

C O N T E N T S

Foreword	vii
Preface	viii
Acknowledgments	x

PART ONE: THE BIOGRAPHY

1. It Began in Malden: 1788–1804	1
2. To Brown and Beyond: 1804–1810	8
3. The Courtship: 1789–1812	19
4. The Goodbyes: 1812	31
5. No Place to Call Their Own: 1812–1814	44
6. The First Letters from Home: 1815–1818	58
7. Maung Nau—The Beginning of Harvest: 1818–1819	68
8. To the Golden Feet: 1819–1820	75
9. The Separation: 1820–1823	84
10. Rumors of War: 1824	98
11. Let Ma Yoon—The Death Prison: 1824	106
12. The Heart of Darkness: 1824–1825	118
13. Aungbinle: 1825–1826	130
14. The Letter: 1826	145
15. The Grieving Years: 1826–1830	154
16. “Teacher, Give Us a Writing”: 1830–1834	163
17. The Family: 1834–1845	172
18. Sarah: 1845	185
19. Emily: 1845	198
20. The Engagement: 1846	206
21. The Final Years: 1846–1849	215
22. His Golden Shore: 1849–1854	230

PART TWO: THE LEGACY

23. Finding the Footprints	241
24. “On the Road to Mandalay”	248
25. The Monuments of Moulmein and Amherst	256

C O N T E N T S

26. The New England Trail	265
27. The New Generation: George and Abigail Ann	273
28. Adoniram, Elnathan, Henry	284
29. The Final Two: Edward and Emily Frances	292
30. Unto the Third and Fourth Generations	302
31. Living Links	308
32. Ann—The Lasting Legacy	315
33. Sarah—The Gentle Spirit	322
34. Emily—The Poetic Heart	331
35. More Than a Memory	340
Appendix: The Church in Burma since 1850	349
Notes	354
Bibliography	387
Index	391
Chronology	402
Family Tree	404

P R E F A C E

ANN AND ADONIRAM JUDSON SAILED TO THE LAND OF BURMA (NOW known as Myanmar) two hundred years ago and changed it forever. Their story is one of love and adventure, tragedy and perseverance, fame and acclaim—a story better than fiction, for it actually happened. The Judsons, America's first effort to send missionaries overseas, became *mythic* figures in nineteenth-century Christianity, but their struggles, triumphs, joys, and suffering were all too real. In New York's famous Riverside Church are stone carvings commemorating historical figures whose lives have exemplified some aspect of Christ's life. Among them, there is only one couple so honored: Ann and Adoniram Judson. (Of the sixty-three honored, only four are women and eight are Americans.)

To this new millennium the Judsons have left a living legacy, both in the United States and in Burma/Myanmar. Throughout present-day Myanmar, the intriguing trail of the Judsons can still be found. Adoniram lay fettered in prison for nearly two years; Ann's intrepidity and fortitude kept him alive. One crisis followed another, yet Ann declared, "We thank God and take courage." This spirit of determination to bless God and take courage became the hallmark of their lives. Ann saved Adoniran from execution three times, then died herself from the effects of disease and malnutrition. He lived on to give the Burmese people their first and best translation of the Bible. Judson's great personal appeal and his remarkable ability to relate to the people and preach in the Burmese language led to the establishment of the church in that land.

The Judson saga is a thrilling account of an extraordinary man who loved three equally remarkable women, each of whom made a major contribution to the foundation of Christianity among the Burmese people. Ann, with her intelligence, linguistic skills, and force of will and character, managed not only to keep Adoniram alive but also to leave behind her own translation work and the foundation of women's education. Sarah, Judson's second wife, was the widow of

another young missionary, and she possessed skills and abilities that complemented Judson's. Sarah was the mother of eight children with Adoniram, but she died tragically early at age forty-one. Judson's third wife, Emily, was already a well-known writer when he met her. They married in 1846, and his last four years were rich in continued strengthening of the Burmese mission.

Many accounts of the Judsons were written in the century following their pioneer efforts, for their significance on America's missions history has been unmatched. However, the last biography of Judson was written fifty years ago, and none was written by someone who had visited Burma. All the biographies ended with Judson's death, but the *story* does not end there. Their legacy has continuing impact. *Bless God and Take Courage* travels to the land where the Judsons served to discover their footprints. The legacy lives on in that nation, for the name *Judson* is carved into the history of its people and its languages.

And in America, there are important stones of remembrance still left to the community of faith, true missions landmarks. Baptists in the United States owe their formation into a denomination to the Judsons, and the larger community of faith is able to trace in the Judsons' story the awakening of the missions consciousness of a fledgling nation. The until-now untold story of Judson descendants is also fascinating. Where did they go? What did they become, and does the line live on? This account searches for clues that shed light on this remarkable family.

This is uniquely *three* love stories, not just one. New material has been discovered, including the exquisite love letters of Adoniram and Emily. And could that copy of a portrait of a beautiful young woman found in an obscure file really be the only known likeness of Sarah Boardman Judson? Exploring the heritage left by the Judsons began as curiosity and ended as a quest. Their extraordinary legacy is very much alive; uncovering it has been the journey of a lifetime.