

Documents

Autobiography of Alvin P. Hovey's Early Life

*Introduction and notes by Elfrieda Lang**

Daniel, the youngest of nine children of Richard Hovey, the glover, who lived at Waltham Abbey, Essex County, England, immigrated to Ipswich, Massachusetts in 1635 at the age of seventeen. For approximately two centuries most of the members of the Hovey family remained in the New England States. The War of 1812 brought many hardships to this area of the country and these likewise descended upon the Hovey family. Therefore, in 1818, Abiel and Frances Hovey with their five children went west to repair their fortunes and sought more fertile fields on the banks of the Ohio, settling near Mt. Vernon, Indiana.¹ In the Hoosier State two more children² were born to this New England family.

Alvin P., the youngest, was born in a log cabin on September 6, 1821. His mother's ancestors were Irish and from her he inherited a fine imagination and courage distinctive of that nationality. Before he reached his second birthday death had deprived him of his father, who died as poor as he came to Indiana and left the "youngest son with nothing but his blessing and a mother's love to enter the battle of life." Want and privation made an indelible impression upon Alvin as a child. To this was added another sting on his fifteenth birthday when death summoned his mother.³

Consequently, some means for procuring a livelihood had to be found. For several months he was employed in a little shop which sold both groceries and other merchandise. Leisure hours, though few, were spent in reading English poetry. He

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¹ *The Hovey Book Describing the English Ancestry and American Descendants of Daniel Hovey of Ipswich, Massachusetts* (Haverhill, Massachusetts, 1913), 5-6, 9, 226-27. Abiel Hovey was born in Lyme, New Hampshire, October 30, 1776. Frances Peterson Hovey, the daughter of John and Frances Peterson, was born in Vermont on May 20, 1780 (?). Their five children were Frances, Eliza, Amanda, Charlotte, and Charles.

² Minerva and Alvin Peterson were born in Posey County. *Ibid.*, 228.

³ *Ibid.*, 227, 287; New York, *The Republic*, January 22, 1890; Unsigned MS in Alvin P. Hovey Papers, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana. Abiel Hovey died on July 17, 1823, in Posey County, Indiana. Frances Peterson Hovey died on September 6, 1836, in the same county.

was soon convinced that he did not want to spend the remainder of his life as a mere clerk in a store. The future looked hopeless, but he yearned to obtain a more important position. After hours of deliberation he decided to write a letter to John Pitcher,⁴ an outstanding lawyer in Mt. Vernon, asking permission to use his books. Weeks passed and no answer came. Yet, Hovey was so determined to become a lawyer that he concluded a personal call might be received with more favor. On the chosen day he visited Pitcher's library with the feeling of a criminal awaiting the decision of a court. In a few brief words he again made his request. Thereupon, the lawyer delivered a long lecture pointing out that success in the legal profession required a great deal of hard work and much talent, and that some trade would offer more inducements. No doubt, the Judge could see in the eyes of young Hovey that his lecture had not discouraged him. One of the oldest books, therefore, was taken off the shelf in the hope that it might dispel the young man's delusions. It, however, had the opposite effect and Hovey in time became a master of the profession.

⁴ Judge John Pitcher was born in Watertown, Connecticut, on August 22, 1795. At the age of seventeen he began studying law and was admitted to the bar in 1815. The same year he was married to Eliza Gamble. In 1816 he came west, making almost the entire journey on foot and located in St. Louis, Missouri. Four years later he moved to Rockport, Spencer County, Indiana. In 1819, Thomas Lincoln, the father of Abraham, had moved to a farm in Spencer County. A friendship developed and Abraham frequently called at the office of Pitcher because the latter's books attracted him. Since the family was very poor and the services of young Abe were needed on the farm, Pitcher loaned him books which could be read at home during leisure hours. In 1820, Pitcher represented Spencer and Perry counties in the state legislature and two years later became judge of the probate court for Gibson, Posey, Vanderburgh, and Warrick counties. In 1835 he came to Mt. Vernon and practiced his profession for forty years. The following year the Whigs nominated him for Congress from the first district. Five years later he was nominated and elected to represent Posey and Vanderburgh counties in the state senate. Because of family relations he drifted into the Democratic party in 1868, but twenty years later he supported Benjamin Harrison. For his second wife he had chosen Amanda Cissena, a native of Ohio, who died in 1854. Oliver C. Terry, Mt. Vernon, Indiana, to Jesse W. Weik, Greencastle, Indiana, July 14, 1888, in the Herndon-Weik Collection of Lincolniana, in the Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. The microfilm copy of this collection, which is in the Indiana University Library, was used. Terry served as treasurer of Mt. Vernon from 1868 to 1878, and in 1878 became mayor and served two years. Original Returns of the Seventh United States Census, 1850, Posey County, Indiana. The microfilm copy of the census, which is in the Indiana University Library, was used. *Indiana House Journal*, 1830, p. 4; *Indiana Senate Journal*, 1841, p. 4; The Goodspeed Publishing Co., *History of Posey County, Indiana* (Chicago, 1886), 376, 518.

In his eighteenth year, he became a student of law and like Abraham Lincoln devoted the hours of daylight to earn enough to live on and the evenings to reading. While the work of Lincoln's hands and the plow was evidenced in the fields of his father's Spencer County farm, that of Hovey's hands and trowel became a more permanent fixture in the form of chimneys on many houses in Mt. Vernon.⁵ Lincoln moved to Illinois, but Hovey always claimed Indiana for his permanent residence. After three years preparation reading law, Hovey was admitted to the bar of Posey County in 1843 and was regarded as one of the best read young men in southern Indiana at that time.⁶

By the following year he had been convinced that life might be more interesting if joys and sorrows could be shared with a companion. As a result of this decision, he chose Mary Ann James, a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to become his wife on November 24, 1844. To this union five children were born, three of whom died in childhood.⁷ Esther and Charles James who reached maturity were always highly esteemed in this southern Indiana village.

Early in his career Hovey won local fame by ousting the executors of the William Maclure estate and becoming the administrator for the property of that eccentric philanthropist.⁸ Probably the school of hard knocks had taught him that there was no room for corruption in the life of a loyal citizen.

When the war with Mexico began, Indiana furnished five regiments of volunteers. In Posey County a company was raised of which Enoch R. James⁹ was captain and Hovey a

⁵ Unsigned MS in Alvin P. Hovey Papers. Lincoln's early reading was directed by Pitcher when the latter was living in Rockport, although his real interest in law began in Illinois. William H. Herndon and Jesse W. Weik, *Herndon's Lincoln, The True Story of a Great Life* (3 vols., Chicago, 1890), I, 61.

⁶ Unsigned MS in Alvin P. Hovey Papers.

⁷ Mary Ann James was born on February 22, 1825, and died in Mt. Vernon on November 16, 1863. The children were all born in Mt. Vernon. Esther, born on January 8, 1846, married Major Gustavus Varsa Menzies on November 11, 1869, in New York City. Enoch James, born February 7, 1848, died at the age of six. Charles James, born January 8, 1850, later became a banker, justice of the peace, and twice postmaster of Mt. Vernon. He married Lillie Jaquess, a native of Poseyville, on March 16, 1871, in Evansville. Mary, born January 13, 1854, died on March 30, 1855. Mary Ann, born April 1, 1857, died on April 7, 1858. *Hovey Book*, 288, 358.

⁸ For details of the case see, 5 *Indiana Reports*, 465-79.

⁹ Enoch R. James, the father of Mrs. Hovey, was born in Kentucky

first lieutenant. The company was assigned to the Second Indiana Regiment, but this regiment was never mustered into service because the quota for Indiana had been filled.¹⁰ Possibly this was a disappointment, but the gates to a larger area soon opened to test the talents of this young man.

In 1850 as a member of the constitutional convention he made his ablest speech on homestead exemption, which he did not favor because the only class that would benefit from "such provisions would be those who" became "involved in debt beyond their means of payment." Then, he asked the question whether it would be "conducive to public morals to place that class comparatively above want by giving them homesteads . . . purchased with the funds of other men." He was of the opinion if the homestead exemption were adopted, it might be difficult for the individual just beginning and not known to receive credit because exemption by law would be greater than a young man could probably acquire in five years. As a result, he claimed thousands would be "driven from independent labor for themselves." They would "be compelled to toil for their more fortunate and wealthy neighbors." This would lead to an "over amount of hireable labor in the market," and the price would be reduced and the poor would be "completely within the power of the rich."

He emphasized the fact that it was the love of gain that "peopled this western wilderness-like world with millions of happy and intelligent freemen." It was the hope of glory or gain that lightened "the poor boy's eye in his log cabin in the wilderness, when by the midnight lamp" he pored "over some old musty work of history or science." Furthermore, he declared if you struck "from the affections of man the love of property," you would "paralyze the intellectual progress of the world." In conclusion he said, "avoid making laws for one class to the injury of another. Without strong reasons to the

on July 4, 1800, the son of Samuel and Frances James, both natives of Virginia. In 1816, Enoch came to Posey County and five years later went to Louisiana to engage in mercantile pursuits. Between 1830 and 1835 he returned to Posey County. In 1847, he was elected to the state senate for Posey and Vanderburgh counties and re-elected in 1850. His wife, Esther Lowry, a native of Maryland, died on June 21, 1849. Goodspeed, *History of Posey County, Indiana*, 501; *Indiana Senate Journal*, 1847, p. 6; *ibid.*, 1850, p. 4.

¹⁰ New York, *The Republic*, January 22, 1890; Indianapolis, *Sentinel*, November 24, 1891.

contrary the general rule should be no law for the rich—no law for the poor—but a law for the whole people.”¹¹

Earlier in the convention he had delivered a speech on the Grand Jury contending it was “one of the most democratic features in the judiciary department.” The Grand Jury system he said was “without a parallel in the history of nations or of man.” “Kingdoms,” he remarked had been “overthrown, empires” had “mouldered into dust, but the Grand Jury amid all the changes of a thousand years,” had “stood as firm and immovable as the pyramids of Egypt.”¹²

Apparently Hovey, though only twenty-nine years of age, had demonstrated in the constitutional convention that he had ability and as a result was given an opportunity to make his mark. From 1851 to 1854 he served as judge of the circuit court of southern Indiana. Then in May of 1854, he became a member of the Indiana Supreme Court to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Judge Addison L. Roache.¹³ Although his term with this body was less than a year, he handed down a decision on December 12, 1854, which added to his prestige. In the spring of 1853, Greencastle Township in Putnam County had voted to assess a local tax for education. Some of the citizens objected and the case came up for consideration before Judge Hovey who declared that the tax was unconstitutional.¹⁴ The inhabitants of one county or township should not be compelled to bear greater burdens than are borne by the citizens in other counties or townships. When taxes are collected to be used for state purposes, the constitution directs the general assembly to provide by law for a uniform and equal rate of assessment and taxation.

¹¹ *Report of the Debates and Proceedings of the Convention for the Revision of the Constitution of the State of Indiana, 1850* (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1850), I, 751-53. The aim of homestead exemption was to protect land or town property if valued at not less than five hundred dollars against seizure and sale by and legal process for any debt contracted after the adoption of the 1851 Constitution. *Ibid.*, 746.

¹² *Ibid.*, 204, 205.

¹³ Addison L. Roache was born in Rutherford County, Tennessee, November 3, 1817, and with his family came to Bloomington, Indiana, in 1828. Here he took advantage of a collegiate education at Indiana University and graduated in 1836. On July 13, 1858, he was appointed a trustee of his Alma Mater. When, however, he moved to Indianapolis in 1859, he became ineligible to hold this post. On April 10, 1878, he again was given an opportunity to be a trustee of Indiana University, and from 1879 to 1881 served as president of the board. Burton D. Myers, *Trustees and Officers of Indiana University 1820 to 1950* ([Bloomington], 1951), 237-39.

¹⁴ *Greencastle Township v. Black*, 5 *Indiana Reports*, 557-77.

Thus far the various offices he had filled were due to his membership in the Democratic party. His last post as a member of that body was in 1856 when President Franklin Pierce appointed him attorney for the district of Indiana.¹⁵ Hovey's knowledge of law was widely known in both political parties.

His interests, however, were not confined solely to the legal profession. When President Lincoln issued the first call for volunteers, Hovey organized the First Regiment of the Indiana Legion of which he was commissioned a colonel. He later became a colonel in another division, the Twenty-fourth Indiana Infantry. Hovey entered the battle with the goal to win and fought to the bitter end. It has been asserted that he won his greatest reputation in the Battle of Champion's Hill in Mississippi in May, 1863. From time to time he demonstrated his ability as a military leader and promotions were awarded to him. The announcement of Hovey's last promotion to Brevet Major General was made on July 15, 1864, and four days later he took the oath.¹⁶ From letters in the Hovey Papers it is apparent this advancement was long over due.

Notwithstanding the fact that many will remember the name of General Hovey in connection with the Civil War because of his courage on the battlefield, others, however, will associate the name with a phrase which the General inherited upon the execution of an order from Ulysses S. Grant to raise ten thousand men. Only those who were footloose and free were invited. Consequently, when the quota was made up, many of the recruits were mere boys, and were, therefore, labeled "Hovey's babies."¹⁷

Regardless of how insignificant and simple or how important and difficult a task, Hovey attempted to discharge his duty in what appeared to be the most beneficial to all concerned. Hence, when the Sons of Liberty were becoming too active for comfort in the minds of state officials in Indiana,

¹⁵ New York, *The Republic*, January 22, 1890; Indianapolis, *Sentinel*, November 24, 1891.

¹⁶ *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana* (8 vols., Indianapolis, 1865-1869), I (1869), 112; II (1865), 229; III (1866), 532; S. F. Chalfin, Assistant Adjutant General, Washington, D.C., July 15, 1864, to Alvin P. Hovey. Hovey Papers. Hovey's Report of the Champion Hill's battle is in the Hovey Papers and also printed in the *War of the Rebellion* (70 vols., Washington, 1880-1901), Series 1, XXIV (1889), 40-46.

¹⁷ New York, *The Republic*, January 22, 1890; Indianapolis, *Sentinel*, November 24, 1891.

he was assigned on September 14, 1864, to the command of the military district of Indiana. His performance in this position was regarded very admirably by some, others were just as prone to criticize. During his regime the case of Lambdin P. Milligan, a Knight of the Golden Circle, was in the courts and became famous. It finally went to the United States Supreme Court, which handed down the decision that the civil law was superior to military law in all places where the civil courts could be opened.¹⁸

In all probability such unrest could even stretch the nerves of a Civil War general, and one year in the command of the military district of Indiana was all Hovey cared for. Accordingly, he asked to be relieved of military duty. This request was granted to become effective on October 7, 1865.¹⁹

Before the above-mentioned wish had materialized, Hovey had been slated for a diplomatic mission to South America. This must have appealed to him, for on August 12, 1865, he was appointed envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States to the government of Peru. During the time that plans were being made for the journey to Peru, his second wife, Rosa Alice, widow of Major William Carey of Cleveland, Ohio, and daughter of Caleb B. Smith,²⁰ became ill and died.²¹ Consequently, only his daughter, Esther, and two servants were mentioned in the diplomatic passport issued on October 6, 1865. The party sailed from New York on the "Henry Chauncey," on November 1 and arrived at Lima, "The Paris of South America," on November 16. While the General was searching for a house, they were the guests of a Mr. Hobson, a wealthy man from Baltimore. Esther in writing to a girl friend in Mt. Vernon gave a detailed account of the voyage and their experiences in Lima. She apparently was quite impressed with the beautiful furnished house which

¹⁸ E. D. Townsend, Washington D.C., September 14, 1864, to Alvin P. Hovey. Hovey Papers. This assignment is also printed in the *War of the Rebellion*, Series 3, IV (1900), 717. Benn Pitman (ed.), *The Trials for Treason at Indianapolis* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1865); Felix G. Stidger, *Treason History of the Order of Sons of Liberty* (Chicago, 1903); *Ex parte Milligan*, 4 Wallace, 2.

¹⁹ Special Orders No. 64 dated October 9, 1865. Hovey Papers.

²⁰ Caleb B. Smith, a native of Massachusetts, immigrated with his parents to Ohio in 1814. He was educated in Ohio and then settled in Indiana where he became a prominent political figure. In 1861 he was appointed secretary of the interior by President Lincoln. *Dictionary of the United States Congress* (Washington, 1864), 336.

²¹ *Hovey Book*, 288.

became their home and those who assisted among whom were seven servants, a French cook, head steward, and porters.²² At the time of their arrival in Peru a state of revolution existed and Spain sought to overturn the existing government. The General counseled with the Supreme Chief, Mariano Ignacio Prado,²³ and his cabinet. As a result of Hovey's advice, the negotiations were carried out to engage in a battle with the Spanish fleet. The Peruvians won the victory and were kindly disposed toward the United States Minister.

Hovey's post, however, was very difficult because Peru was engaged in either a foreign war or internal revolutions during his stay. Nevertheless, the populace and government recognized his many acts of personal kindness.²⁴ Yet, five years in the diplomatic service to the country where confusion and revolution were the fad convinced the General that he had been properly initiated as a diplomat. He resigned and returned to the calm and peaceful life of southern Indiana to practice law.

Back in the Hoosier State, however, some of his friends in 1872 were of the opinion that he should utilize his talents in some other way than as an attorney in a small Indiana village. They wanted to nominate him for governor, but he refused. After a rest of fourteen years, the immunity to public office apparently had worn off and Hovey accepted the Republican nomination for Congress from the first district and was elected. It is possible that he was willing to become their candidate because he felt there was little chance of winning. After the election many wondered how it had happened and various reasons were given. The successful candidate, however, attributed it to "Hovey's babies" who had fought with him and their children who had voted for him, although many were Democrats. This victory made an impression upon the

²² Esther Hovey, Lima, Peru, to Mary Leavenworth, Mt. Vernon, Indiana, February 19, 1866. Hovey Papers.

²³ Mariano Ignacio Prado was born in Huánuco in 1826 and died in Paris in 1901. He was supreme chief of Peru from 1865 to 1868, which office he had acquired through a revolution. On August 2, 1876 he was named the constitutional president. In 1879 he embarked for Europe on the pretext to obtain arms. When Andrés Bello was elected president in June of 1886, he requested Prado to return to Lima. *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada, Europeo-Americana* (70 vols., Barcelona, n.d.), X, 256-57; XLVI, 1208-09; Clements R. Markham, *A History of Peru* (Chicago, 1892), 359-65, 398, 428.

²⁴ New York, *The Republic*, January 22, 1890; Indianapolis, *Sentinel*, November 24, 1891.

General, and he was determined to do something for those who had been loyal on the Civil War battlefields. As a congressman, therefore, he introduced the Service Pension Bill which attracted nationwide attention,²⁵ but due to the opposition of the administration failed to pass.

Although he had not succeeded in the passage of the Service Pension bill, the Republicans had not lost confidence in him, for by 1888, Oliver C. Terry of Mt. Vernon was certain that Hovey would be returned to Congress. Others were of the same opinion because the first district had to be saved for the Republicans. When the Indiana State Republican convention was held in that year, some of the General's friends, however, had him in mind as a candidate for governor. Even though there were five aspirants for this office, he received the nomination on the first ballot.²⁶ That a majority of the people of his native state endorsed this choice is indicated by the fact that Alvin P. Hovey became Indiana's twentieth governor.

No county in the entire state was more pleased with the results of this election than Posey, for its favorite son had traveled from the log cabin to the governor's mansion. Celebrations took place throughout the state, but the climax was reached at the time of the inaugural ball in Tomlinson Hall, Indianapolis, when "fair women and brave men . . . twirling in the mystic mazes of the dance," were described by a society lady of national prominence as participating in "the grandest affair ever witnessed outside of Washington City." The local paper asked "what could keep the heart of a Posey County citizen from swelling with pride and joy as he remembered that all that pomp and glory was done in honor to a once poor lad who grew to manhood in our beloved Posey County?"²⁷

For some the highlight of January 14, 1889, may have been the ball. Those responsible for the transaction of state affairs, however, were probably more impressed by the inaugural address which mentioned a number of problems but

²⁵ New York, *The Republic*, January 22, 1890; Alvin P. Hovey, *The Rights of Soldiers of the United States Who Served in the Late Rebellion* (Washington, 1888).

²⁶ Oliver C. Terry, Mt. Vernon, Indiana, to Jesse W. Weik, Greencastle, Indiana, July 14, 1888. Herndon-Weik Collection of Lincolniana. Indianapolis *Journal*, August 9, 1888; New York, *The Republic*, January 22, 1890. For a good account of the 1888 campaign see, R. Carlyle Buley, "The Campaign of 1888 in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History* (Bloomington, 1905-), X (June, 1914), 30-53.

²⁷ Mt. Vernon, Indiana, *Weekly Sun*, January 23, 1889.

stressed in particular the purity of the ballot box. Since an act concerning elections was passed on March 6, 1889, the legislators must have accepted the challenge and worked with considerable rapidity.²⁸

Still, Hovey was not destined to see all of his plans materialize, for on November 23, 1891, he died in Indianapolis, after he occupied the chair of the chief executive of the state of Indiana less than two years. The body was returned to Mt. Vernon and laid to rest near the west entrance of Bellefontaine Cemetery.

Autobiography²⁹

"My father, once a wealthy merchant of Vermont, was reduced to poverty, by the War of 1812, and in the year 1815, to cover his misfortunes, or at least to forget them as far as possible, removed with his family to the wilds of the great North West, and settled on the banks of the Ohio.³⁰ Here, with the weight of his misfortunes, and a broken constitution, he passed his life in comparative obscurity, and died in 1823, leaving my mother, with the rich legacy of seven small children, and nothing to eat. The severe struggles with poverty, and despondency, soon brought her to the bed of sickness and death, and my five sisters o[n]ly brother,³¹ and myself were cast upon the world, to take care of ourselves. Poverty, is commonplace cold and unromantic, and ragged boyhood, has but few charms. I will not dwell upon this period of my life. At nine, I was master of my own fortunes, and launched upon the broad ocean of the future. I have vivid recollections, of days of want and privation—bright days of sport and hope—and sad, sad, and gloomy hours, when the prospective future, would loom up before me. Whether my innate aspirations were

²⁸ *Indiana Laws, 1889*, pp. 157-86. See pages 3-6 of the "Inaugural Address of Hon. Alvin P. Hovey, Governor, and Hon. Ira J. Chase, Lieutenant-Governor of Indiana," in the *Indiana Documentary Journal, 1889*.

²⁹ The Autobiography is in the Alvin P. Hovey Papers.

³⁰ According to the *Hovey Book*, Abiel Hovey was a farmer and lived in Rutland, Vermont, until 1812, then in Montpelier for two years, and in Middlebury until 1818. In the latter year he removed to Posey County, Indiana.

³¹ The five sisters were Frances, Eliza, Amanda, Charlotte, and Minerva. An older brother, John, was born in February, 1803, and died in April of the same year. The brother here referred to was Charles born in Middlebury, Vermont, on April 19, 1815. He was killed by a cannon in Mt. Vernon on January 9, 1862. *Hovey Book*, 227-28, 286.

to be realized, or whether my friendless and unprotected condition, would lead me to disgrace and infamy, were questions, that even at that early day, caused me many hours of reflection [*sic*] and sadness. From this period, until my twe[lf]th year, I roamed at large, working or playing at my pleasure, or making sudden and laborious inroads, upon the few books that might be found in our village. The ordinary branches of common education, seemed to come to me by intuition, and I was regarded by my acquaintances, as being 'a very old boy of my age.' At this time, a teacher, of no ordinary talent, the author of a work on English grammar, opened a high school, in my village, and I soon became prominent, as one of its most promising students. My compositions, were regarded in the most favorable light, and I was held up, as a genius, that might one day, Do honor to my preceptor. The School, was liberally patronized, its pupils numbering nearly one hundred girls and boys, between the ages of eight and twenty.

"Here, the first tender emotions of my heart were awakened, by a dark eyed fairy looking child four years my junior. I look back at her now, as she then stood in the old school room—white panties—sky blue dress a little below the knee, and snow white collar, neatly fitted to her slender neck—with dark lustrous eyes—pale face—light brown hair—coral lips—with her slender frail form, and voice of band like music, and ask myself, whether even angels could be more beautiful than that fairy like child? Anna Lowry,³² born in the South, had but recently become a member of our village. Her father, had accumulated considerable property in Louisiana, in mercantile transactions, and for the purpose of saving the lives of two children, who were his idols, had been advised to remove to a more bracing latitude, and had but a short time since become a resident. For hours, in that old school room, would my book lay neglected on my lap, whilst my whole soul would revel in dreams of the future—dreams, in which little Anna, was ever the central thought, and day star. How could I win her? How could I deserve so pure and fair a being? How could I the poor r[a]gged boy, who had no one to assist, and nothing to

³² Relatives are of the opinion that the Anna Lowry here referred to was Mary Ann James, later to become Mrs. Hovey. Her mother's maiden name was Lowry. There was a William Lowry, brother of Esther Lowry James, who lived in Mt. Vernon and had two daughters, Mary and Ann Grace, but they were both born in Indiana. At the time of the 1850 Census they were 10 and 7 years of age. See footnote 9 for more detailed information on the James family.

lean upon in the future, but my own strong will—how could I hope, to link my fate with hers, and claim her for my own? A deep and impassable gulf seemed to separate us, but I was resolved that that gulf should not prove impassable for me. Daring resolve—bold boy—I had not then read that ‘fools rush in, where angels dare not tread.’

“Time, with his rapid wing, had flown over the great period of twelve months, and found me, at the end of the year, much improved. I began to realize my condition, and felt much flattered, by the praises bestowed upon me, by my teacher. But how should I pay him? I had no money, and felt too proud to acknowledge it, to the man who had appealed so successfully to my vanity. Hours of real pain, and mental suffering ensued, and I was at length relieved, by being able to borrow, a few dollars from an older student, which enabled me to discharge my debt. Never did a son of Mammon, enjoy the use of gold, so much. I actually shed tears, at my delivery, from what I regarded, as a great disgrace.

“At fourteen, my physical development was such, as to give me the appearance of manhood, and for many months succeeding I almost reveled in the wild sports of the country. For days, alone, with my gun I penetrated the dense wilds around the village, in search of game, and would return, with the fruits of my labor, with all the pride, of a roman conqueror. How I enjoyed those solitary hunts, communing with nature! What bright dreams, and reverie would float before me! With a small volume, of ancient heroic poetry—the *Calliope*. I would while away the hours, under some shady tree, and dream, that I would some day rival the Knights of Arthur’s table round. Deep was my sympathy, for Sir James the Ross, who fought the haughty Greame, for his fair Matilda.³³ Sir Launcelot, filled my mind with all the wild pathos of chivalry, and the sorrowful tale, of the Hermit of Warkworth,³⁴ would soften my heart, and sprinkle the page with

³³ For “Sir James the Ross,” an ancient historical ballad, see, Alexander B. Grosart (ed.), *The Works of Michael Bruce* (Edinburgh, 1865), 197-205; 258-60. John Logan published the ballad in 1770. It was enclosed in a letter by Michael Bruce to David Pearson.

³⁴ “The Hermit of Warkworth,” a Northumberland ballad, may be found in Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (Philadelphia, 1856), 435-45. This ballad was first published in 1771 and is very characteristic of the eighteenth century. The first edition of the *Reliques* was published in 1765 in three volumes. *Dictionary of National Biography* (63 vols., New York, 1885-1900), XLIV (1895), 437-39.

tears! Oh what a world is Fancy's realm [*sic*] and how happy are they, that dwell within its vales! In those hours, of exquisite luxury, I would imagine [*sic*] myself, the hero of like adventures. If little Anna, should be enchanted, or stolen away, by Sprites, or fairies, I would break the spell, and rescue her from thralldom.

"The Child of Elle's Emeline,"⁸⁵ was not as fair as she, and I would willingly break a hundred lances, to win her to my love. No Squire of Dames, would dare what I would, for the love of that fairy girl. With such dreams, time rolled on, but never one smile, look or word, that led me to suppose, that she ever thought of me, save as a poor sprightly student. True, I had made pictures on her papers, and on the backs of her covered books, and she had thanked me for them, with her more than winning smiles. I had watched her, at her plays, helped her in every opportunity, and praised her for her little songs, and winning arts, but her only return, was her approval, that filled my soul with delirium and hope!

"It now became necessary, that I should resort to some means, of procuring a livelihood, and for several months, I was employed as a clerk, or salesman, in a little shop, kept for the sale of groceries, and merchandize. Faithfully did I perform my trust, but filled every leisure hour, in pouring over the classic authors of English poetry. I lived in a world all my own, and all its bright imagery had allusion and reference, to my boyish love. Years sped, and I was in the same vocation, and drawing the same bright visions but no nearer my hopes than the first hour that my heart owned her power. Something must be done, to win her—something, to lift me from obscurity and place me at least upon equal terms with herself.

"She had now reached womanhood, and was the acknowledged beauty, of the country far and wide. Still pale, fragile, spiritual, her dark soft eyes, sank deep and deeper, into my soul. Regularly, was I found, at the church, she attended, not to worship my God, but to gaze enraptured into her face, and worship at the shrine of my boyhood's love.

"For many days and nights my soul was sick with the hopelessness of the future. I well knew that as a mere shop keeps clerk my hopes could never be realized and that I should be compelled to abandon the dearest dream of my life or oc-

⁸⁵ For "The Child of Elle" see, Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 87-89.

cupy a more exalted position in the estimation of the world. At this time society had undergone a great change, and the once little quiet village, had assumed the proportions of a western city. Wealth and power would enter the lists against me, and I was determined to win as my future happiness was at stake. After many hours of thought upon the changes around me and the necessity for greater progress, I determined to apply to Esqr Pitcher an eminent lawyer of the city for the use of his books. Accordingly I addressed him a note couched in humble terms asking as a great favor that I might be permitted to read his books and promising eternal gratitude and future rewards. My note was unanswered and weeks of mortification and anxiety ensued. I thought then that his silence and coldness was very cruel and hoped that I might some day be able to show some striving student that my heart could feel for those who might be placed in a similar condition. Rest had left me and my will could not submit to refusal so I determined to visit him in person and make my application for his friendly aid. On the ensuing day I visited his library with all the solicitude that a criminal feels awaiting the judgment of the Court. In a few brief words I again made known my wishes. I saw in his cold clear grey eyes that he regarded me with no great favor and that he deemed my success as almost impossible. He gave me a long lecture on the impossibility of succeeding at the bar without immense labor and great talent, and asserted that every other calling[,] trade or art afforded greater inducements.⁸⁶ He read in my down cast mortified look and trembling hands the anxiety I felt and I could see that he felt for me, and his eye seemed to say I will give him a trial that will dispel his delusions. He arose and going to his shelves hand[ed] me one of the oldest books of the profession. The backs had been torn off and the Corners turned down. I took it with thankfulness and retired. I at once procured a chamber in the second story of an unoccupied building and with my full heart devoted myself night and day to the resolve that I would succeed and make myself fully master of the profession upon which I had just entered."

⁸⁶ Judge Pitcher at the age of ninety-six remarked to Governor Ira J. Chase, former Governor Albert G. Porter, and Isaac P. Gray when they called on him in Mt. Vernon that Hovey "came into this world right end first." Undated clipping from the Evansville, Indiana, *Journal*. Hovey Papers.