

Seattle, Wash. June 8/89

Messrs. P. & S. Messrs.  
Mr. Edward Hartmann.

Munich. Messrs.  
Messrs. Bavaria Messrs.  
Germany. Messrs.

Dear Uncle, Messrs. I write to you

I write to inform you of  
the terrible disaster which has befallen, and  
our beautiful city (Seattle).

We are all in sorrow now. The business  
portion of Seattle is in ruins. Seattle  
which the day before yesterday, was a  
beautiful <sup>city</sup>, today is in ashes. The Opera  
House <sup>was consumed</sup> ~~with it~~, so you will know Papa's  
Office & shop went with it. (as it was <sup>situated</sup> ~~sit~~ <sup>very</sup>  
in that building. He lost all his machinery,  
books and stock. — everything. He only saved  
about 7 books belonging to the Court House.  
Those were the Assessment Rolls. (books)  
and very expensive books (\$5 a piece).  
They were wanted just now, and were finished  
they lost all the time in carrying them away.



to a place of safety (each book weighs about  
 30 lbs). (Papa's arms are still sore today,  
 during which <sup>time</sup> they had to let their stock go.  
 The fire started in the Denny Block (a wooden  
 structure) almost opposite the Opera House,  
 by the overturning of a gasoline stove in a  
 paint shop. It was thought to be only a little  
 fire at first, and as the Opera House block,  
 with its solid looking walls, looked as if it  
 could defy the flames. Not much thought  
 was given to it; anyhow young Mr. Frye was  
 on top of the building & gave it a good  
 drenching, which proved to be of no avail;  
 then suddenly came the cry "the Opera  
 House is on fire," and an arrow of flames  
 shot up from the roof of the building.  
 Papa's office being in the furthest corner  
 of the building, on the second floor, was the  
 first office to catch fire. Papa was  
 the first to move in the Opera House  
 5 yrs. ago (only half completed). Papa & his  
 workman seen the fire from the start, &  
 had not the least idea, <sup>that</sup> they were to share its



gate. Papa carried those books away immediately (which I named) and his workman some others. By the time they returned the heat & smoke was so great, they had to rush back. Papa was the last man who entered the building and on opening the door of his shop, a cloud of black smoke rushed out, all he could do was to run for his life (he was almost suffocated, he could not see, nor hear, - scarcely).

Papa is not ~~without~~ without a bindery, and a fine <sup>and well</sup> equipped bindery it was. - His joy and his pride. Many artistic, as well as solid <sup>beauty</sup> books were turned out of his establishment. He also possessed the confidence, in the community as an honest and industrious man. Although, lately he had too much concurrence, there were 4 binderies in a small town like this, (2 besides his burned out). He really does not know what to do. - To start again for the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) time, (which seems pretty tough for him) or to go away. We have a home - that is all, but we are thankful for that. Mama says, the ruins



4  
remember her of the great Chicago fire, —  
the destruction and devastation being so  
great. — About sixty (60) blocks burnt  
which equal 120 acres. All the beautiful  
brick blocks are swept away, including the  
following; Opera House built 5 yrs ago,  
San Francisco (Store) built 6 months ago,  
Yusler Leary built 7 yrs. ago, New Yusler  
block, built 6 mo ago.

The Beautiful Occidental completed  
8 mo. ago. and many, many more.  
(I think Mama send you the Christmas no. of  
the "Press", which has all these buildings in).  
It took only 7 or 8 hrs. to destroy the entire portion.  
There are thousands of people, homeless,  
with only the canopy of Heaven as their  
shelter. The night before the fire, our citizens  
held a mass meeting at the Opera House  
for the relief of the sufferers of the great flood  
at Johnstown in the Pennsylvania valley,  
(of which I suppose you have heard). This  
next evening we ourselves were in a  
similar circumstance. I imagine yourselves  
in a beautiful city one day, and the next  
a city of ashes. It is dreadful to think back  
only two days. —



5  
It was a "sea of fire", and yet it is so smoky  
no one is allowed to go near the ruins.

We have Martial Law, and no one is allowed  
on the streets after 8 P. M. — without  
a Pass. The Militia is here also.

The fire in its course swept away many  
churches. The one which was in the midst  
of the flames, and was saved is our beautiful  
Catholic Church, built about 6 years ago.  
It was saved only through a miraculous  
power, — no human power saved it.

The Altar's were striped, and the organ taken  
apart. The Blessed Sacrament was carried up  
to the Academy of the Holy Names, — but God  
spared it.

The Court House, District Court & Jail were  
saved by tearing down of a shanty across the  
street. The Boston Block, is the only brick  
block left. It was on fire several times,  
but was saved by organizing of the "Bucket  
Brigade". The Post Office is in the  
latter building. The Colonial Block which is  
a wooden structure, was saved by shade trees.  
Now, to day is Sunday, and everybody is building  
up tents and shanty's, for grocers', shoe stores  
and the like.



It hardly seems like Sunday at all.

The people are hauling lumber, building, delivering Merchandise, etc. Sunday is always well observed in American cities, — and especially in Seattle. Two saw mills were burned there being only two left to supply all the lumber, for the present.

There is only one wharf, for all the vessels and steamers to land. There being over 50. The Electric Motor Line (Street car) which is run by electricity was stopped, — but is now running again (of course not through the burned district). It makes one feel encouraged to see it run.

The two Cable roads, ~~are~~ stopped. The Front Street cable cannot run for a long time till all the debris is cleared away, as it runs through a large portion of the burned district. The cable was saved by constantly turning the turn table.

The Great River (which go to Lake Washington, & is such a beautiful ride) will run soon as it does not run through



much of the burned district, but its turn-  
table is entirely ruined.

It is dreadful to think of our beautiful city all  
in ruins, — with all its stately brick  
blocks — to be in ashes. Many a heart is  
broken over ~~this~~ <sup>its</sup> destruction. Many a one  
is without a home, or employment.

They talk of rebuilding the city immediately  
but (as I said before) the ruins are smoking  
on, and some are still fiercely burning,  
that it is impossible for at least 2 weeks,  
"While the flames are still active, and  
while the embers are still glowing, preparations  
are making for reestablishing every line  
and department of ~~our~~ business."

— — — — —

Papa received several letters and  
telegrams from kind parties, who are  
willing to help him <sup>to</sup> establish again.

Did I tell you Papa had an insurance?  
no, I do not think I did. of \$5000.00

He has an insurance of \$100.00, although  
it does not cover  $\frac{1}{8}$  of the loss, it is better



than none at all.

Papa thinks with the \$500.<sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub> ins, and what Aunt Dora left to Mama, he may be able to establish again.

Papa left last evening for Portland, Ore, and will then go to San Francisco.

Mama thinks he needs a few months rest, <sup>and dispassion</sup> and he has gone to take it.

Papa & Mama send their best wishes & regards, so does Julia & Robert, your Aunt &

Your loving Niece,  
Helen Anthony

P.S. - Please address your letters to the house. - 1522 - 7th St.

Though Papa retains his P.O. Box 633.