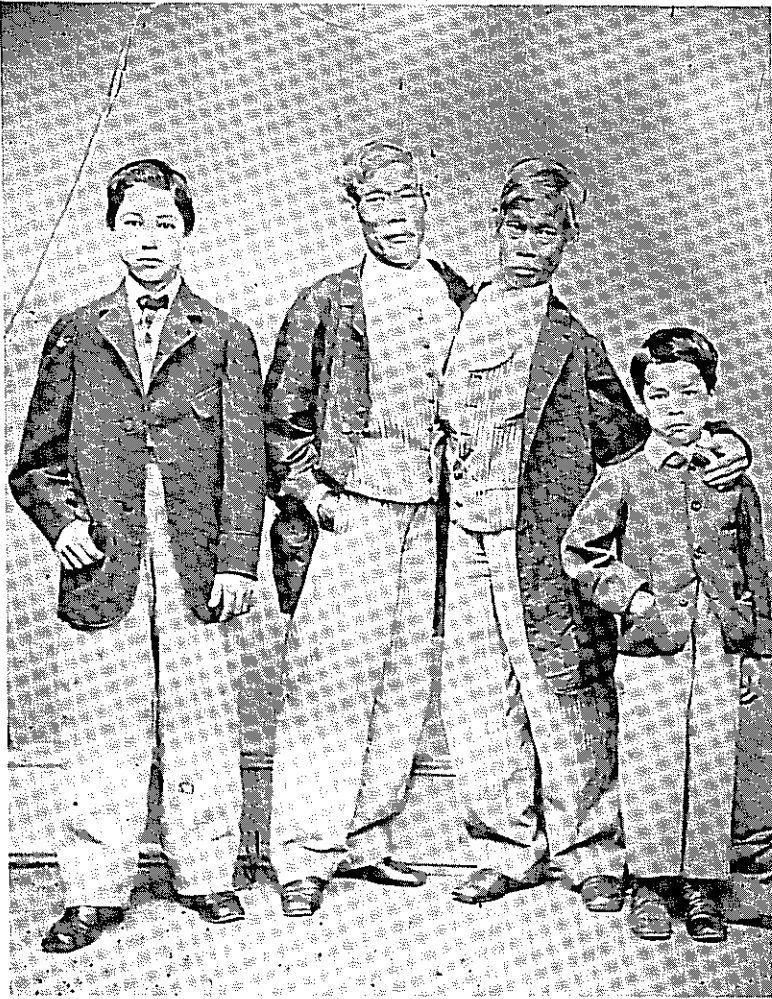


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# UNIT 5



# The Twins of Siam

**A** YOUNG mother was lying on a bed. She had just given birth to twin boys. She was tired but happy. A woman was helping her. Suddenly the woman screamed. "What's the matter?" the mother cried. She lifted her head and looked at her babies. The babies were joined at their chests. She could not separate them.

That happened in Siam—now called Thailand—in 1811. The mother named her babies Chang and Eng. Chang and Eng grew up and became the famous Siamese twins.

People came from all over Siam to stare at the twins. One day, when the twins were 18, an American saw them. He thought, "I can make money with the twins." He asked Chang and Eng, "Will you come with me to the United States?" Chang and Eng wanted to go to the United States, so they went with the man. They never saw Siam or their family again.

Chang and Eng traveled with the American for ten years. Later they traveled alone. People paid to see them and ask them questions about their lives. Finally, the twins got tired of traveling. They got tired of answering questions. They decided to live quietly in North Carolina.

Soon after they moved to North Carolina, the

twins met two sisters. The sisters' names were Adelaide and Sarah. The twins fell in love with the sisters. Chang married Adelaide, and Eng married Sarah. The marriages were very unusual. Adelaide and Sarah lived in separate houses. The twins lived in one house for four days. Then they went to the other house for four days. The marriages were unusual, but they were long and happy. Chang and Adelaide had ten children, and Eng and Sarah had eleven children.

The twins were happy with Adelaide and Sarah, but they were not always happy with each other. Sometimes they argued, and they didn't talk to each other. They asked doctor after doctor, "Please separate us." Every doctor said, "I can't separate you. The operation is too dangerous." So, the twins stayed joined together.

One night, when the twins were 63, Chang suddenly woke up. He looked at Eng, who was lying beside him. Eng was not breathing. Chang screamed for help, and one of his sons came.

"Uncle Chang is dead," the young man said.

"Then I am going to die, too," Eng said, and began to cry. Two hours later Eng was dead.

For 63 years the twins of Siam lived together as one. In the end, they also died as one.