend to bend by the time and rate of motion, sketching every notable thing, occasionally landing to examine the geology of the rocks, and sleeping in the sand despite the gnats and mosquitoes. We made the trip without an accident, and leaving our canoe with Capt. White at the trading house, we footed it to the fort, where we arrived many days before the main body, who returned leisurely by land, and arrived in fine order, without the loss of a man, a horse, a tool, or a beef, which were fatter than at the starting, after a march of eleven hundred miles."

¹⁰³ *Freeborn County Standard*, Albert Lea, Minnesota, edited by H. G. Day.

¹⁰⁴ Lea was an intimate friend of President Jefferson Davis; and he claimed relationship to General Robert E. Lee. In the early part of the war, however,

of these articles are especially valuable as they give the Indian's side of the Black Hawk War,¹⁰⁵ just as Lieutenant Lea heard it from the lips of Black Hawk himself. In another of these same articles we are told of the formation of the United States Dragoons.¹⁰⁶ A cavalry regiment of five companies was formed at the close of the Black Hawk War, and this, declares Lea, "was the cause and nucleus of the First United States Dragoons".

The last of these lesser contributions¹⁰⁷ is a letter by Lieutenant Lea, which deserves special mention as it throws some light on the name "Iowa". It appears that the name was spelled "Ioway" by the earliest settlers; but in order to satisfy their desires for Latin endings, George W. Jones, the Territorial Delegate to Congress,¹⁰⁸ and Lieutenant Lea agreed to spell it "Iowa". Several years later, after the State had been formed, the original spelling seemed preferable; and in this letter the writer asks his friends to revert to the old spelling of "Ioway".

The contributions of Albert M. Lea¹⁰⁹ are not numerous.

Lieutenant Lea incurred the disfavor of Jefferson Davis and never rose higher than the rank of Major.

At the battle of Galveston, Albert M. Lea fought against his son, who was a Lieutenant on a Federal gunboat. The younger Lea was slain and the article telling of this battle is the most pathetic story ever written by Albert M. Lea.

¹⁰⁵ Lea, accompanied by General Parrott, visited the lodge of Black Hawk.

¹⁰⁶ Article published in the *Freeborn County Standard* on January 30, 1890.

¹⁰⁷ Letter written to H. G. Day of Albert Lea, Minnesota, on January 1, 1890, preserved in collection of Mr. A. N. Harbert.

¹⁰⁸ For a complete history of the Territorial Delegate see an article by Kenneth W. Colgrove entitled *The Iowa Territorial Delegates* in *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. VII, No. 2, April, 1909, p. 230.

¹⁰⁹ Lieutenant Lea was a very careful writer and most of his writings agree perfectly with official records and documents. The map in the *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, however, was based to a considerable extent upon data furnished by Capt. Nathan Boone; and a comparison of this map with the present map of the State shows its defects.—See *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VI, No. 4, October, 1890, p. 550.

neither are they in the best sense critical. The author did not realize the part they would play nor the influence they would exert. They are, however, remarkable in many respects. They give us real pictures of the virgin Iowa prairies, of the streams, and the homes of the pioneers. They were in most respects accurate and reliable, concise and clear. These contributions though few in number are prized by all students of Iowa history. They are, indeed, the most enduring monuments to the life and memory of Albert Miller Lea.

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