

# Alexandra Campbell Wells Oveson

*An account of the life of Alexandra Oveson from her early days in Salt Lake City, Utah, to meeting Dick Oveson in California; their marriage, births of their three children, and military assignments, including Harvard University and the U.S. Embassy in Paris, France—her experiences in the France Bordeaux Mission and her life in Provo, Utah.*



**Compiled by Richard T. Martin  
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# Alexandra Campbell Wells Oveson

Compiled by Richard T. Martin

**I**nterviewed Alix in February and March 2018. As she reflected on her life it reminded me of what a unique and special person she is.

Alexandra Campbell Wells Oveson,\* always called “Sandy” by her family and old friends



Above: Melvin Dickinson Wells, Jr. (1898-1970) and Virginia Clawson Campbell (1902-1986), Alexandra’s parents. Right: Alexandra “Sandy” with her mom when she was about four years old in 1938. Sandy was always close to her mother and they were best friends. They would go shopping together, see movies together—they “did everything together.”



and “Alix” by her more recent acquaintances and friends, was born on July 14, 1934, in New York City, New York. She is the only child of Melvin Dickinson Wells, Jr. (1898-1970) and Virginia Clawson Campbell (1902-1986). She is a direct descendant of Daniel H. Wells and Brigham Young and descends from the famous Clans Campbell and Stewart, which were involved in much of the early history of Scotland (see appendix).

## Early Days

When Alix was two or three years old her family moved from New York City to Wash-

*\*Alexandra Campbell Wells is the only child of Melvin Wells, Jr. and Virginia Campbell. She married Richard “Dick” Oveson on August 30, 1957, and they have three children: Virginia Oveson, Merrill Oveson, and Alice Oveson, and fourteen grandchildren.*

ington D.C., and then in another year or so to Salt Lake City, Utah. Following the move to



**Sandy (age four; top left); with her mother (age 2; top right; age 8 months; far left); age four (left); and in San Francisco, when she was about five years old (above).**

Salt Lake City, Alix's parents divorced and Alix and her mother moved to San Francisco where they lived with her Aunt Kate and Alix's grand-

mother. Her mother worked for the 9<sup>th</sup> Service Command and at the beginning of the war she was transferred back to Salt Lake City where Alix grew up. Her Uncle Stewart bought



**Above: Alexandra "Sandy" Wells when about four years old. Top right: Sandy's mom, Virginia Clawson Campbell (1902-1986). Right: Virginia (age 4) with her brother, Stewart Campbell (age 3) in 1906.**

a home in Salt Lake for Alix's grandmother, and she and her mother lived with her grandmother until Alix was married.

Alix wrote, "In 1918, my mother was 16 years old. Her father left Salt Lake to inspect a coal mine in Price that he partially owned.

My grandfather Campbell set dynamite and then, when it failed to ignite, he went back in to check on it and was killed in the subsequent explosion. I relate this experience not because of what happened to him, but because of how my grandmother and mother rose above the tragedy, and, above all, kept the family together. My mother quit school at age



16 and went to work to help support her five younger siblings. The youngest child was three. They didn't have any money, except a small insurance policy. Many aunts and uncles



**Above: Sandy's grandparents, parents of her mother, Virginia Clawson Campbell (1902-1986): Alexander Stewart Campbell (1872-1918) and Alice Young Clawson (1876-1956). Alexander was killed in a coal mine explosion in 1918. His youngest child was three years old when he died. Alice, who never remarried, raised her six children by herself. Sandy grew up living with her grandmother in her home in Salt Lake City. They were a close family and loved one another. Below: Alexandra "Sandy" Wells, holding her doll.**

offered to take the kids, but my grandmother would not split up the family. Because of the sacrifices each of the children and my grandmother made to stay together, those six children, my mother, my two uncles and my three aunts, had an unbreakable bond their whole lives."



"Toward the end of the war, I was 11 and I desperately wanted a bicycle—but due to the war and the lack of materials bicycles were hard to come by. Mother, however, found me a bicycle somewhere (I don't know exactly where) and on Christmas morning there it was. It only reinforced my belief that my mother loved me and if I wanted or needed something I only had to let her know and there it would be—this began early in my life. I remember an early Christmas when I lay in my bed listening to my mother's sewing machine as she (who was not a gifted seamstress) worked late into the night, making, as it turned out to be, clothes for my dolls. Again, on another Christmas, I longed for a doll house. On Christmas morning there it was—beautiful, big and complicated—a real challenge for a single, work-

ing mother who didn't have much house building experience and who certainly was up most of the night assembling that doll house. Christmas was always special. Christmas Eve



**Above left: Sandy's High School Graduation Photograph in 1953. Top and above right: Sandy in high school. Note: Alexandra was nicknamed "Sandy" by her family and early friends, and called "Alix" by her later friends and acquaintances. Both are used in this history.**

was highlighted by a big family dinner with all my aunts and uncles and as they arrived, cousins. Family meant a lot to me, perhaps because mine was pretty small, and my mother spent her life determined that I would be part of her large, loving and caring family. When I was in grade school and my Uncle John was in the Army, John sent the money to buy me my first ski outfit, complete with skis, poles, and boots. My family were some of the pioneer skiers in Utah, and my mother's family saw that I became part of it. My Aunt Mary and Uncle Doc (and later my Uncle John) took me skiing with their families whenever they went. It started something that I have done most of my life. In college I skied on the University of Utah ski team and all my children have been either ski instructors or guides. I even taught my husband to ski and we did it together until we were well into our 80s. I

should mention that Uncle Stew sent me two beautiful dresses from New York when I was



in grade school. I'm sure there were many other kindnesses which time has dimmed in my memory."

Alice Oveson wrote, "My mother is a gifted homemaker. Wherever we went she had the ability to very quickly

**Top left: Sandy's senior photograph in *The Panther*, 1952-1953, her high school year book. Her friends wrote in her yearbook that she was pretty, had a great smile, and that she was "a swell girl." All wished her "good luck in life." Top middle: Marjorie Decker and Miriam Barker (top right), two of her best friends in grade school and life. Both photographs are from *The Panther*, 1952-1953. Above: Graduation time for (left to right) "Carolyn Coleman, Alix Wells, and Miriam Barker" (her good friend) in the *Deseret News* in 1953. Above right: Sandy/Alix in high school.**

move us in and make it a home. So many military families separate during training times or short assignments. We, however, did not separate. Wherever my father went, we went.

My mother comes from a legacy of powerful women who did whatever it took to keep the family together.”

Alix attended Lowell Elementary, Horace Mann Junior High, and graduated from West High School in 1953. She was a good student and was on the Academic Honor roll every year of high school. She liked to read and still enjoys reading.

In grade school she became best friends with Miriam Barker Zabriskie, Annette Sharp Mower, Marjorie Decker Horton, Jo Ann Condie and her sister, Jeanette Condie, who are twins. What’s unusual is that they have stayed her good friends to this day. They still get together and talk regularly on the telephone. Alix talks to Miriam Barker Zabriskie (who lives in Salt Lake City) at least twice a week. (About 1998 she met Wanda Bonnett and they have been good friends ever since. She sees Wanda a few times each week. Alix also has many good friends in the Sherwood Hills Ward.)



**Above: Close-up of photograph entitled, “Candidates for Sweetheart of Sigma Chi,” in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, on January 25, 1954. Sandy is in the front, second from the left. This picture was taken during Sandy’s freshman year at the University of Utah.**

While in school Alix was in the local newspaper many times. She said this was because her uncle, John Campbell, was a reporter for the *Deseret News* and went out of his way to make sure that she often got her name and picture in the paper.

## College

Alix began attending the University of Utah in September 1953, where she majored in Recreational Administration. Alix completed three years of college. Between her freshman and sophomore years her Aunt Alice and Uncle Cube invited her to spend the summer in Washington D.C. Alix had a wonderful time—she dated a young man who owned a small

sailboat and they spent the weekends sailing. During this time Alix worked at a really boring job for the Army.



Above: Photograph taken in June 1921 in Salt Lake City, Utah, of Alix's grandmother (center) and her six children. Back row, left to right: Alice (1905-2001), Virginia (1902-1986; mother), and Stewart (1903-2003). Front row, left to right: Kate (1914-2005), Alice Young Clawson (1876-1956; grandmother), Mary (1907-2006), and John Campbell (1910-1996). Below, later in life, left to right: Alice, John, Mary, Stewart, Virginia, and Kate Campbell.

She joined the Alpha Delphi Pi sorority in her freshman year. Some of the girls lived in the sorority house, but Alix lived at home while going to school.



As mentioned earlier, Alix had learned to ski when she was eight or nine years old and became a great skier. She tried out for the University ski team and made the squad which was quite an accomplishment since Utah is a snow state. They competed against other universities. She was on the team for one year, but didn't go longer because "I didn't think

it was that much fun.” Later in life she took up golf because her husband enjoys that sport as well. During the summer she plays golf four or five times a week.

After two years of college, Alix was “bored” and wanted to do something different. She saw an ad posted on a bulletin board for stewardesses for Pan Am Airline. She thought that sounded interesting, went for an interview, and was hired. They wanted her to start right away, but her grandmother became ill and died and she thought that she had better stay home with her mother. That was in 1955-1956. She went ahead and completed her third year of college and then went to work for Pan Am.

## Family

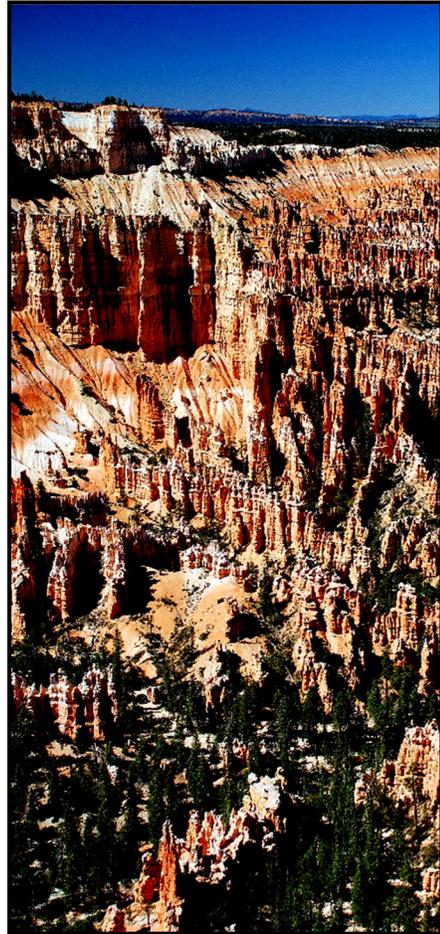
Alix loved her mother and appreciated the sacrifices that she made for her. They were very close: “She was my best friend. We went shopping together, went to movies together; we did everything together.” Alix’s parents had divorced when she was four years old and she saw very little of her father for most of her life (he died when Alix was 36 years old). When Dick was in Vietnam (1969-1970), Alix called her father and reestablished a relationship with him. He got to know his grandchildren and Alix had him to dinner frequently. The relationship remained until his death in November of 1970.

Alix was also very close to her four aunts and two uncles. “They treated me wonderfully. We went on trips together and I saw them all the time. When I moved away we would still talk to each other on the telephone and write to each other often.” It was a special family because everyone in the family got along well and were attached.

## Jobs

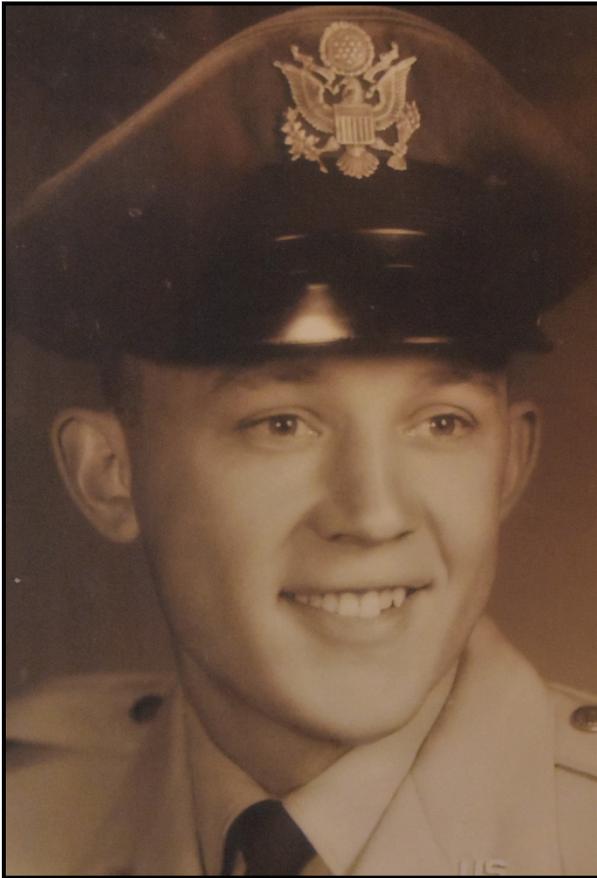
Alix’s first job was when she was 16, working as a “Copy Girl” for the *Deseret News*. She assisted the full-time employees in whatever they needed; she even got to write some obituaries. She worked there all summer.

For two summers she worked at the Bryce Canyon National Park Lodge as a waitress. “It was fun.” Every night the employees, who were college students from all over the country, would do a song and dance show for the guests. She and three other girls were from Utah



Above: Bryce Canyon National Park (2008), where Alix worked at the lodge for two summers in 1954 and 1955.

and dressed up as can-can girls, and at the end of their number they would flip their dresses over and spell “U-T-A-H.” The guests loved it; they would applaud and laugh. Afterward they would have a dance for everyone and managed to have their own little orchestra. She



often hiked on the many trails in the park, which is, without question, one of the most scenic in American.

After those two summers, she applied early to work at the ski lodge in Sun Valley, Idaho, but she didn't hear from them so she decided to go to work in Los Angeles with her friend Miriam, instead. Shortly after she arrived in Los Angeles she got a letter from Sun Valley, saying that they wanted her to work for them, but by this time she was committed to spending the summer in LA.

**Left: Richard “Dick” Oveson, in his Air Force uniform about the time that Alix met him in Los Angeles, California, in 1955. Alix said, “Once I met Dick I didn’t want to date anyone else.” She also said, “He was the nicest man that I had ever met.”**

This serendipitous event would change the future course of her life.

She worked in Los Angeles for Zurich Insurance Company, which turned out to be a boring job, checking contracts and working on lost files. But it wasn't all boring (see Dick Oveson below). This was the summer of 1955.

## Richard “Dick” Oveson

On Alix's first Sunday in Los Angeles she attended the Wiltshire Ward. There she met Richard “Dick” Oveson, who had just graduated from Brigham Young University. Dick had also served a mission to France, so he had the proper resume. For the rest of the summer they dated every day. I asked if they ever kissed and Alix exclaimed, “Of course!!!”

Dick then left for pilot training in the Air Force, and Alix spent the next year completing her third year of college and working as a stewardess for Pan Am.

## Pan Am

Working for Pan Am was a fun job. She was based in San Francisco and flew to places in Southeast Asia and Polynesia. She flew to Hong Kong, Bangkok, Fiji, The Philippines, Guam, and Australia. She stopped in every country that Pan Am flew to in that part of the

world except New Zealand. She usually flew on a Boeing 377 “Stratocruiser.” She would always fly out of San Francisco to Honolulu, Hawaii. (In San Francisco she roomed with

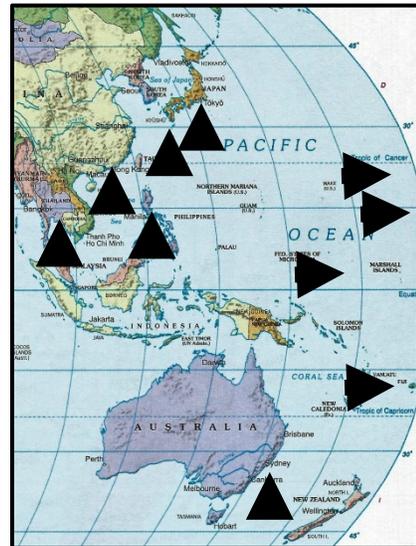


**Left: Alix, wearing her stewardess uniform and with a fellow worker (above) in 1956. Alix worked for Pan Am for one year and flew to every country that the airline visited in Southeast Asia and Polynesia except New Zealand. Below: Countries that she visited, left to right: Bangkok, Hong Kong, Manilla, Guam, Tokyo, Sydney, Wake Island, Fiji, Midway Island, and Hawaii. Map courtesy of Rand McNally; used with permission.**

another LDS girl, Ann Eldridge, who she had become friends

with and that also worked for Pan Am.) Then they would usually fly to Wake Island or sometimes Midway Island to refuel (overnight stays on Wake Island were her least favorite stops because there was nothing to do on the tiny island— “they had huts for the crew to stay in, but they weren’t very nice”). Then they would continue on to Guam and Japan or Guam and Hong Kong. Alix said, “Tokyo was very interesting and still recovering from the war. We stayed in a luxury hotel designed by Frank Lloyd Wright that was located directly across from the Emperor’s Palace.” In or near Tokyo she saw a famous bronze statue of the Buddha.

Pan Am paid for all their lodging and they usually stayed at one of the best hotels available in whatever city that they stayed. She enjoyed Hong Kong, and one of the reasons was that “everything



was so inexpensive—but I didn't have much money." Sometimes the flight would continue from Hong Kong to Singapore.



**Above: Wedding Day, August 30, 1957, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Dick and Alix have now (2018) been married 61 years.**

Together and Dick asked, "Do you think you could live with me?" Alix replied, "Are you serious?" There was this long silence and then he said, "Of course I am." Four months later they were married on August 30, 1957, in the Salt Lake City Temple. Alix said, "I really think that Dick was the nicest man I ever met. And it's still true. I still feel that way." They honeymooned at Lake Tahoe.

Of course when they flew further southeast they would stop in Manila or Fiji. "Back then Australia wasn't as enjoyable to visit as it is today."

The Stratocruiser was a large airplane with two passenger decks that held 63 to 84 passengers.

Most people didn't travel then. "Even economy was nice in those days. The meals were really good and there was plenty of leg room." People got dressed up to travel and all the stewardess were young.

Alix only worked one year for Pan Am, but would have worked longer if she hadn't gotten married.

### **Life with Dick Oveson**

Alix had to live in Burlingame, south of the San Francisco airport to work for Pan Am. In the meantime, Dick was stationed in Oxnard, California, which is located on the coast about 380 miles south of San Francisco. So he drove up to see her.

They were driving along to-

Alix wrote: "Dick and I met at church in Los Angeles during the summer of 1955. We dated all summer and once I met Dick I didn't want to date anyone else. I don't like to cook



**Above: Alix and Dick at a formal engagement in Paris; 1974-1976. Top right: Alix and Dick at an Air Force Academy Halloween party in 1966. Right: Alix with her kids, left to right: Merrill (age 4), Virginia (age 10), and Alice (age 1 ½ or 2) in 1969.**



breakfast. I like to get up and begin the day's work, Dick used to get up and cook everyone breakfast every morning. It had always been a dream of mine to build a house, but Dick loved the house we lived in on Foothill Drive. Although he really didn't want to sell our house, when he knew

how much it meant to me he began flagging cars down to invite them in to look at our house. We ended up selling the house to one of the people that Dick flagged down. All of our years at Lake Powell Dick patiently taught all of our kids and their friends to water ski. Everyone knew that if they fell or didn't get up that Dick would say, 'My fault, try again.' There are many ways to describe the ways that Dick is so unselfish. It has been so wonderful to be married to someone who loves to do things. When we first got married Dick didn't ski, but he quickly learned and it has been something we love doing as a family. Dick and I bought a boat when we retired from the military and moved to Provo. We learned to boat and ski and explore together and spent wonderful summers at Lake Powell. Dick and I love to travel and we have seen the world together. We learned to golf together;

however he has mastered the art and I just have fun. We have spent a lot of beautiful hours trying to get that little white ball in a hole. Dick is such an avid golfer that he will golf in



Above: Alix and Dick in Paris in 1974-1976.  
Left, left to right: Their children in 1969: Alice, Merrill, and Virginia.

all kinds of weather—it's why he has such a great tan year round. We have spent our marriage exploring new places and having adventures. I can't talk about Dick without talking about how brilliant a man he is and how that has blessed our lives. Dick reads everything and has original creative ideas. We like to share and discuss books. I have never been bored being married to Dick. Dick is also deeply religious and has been willing to do whatever the Lord has asked of him. He truly lives what he believes."

**Oxnard, California,  
Fairbanks, Alaska, and  
Wichita Falls, Texas**

After their marriage they lived in Oxnard, California, from 1957 until 1959. They first lived

in a duplex Dick had picked out because it was on the beach. He didn't notice that it backed on the city dump. Alix had no car and was pretty isolated and so as soon as possible they moved to a small apartment in Oxnard. They had many friends there and spent a lot of time at the beach. They both learned to surf on body boards and spent hours in the water.

Then Dick was assigned to Ladd Air Force Base in Fairbanks, Alaska, in 1960. They drove up the Alcan Highway to Fairbanks. Alix was alone a lot since Dick's squadron had alert responsibilities in Anchorage. She was also pregnant with Virginia, who was born on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 1959.

From Fairbanks they were transferred to Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas, where they lived from 1961 to 1963. The people were nice, but Alix didn't like Wichita Falls. She was glad when they were assigned to go to graduate school preparatory to Dick's teaching at the Air Force Academy.



Above: Dick Oveson in 1977.

Dick had thought about it and decided he would like to teach. In 1961 he interviewed with the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. They liked him and encouraged him, but told him he would have to get a graduate degree to be on their faculty. Arrangements were made and the Air Force paid for his education.

## **Belmont, Massachusetts**

To complete his education, Dick was accepted at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. While he went to school they lived in a duplex in Belmont, Massachusetts, which was located about five miles from the campus.

As Dick worked on his degrees, Alix also took some art history classes at Harvard. Here they became the parents of Merrill who was born just before they left school.

## **Air Force Academy**

Dick taught Economics at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, from 1966 to 1968 and from 1970 until 1972. He has always enjoyed teaching and appreciated the opportunity to work in a college atmosphere. In 1969 Dick served for one year in Viet

Nam as a jet bomber pilot. He did sorties on the Ho Chi Men Trail and other dangerous missions. While he was in Viet Nam, Alix took care of the kids in Salt Lake City. Harvard



**Top right: Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Top left: Harvard in Greater Boston, Massachusetts. Middle left: National War College in Washington D.C. Left: U. S. Embassy in Paris, France.**

awarded him his PhD while he was in Viet Nam.

## **Washington D.C.**

Dick was assigned in 1972-1973 to the National War College in Washington D.C., where he taught Economics and was a student. They lived in Alexandria, Virginia, during this period and owned their first home.

## **Paris, France**

Dick was assigned to the American Embassy in Paris France, as the Air Force's representative from January 1974 to September 1976. They lived in a huge apartment, listed on

the Registrar of Historic Places, with a stained glass window and fireplaces at each end, on one of the main avenues leading to the Arch of Triumph. Alix said, “It was a pretty fancy apartment.” They had a full time maid and an au pair to help with the children. The children



**Above: The kids, left to right: Virginia, Merrill and Alice Oveson. Right: Merrill leaving for his mission to Portugal with his younger sister Alice on the left and Virginia on the right (in plaid jacket) in January 1985.**

attended the American School of Paris—Alice and Merrill in grade school and Virginia in high school. Virginia was a cheerleader and had many friends—some of whom she still sees. Merrill and Virginia participated in school ski trips to Italy and the French Alps.



Dick had “a very nice office” in the American Embassy with his own personal secretary, two assistants, and other workers. He also had an embassy car and chauffeur at his disposal.

“We knew some of the French Generals—they would invite you to dinner and we would invite them over as well—at times U. S. Congressmen would come into Paris and asked the military to show them around, which we did.” Visitors got VIP treatment, even getting to fly in helicopters when necessary.

This was during the Cold War and at times information was passed from informants to



**Alix and Dick on two different ocean cruises.**

Dick and on to the American government. An atmosphere of confidence was necessary for

this to take place. Alix remarked. “Everyone trusted Dick, who spoke excellent French.” Fortunately for Alix most dignitaries could speak English. She tried to improve her French



**Right: President and Sister Oveson in July 1992, leaving for the France Bordeaux Mission. Photograph published in the LDS Church News of the *Deseret News*. Above: The Bordeaux Mission Home in Bordeaux, France. Below: With two of their missionaries: Elder Duckworth and Elder Burgis, in 1992-1995.**



by taking lessons, but “it was never very good.”

Sometimes they had dinners with up to 24 attendees. Alix hired people to help serve the meals, but much of the food was prepared by Alix. “I’m a good cook—I’m actually a gourmet—I’ve always been a good cook.” When important visitors would come to town they would often bring their wives and Alix would entertain them. They did this frequently.



Dick became good friends with a Soviet General. Soviet wives would spend all their time shopping because you could get anything in Paris, unlike Moscow.

Frequently Alix and Dick would drive their Peugeot station wagon to SHAPE headquarters in Belgium to load up on groceries, and, less frequently, they went to Ramstein in Germany for meetings with the Air Force’s European commander.

Frequently Alix and Dick would drive their Peugeot station wagon to SHAPE headquarters in Belgium to load up

Dick also did some other special assignments for some well-known people. The Viet

Nam War was winding down at the time so they used Dick to carry messages back and forth.



**Left: President Oveson with one of his missionaries and (above) with Sister Oveson and one of their Sister missionaries in 1992-1995.**

After three years of interesting service at the embassy, Dick retired from the Air Force. He had served 21 years in the military and retired as a full colonel. Alix said her time in Paris “was fun.” I noted, “It must have been quite a drop off to go from dinners and parties every week to your new life in Provo.” Not being one to complain, Alix replied, “It was.”

## **Provo, Utah**

After Dick retired he was invited by Merrill Bateman, who was Dean of the Business School to join the BYU faculty. From 1976 until 1986 he taught Economics in the School of Business. During this time, Dick had major church assignments on the BYU campus, including serving as Bishop and as a counselor in two stake presidencies. He also served as a branch president in the MTC for three years. This meant that Alix had to get the kids ready and take them to church every week on her own. Dick said, “She really held everything together while he was gone.” Alix’s mother lived with them during her last months, from January to May 1986.

Their only change of residence from 1976 to 1992 was in 1980-1981 when they returned to Boston for a year, where Dick tried a business venture.

## **France Bordeaux Mission**

From July 1, 1992, until July 1, 1995, Dick served as President of the France Bordeaux

Mission and Alix served with him. The mission had an average of 180 full-time missionaries and a major part of Dick's duties was overseeing the branches within his mission. This meant that Dick and Alix would travel together all over their mission, which covered most of southwest France from the Spanish border to Le Mans on the north, to Orleans on the northeast, and Limoges and Toulouse, France, on the east. It was the largest of the five French missions by area. This meant that they had to travel even more than usual, driving some three thousand miles every month. They had a brand new Opal at the beginning of their mission and by the time they went home they had driven it over 100,000 miles.

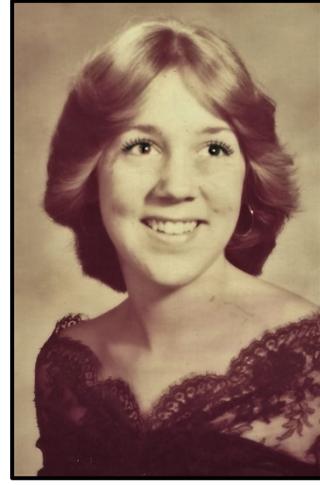
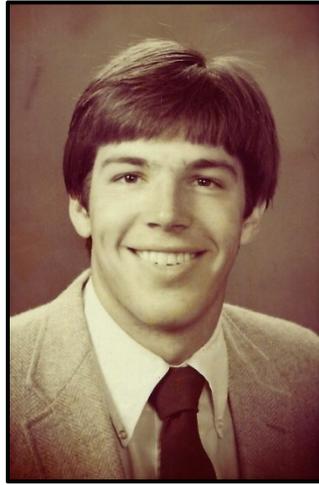
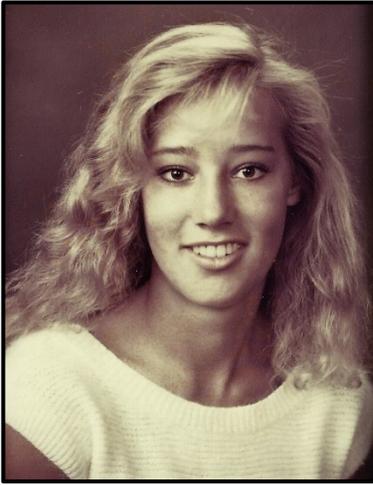
One of the goals of a mission president is to have an interview with every missionary in his mission at least once every four or five weeks. Dick and Alix would drive to a city and have a zone conference with about twenty to thirty missionaries. Dick would speak to the missionaries in a general meeting and afterwards have private interviews with each missionary. While the missionaries were waiting, Alix would often talk with them and "find out what was really going on." They were able to accomplish this goal of seeing all the missionaries every five weeks for their entire mission. Alix remarked, "It was important that the missionaries be interviewed often. This prevented a lot of problems from happening." As a result of their many travels they got to know southwest France very well.

One of the goals that Alix set was to improve the living conditions of the missionaries, and she personally arranged to get better apartments and furniture for the Elders and Sisters. She got clothes dryers in each apartment, which cut down the number of colds that the missionaries were getting (before they would hang their wet clothes out to dry inside the apartment and the wetness would make them sick). Alix said, "I tried to make sure that they were healthier."



**Above: The France Bordeaux Mission was the largest in area of the five French missions in the 1990s. It extended from the Spanish border to Le Mans on the north, to Orleans on the northeast, and to Limoges and Toulouse on the east. President and Sister Oveson drove over 100,000 miles on church business during their three year mission.**

I asked Alix if she learned French and she said, “Poorly, poorly, poorly.” Dick had served a two and a half year mission to France as a young man so, of course, his French was fine. As mentioned earlier, Dick also had the responsibility of overseeing every Branch in his



**Top, left to right: High school photographs of Alice, Merrill, and Virginia Oveson. Above, left to right: Merrill, Dick, Alix, Alice, and Virginia in 2005.**

mission that was not under a Stake President. This meant that he presided over about two thousand church members. He would visit the branches and conduct interviews.

Once a missionary was told by French authorities that he would have to leave the country immediately because he had not completed his medical papers. Dick and Alix drove him across the border into Spain where his passport was stamped. Dick then drove back the

same way while Alix and the missionary took a train back into France. This way the Elder was able to complete his mission.



Above, left to right: Kevin Wilcox, William Wilcox, Preston Wilcox, Alix Wilcox, Noah Wilcox, Jack Wilcox, Todd Burton, Christine Burton, Virginia Frye (daughter), Aubry Frye, Brillany Frye, John Frye, Kevin Frye (son-in-law), Riley Frye, Taylor Frye, Heide Frye, Sarah Frye, Mark Frye, Mason Frye, Rob Frye, and Trish Frye. Missing: John Pettet.

They were busy all the time, but they did get to see their children a few times who flew out to see them. One of the advantages of serving a mission in Europe was the opportunities of seeing some of the best historical sites in the world. On their one day off each week they did get to see some great historical sites such as the world famous cave of Lascaux and the châteaux's in the Loire Valley.

Dick said, "I think every mission president is entitled to inspiration, and needs it."

## Last Move

In 1976 Alix and Dick bought a home at 4087 Foothill Drive in Provo, Utah. In May 1987 they moved into a new home located nearby at 782 East Redford Drive. There was a major downturn in the real estate market in Utah that year so it turned out to be a perfect time to build a new house. Their house is situated on a foothill and has magnificent views of Utah Valley. They have continued to live in this home for 31 years.

## Children

Alix is justifiably proud of her children, who were "easy teenagers," and grandchildren. I asked her to write something about each child, and I must say, I'm impressed.

**Virginia** “Our oldest, Virginia, was born in the base hospital at Ladd AFB in Fairbanks,



**Top, left to right: Riley Oveson, Andrea Oveson (daughter-in-law), Lindsay Oveson, Merrill Oveson (son), and Richard Oveson. Above, left to right: Jane Huber, Clayton Huber, Alice Huber (daughter), Phil Huber (son-in-law), Eric Huber, Jens Huber, and Maren Huber.**

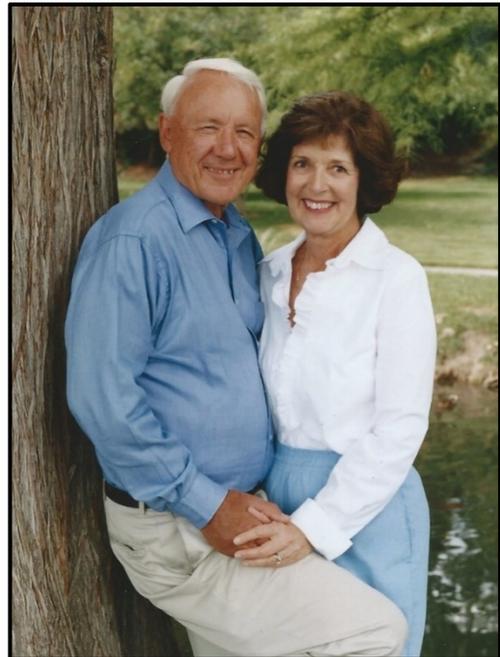
Alaska, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 1959. She was a sweet baby and we were enthralled by her.

As she grew, she had a strong little personality and she didn't always see eye to eye with her parents—contrary to many children, Virginia became easier and easier as she matured,

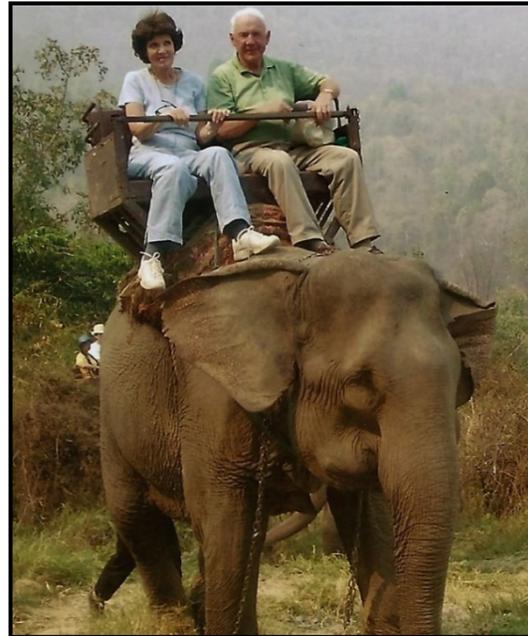
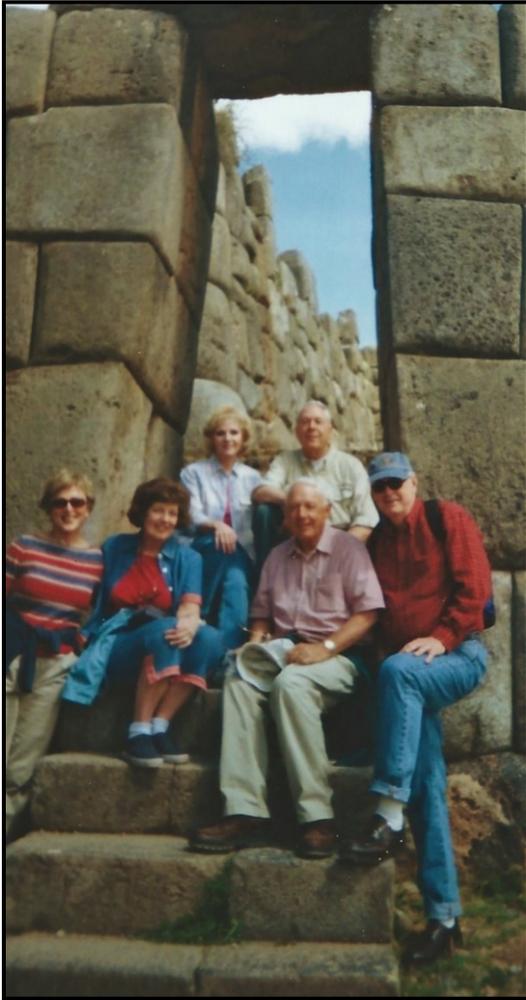


**Above: Alix and Dick celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in August 2007. Right: Alix and Dick have been in love for more than 61 years.**

and by the time she was in high school she was the sort of girl every parent imagines their child will be. She was a diligent student, worked hard and was a faithful member of the church. She went to school in Texas, Massachusetts, Colorado, Virginia, and France, finally attending college at Brigham Young University. She married a wonderful man in the Salt Lake Temple and became the mother of six children, and (so far) grandmother of ten. She is determined to finish her education and will graduate from BYU in April 2018—all this after several years of intense school work while supporting her husband, raising her children, and, most recently, serving as Relief Society President of her ward. Four of her six children have served missions and all but the youngest have been married in the Temple—the youngest is scheduled to be married in the Salt Lake Temple in June 2018. She remains a source of wonder to us.”



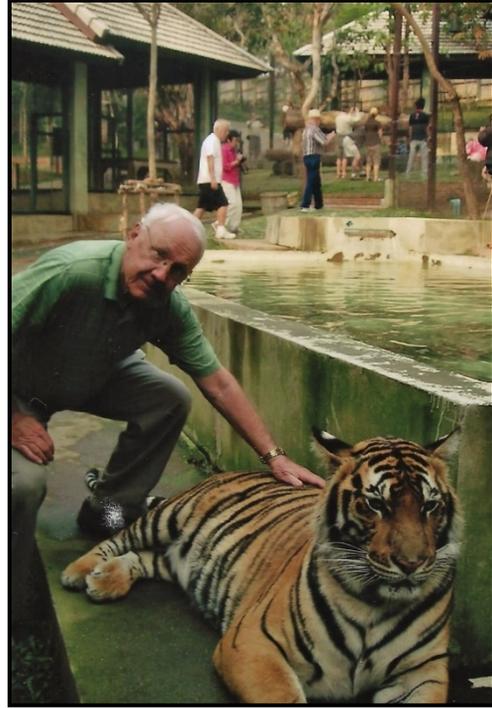
**Merrill** “Our second oldest child, Merrill, was born in the Boston Lying Hospital on the



**Above, left to right: Debbie, Alix, Dick, Ray, Dex, and Steve in Machu Picchu, Peru, in 2002. Top right: Riding an elephant in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 2012. Right: Alix at a falls in Norway.**

3<sup>rd</sup> of November 1965. His birth was an occasion of special joy since it had been six years since Virginia’s birth and we were anxious to add to our family. Merrill was a sweet and easy baby, with an ability to entertain himself from an early age. He could become completely absorbed in what he was doing—and he still has the ability to focus on a task until it is completed. Merrill also was subjected to the same lifestyle that characterized Virginia’s childhood—moving a lot. Merrill started school in Virginia, went to grade

school in France, and finished grade school and high school in Provo. He was a good



**Top left and right: “Taking a rest” with a Bengal Tiger in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 2012. Above: On another cruise. Middle right: Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River in China in May 2008. Lower right: At a fjord in Norway in 2014.**

student and a good athlete, playing varsity football for Timpview and giving his dad a chance to go to ball games and sit with the other fathers cheering for their sons! Merrill attended BYU for a year before going on a mission to Portugal. He returned and finished at the Y with both undergraduate and master’s degrees. During summers he worked as a river guide on the Colorado deepening his love for southeast Utah. Merrill initially worked for a Boston based company and lived there for several years. He returned to Utah where he is currently director of technology for the college of Computer Science and Technology at Utah Valley University. He married Andrea Ault in the temple and is the father of two boys and a girl, the oldest of whom is serving a mission in



Mexico. He has been a joy to us every day since he was born. His life has been characterized by his honesty and integrity. He is and ‘Israelite without guile.’”



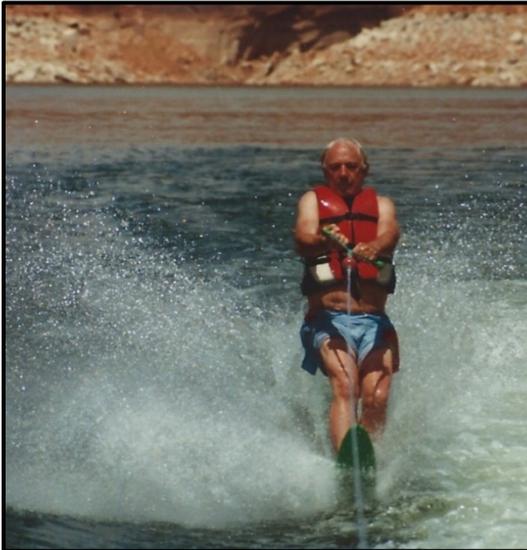
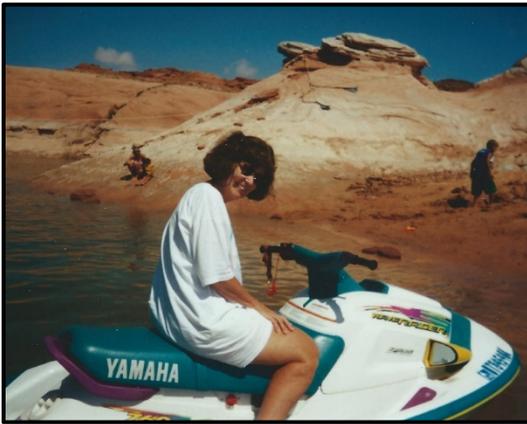
**Above: At the Great Wall of China in 2012. Left: Bergen, Norway, in May 2014. Below: Norway cruise in 2014.**

**Alice** “Our youngest, Alice, was born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 1968, in the Air Force

Academy hospital just outside of Colorado Springs, Colorado. She was just a year old when Dick left for Vietnam and so she took a few weeks to get reacquainted with him when he returned. Alice was a bright, happy child who made friends easily. She grew up in Provo, went to grade school, junior high, and high school with the same group of friends and eventually married a young man she met in 5<sup>th</sup> grade! She brought home some stray kittens when she was young—one of which she nursed back to health after it had lost an eye and almost starved to death. Later on she brought home stray boys and it was a great relief to her parents when she finally settled on Phil. She was a cheerleader, a skier, and a lover of Lake Powell in high school with the same close friends. She served a mission to Switzerland (Geneva) and France and then graduated from BYU,



got married and helped her husband through medical school, residency and a fellowship in cardiology—eleven years while raising three boys. Soon after beginning practice in



**This page: Good times at Lake Powell. Lake Powell has been a favorite family destination for years.**

Spokane, Washington, she and Phil adopted two Chinese orphans—sweet girls now in junior high. Her oldest boy served a mission in New York, and her second son is on a mission in Japan. None are yet married. She teaches early morning seminary and is particularly helpful to those who have difficulties in her ward. Her husband has a busy practice and serves as the bishop. She was a joy as a baby, a young girl, a young wife and mother and now as a very special woman.”

## Church

Alix has been active in the church all of her adult life, and never turned down a call (with an unusual exception in France). She once served as Young Women's President. As recorded above, she served with Dick, on a mission to Bordeaux, France, and was Assistant

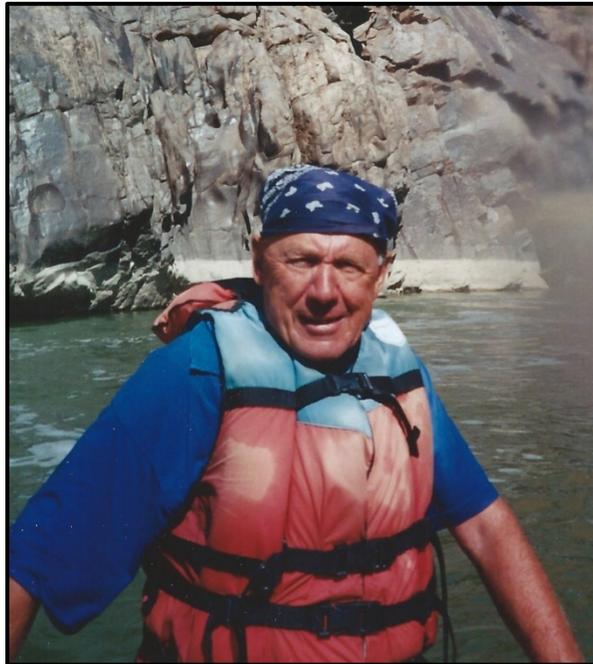


Above: Merrill Oveson skiing at Lake Powell. Right: Dick at Lake Powell. Notice the cool bandana.

Temple Matron in the Provo Temple for three years. She has always felt a strong sense of duty. She has always had a strong testimony and never doubted the truthfulness of the gospel.

Dick was called to be First Counselor in the Provo Temple Presidency in 2004 and served until 2007. By virtue of his call, Alix was also called to serve during this time. When the temple is open a member of the Temple

Presidency must always be present, which meant that there were days when Alix would have to get up at 5 a.m. to start her day. Every third day they had off, but they spent many hundreds of hours in the temple. The Lord blessed her, and even when she was tired, she would become energized as soon as she passed the recommend desk. She got to know many wonderful people as a result of her work. Alix said jokingly, "I have to be really nice in Costco."



## Travel

Alix and Dick have traveled extensively. Besides the many countries that she visited while working as a stewardess for Pan Am, she has also been to many other destinations. When she was in high school she drove from Utah to Acapulco and Mexico City with her mother, a cousin and friends. She went to Washington D.C. and drove to San Francisco almost every summer to visit her mother's cousin in Palo Alto, California. Her mother "liked to go places."

In 1961 she and Dick purchased a Volkswagen and drove all over Europe—to Germany,

France, Switzerland, Rome, Venice, and other memorable places. The trip wasn't expensive because they could stay on military bases and had military discount coupons to buy gas. They estimated that they only paid \$33 for all of their gasoline. They flew back



**Above: Kevin Frye, Alice Oveson Huber, and Phil Huber at Lake Powell.**

home and had their VW shipped back to the states. Alix took her mother on this trip, which was her first visit to the old world. Virginia was 18 months old and Dick's parents tended her while they were on this journey.

On another occasion, while they lived in Paris, Alix went with her mother and aunt on a Mediterranean cruise to Istanbul, Ephesus, Athens, Alexandria, and Cairo, Egypt (where they saw the Great Pyramids), and Israel.

One year she and Dick went to England and Scotland and another

year went on a cruise to The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Estonia, Finland, and St. Petersburg, Russia. Still on another cruise she and Dick saw the fjords of Norway, which were magnificent.

One of her favorite trips was the one she took to China a few years ago. They saw the Great Wall of China, the Forbidden City and other major sites, and then took a five day cruise down the Yangtze River and saw Hong Kong.

Other trips include a three week Southeast Asia tour of Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, and Singapore. Of course some of these areas were at war in 1969 when Dick was flying missions for the U. S. Air Force. They have been four times to the Caribbean and she has gone through the Panama Canal twice.

I asked Alix which was her favorite trip and she replied, "They have all been my favorite. I love to travel."

In all Alix has been to over 40 countries, including Canada, Guatemala, Mexico, Costa Rica, Chile, Peru, Venezuela, Panama, Caribbean, France, England, Scotland, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Thailand, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, Viet Nam, The Philippines, China, Australia, Malaysia, Japan, Hong Kong, and Fiji.

## Bridge

As we were talking, Alix mentioned something about playing bridge. I asked, "You like

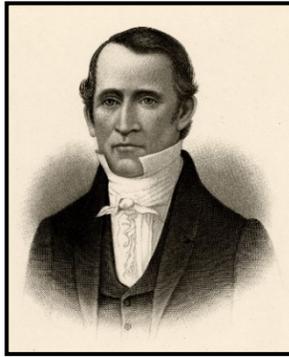
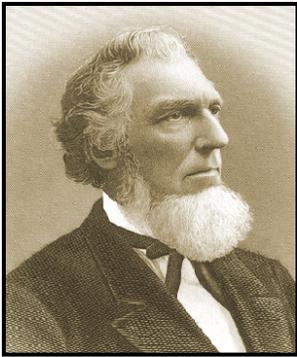
bridge?" I found out that Alix loves to play, and plays two or three times a week. She said, "It's the only good card game. It's good for your brain because you have to think." She



likes Duplicate Bridge because there is more skill involved, whereas there is more luck involved in Party Bridge. Dick is also a good bridge player, but, Alix said, "I'm probably a better player because I play all the time. I also love to play golf."

## Conclusion

I've been a Home Teacher to Alix and Dick Oveson for over seven years. They have always treated me special and made it easy for me to visit them. One of the things I've always liked about Alix is her independent mind, heart, and wit. She is totally loyal to the Church and has a strong testimony of the gospel.



When she told me about her cancer I asked what the prognosis was and she said, "Well they said that they think I can get better." She completed her radiation treatments last month and celebrated by going out to Carrabbas



**This page: Some of the more interesting ancestors of Alexandra Campbell Wells Oveson. Top left: Brigham Young (1801-1877; Great-Grandfather). Above left: Daniel H. Wells (1814-1891; Great-Grandfather). Above right: Edward Partridge (1793-1840; Second Great-Grandfather). Left: Depiction of John Cotton (1585-1652; distant great-grandfather), a famous Puritan Minister.**

for her husband's birthday on January 5, 2018, where I happened to run into them.

One of my ancestors has an inscription on his gravestone that reads: "Time sped by although seeming to stand still." A nice insight. Alix has lived an exemplary life and she has blessed the lives of countless people, now, and for generations to come.

## Appendix

Alix descends from a number of famous people. Through her father she is the grand-

daughter of Melvin Dickinson Wells (1867-1941), who was the grandson of Daniel H. Wells (1814-1891; Second Counselor in the First Presidency from 1857 until 1877).



Distant ancestors of Alexandra Campbell Wells Oveson. Top left: James Stewart III (1451-1488; King of Scotland from 1460 until 1488; 14<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandfather). Top middle: James II (1430-1460; King of Scots from 1437 until 1460; 15<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandfather). Top right: James I of Scotland (1394-1437; King of Scots from 1406 until 1437; 16<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandfather). Middle right: Robert III of Scotland (born John Stewart) (c. 1337-1406; King of Scots from 1390 to 1406; 17<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandfather). Above middle: Robert II (18<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandfather; 1316-1390; King of Scots from 1371 to 1390; first monarch of the House of Stewart—son of Walter Stewart, 6<sup>th</sup> High Steward of Scotland, and Marjorie Bruce, daughter of Robert the Bruce). Bottom right: Tomb of Marjorie Bruce (1296-1316; 19<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandmother). Above left: Margaret of Denmark (14<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandmother; 1456-1486; Queen of Scotland by her marriage to King James III).

Through her mother she descends from the Campbell and Stewart families, two famous and powerful Scottish clans. Alix's grandmother was Alice Young Clawson (1876-1956), who was the daughter of Emily Young (1849-1926), who was the daughter of Brigham Young (1801-1877; second president of the church) and the granddaughter of Edward Partridge (1793-1840; first bishop in the church).

More distant ancestors include: James Stewart III (1451-1488; 14<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandfather), who was King of Scotland from 1460 until 1488. James II (1430-1460; 15<sup>th</sup> Great-



Grandfather), who was King of Scots from 1437 until 1460. James I of Scotland (1394-1437; 16<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandfather), who was King of Scots from 1406 until 1437. Robert III of Scotland, who was born John Stewart (circa 1337-1406; 17<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandfather). He

was King of Scots from 1390 to 1406. Robert II (1316-1390; 18<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandfather), who was King of Scots from 1371 to 1390. He was the first monarch of the House of Stewart—son of Walter Stewart, 6<sup>th</sup> High Steward of Scotland, and Marjorie Bruce (1296-1316; 19<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandmother), daughter of King Robert the Bruce. Her tomb is in Paisley Abbey, ten miles west of Glasgow, Scotland. Robert the Bruce (1274-1329; 20<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandfather) is with William Wallace, the most famous Scottish patriot. He was King of Scotland from 1306 until his death in 1329. “Bruce’s descendants include all later Scottish monarchs and all British monarchs since the Union of the Crowns in 1603.”

Margaret of Denmark (1456-1486; 14<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandmother) married King James III (14<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandfather) and was Queen of Scotland from 1469 until 1486 by virtue of her marriage. She was the daughter of Christian I of Denmark (1426-1481; 15<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandfather), who was King of Denmark from 1448 until 1481. He was also King of Norway from 1450 until 1481, and King of Sweden from 1457 until 1464. He had a portrait made with his wife, Queen Dorothea of Brandenburg (1430-1495; 15<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandmother), which is shown above on this page.



**Above: Robert the Bruce (1274-1329; King of Scotland 1306-1329; 20<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandfather). This likeness of Robert the Bruce is according to an expert facial reconstruction made from his skull in 2016. Left: Portrait of Christian I of Denmark (1426-1481; 15<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandfather; King of Denmark 1448-1481, Norway, 1450-1481, and Sweden, 1457-1464) with his wife, Queen Dorothea of Brandenburg (15<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandmother; 1430-1495).**