Alvah was a grandson of Thomas Downey, who had converted to the LDS faith in Leeds, Ontario, Canada in 1838 and brought his family to the Mormon colony in MO, where his son Harvey was born in 1838. The Saints were forced to leave Missouri late in 1838, and many escaped to the welcoming community of Quincy, Illinois, although conditions were harsh and many died.[[1]](#footnote-1) Thomas died in 1839 in Quincy. Thomas’ wife Anna and her children continued on to Nauvoo. Thomas and Anna’s son Calvin (Alvah’s father) paid taxes in Nauvoo in 1842.[[2]](#footnote-2) Calvin’s sister Lucy Sally Downey McOlney died 20 Aug 1846 in Kanesville[[3]](#footnote-3). Perhaps the traumas of the Mormon waystations discouraged the family from continuing on; by 1850 we find Calvin and his wife and children were back in Hancock County, Illinois in 1850 (near Nauvoo; Mormons waystations were in Iowa and Nebraska), as was his mother and his brother Harvey. Harvey died in Hancock County that year; Calvin died there in 1853, their mother in 1856. Their surviving brother, Jabin Bosworth Downey, had moved back to the east with his wife and children.

Alvah was the only one of the Downey siblings who made it to Utah, and his daughter Adeline Downey Yager (with her husband, whom she married in Hancock County in 1845) was the only of his 10 children who did, traveling in the Warren Foote Company in 1850. They arrived in SB in 1854[[4]](#footnote-4) (same year as RAP—did they travel together?) Of note, after Elizabeth died, Alvah married the widowed **Mary Elizabeth Benson** Walton, daughter of **Jerome Messenger Benson**, who was rather infamous in the San Bernardino Colony. [[5]](#footnote-5) His daughter Adeline Downey Yager came to Utah and then San Bernardino.

1. <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/joseph-smith-prophet-and-seer/saints-forced-exodus-missouri-1839>; http://www.whig.com/story/15300641/once-upon-a-time-in-quincy-town-provided-refuge-for-persecuted-mormons# [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Platt, Lyman. *Nauvoo, Illinois Tax Index, 1842* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 1999. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Per Mary Lewis collection [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)