

of Alexander, Genesee county. Draper's father was a poor man and unable either to help his son toward an education or to support him in idleness; very likely, he did not appreciate the lad. Lyman was undersized, not robust, and had tastes which seemed to fit him only for an unprofitable life of letters. Remsen, a man of moderate means, offered the youth a congenial home, without cost, and to this patron he again went upon leaving Granville. For a time he was placed at Hudson River Seminary, in Stockport, his studies here being followed by an extended course of private reading, chiefly historical.

Doddridge, Flint, Withers, and afterward Hall, were the early historians of the border. The young student of their works found that on many essential points and in most minor incidents there were great discrepancies between them. It was in 1838, when twenty-three years of age, that Draper conceived the idea of writing a series of biographies of trans-Alleghany pioneers, in which he should be able by dint of original investigation to fill the gaps and correct the errors which so marred all books then extant upon this fertile specialty. This at once became his controlling thought, and he entered upon its execution with an enthusiasm which never lagged through a half century spent in the assiduous collection of material for what he always deemed the mission of his life; but unfortunately he only collected and investigated, and the biographies were never written.

From the Remsen home, Draper began an extensive and long-continued correspondence with prominent pioneers all along the border line—with Drs. Daniel Drake and S. P. Hildreth, and Colonel John McDonald, of Ohio; William C. Preston, of South Carolina; Colonel Richard M. Johnson, Charles S. Todd, Major Bland W. Ballard, Dr. John Croghan, and Joseph R. Underwood, of Kentucky; ex-Governor David Campbell, of Virginia; Colonel William Martin and Hugh L. White, of Tennessee, and scores of others of almost equal renown. Correspondence of this character, first with the pioneers and later with their descendants, he actively conducted until within a few days of his death.