

Colby Missionaries in East Asia, 1822-1949

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Introduction

Starting with Colby's first graduate, George Dana Boardman in 1822, and through the end of the Second World War, Colby alumni worked throughout the world as missionaries. Beginning with Boardman, missionary activity became an integral element of Colby's purpose and is an important part of the college's history. While missionary activity is no longer a part of life at Colby today, remnants of the legacy of Colby's missionaries live on.

Out of the fifty-seven foreign missionaries from Colby, forty-seven of them worked on missions to Asia.¹ These missionaries had a broad range of experiences based on the very different countries in which they worked in, the range of the time periods in which they served in, and the organizations for which they worked. As Colby was founded as a Baptist institution, the majority of Colby missionaries went by appointment of the American Baptist Missionary Union, which was coincidentally formed only one year after Colby's founding date, in 1814.²

Perhaps the two most significant foreign missions in Colby's history were the American Baptist Mission to Burma, and the American Baptist Mission to China. The mission to Burma involved eighteen Colby graduates from the class years from 1822 to 1926, making it the longest and largest mission of Colby graduates.³ The mission to China involved fifteen Colby graduates from the class years from 1854 to 1918, putting it closely behind Burma in both numbers of Colby missionaries and time span of involvement.

As Colby missionaries were in Asia for such a large span of time, they witnessed a great deal of history, and the events that were taking place during the times in which they served certainly affected their missionary activity. From the collapse of the Burmese empire, to civil

¹ Ernest Cummings Marriner, *History of Colby* (Waterville: Colby College Press, 1962), 629.

² Edmund F. Merriam, *The American Baptist Missionary Union and Its Missions* (Boston: American Baptist Missionary Union, 1897), 8.

³ Marriner, 628.

war in China, to the rise of Imperial Japan, Colby missionaries found themselves in the midst of global events of great interest, and shared their opinions and perspectives from living in Asia with the Colby community. Due to the growing influence of Japan over the Pacific Asia region during the span of Colby's missionary activities, this paper will also include an investigation of Colby's involvement in the smaller mission to Japan, which involved only four Colby alumni.

This paper aims to cover the history of the Baptist missions in Burma, China and Japan, focusing on the experience of Colby missionaries abroad, and to determine why Colby developed a tradition of foreign missions, and what traces of this tradition can still be seen in the school today.

Colby's First Missionary

Colby's missionary history begins with Colby's first graduate. George Dana Boardman of the class of 1822 is without a doubt the most famous of all of Colby's missionaries. As the founder of the hugely successful Karen mission in Burma, Boardman became a legendary figure both within the Baptist church and at Colby during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Boardman was the son of Rev. Sylvanus Boardman, one of the founders of Colby. After graduating from Colby, Boardman became a tutor at the college and there was some speculation that Boardman might have gone on to become Colby's second president. At that time, Baptist missions were a subject of popular interest. Upon hearing the news that James Colman, a missionary on the first Baptist foreign mission to India, had died in 1823, Boardman was supposedly asked, "Who will go to fill his place?" Boardman immediately replied "I will go" and made up his mind to go on a foreign mission.⁴ After attending Newton Theological Seminary, in

⁴ Unnamed Author, Untitled Biography of George Dana Boardman Papers, p.1, George Dana Boardman Folder 1, Colby College Special Collections.

Newton, Massachusetts, which became the school where nearly all of Colby's missionaries were ordained, Boardman set sail with his new wife Sarah Hall, in 1825, to India on the way to Burma.

Arriving after a 139-day voyage to Calcutta, the Boardmans were forced to wait before continuing on to Burma due to fighting between the Burmese and British Empires in the First Burmese War.⁵ In 1827, Boardman was finally able to begin his work in the newly secured areas of Burma that were under British control. Boardman was joining a mission founded by Adoniram Judson, and his wife, who had arrived in Burma in 1812. Judson was the first American Baptist Foreign Missionary, and as he had been driven out of India because of the East India Company, who had threatened to send them back to England⁶. Afraid of being shipped back to England the Judsons hastily took a boat for Burma.⁷ They began their mission there in Rangoon, working to convert the majority Bamar population. It was not until 1819, though, that they managed to baptize their first Bamar convert.⁸ At the time Burma was an independent Empire, which had conquered many smaller nations and was expanding towards British India. Over the 19th century a series of wars occurred with the British that greatly changed Burma, transforming it from an expanding Empire to eventually a British colony in 1886, and it was administered as a province within British India.

After the First Burmese War in 1824, in which the British first gained control of territory in Burma, the mission in Burma was moved from Rangoon to Amherst, a newly formed British settlement, as Rangoon was to remain under the control of the Burmese king.⁹ Boardman at first

⁵ Susan T. Laws, "Boardman of Burma: A book Review Article," *The Watchmen-Examiner*, No. 8, February 1940, 131. George Dana Boardman Papers, Folder 1, Colby College Special Collections..

⁶ Merriam, 36

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Merriam, 37.

⁹ Merriam, 40.

joined the Judsons in Amherst, but as the British were relocating their headquarters to Moulmein, Boardman decided to follow, leaving the other missionaries at Amherst.¹⁰ Moulmein is located in an area of Burma that is populated by one of its ethnic minority groups, the Karens. It was here that Boardman began his mission to the Karen people in 1828. Within the year Boardman had baptized his first convert.¹¹ A year later Boardman traveled to establish a church in Tavoy, another city in Karen territory.¹²

Boardman had an extremely successful but short lived career as a missionary. In 1833, there was a total of 292 Karen converts.¹³ This accomplishment is all the more impressive when considering the conditions in which Boardman worked. Disease was perhaps the greatest danger on the mission, and Boardman was sick for a large amount of the time he was in Burma. As early as 1829, Boardman referenced ongoing medical problems in a letter to his sister, as well as sickness affecting other members of his family.¹⁴ Furthermore Boardman and his wife lived an extremely isolated life. While the British had a presence in Burma, it is unclear how much safety or social interaction they provided to the Boardmans, who faced many real dangers. At one point they were robbed and their mosquito nets were slashed as a threat as they slept.¹⁵ The slashing of the mosquito nets may have been to show just how close these intruders could get to the Boardmans, but the action may have also held significance in that it exposed them to malaria bearing mosquitos. Additionally the Boardmans were hardly connected with anyone back in

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Marriner, 580.

¹² Merriam, 40.

¹³ Merriam, 61.

¹⁴ George Dana Boardman to Frances Boardman, August 16, 1830. Transcription of original document found in *The Colby Alumnus*, First Quarter, 1930-1931. Both documents in George Dana Boardman Papers, Folder 2, Colby College Special Collections.

¹⁵ "The Hall of Fame, George Dana Boardman," *The Colby Echo*, February 22, 1911, V.14, no. 16, 128. George Dana Boardman Papers, Folder 1, Colby Special Collections.

America. News and letters could take years to travel between Burma and America. In Boardman's letter to his sister in 1829 he notes that it is only the second he had written to her since 1826 presumably because of the length of time it took mail to travel.¹⁶

Only six years after arriving in Burma, Boardman died from tuberculosis at the age of thirty.¹⁷ The story of his death is dramatic and effectively turned him into a sort of martyr for the American Baptist Church. In 1831 Boardman decided to make a trip up into the Karen hills despite his failing health in order to watch Rev. Francis Mason, who had recently joined him at Tavoy, perform a baptism. On their return home, Boardman died in the arms of his wife. Sarah Boardman stayed on in Burma to found and manage schools and eventually married Adoniram Judson, who had also lost his spouse to disease in 1819.¹⁸

The dramatic nature of Boardman's death, combined with the success of the Karen mission, made Boardman into a celebrity in the Baptist church and he was soon given the posthumous name "The Apostle to the Karens."¹⁹ Boardman also became one of the most distinguished and famous Colby alumni of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Nearly a century after he graduated the *Colby Echo* ran a piece on Boardman that declared, "if there was a hall of fame, we would put Boardman first," and an article of the *Colby Alumnus* ran copies of his letters.²⁰ Another article cited that George Boardman became a popular baby name for alumni of the classes of 1849 to 1860.²¹ Boardman had a book written about him, entitled *Boardman of*

¹⁶ Boardman to Frances Boardman, August 16, 1830.

¹⁷ Marriner, 580.

¹⁸ Merriam, 37.

¹⁹ Laws, "Boardman of Burma, A Book Review."

²⁰ "The Hall of Fame, George Dana Boardman," *Colby Echo*, February 11, 1911.

²¹ "Alumni Name Babies after 1st Graduate," *Portland Sunday Telegram*, February 24, 1935. George Dana Boardman Papers, Folder 1, Colby College Special Collections.

Burma, and even had a comic made of his life.²² The Baptist missionaries following Boardman in Burma made a memorial for him in Burma reading, “Ask in the Christian villages of yonder mountains who taught you to abandon the worship of demons? Who raised you from vice to morality? Who brought you your bibles, your Sabbath and your words of prayer? Let the reply be his eulogy.”²³ Additionally Colby named willows on the old campus in his memory.²⁴ Perhaps most importantly, a year after Boardman’s death, in 1834, Colby renamed its leading religious society the Boardman Missionary Society and which focused on the discussion and support of missions.²⁵

Boardman was as a central source of the tradition of foreign missions at Colby due to his fame and success in the work. As nearly all of Colby’s missionaries graduated while Boardman was still a prominently known figure in the history of the college, he would have served as an example and an inspiration for a life of service and adventure.

Other Colby Missionaries in Burma

In the century following Boardman’s death, seventeen Colby missionaries followed in his footsteps on missions to Burma, although strangely, despite Boardman’s fame there was a large period of time before the next Colby missionary arrived there in 1865. In the meantime, Francis Mason, a missionary who arrived in Burma shortly before Boardman’s death, was awarded an honorary degree from Colby for continuing to carry on the Karen mission.

²² “Crusaders of History, George Dana Boardman,” comic, unknown newspaper, 16. George Dana Boardman Papers, Folder 1, Colby Special Collections. See appendix, p. 38.

²³ “Boardman Monument in Burma”, George Dana Boardman Papers, Folder 3, Colby College Special Collections.

²⁴ Marriner, 580.

²⁵ Marriner, 450.

There is evidence that at least five Colby graduates were specifically involved in the Karen mission, which was perhaps the greatest success of the American Baptist Church's missionary activity, and the pride and joy of the society. Rev. Edmund F. Merriam, author of *The American Baptist Missionary Union and Its Missions* and himself a Colby graduate of the class of 1879, wrote that "The American Baptist mission to the Karens of Burma is justly regarded as one of the most illustrious of miracles of modern missions. In the readiness with which the gospel has been received, in the large number of converts gathered, and in the development of self-supporting, self-directing, and self-propagating churches, the mission stands conspicuous among all missionary efforts in the world."²⁶ Colby alumni were significant participants on the mission, and by 1867 there were seventeen missionaries working on the Karen mission, fifty-seven ordained Karen preachers, 309 unordained Karen preachers, 338 churches and 18,254 members.²⁷ In 1878, fifty years after Boardman's first baptism the number of Karen converts passed the 20,000 mark.²⁸

In order to understand the incredible success of the mission it is necessary to compare these figures to the original mission to the majority Bamar population, which involved more missionaries.²⁹ The Karen and Bamar missions were interlinked, missionaries often worked with members of both populations. The Baptist Missionary Union identified the fact that many different peoples comprised Burma, and therefore decided to distinguish each mission there. In 1867, there were twenty-four missionaries, nine ordained Bamar preachers, twenty-six

²⁶ Merriam, 76

²⁷ Merriam, 72

²⁸ Merriam, 74

²⁹ This mission was referred to by the American Baptist Missionary Board as the "Burmese mission", and the majority population was known as Burmese to the missionaries. As the term Burmese now refers to all members of the nation of Burma, or Myanmar, Bamar is used in this paper instead.

unordained Bamar preachers, fifteen churches, and only 780 members of the church. These figures are self-reported by the American Baptist Missionary Union so there may be some reason to speculate on the accuracy of them. But the low numbers reported on the Burman mission seems to undermine these doubts.

Why the Karen mission was so much more successful than the mission to the Burmans is unclear. Both the Karens and the Burmans practiced Buddhism, but beliefs may have varied and played a role in their respective reception of the Christian message. One factor that may have also contributed to the Karens' openness to the Christian message was their ethnic minority status. Francis Mason, who continued to play a role in the Karen mission for several decades after Boardman's death believed that this was the case. He described his experience preaching to both Burmans and Karens: "I presume I have preached the Gospel to more Burmans than Karens; and looking at the results, I find I have baptized about one Burman to fifty Karens. The reason of the great difference in these results is the difference in the preparation of the two nations for the reception of the Gospel. The Burmans are our Pharisees and Sadducees; the Karens, our publicans and sinners."³⁰ The Karens perhaps saw the Christian religion as an equalizing factor, and having been disadvantaged in the Burman system, as a conquered people welcomed the presence of foreigners as they brought the potential for a change of status. Perhaps embracing Christianity, and taking on leadership roles in the spread of the Christian message, was a way to gain power or at least a connection to an outside source of power. Indeed their disposition to Christianity led the Burmans to correctly suspect that the Karens were in fact sympathizing with the British.³¹ As Britain began to expand its influence throughout Burma, in the Second and Third Burmese wars, which took place in 1852 and 1885 respectively, it brought

³⁰ Merriam, 65.

³¹ Merriam, 68.

over a force of Indian military police for which the Karen people were exclusively recruited as they came to be seen as by the British as “loyal.”³² This notion of the Karen people as loyal perhaps comes from their warmer reception of Christianity, and therefore the west, as well as the fact that the British had occupied Karen territory longer than any other area in Burma.

In any case, the Karen mission’s success, and therefore the necessity to train large numbers of Karen preachers, led to the creation of the Karen Theological Seminary. The seminary was later moved to Rangoon in 1850, and then enlarged to train students from all ethnicities in Burma in 1895.³³ Many of the Colby missionaries were specifically involved with this seminary, and in other forms of education, religious and otherwise, throughout the history of the Burmese mission. Daniel Appleton Smith, class of 1859, was a member of the Karen mission in Henzada and transferred to become the head of the seminary in 1867.³⁴ It is perhaps under Smith’s influence that the merging of the education of ministers from all Burmese groups happened, as Smith appears to have been a leader described as inclined to inclusion and uniting the missions. A fellow missionary recalled in a memorial for Smith that Smith was “especially fitted as the head of the Karen Theological Seminary to unite our mission body as well as the Karen Christian community in cooperation with that institution. In that capacity through many decades he contributed very largely towards the development of a ministry which has wrought so signally, not only in the Karen churches in Burma, but also among other races to the most remote limits of Burma, reproducing here in turn all that is valuable in their own churches.”³⁵

³² Thant Myint-U, *The Making of Modern Burma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 208-211.

³³ Merriam, 70, 74.

³⁴ Merriam, 73

³⁵ C.A. Nicholas et al., “Daniel Appleton White Smith,” *The News*, American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Volume 35, No. 1, January 1922, 2. Daniel Appleton Smith Papers, Colby College Special Collections.

As men like Smith influenced the development of the Baptist Mission in Burma, the educational system swiftly began to change. As the mission became more united throughout Burma, Colby missionaries found themselves branching out from Boardman's legacy and participating in missions to many different people in Burma. Frederick H. Eveleth, class of 1870, began his work on the Bamar mission in Toungoo and then continued his service in isolation at a station in the town of Sandoway. It was Eveleth became the head of the new "Burman" (Bamar) department at the seminary in Insein when the seminary's scope was enlarged in 1894.³⁶ In this way Colby missionaries built upon one another's work, and their lives and work were interrelated throughout the century.

General education outside of training for ordination was also an important part of the work of Colby missionaries in Burma from its beginnings. Alonzo Bunker, class of 1862, the second Colby missionary to Burma, founded a school in Toungoo which he maintained for over thirty years in addition to his other missionary work.³⁷ Schools continued to be developed for boys and girls throughout the country, led by both male and female missionary workers. In short, as the Baptist Mission in Burma developed so did the educational system. John Earnest Cummings, class of 1884, played a particularly important role in its development. Cummings was an active missionary in Burma for forty-five years. The main focus of his mission was education and he founded fourteen schools in his time there.³⁸ In addition to founding schools, he became a member of the Educational Syndicate, the official educational advisory board,

³⁶ Merriam, 76.

³⁷ "Colby Missionaries now on the Field," *The Tidings*. (Waterville: Missionary Committee of Colby Ministry, May 1896), 10. Colbiana Collection, Colby College Special Collections.

³⁸ Biographical Record of John Ernest Cummings, Colby College, John Ernest Cummings Papers, Colby College Special Collections.

restructuring the school system in the Henzada region of Burma.³⁹ As if that wasn't enough to accomplish, Cummings also went on to be a member of the board of trustees' executive committee and later the chairman of Judson College, Burma's first western style higher education institution.⁴⁰ Cummings did not go unnoticed for his work and was presented the Kaisar-i-Hind Silver Medal for public service in India⁴¹ by the British Lieutenant Governor of Burma.⁴²

As the 19th century passed and more and more missionaries arrived in Burma, the British gained more control and influence over bigger regions of Burma, and the nature of the missions changed. The experiences of the earlier followers of Boardman were quite similar to his. Alonzo Bunker, like Boardman, experienced many of the same dangers that Boardman had. Bunker was at one point captured by a group of "natives" while working in the Karen hills, and also struggled with disease, taking several furloughs back to America to regain his health.⁴³ While Cummings suffered the loss of his first wife due to disease shortly after his arrival in Burma in 1893, there seems to have been a great deal more stability and structure within the country by the time he came. In Rangoon, the hub of British Burma, there was a newspaper and several religious societies for men and women from abroad. The frontiers of missionary activity began to change as well. After the Third Anglo-Burmese war in 1885, the British gained complete control of the country and upper Burma opened up for missionary activity. Colby missionaries participated on

³⁹ Colby College, "Special Dispatch to Sunday Telegram," about 1930-1933, John Ernest Cummings Papers, Colby College Special Collections.

⁴⁰ Biographical Record of John Ernest Cummings.

⁴¹ Cummings was awarded for service in India, as Burma was one of its provinces.

⁴² "Brief Note of the Titles to be Conferred and Presentations made by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the Durbar at Government House, Rangoon, on the 19th August 1913" (Rangoon: Office of the Supdt., Govt, Printing, Burma, July 1913), 4. John Ernest Cummings Papers, Colby College Special Collections.

⁴³ Bill Vinton, Letter to President of Colby College, Alonzo Bunker Papers, Colby College Special Collections.

missions to minority groups in these regions, including to the Shan and Chin peoples. Wilbur W. Cochrane, class of 1885, spent twenty-four years among the Shan in upper Burma from 1890 to 1894.⁴⁴ Cochrane was commissioned by the Asiatic Historical Society of London to write down their history.⁴⁵ This demonstrates how missionaries not only served to bring information from the West into Burma, but also how missionaries served as vessels for knowledge of other cultures, previously unknown to the western world, to also be transferred in the opposite direction, despite the fact these perceptions may have been skewed by colonialist ideologies. Many other missionaries from Colby took on the role of academics, in Burma and beyond, writing articles describing the language, the culture, and the politics of other cultures as well as their own experience.

Shift from Burma to the Far East

Of the thirty-six Colby missionaries who went to Burma, China and Japan on missions, eighteen worked in Burma. Of these eighteen, only four graduated after 1890. Of the remaining eighteen missionaries who went to Japan and China, only five graduated before 1890. Of those five who went on missions to Japan and China before 1890, three were of the class of 1884.⁴⁶ From this data it is quite clear that there was a dramatic change in the trend of the destinations of Colby missionaries around the turn of the century, with the Baptist Mission to China having the greatest participation by Colby alumni.

There does not appear to be any definite reason why there was a shift in Colby missionary activity from Burma to China. The mission to Burma continued, with two Colby

⁴⁴ Biographical Record of Wilbur W. Cochrane, Colby College, Wilbur. W. Cochrane Papers, Colby College Special Collections.

⁴⁵ "Rev. Wilbur W. Cochrane Dies at Age of 89 Years", *Petaluma Argus-Courier*, August 5, 1947, 5. Wilbur Willis Cochrane Papers, Colby College Special Collections.

⁴⁶ See appendix on page 31 for reference.

missionary couples serving work on into the 20th century. Furthermore, Colby's second missionary -- excluding Francis Mason who was the recipient of an honorary degree-- was Henry Allen Sawtelle, class of 1854, who went on a mission to China, demonstrating that there was the opportunity for Colby missionaries to become involved with the Baptist China mission far before the general shift began.

One possible explanation for this shift is the weakening of the Qing dynasty and the eventual opening of China to foreign influences. China was closed to foreigners until the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, following the British victory over the Chinese in the Opium War. China ceded Hong Kong to the British, and five ports were opened to trade. Opening China to trade also resulted in its opening to missionaries. Merriam describes the consequences of the Opium War through the perspective of the Baptist Missionary Union: "It resulted in forcing British opium on the reluctant Chinese, but this evil was in part counterbalanced by the opening of the Chinese empire to missionary work."⁴⁷ This allowed for missionaries such as Sawtelle to travel via Hong Kong to work on missions in Southeast China in cities relatively close to Hong Kong such as Swatow and Shui Hing. Meanwhile, the Chinese state continued to be weakened throughout the 1800s by a string of internal conflicts including the southern Taiping Rebellion, which took place from 1850 to 1864, the northern Nien Rebellion, which took place from 1851 to 1868, the Muslim Rebellion, which took place from 1862 to 1887, and the Panthay Rebellion which took place from 1856 to 1873. The opening of China culminated in the Boxer Rebellion in 1898, which resulted in China was conceding to even greater demands by foreign powers.

A second factor that significantly affected the shift in Colby's missionary activity from Burma to China was simply the vast potential of China's massive population. While working in

⁴⁷ Merriam, 145.

China, John M. Foster, class of 1877, wrote of his astonishment at the population size of 40,000 in a nearby region which could be accessed within a day by foot. He wrote that the region contained “more people than live in any three of the six states last admitted to the union.”⁴⁸ China’s massive geographical size and huge population posed a welcome challenge for the Baptist Missionary Union, which subdivided its mission there into four separate areas, the South China, North China, East China and Inland China Missions. In order to make an impact on Chinese society, and to bring Christianity to China, a large number of missionaries would be needed. While the logistics of maintaining a unified mission to China may have posed a challenge, the seemingly limitless number of potential converts seems to have been a source of excitement for some of the missionaries. John M. Foster likened the work of the mission to a battle where “The field is so large and the line of the battle so extended, that when checked at one point, we can move to another.”⁴⁹

The Mission in China

As Colby missionaries participated in the mission to China in a later time period than the majority of Colby missionaries to Burma, the life and work these two groups were quite different. Many of Colby’s missionaries to Burma had been commissioned by the American Baptist Missionary Union. Most were ordained at the same seminary, Newton Theological Seminary, and most went as husband and wife pairs. Colby missionaries in China were more varied. Missionaries to China included men and women, working with a family or independently, and working thousands of miles apart from each other.

⁴⁸ John M. Foster, “‘University Extension’ from Swatow,” (Swatow, China: Press of Mr. Kwai Fung, Printer to Baptist Mission Union, 1893), 6, John Marshall Foster Papers, Colby College Special Collections.

⁴⁹ Foster, 6.

One particular noticeable difference between Colby missionaries in Burma in the 19th century and Colby missionaries in China at the turn of the century was that many of the latter were employed by the YMCA as well as the Baptist Missionary Union. These YMCA missionaries included Arthur Greenwood Robinson, class of 1906, Chester Frank Wood, class of 1914, and Frank Foster, class of 1916. This change corresponds to a change that happened in Colby's religious societies in the later part of the 19th century. After Boardman's death, the pre-eminent religious society at Colby was the Boardman Missionary Society, formed in his memory.⁵⁰ But in 1871, following the national movement, a YMCA chapter was founded at Colby, and this chapter merged with the Boardman Missionary Society in 1875.⁵¹ By 1883 the Boardman Missionary Society was completely dissolved, and all missionary activity came under the auspices of the YMCA, which addressed religious issues outside of missions as well.⁵²

Arthur Greenwood Robinson perhaps demonstrates best the flexibility and variety of work done by Colby missionaries in China in the early 20th century. After graduating from Colby in 1906, Robinson worked as a teacher for four years before joining the YMCA to do work in Kansas City, Missouri, in boys' education.⁵³ In 1913, Robinson received a letter from the YMCA calling him to join their foreign department to work in China.⁵⁴ As a long period had passed since China had first opened to foreign influence, by the time many Colby missionaries arrived in China they became part of an already well-established system rather than being the founders of one. Robinson, like many other Colby missionaries, first attended a language school in

⁵⁰ Marriner, 450

⁵¹ Marriner, 451

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Biographical Record of Arthur G. Robinson, Arthur Greenwood Robinson Papers, Folder 1, Colby College Special Collections.

⁵⁴ Marian Rider Robinson, "'Robbie' 1884-1964 An informal Biography of Arthur Greenwood Robinson." November 1964, 12, Arthur Greenwood Robinson Papers, Folder 1, Colby College Special Collections.

Nanking, as it had been established that two years of language school was required before “a man can do much in Asia.”⁵⁵ After language school Robinson worked with boys around China, in Peking (Beijing) and Hankou, and even traveled to Tokyo with a group of Chinese students for a year in 1914.⁵⁶ Robinson’s “boys work” consisted of religious activities including running “20 Bible Study Clubs, Inter-Church Boys clubs, special Sunday meetings for older boys...,” educational activities including running “secretaries reading circle; inspection trips to mills, factories, printing presses etc., movies for primary school boys; school conferences...” and social activities including concerts, socials, and health initiatives such as physical exams and a “health campaign.”⁵⁷ Perhaps “boys work” might best be summarized as bringing western institutions and practices to the youth of China. After a brief period back in the United States from 1926 to 1929, Robinson returned to China to work in Tientsin, China, this time commissioned by the American Missionary Board. Due to economic problems with the American Board’s income in 1934 however, Robinson was ordered back to America. Instead he opened a small shop and became a self-supporting missionary continuing his work in Tientsin. Robinson’s work was clearly incredibly varied, and not confined to acquiring as many new Christian converts as possible. The definition of a missionary and a mission had changed.

This change in the purpose and definition of missionary work came within what appears to have been a single generation. Colby’s archives are fortunate to have the records of a missionary in China from the end of the 19th century as well as those of his two sons who also served as missionaries in China in the 20th century. John Marshall Foster, class of 1877, began his work in 1887 and is one of Colby’s earliest missionaries to China. An ordained minister,

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Robinson, 13.

⁵⁷ Robinson, 14.

Foster's work shared many similarities with the ministers in Burma. Foster started his own school with the intent of training native preachers, much after the model of the Burman mission.⁵⁸ Two of Foster's sons also performed missionary work in China. There are few records of Frank Foster, class of 1916, who taught in Swatow after his graduation from Colby and later headed the YMCA in Siberia and Manchuria for six months during World War II.⁵⁹ Luckily Foster's other son, John Hess Foster, class of 1913, did leave Colby a fair amount of information about his experience in China, and also some insights into his experience witnessing his father as a missionary there.

John Hess Foster was born in Swatow, and became a third generation Colby student. After studying medicine at Harvard he served as a lieutenant in the United States Army during the First World War.⁶⁰ Foster returned to China as part of the faculty of Yale-in-China at Hunan-Yale medical college in Changsha, China. Though Foster admits to remembering fairly little details of his father's work, he considered his father's work to have been primarily religious in nature, saying, "My father was more interested in the theological side of the mission, teaching and preaching." John Hess Foster noted, however, that his parents worked in some education programs as well.⁶¹ But Foster agreed that on the Yale mission, with which he was associated, theology came secondary: "as Yale-in-China developed that missionary spirit, as the evangelical, [it] was secondary to education and medical advancement."⁶² It is ambiguous whether Yale-in-

⁵⁸ Foster, 1.

⁵⁹ Xiaoxin Wu et al., *Christianity in China: A Scholar's Guide to Resources in Libraries and Archives in the United States*, (New York: ME Sharpe, 2009), 46.

⁶⁰ "John Hess Foster '13," *The Colby Alumnus*, September 1984, John H. Foster Papers, Folder 1, Colby College Special Collections.

⁶¹ Marilyn Starr, "Changsha Memories: John H. Foster M.D. An Oral Interview," July 9, 1980, 2, John H. Foster Papers, Folder 2, Colby College Special Collections.

⁶² Starr, 6.

China can truly be considered a Christian mission, and whether John Hess Foster would consider himself a missionary or a doctor first.

This shift was not unique to China, but also could be seen in the work of the few Colby missionaries going to Burma in the early 20th century. Gordon E. Gates, class of 1919, is another example of a missionary whose primary function abroad was not evangelical. Gates, who later would go on to become the head of Colby's biology department, traveled to Burma to teach premedical students at Judson College starting in 1921. During his time there he not only founded and became the head of the biology department, but began studying earthworms, becoming a "world authority" and internationally recognized scholar. With figures such as Gates, John Hess Foster and Robinson in mind, the definition of "mission" might need to be broadened to incorporate a wide variety of Christian educators from the West, including many of Colby's missionaries in Asia in the 20th century.

The Chinese Civil War

As the experiences of Colby missionaries in China were so varied, it is difficult, if not impossible, to generalize about their missionary work. One thing we can be sure of, however, is their shared experience in major historical events. The Chinese Civil War in particular affected the work of many of Colby's missionaries in China, many of whom commented on it in their memoirs and in their correspondence to America.

Many missionaries, for example, found themselves directly caught up in the violence that occurred between the Communists and the Nationalists even before the official start of the civil war in 1927. Sometimes there was confusion of which side was which, but on the whole missionaries tended to place their sympathies with the nationalist leader, Chiang Kai-Shek,

perhaps because the Communists seemed to be particularly disruptive of missionary activity. Unlike in Burma, where missionaries looked at ethnicity as the primary source of difference within the native population, the missionaries in China began to look at political affiliation as a primary source of identity.

Many of missionaries witnessed firsthand the Chinese civil war and the violence it produced, both leading up to and during it. Missionaries such as Hazel E. Barney and John Hess Foster, who left the year the war officially began, had already witnessed a great deal of fighting. Moreover while the missionaries technically were not in China for the purpose of becoming involved with politics, it became quite clear that they did not particularly like the Communist movement, and Chinese Communists certainly did not seem to like them. This is likely because communism traditionally has been an anti-religious party. Furthermore the communist movement involved a great number of students, and it was groups of students who violently disrupted several Colby missionaries' work.

Arthur H. Page, class of 1898, worked as missionary in Swatow for 33 years, from 1906 to 1939. In these years Page was able to witness the beginnings of the Chinese Republic, and the buildup to and escalation of war between the Republic and the Communist Party. Page in particular had an extremely negative experience with the Communist Party. In an article many years later Page recalled them as being extremely disruptive to his mission, "filtrate[ing] into their missions and schools to cause riots and revolts."⁶³ At one point on his mission, Page was even attacked by a group of Communist students and nearly beaten to death, "if I hadn't lain

⁶³ Don Beale, "Pages Celebrate 50th Anniversary; Recall Battles with Chinese Reds," Unknown Paper, June 27, 1956, Arthur H Page Papers, Colby College Special Collections.

perfectly still they would have killed me,” he later recalled of the experience.⁶⁴ Despite this adversity, Page remained in China ten years into the civil war.

As mentioned earlier, it was in the early 20th century that female alumni from Colby began working as independent missionaries. Hazel E. Barney, class of 1918, was one of these women and she bravely faced the escalating violence on her own in Chungking, a city 1500 miles up the Yangtze River from the east coast of China. Barney was assigned to the Inland Baptist Mission in China where she worked from 1919-1927.⁶⁵ Chungking, in particular, was drastically affected by violence during the war, but Barney did not place blame on one side or the other. In an autobiographical sketch she recalled, “the city changed hands three times in two days. Two of the armies bombarded the city with some loss of life.”⁶⁶ Barney remained in China but was switched to a new city, Suifu, even farther inland, where she worked at a missionary home with several other American women. In that time she remembers a short period of peace but that then fighting broke out once again, this time accompanied by a propaganda campaign by the Communists that “stirred up the people to such an extent that disorder and chaos were the result of this deadly work.”⁶⁷ Like Page, Barney’s work was disrupted by Communist students who attacked Barney and her missionary colleagues’ home in 1925.⁶⁸ Still, Barney remained in Suifu until the mission was closed down in 1927, when she began a perilous journey back to the coast of China. The boats she took down to Shanghai were under attack much of the time and she describes her experience aboard as “mostly just dodging bullets and running behind the steel

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Biographical Record of Hazel E. Barney, Hazel E. Barney Papers, Colby College Special Collections.

⁶⁶ Hazel E. Barney, “Biographical Sketch”, 2. Hazel E. Barney Papers, Colby College Special Collections.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

plate for safety”⁶⁹ Stories like Barney’s and Page’s show just how dedicated these missionaries were, willing to risk their lives over and over again to continue their work. It is unclear if the missionaries expected to face such a degree of danger when they committed to these missions, but many of Colby’s missionaries certainly rose to face the challenge of working in such violent and dangerous conditions.

John Hess Foster had a less traumatic experience than Barney with the conflict in China, though he did see the city he lived in, Changsha, fall under Communist influence. In fact, his status as a foreigner offered him a sort of protection. Foster recalled that as a doctor, “we Americans were under pressure but not harassed, though several of our Chinese faculty were jailed others forced to leave for Hankow or Shanghai.”⁷⁰ Foster’s recollections and feelings about both parties might have been influenced after his time in China seeing as his interview was conducted in 1980, after living through the Cold War in America. In this interview he stated, “Looking back to that period it was clear to us that General Chiang-Kai-Shek’s army was well trained, disciplined and idealistic and it was welcomed by the Hunanese. After Hangkow fell and the drive down the Yangtse was underway, the occupied territory was turned over to the Russian advisors. So after October first, we were essentially under a soviet government.”⁷¹ Still, Foster found similarities between the Nationalists and the Communist Party, recalling that “both of them were greatly concerned about our unpreparedness and indifference to Japan’s aggression in China.”⁷² And in the end, it proved to be Japanese aggression that forced Colby Missionaries out of Asia.

⁶⁹ Barney, 3.

⁷⁰ Starr, 57.

⁷¹ Starr, 56.

⁷² Starr, 49

The Mission to Japan and the Effects of Japanese Imperialism on Colby Missionaries

The rise of Imperial Japan, beginning with their first foreign intervention in the Sino-Japanese war in 1896, had a drastic effect on the history of modern Asia, and on the work of many Colby missionaries both in Japan itself and especially in China. In the years of World War Two, at the height of the Japanese Empire, the reach of Imperial Japan had grown so large that it even affected the lives of Colby missionaries in Burma, and was responsible for the death of two Colby missionaries working in the Philippines.

Japan had always been an area of great intrigue for Christian missions, starting with Francis Xavier's famous arrival in 1549. Despite this history, the Japanese were never particularly receptive to the Christian message, remaining highly intolerant to foreigners and both Japanese and western Christians. The first Baptist Missionary arrived in Japan with Commodore Matthew Perry in 1854, when Japan was forced to open its doors to the outside world.⁷³ In 1872, the American Baptist Missionary Union officially recognized the mission to Japan, a mission in which four Colby alumni participated.

John L. Dearing, class of 1884, was Colby's first missionary to Japan, arriving in 1889. He rose to prominence there as a Baptist leader in Yokohama, becoming the president of the theological seminary there.⁷⁴ Dearing wrote many articles on life in Japan and the character of the Japanese people. Of particular interest, he commented on the conflict between Japan and other foreign powers in Asia. Arriving in Japan shortly after the First Sino-Japanese war had finished, Dearing was able to witness firsthand the dramatic change in national sentiment, a growing sense of nationalism and pride within Japan due to its military successes, writing that,

⁷³ Merriam, 170

⁷⁴ John L. Dearing, "Rev. John L. Dearing on Conditions in the Far East," *Kennebunk Journal*, August 16, 1909. John L. Dearing Papers, Folder 1, Colby College Special Collections.

“the war with China was the beginning of a new era for Japan.”⁷⁵ Dearing wrote about his astonishment at the enthusiastic militarization and industrialization of Japan. Even before the turn of the century, Dearing identifies a spirit of aggression that was developing when one official told him that, “Deep down in the breast of every Japanese, whether he be official or farmer, there burns deeply the determination to drive back Russia from her encroachments in the East.”⁷⁶ As early as 1909 Dearing even addressed the possibility of conflict between Japan and the United States, but suspected that there was little chance of war as “Japan wants commerce not war. The relations between Japan and the United States have been most cordial on the part of the Japanese.”⁷⁷

This growing nationalism and idea that Japan was beginning to see itself as a sort of guardian of East Asia is echoed by Colby’s first Japanese student, and Baptist missionary, Yugoro Chiba, class of 1897. Chiba wrote during the time of the war, while he was a student at Colby, that the war “may bring radical change throughout all Asia. Should European countries interfere with the matter-- whether Russia, the hungry polar bear, taking the one side, or England, the thirsty lion, taking the other-- as the tendencies are seen, the affair would not only be of the East, but also of the West.”⁷⁸ Chiba believed that Japan had grown to see itself as a power that could compete with the West, a power that was superior to its other Asian neighbors. Chiba even describing China and Korea as “not very quick to get hold of modern ideas,” validating his feeling of Japanese superiority, and echoing the Meiji Period’s nationalism in Japan.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ John L. Dearing, “Japan since the War,” 1896, Scrapbook of Dearing’s Writing, John L. Dearing Papers, Folder 1, Colby College Special Collections.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Dearing, “Conditions in the Far East.”

⁷⁸ Yugoro Chiba, “The War in the East,” *The Colby Echo*: September 29, 1894, 6, Yugoro Chiba Papers, Colby College Special Collections.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Despite growing tensions between Japan and the western powers, missionaries were allowed to carry on their activities. It was not until shortly before the actual outbreak of war between the United States and Japan in December 1941 that missionaries were forced to leave. Colby's last missionaries in Japan, Marlin and Melva Farnum of the Class of 1923, worked from 1927 to 1940, when they were forced to leave due to conflict. Working in a town on the Inland Sea of Japan, the Farnums experienced rising hostility and growing tensions. Melva Farnum recalls, "The gossip in the village was that the Americans have a short-wave radio hidden in the roof of their house... where they corresponded with Washington."⁸⁰ On top of a hostile attitude and routine checkups from the Japanese police, the Farnums had to deal with the rising difficulty to getting necessities like food, clothing and fuel due to shortages caused by Japanese military activities.⁸¹ In 1940 the Farnums were ordered out of Japan by the Baptist Missionary society. But they did not bear a grudge against the Japanese people. "Japan was our world and we loved that world. The magazine articles, the radio, blistering Japan were very hard for us. We were sort of split."⁸²

Missionary activity in China was perhaps just as affected by Japanese imperialism as was the case in Japan, and even earlier. Ellen J. Peterson, class of 1907, worked in China from 1913-1949, mostly in Baptist girls schools. She remained intensely dedicated to her work in China, and did all she could to remain there despite the Japanese advancing. In 1937 the Japanese approached Hangchow where she was working, but Peterson and a few other women fled to a

⁸⁰ Alberta Cook, "Pearl Harbor Remembered," *Portland Press Herald*, December 5, 1991. Melva Mann Farnum Papers, Colby College Special Collections.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

nearby city hoping to outlast the violence.⁸³ She reopened a school in 1938 at Shachsing, and due to daily bombings only could run the school in the evening.⁸⁴ After a furlough in 1940 Peterson returned, but this time no longer worked in a school. Instead, she began working with refugees feeding and clothing them and attempting to continue to give the children an education. After Pearl Harbor, though, Peterson and her fellow missionaries were forced to stop their relief work and Peterson was not permitted to leave the city until 1942, when she was sent back to America.⁸⁵ Not dissuaded by this setback, Peterson prepared to join a new mission, this time to the Belgian Congo. But at the last minute the Baptist Foreign Mission Society asked her to return to China. Her decision to return was made so quickly that she had no time to inform anyone. The missionary society instead sent out a letter starting with the words, “Within the hour Ellen Peterson will board an army transport and start on her way back to China”.⁸⁶ Finally in 1949, the year the Communists took Peking, Peterson returned to America for good on an army transport.

The reach of Japan’s imperialism even affected the last set of Colby missionaries working in Burma and the Philippines. Gordon E. Gates and his wife were forced to evacuate from Burma in 1946 due to Japanese presence there. Perhaps the most tragic consequence of Japanese aggression in World War Two on Colby missionaries is the case of the Roses. Francis Rose, class of 1909, and Getrude Coombs Rose, class of 1911, worked as teachers in the Philippines at Jaro Industrial School at Iloilo.⁸⁷ When the Japanese took over the Philippines, the Roses fled with native Christians, living up in the mountains from April 1942 to 1943. When

⁸³ Lillian M. Perkins, “She Spent Her Life Serving Others- Worked in China 1913-1919,” *Sigma Kappa Triangle*, 23. Ellen J. Peterson Papers, Folder 1, Colby College Special Collections.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Hazel F. Shank, Letter to Friends of Ellen J. Peterson, November 18, 1945, New York, New York, Ellen J. Peterson Papers, Folder 2, Colby College Special Collections.

⁸⁷ Marriner, 582.

they were found the Roses were executed by sword by the Japanese, and it is in their memory that the side chapel to the main Lorimer Chapel building on Colby's campus is named, to honor them and all other Colby missionaries.⁸⁸

In the end, materials pertaining to Colby missionaries in the 20th century provide a firsthand look at how Japan itself changed, and how outsiders' views of Japan quickly changed as well. From Dearing's initial admiration of Japan's "modernization," to the fear and violence the Japanese invasions of other Asian nations brought, Colby missionaries were able to witness one of the most drastic and sudden transformations of a country in history. While the foreign missionaries in Asia eventually left to return to America, Yugoro Chiba stayed in his native Japan to rebuild. In a November 1945 letter to the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Chiba revealed a drastic change in sentiment from the letters of his earlier college years, describing how "the old Japan was destroyed and thrown away, and the new Japan was started."⁸⁹ Chiba identified his country's new aspirations: "one is the cry for democracy and freedom, another is international friendship, and the third is the cry for bread."⁹⁰ The narratives of Colby missionaries like Chiba provided both intimate glances into contemporary life in Asia, as well as sweeping opinions about the countries where they served, and these perspectives gave people both at Colby and throughout America the means to learn about other nations, and issues going on beyond America's borders.

Missionary Activity at Colby

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Yugoro Chiba, Letter to A.F. Ufford of the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society, November 10, 1945, Yugoro Chiba Papers, Colby College Special Collections.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

The question of why so many Colby alumni elected to go on foreign missions can be best explained by looking at which institutions associated with Colby supported missionary activity. The first major connection to missionary activity came with Colby's early relationship to the American Baptist Church, and then to the American Baptist Missionary Society. Colby was founded as a Baptist Institution, and its founding date was only one year after 1812, the year in which Judson, the first American Baptist missionary was sent on a mission to India.⁹¹ Clearly, during Colby's foundational years, foreign missions was a popular topic within the Baptist community.

This newly established foreign mission to India was certainly a topic of discussion at Colby, as it was the news of the death of one of its members that directly influenced George Boardman to take up a foreign mission himself. But even before this news of the death of a foreign missionary came to Colby, Boardman was already thinking about and discussing the importance of missions. Boardman himself, along with several of his fellow students, established the first religious society at Colby, the Philalethian Society. The object of the society was "to secure religious information, discuss practical topics in Christian living, and afford mutual sympathy and restraint."⁹² One topic the society discussed was foreign missions and this served "as a fountainhead of missionary interest" at Colby.⁹³

After Boardman left Colby interest in the Philalethian Society waned, but in 1834 a group of members became determined to turn it into a society which specifically dealt with missions.⁹⁴ After petitioning the trustees, permission was given for the Philalethian Society to be

⁹¹ Merriam, 12.

⁹² Edwin Carey Whittemore, *Colby College 1820-1925* (Waterville, The Trustees of Colby College, 1927), 31.

⁹³ Marriner, 449.

⁹⁴ Marriner, 450.

transformed into the Boardman Missionary Society. Founded shortly after news of Boardman's death reached Colby, this society possessed "the impulse of Boardman's career and the call of his death."⁹⁵ This description echoes the calling Boardman himself felt upon learning of Colman's death and Boardman's direct connection to Colby provided the perfect inspiration for Colbians' future interest in missions. The new constitution of the Boardman Missionary Society reflected the change in focus of what had been the Philalethian Society, and also showed student's interest in learning about the foreign and exotic. Its purpose was "to devise and prosecute measures for the extension of Christianity; to acquire and disseminate a knowledge of the literature, morals and religion of different countries, and of the causes that operate on the moral improvement of mankind."⁹⁶ The questions that members of the society debated directly addressed issues that not only concerned students who were considering going on a mission, but also those who were interested in taking a more passive and supporting role in missionary activity. Questions included, "Ought students studying for the ministry to decide early whether they will become foreign missionaries?" and "Is it the duty of Christians to give their whole property, exclusive of what is necessary for their competence and that of their families, to assist in the work of converting the world?"⁹⁷

The Boardman Missionary Society continued to play a role as the primary religious society at Colby for much of the 19th century, and shortly after its inception instituted a tradition that would both help to inspire new generations of missionaries for the century of come, and last until the present day. In 1835 the Boardman Society brought Steven B. Page, a student at Newton Theological Seminary, to speak as a guest orator at commencement. This became a

⁹⁵ Whittemore, 58.

⁹⁶ Marriner, 450.

⁹⁷ Marriner, 450.

yearly tradition and in 1840 this speech became known as the “missionary address.”⁹⁸ The custom of having a missionary come and speak at commencement, and hearing first hand from a missionary about his or her experiences, was no doubt integral in arousing students to take up foreign missions.

While the tradition of having an outside speaker give an oration at commencement did not die out, the Boardman Missionary Society was dissolved before the turn of the twentieth century. The reason for its dissolution was not necessarily a decline in interest in missions, as Colby’s missionary activity fluctuated up until the 1940s, but rather the influence of a new religious society, the YMCA. In 1871 the YMCA was established at Colby and existed alongside the Boardman Missionary Society until the two merged in 1875.⁹⁹ The Society was permanently dissolved in 1885. The shift from the Boardman Missionary Society to the YMCA as the largest religious group on campus coincides with a small trend of Colby missionaries going to East Asia through the YMCA or other alternatives to the American Baptist Missionary Union.

Interest in missions lived on both within the YMCA and outside of it, as evidenced by the existence of a “Student Fellowship of Christian Workers,” which was an organization for students who wanted to devote their life to Christian Service. Colby was also strongly represented in the “Student Missionary Volunteer Association of the Maine Colleges.”¹⁰⁰ One particular student publication, *The Tidings*, shows a way in which Colby students, perhaps associated with the YMCA, worked to spread knowledge of missionary work.

The Tidings was published in 1896, a decade after the Boardman Missionary Society was dissolved, and shows concern over the contrast between Colby’s interest in missions, and the

⁹⁸ Marriner, 451.

⁹⁹ Marriner, 451.

¹⁰⁰ Marriner, 195

lack of interest in missions from the greater Christian community. “It is true that a large proportion of Christians show a lamentable lack of interest in the cause of missions...Christianity is no thing at all if it is not missionary,” the editorial begins.¹⁰¹ To combat this lack of interest *The Tidings* included an article on current Colby alumni working on foreign missions as well as letters directly from missionaries, including John L. Dearing. *The Tidings* is hand written, and as it has Vol. 1, No 1, written on the first page it was clearly intended to be a continuing publication. It is unclear how many Colby students may have viewed such a document, or if subsequent issues of *The Tidings* were published. Still, *The Tidings* demonstrates two key elements of the nature of Colby’s missionary legacy. First the letters contained in *The Tidings* as well as the news of other Colby missionaries in the field demonstrates that the legacy of the missionaries that went before is likely what inspired new Colby missionaries to commit to the work. This kind of contact, like the missionary address, would have been precisely the kind needed to plant seeds of inspiration for missionaries to come, and is likely a large part of why Colby has such a strong missionary history. Their added connection to one another and to Colby made the experiences of these missionaries all the more relatable. For instance, when John L. Dearing spoke of his Christian work he appealed to the theological side of potential missionaries. But what Dearing had to offer specifically to potential Colby missionaries was his connection to Colby, despite his isolation in Japan. Dearing wrote to the members of the YMCA and YWCA that “Colby is scarcely known” in Japan, but

¹⁰¹ “Editorial,” *The Tidings*, Vol 1, No.1, (Waterville, May 1896), 3. Colbiana Collection, Colby College Special Collections.

nevertheless on an outing to the mountains of Japan he decided to sing a song called “Old Colby, Our Glory”¹⁰²

The Tidings also demonstrates how missionaries served as a source of knowledge of foreign countries for Colbians back home. Missionaries described their experience in foreign countries in letters, and wrote articles about the people and conditions of the countries they worked in. Perhaps Colby’s missionary tradition leaves a legacy of international engagement, one that is manifested today, in part, in study abroad and Colby’s international student population.

Conclusion

Today the college is very different from the way it was during the century of missionary activity spanning from George Dana Boardman in 1822, to Ellen J. Peterson who finished her missionary work in 1949. Over the course of that century, religion diminished in importance at Colby, and has continued to do so up until the present. No longer are religious institutions central to life at Colby, and no longer is Colby associated with the Baptist church or any other religious group. Nevertheless, Colby’s missionary history is one of great interest. The stories of the missionaries are intertwined with moments of global historical significance, as well as tales of perseverance through danger. While perhaps now largely forgotten, Colby missionaries earned high reputations and have been recognized by the Baptist Church, academia, and the British Empire, amongst other groups and institutions. At Colby, remnants of the early missionary society lives on, and Colby’s missionaries are remembered and honored in a memorial in the

¹⁰² John L Dearing, “Letter to the YMCA and YWCA”, March 1896, *The Tidings*, 31-32. Colby 21, T5, Colby College Special Collections.

Rose Chapel. But perhaps the greatest honor these missionaries might have is how at Colby itself, their spirit of adventure and service endures.

Appendix:

List of Colby Missionaries in China, Burma and Japan by Class Year

Class Year	Country Of Mission	Name
1822	Burma	George Dana Boardman
Honorary Degree	Burma	Francis Mason
1854	China	Henry Allew Sawtelle
1859	Burma	Daniel Smith
1862	Burma	Alonzo Bunker
1863	Burma	James Frederick Norris
1867	Burma	Henry Malcolm Hopkinson
1870	Burma	Frederick Howard Eveleth
1873	Burma	David Webster
1877	China	John Marshall Foster
1879	Burma	Julia Maria Elwin
1880	Burma	John Elija Case
1880	Burma	James Edward Cochrane
1884	Burma	John Ernest Cumming
1884	Burma	Benjamin Francis Turner
1884	China	Edwin Palmer Burt
1884	China	Henry Kingman
1884	Japan	John L. Dearing
1885	Burma	William Willis Cochrane
1897	Japan	Yugoro Chiba
1898	China	Arthur Hartstein Page
1906	China	Arthur Greenwood Robinson
1907	China	Ellen Josephine Peterson
1913	China	John Hess Foster
1914	China	Helen Foster
1914	China	Abbie Gertude Sanderson
1914	China	Chester Frank Wood
1915	Burma	Vernelle Wallace Dyer
1915	Burma	Odette Pollard Dyer
1916	China	Frank Clifton Foster
1917	China	Myrtle Aldrich Gibbs
1918	China	Hazel E. Barney
1919	Burma	Gordon Enoch Gates
1919	Burma	Helen Baldwin Gates
1923	Japan	Marlin Farnum
1923	Japan	Melva Mann Farnum

Map of Burma and Territory Gained in Anglo-Burmese Wars



Map of China



Base 802437 (545114) 2-96

Map of Japanese Empire at its Height



Comic of George Dana Boardman's Life

CRUSADERS OF HISTORY **George Dana Boardman**

1. Like other Maine farm boys in the early 1800's George Dana Boardman listens eagerly to old seafaring men tell of adventure beyond the far horizons.

2. He attends Farmington and Bloomfield Academies. Teaching in the district school at 16, he attracts unruly pupils through his manner of quiet authority.

3. In 1819 he enters what is to become Colby College. A keen student, he also goes hiking and swimming. Once he nearly drowns—a friend rescues him.

4. At graduation George gives the valedictory address. He is appointed to the college faculty, and it is believed that he will be its next president.

5. But he forsakes this pleasing prospect to spread the gospel in Burma. He marries Sarah Hall, July 3, 1825. Two weeks later they are bound for the Orient.

6. At Amherst, Burma, George and Sarah Boardman meet Adentrem Judson, Burma mission founder, whose gallant wife, Ann, has passed away 5 months before.

7. In 1827 George and Sarah found the mission station at Moulmein. Leopards and tigers prowled near their home and till the night with hideous sound.

8. In the market-place, or anywhere he can get people to listen, Boardman tells of Christ. Finally inquirers begin visiting the missionary at his home.

9. April, 1828, the Boardmans open a station at Tavoy. It is here that baptism is administered to Ko The Bye, ex-bandit, who becomes a flaming evangelist.

10. With Ko The Bye, Boardman travels to the responsive Karens in their isolated villages. He lays enduring foundations, but his health is destroyed.

11. On his final visit to the Karens he is borne on a cot. Too weak to participate, he watches as Dr. Mason baptizes 34. Two days later he dies. Age: 30.

12. Sarah Boardman carries on the work, including jungle trips. Three years later she marries Adentrem Judson. The Burma mission grows and flourishes.

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