



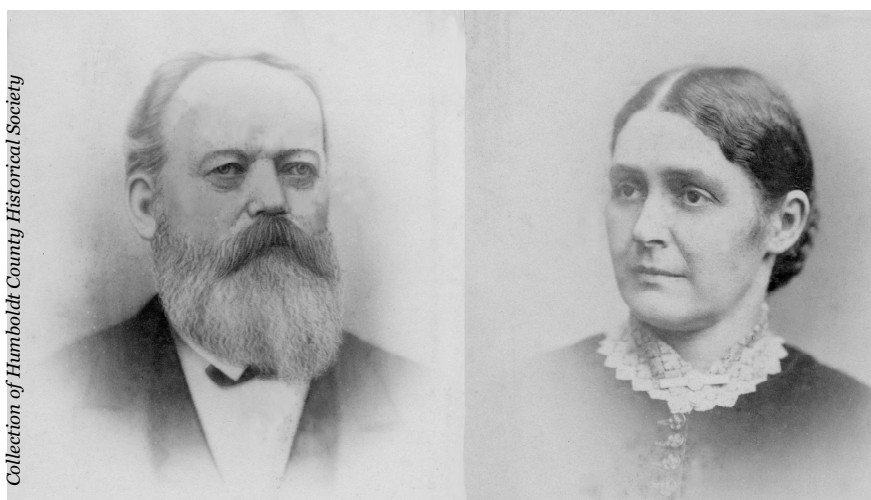
~ HISTORY HAPPENS SIDEBAR ~

CHASING DOWN THE MOON ~ Carla Baku

CHASING DOWN THE MOON is a work of fiction, but some of the people and events in the novel are based on real persons and actual historical situations. Everything has taken a significant creative detour through the author's imagination, of course, and in order to create a compelling life for my fictional characters, I have invented all sorts of circumstances, motivations, and conversations that only happened in my own head. It's the *actual* history that really makes historical fiction compelling, though. Below is a collected smattering of the historical facts surrounding the killing of David Kendall and the resulting expulsion of the Chinese from Eureka, California, followed by a special "Author's Cut": four short vignettes from *Chasing Down the Moon* that will give you a parting glimpse of several of the novel's memorable secondary characters. Enjoy!

On February 6, 1885, Eureka City Councilman **David Kendall** was accidentally shot on the street just a block from his home. While it was assumed he was caught in the crossfire between rival Chinese tongs—violence in Eureka's Chinatown was most definitely on the increase—no Chinese person was ever specifically identified or brought to justice for the shooting. Secondary sources indicate that, although several arrests were made, **Sheriff Tom Brown** was unable to determine who actually shot Kendall. This is a mystery unlikely ever to be solved. Public record makes one thing quite clear: David Kendall was widely admired and liked in Eureka. Many citizens expressed personal sorrow at the death of a good person. The legend on his grave monument reads: "An honest man is the noblest work

of God." He was fifty-six years old when he died. By all accounts, mourners filled the Myrtle Grove Cemetery where he was buried, the largest public funeral in the city's history to that point. **Prudence Kendall** was undone by the death of her husband. Just 17 months after David



Kendall was shot, Prudence Kendall took her own life by ingesting poison. She was buried with her husband. The legend at the bottom of her marker states simply: "We loved her."





Twelve-year-old **Louis Baldschmidt**—also shot the night David Kendall died— is portrayed in an Author’s Cut vignette as a painter’s apprentice. The real Louis was actually employed at a furniture company in Eureka. He was shot in the ankle, and apparently recovered from his wounds.



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

Lumber Baron **William Carson** really was having his incredible family mansion built in 1885, much to the benefit of the laborers he put to work during that economically challenging time. The mansion still stands, and although the fantastic Victorian color scheme is slightly toned down from the original, it is considered the most photographed Victorian house in the United States. You can take a virtual tour at www.ingomar.org.

The steamship **City of Chester** sank in the frigid depths of San Francisco Bay three years after taking Eureka’s Chinese to the city. It was rammed amidships by a massive freighter in a heavy fog and sank within five minutes of being struck. More than thirty souls perished.

The Reverend **Charles Huntington**, minister of the Congregational Church, was a vocal proponent of moderation and tolerance toward the Chinese. According to newspaper accounts and his privately published autobiography, Huntington took the floor at Centennial Hall minutes after David Kendall’s death and argued for clear thought and nonviolence. Later, Huntington’s wife and daughter were in their home, attempting to bid farewell to a young Chinese friend named Wei Lum—nicknamed “Charley Way.” Local men broke into the house and forcibly removed Wei Lum, hauling him by the queue to a freshly-built public gallows. A second minister, this one from the Methodist Church, came to Wei Lum’s aid and prevented the hanging.

The Chinese were incarcerated in wharfside warehouses prior to boarding of the steamships. Charles Huntington went there and demanded entrance; he returned to Wei Lum a Bible, an umbrella, and some gloves, and said goodbye to those he knew among the prisoners. For his empathetic actions and his vocal opposition to the expulsion, Huntington was hung in effigy.





Prior to the expulsion, Huntington's flock had been on the increase and was generously supportive. Afterward, there was a pronounced backlash, both in church attendance and monetary support. Pledges toward his \$1,000 per annum salary dwindled by more than half. In his autobiography he writes, "They thought I would withdraw and depart with the Chinese....In this they were disappointed. Neither the church or its minister proposed to plead guilty of wrong in dissenting from the 'vox populi' by running away."¹ Huntington continued as the Congregational minister until he retired from the pulpit altogether, two years later, at age 75. He lived on in Eureka; his energy and vitality were remarked upon in the local paper well into his octogenarian years. He died at age 92 and was buried with his wife, **Lucretia Huntington**, who preceded him in death.



*Rev. Charles Huntington riding tandem with his grandson, 1890.
Collection Humboldt County Historical Society*

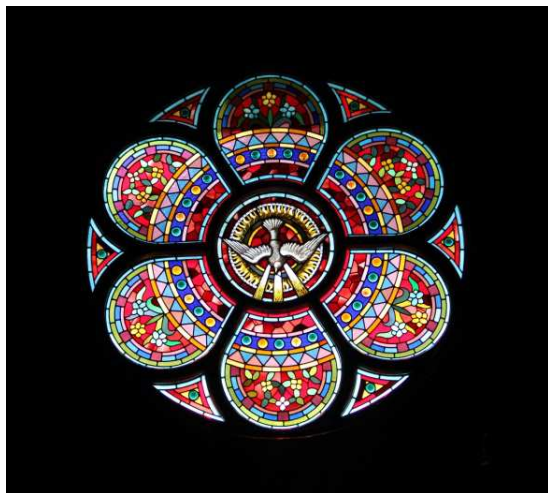


Image courtesy of Christ Episcopal Church, Eureka

Thomas Walsh was the Mayor of Eureka at the time of the expulsion, and he did, indeed, travel to his native Ireland and raise \$1,000 (comparable to over \$18,000 today) toward the building of the church and the purchase of 15 magnificent stained glass windows for Christ Episcopal Church. The church was located exactly at the edge of Chinatown. Due to a noisy streetcar line right outside, the church building was relocated in 1938, and the windows reinstalled in the current building.

¹ *Autobiography of Rev. C.A. Huntington*, Self-published, typed manuscript in the collection of the Humboldt Historical Society. The Dalles, 1899.





Was there really a place like “**Salyer’s Hotel**” in Eureka? Yes and no. There most certainly were sprawling, ornate hotels not far from the waterfront, and it’s no secret that there were a good many brothels around town. Salyer’s, though, and the specific situation in which Ya Zhen was enslaved, are entirely figments of my imagination. The number of women living in Eureka’s Chinatown was very small, probably less than ten percent of all the Chinese living there. Because of prevailing circumstances, it’s likely that many or most of them were prostitutes, but somewhat doubtful that these women

lived outside of Chinatown itself. One of the old hotels, the Eagle House, was built in 1885, the same year as the expulsion; it’s still there and still in operation. In fact, people claim that one wing of the hotel is haunted by the ghost of a young prostitute who hung herself



Collection Humboldt County Historical Society

in a stairwell. I’ve stayed at the Eagle House several times, even in the “haunted” wing. On that floor, the rooms were perfectly appointed, beds made up, antique books on the nightstands, but guests were virtually never booked in them. That block of rooms felt a little eerie and deserted, but I didn’t encounter the poor woman’s ghost. For the writing of *Chasing Down the Moon*, my imagination was especially sparked by the photo above, of a cattle drive through the old part of town: muddy streets, wet board sidewalks, and that incredible octagonal tower on the right, which was part of the Grand Hotel. The Grand Hotel no longer exists, but while I wrote about Ya Zhen, I pictured her here.

Local anecdotes still circulate that a few Chinese individuals were able to escape the expulsion from Eureka by making a run into the rough Humboldt County backcountry. The most widely held account of such an escape has to do with a man known as **Charley Moon**, whose white employer put him inside the house and barred the door





with a shotgun. While some of these stories may be true, outlying Humboldt County towns followed Eureka's example with their own expulsions. This would have made it extremely difficult for any Chinese person to stay in the area, unnoticed and unmolested. Over the course of years, several incidences of Chinese persons coming into the area as laborers ended with their rapid exit at the hands of the local citizens and law enforcement. The 1885 expulsion was memorialized and applauded for decades in the local newspapers. An 1890 business directory made the following boast in the local paper:

“Nature’s benefactions to Humboldt County have been many, but we pride ourselves on having, by our own efforts, eradicated a festering, putrescent sore from our vitals.”²

Those who were expelled sought redress for their losses through the courts in San Francisco. A lawsuit brought by the Chinese against the City of Eureka was called in the U.S. Circuit Court in San Francisco, eleven months after the expulsion. *Wing Hing v. Eureka* sought almost \$80,000 in damages (comparable to nearly \$2 million today) for loss of property and negligence on the city’s part to uphold the law against mob rule.



Eureka's Chinatown, pre-expulsion. 4th Street, between E and F Streets
Collection Humboldt County Library

After much legal wrangling between well-known San Francisco prosecuting attorneys Thomas D. Riordan and Hall McAllister, and Eureka's City Attorney, S. E. Buck, Judge Lorenzo B. Sawyer dismissed the case in 1886. Immediately after the expulsion,

² *The History and Business Directory of Humboldt County* (Eureka Daily Humboldt Standard, 1890.)





Eureka's Chinatown was razed. Some buildings were torn down, others renovated. The faulty grade of the street that caused serious sewage and drainage problems (for which the Chinese community was unjustly vilified) was corrected, and the white population happily moved in to occupy the area.

In 1934, excavation on the old Chinatown site—in preparation for building a new Montgomery Ward store—unearthed a cache of items the newspaper referred to as “souvenirs”:

“Echoes of Chinatown days in Eureka were revived here late Saturday afternoon when a crew headed by Buck Hanson unearthed a number of Chinese relics while excavating for the basement of the new Montgomery Ward & Co. store at the corner of Fourth and F streets.”³

No Chinese person settled in Eureka until the mid-1950s, some *seventy years* after the expulsion.

~~~

**I**F YOU'D LIKE TO READ MORE about the Chinese expulsion, the history of the Chinese in the U.S. during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, everyday life in the Victorian era, or the founding and history of Eureka and Humboldt County, here are a few good books to get you started:

*Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture* by Kenneth Ames

*The Chinese in America: A Narrative History* by Iris Chang

*Chinese Americans: The Immigrant Experience* by Peter Kwong and Dusanka Mišćević

*Driven Out: The Forgotten War against Chinese Americans* by Jean Pfälzer

*An Everyday History of Somewhere: Being the True Story of Indians, Deer, Homesteaders, Potatoes, Loggers, Trees, Fishermen, Salmon & Other Living Things in Backwoods of Northern California* by Ray Raphael

*Two Peoples, One Place, Volume I* by Ray Raphael and Freeman House

*Victorian America Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915* by Thomas J. Schlereth

*Polly Bemis: A Chinese American Pioneer* by Priscilla Wegars (ages 9+)

---

<sup>3</sup> Eureka *Daily Humboldt Standard*, February 19, 1934.





## ~ Hong Tai ~

*What became of Ya Zhen's little brother, after his Tǎ jà was taken?*

**T**HE LITTLE BIRD STILL FOLLOWED HIM. It was early morning and Hong-Tai had just come outside to urinate. When he went down the path to look out at the river, a cuckoo made its throaty chuckle. At first, he had chased the bird away. It made him angry to hear it laugh that way, because his sister was gone and his parents had forgotten her. The first time he heard the cuckoo, many months ago, he had taken up stones and thrown them, up through the branches of the old camphor tree, until the bird flew away and the tiny flowers had showered down on his head. But then he was sorry, because he couldn't laugh anymore, and he wanted to hear the bird again, to remember what laughing felt like. Now the cuckoo made him smile, and if he was alone, he would say hello and talk the way he used to talk with Ya Zhen. She had gone away with the bad men a very long time ago. It was hard to remember what her face looked like. When he forgot, he went down to the river to see his own reflection. If he squinted just so, her face came back to him.

After she went away, Hong-Tai had taken off his new clothes and hidden them under his sleeping mat. He didn't know why, but the clothes were bad; that is why his mother had been so angry when his father brought the dark blue jacket and trousers home from his long journey. One day, about a week after Ya Zhen was taken, his father had asked him about the clothes. "They are gone," Hong-Tai said. "The wind blew them away." His father looked at him for a long time, then had gone about his business. He never asked about the clothes again. His mother, who was growing so thin she seemed about to disappear, saw the clothes under his mat, but said nothing at all.

The sun came up from behind the eastern peaks and lit up the mist over the river in a bright haze. A small trout leaped from the water and caught an insect on the wing. Hong-Tai grabbed a stout twig and began to dig for worms. Perhaps he could catch a fish for breakfast. A breeze pushed through the branches of the camphor tree again, bringing out the pungent smell that Hong-Tai loved. Tǎ jà laughed down at him, and the boy smiled as he dug.





~ Louis Baldschmidt ~

*What was 12-year-old Louis doing just before he was caught in the shooting that killed Captain Kendall?*

**L**OUIS BALDSCHMIDT was a painter's apprentice. He didn't get to paint, though, not often. It was Louis's job to mix the paint, to use the right amounts of milk and lime and pigment. He took great pride in the fact that, at age twelve, he had memorized all the paint recipes in Mr. Roscoe's palette book. Last week, he had been allowed to do some painting on William Carson's new mansion. For weeks, the journeymen had crawled on scaffolds, each one wielding a different color, a different-sized brush for the minute gingerbread and scrollwork that covered every square foot of the building. Louis thought the house, where Mr. Carson would live with his family soon, looked as though it had been shaken off the pages of a storybook, that perhaps one afternoon a fair maiden would put her head out the tower window and throw down her long golden hair.

When he stood out in the street and looked up at the gables and porticoes, he itched to be way up on the scaffold, out in the hard breeze with a grand view of the bay, working the tiny details with a small brush. The house incorporated a tremendous palette of colors: slate, and seal brown light and dark; bronze green and terracotta; ash and oak yellow; maroon and reds ranging from scarlet to Indian to turkey. The ceiling of the broad veranda was an ethereal robin's egg blue. Louis thought if he could tell Mary Jane Kirkpatrick, whose own yellow hair he would gladly climb if it were tossed out a window, that he had painted the Carson place, she might let him hold her hand when they walked the long way home from school.

He had five more brushes to clean with turpentine and the main shop floor to sweep, and then he could go home for supper. His ma was making smothered chicken and spoonbread, she had told him when he left that morning. He decided to take a shortcut through Chinatown on his way home, though his mother had repeatedly told him not to do so. This evening, her worries would prove not to be as groundless as young Louis believed.







## ~ Elsie Dampler ~

*While things were in crisis all around her, where was the window-peeker?*

**T**HREE BLOCKS FROM CHINATOWN, Elsie Dampler and Frances Jane Beebe were sipping blackberry cordial in Elsie's tiny front parlor. It wasn't hers, really. It was her mother's house, but her mother now lived in the two rooms over the carriage house, and was just as happy. She had allowed Elsie and Charlie to take over the main part of the house as if it were their own, anticipating a houseful of grandchildren the minute they were married. No grandchildren had arrived yet, and Elsie planned to keep it that way for a while. She kept meticulous track of her fertility, and there were only two or three days a month that she allowed Charlie to take his privilege with her. Even then, she was scrupulous about douching afterward with Lydia Pinkham's Sanative wash. Elsie had been an only child and wasn't fond of children, especially babies. The whole topic of pregnancy made her feel queasy. Having some living thing squirming around inside her was nauseating, so parasitic. And birth? As a child, she had witnessed the family dog having puppies, and had run from the room, loudly declaring it the most revolting thing she had ever seen. The notion of expelling something from her own body, something the size of a suckling pig from such a small orifice—well, she could only shudder to imagine.

This was Elsie's idea of marital bliss: Charlie hard at work in the accounting office at Carson's lumber mill, working late and earning the extra they needed around the house. Meanwhile, her afternoons were free to receive visitors, to entertain them properly, if modestly. She and Frances Jane had been bosom companions since early childhood, and since Frances Jane was unattached, they were free to spend many long afternoons together. Elsie took another long sip from her little tumbler. The blackberry cordial was stunningly sweet and thick in her mouth, and she loved the warm glow it put into her limbs. No wonder it was considered medicinal.

"Remember Byron Tupper?" Frances Jane said. She was looking out the windows at the fog rolling up from the bay, her large hazel eyes a little glassy and unfocused from the liquor.





“That pudding head?” said Elsie.

Frances Jane giggled and licked cordial from her upper lip.

Elsie grimaced. “What made you mention Byron Tupper?”

“He came by my house the other night when it was raining. He threw an old apple at the front porch. I think he wanted me to come out.”

“Leave it to Byron to get your attention by pelting the house with spoiled fruit.”

“What’s wrong with spoiled fruit?” Frances Jane held her glass up to the silvery light of the early evening and admired the murky purple color, then took a rather large gulp.

“What? Frances Jane, I’m not talking about fruit. I’m talking about Byron Tupper being soft in the head. He can hardly string two sentences together.” Elsie often felt this mild irritation with Frances Jane, who tended toward a certain flightiness.

“I know. But who needs a man to think? He’s awfully—” Here she actually hummed a little tune. “—awfully well-developed.”

“Frances Jane Beebe, you’re drunk.”

Frances Jane giggled again, and stood up. She did a little waltz on the carpet, humming the tune again. “I’d like to have him take me into the cloakroom and teach me a good lesson,” she said in a husky voice.

Elsie stood and snatched the tumbler from Frances Jane before she could spill it all over the good carpet. Frances Jane, as thin as Elsie was plump, put her hands on Elsie’s wide waist, leaned over, and kissed her. Her lips were soft and she tasted like overripe berries. Elsie’s eyes went wide and she pulled away, just far enough to see Frances Jane’s face clearly. Frances Jane kept her hands on Elsie’s waist and stood perfectly still, until Elsie leaned in for another kiss. When Elsie felt Frances Jane’s hand rise to her breast and heard the echo of her own breath in Frances Jane’s mouth, Elsie Dampler sensed, for the first time in her life, the onrushing juggernaut of lust.





## ~ Billy Kellogg ~

*A last look at Byron Tupper's troublemaking friend.*

**T**HE BOY WAS TROUBLE. May Apple Kellogg had known it for years. But then, he came from a long line of trouble, his older brothers and his daddy before him, every one thickheaded as a frozen turd. Even Billy's granddaddy, her own husband Albert, had been fractious from the minute he parted his mama's flesh. And now here sat Billy—she could see him through the front window--brooding with the long face and sticking the point of his knife in the porch rail. May Apple knew he'd get a clout on the ear if anyone saw him, although the state of the place flew somewhere between shambles and disaster at the best of times. Despite his evil temperament and tendency to lay into the ugliest mess he could find, May Apple loved Billy, loved him even with that ugly puss.

She got up from her chair by the stove, planting her stick for balance and shoving against the chair with her less-afflicted arm. It had been a decade, perhaps, since she had stood fully upright. When she cared to consider it—which was rarely—it seemed to May Apple that her body was a bundle of fiery pains holding fast by the glue of her own intentions. There had been a time when she could hardly stop to stand still, when she fairly flew from one piece of work to the next, when the days were never long enough, even in the widest girth of summer. Albert had complained that she was too hard to pin down, up out of bed in the early dark and not down again until the tapers burned to stubs. Many was the time he had bent her over the table in the middle of the day, saying hold still now, just a little, woman, it won't take long. It hadn't, as a rule.

Propping herself along, May Apple shuffled to the pie safe and pulled out a hunk of yesterday's bread.

It was quiet in the house. One of the daughters-in-law was having another baby. Apparently all the women were out at Gilbert and Brenda Sue's place on the other side of the gulch, making sure Brenda Sue's baby saw right from the moment it





opened its eyes on this world that it was up against a serious wall of Kelloggs. Gilbert, now that his part of getting the child kindled was finished, had gone out in the woods with his daddy and some men to raise hell.

On the top shelf of the breakfront May Apple had secreted a half-pint of sweet tomato preserves. She loved it more than any jam, even Claudella's pumpkin butter, so she kept a bit hidden away. Over the years, as her son's family grew into a regular clan, May Apple had learned to act the part of an animal near hibernation, so as not to starve. In the early years, Claudella had been a lovely and attentive daughter-in-law, but she was broke down now, like any woman would be. They were all surviving.

She carved a hunk off the loaf and smeared it with a little lard, then the preserves, pink as salmon roe. Getting to the front door was a trick, grabbing furniture for balance while holding the bread and jam. Two of the dogs sprawled across the tattered rug, muscular and ugly as sin. One of the great-grandchildren, a thin girl with big, bony knees and of an age where several teeth went missing, was now sitting in May Apple's chair.

"Open that door for me," she told the girl.

"Mama said I can't." The child's voice was deep, and the other children called her Froggy.

"Your mama didn't. Get up and open that door before I snatch you bald-headed."

"You can't catch me to do it."

"I'll find you sleeping and pull every one of the hairs from your head."

The girl, barefoot, all knobs and bone, got up and opened the porch door. "I'm telling Mama on you, Meemaw."

"What's your mama's name?"

"Brenda Sue Kellogg."

"Leave her alone" May Apple said. She touched the girl's matted head and went out onto the porch. The door shut behind her and the bolt slid to. *Ought to drown some at birth like kittens*, she thought. Billy had managed to make a noticeable mess of the porch rail, had carved a blocky 'RK' in





the process. He was stupid, but he had twin brothers by the name of Ronald and Roland, so maybe he wasn't an entire idiot.

"Eat this."

He looked at the bread in her hand as if it were a stone or a chunk of wood, and went back to gouging the porch rail into kindling.

"God damn it, I said eat the bread." Her voice was quiet enough to make him look around. She understood he thought her simple; it was a notion she did nothing to dispel. Women in general and old women in particular were more-or-less functional pieces in a man's life, May Apple knew. Like any tool in the shed, some still had a shine on them and served a purpose—feeding and fucking mostly. The rest had lost their edge or broke their handles, rusted out or otherwise lost appeal. What a man needs or thinks he wants is as transient as tide. She had learned long ago that women were primarily a thing to be stepped over on a man's way to somewhere else.

Billy looked again, then took the offering as if setting his mind to some disagreeable chore. His grandmother watched him chew, how he licked bits of soft lard and preserves off his dirty fingers.

"It won't kill you," she said, meaning both things, the food and the trouble in his face. "See if you can't get this door open for me. It's gone cold out here."

"Doesn't anybody make supper around here?" The bread and jam was gone as if it had never been there.

May Apple looked at him, all red hair and ears, ruddy as a cock's comb. An Irish face if she ever saw one, and the Blessed Virgin knew she'd seen her share, having married into the race and increased it: a face that expected trouble and seemed most at ease when trouble showed itself.

"God helps them who help themselves. Ever hear that one?" She rattled the door handle.

"Why can't you open it yourself?"

"One of the kids locked it. That yellow-headed one of Gilbert's who looks to have a tapeworm."

He crossed the porch and scowled in the window at a room now deep in shadow. "Open the door, you little scab-licker," he





shouted. There was the sound of bare feet running out the back door. “Needs her neck broke, he said, and leaned in to wrench up the sash. From inside, one of the dogs yelped and then the boy was sliding back the bolt. He grinned. “I stepped on the dog.” Raising even a small bit of Cain agreed with him.

She hobbled over to her chair and eased herself down. “What’s needed is fire.”

Billy sighed and yanked open the firebox on the stove. In a few minutes he had it stoked, and lit the lamp.

“Get eggs,” May Apple said. She was able to work sitting down, frying the eggs with the last of the bread, along with a lump of sausage the size of a goose egg. When it was divided between them, they ate by the stove.

“They’re gonna put in electric down at the Vance Hotel.” Billy spoke with his mouth full of food.

“Probably burn themselves up.”

“I want to see it.”

May Apple Kellogg wiped up the last grease with her bread. She didn’t know if he meant the electric or the burning. “You’ll see plenty,” she said.

