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A Rare Titanic Family: The Caldwells Story of Survival

Julie Hedgepeth Williams

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Of the families that boarded the unsinkable *Titanic* in 1912, only a fourth stayed together during the sinking and arrived safely in New York. Albert and Sylvia Caldwell and their 10-month-old son, Alden, were one of those rare *Titanic* families. Author Julie Williams draws on first-person accounts from her great-Uncle Albert and extensive research to tell the fascinating story of the young family who were saved by a combination of luck, pluck, Albert's outgoing nature, Sylvia's illness, and Alden's helplessness. Their detailed story of the short life of the *Titanic* and their lucky rescue aboard the ill-starred Lifeboat 13 has never been fully told in *Titanic* literature. *A Rare Titanic Family* includes a photo taken of them on deck an unusual surviving souvenir sent to them after the disaster. But the trip on the *Titanic* was only one part of a bigger nightmare for the Caldwells.

Albert and Sylvia, idealistic young Presbyterian missionaries from the American Midwest, had set out to Bangkok, Siam, on the very day of their wedding in 1909, eager to serve God and see the world. But things went awry. In the end, they fled Bangkok in a desperate journey around the world to save Sylvia's health. Fellow missionaries, however, believed that the couple had plotted to renege on their contract and contrive an excuse to go home early, at great financial loss to the church. The trip around the world thus developed into a grim game of cat and mouse, with the Caldwells as the prey. Not even the loss of the *Titanic* ended the hunt. *A Rare Titanic Family* follows the true-life plot twists in a biographical account of a family that survived the *Titanic* but could never escape the shadow the ship cast over them.

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