

This young John Hollinbeck early migrated to Johnstown, and settled on a farm about three miles east of the village, and took with him his young sister Mary.

I was the second of eight children, all sons, six of whom grew to years of maturity, and two of my brothers, Nathaniel, of Calhoun county, and Comfort of Pike county, Illinois, both forehanded and respectable farmers, yet survive. When three years of age, I one forenoon accompanied my elder brother Daniel to the village school in Johnstown. A Mr. Throop, the adopted father of Enos T. Throop, since Governor of New York, was the teacher. I was so terrified with his repulsive appearance, having very long eye-brows and a very unpleasant physiognomy, that I could never after be induced to attend school. What little education, therefore, I became possessed of, was obtained by piecemeal, and in a picked-up way. When I was fourteen years of age, my father died, having been four years incapacitated by consumption for labor; and the two eldest boys, Daniel and I, had all the work to do in order to support the familv.

In the spring of 1808, when twenty-five years of age, I resolved to go to the Western country, as my younger brothers had now grown up, and could more than fill my place in providing the family support. I had thought there was no chance to secure a competency in the old settlements, and I had formed an ardent desire to pass the Rocky Mountains, and bathe on the shores of the Pacific. For a year prior to this period, I had carefully practised the use of the gun, and became very expert with it. I started that spring for Montreal, intending to journey with some party of the Northwest Fur Company, and by that means reach the remote West. But concluding this was not very practicable, I went up the St. Lawrence, and along the shore of Lake Ontario to Niagara Falls, which latter I had first visited two years previously. There was only a single log house, nearly a mile from the Falls, on the Canada shore; and at Black Rock I crossed the river, and went to Buffalo, where there were about thirty wooden houses.