

*Seattle, Wash, June 8/89*

*Mr. Edward Hartmann  
Munich  
Bavaria  
Germany*

*Dear Uncle*

*I write to inform you of  
the terrible disaster which has befallen us and  
our beautiful city.*

*We are all in sorrow now. The business  
portion of Seattle is in ruins. Seattle Pacific University  
which the day before yesterday was a  
beautiful city today is in ashes. The Opera  
House was consumed with it*

*so you would not know Papa's  
Office and shop went with it (as it was situated  
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 (\$50 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 weights about  
30lbs., (Papa's arms are still sore today.)  
during which time they had to let their stock go.  
The fire started in the Benny 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 is 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 and 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 five years ago (only half completed). Papa and his workman seen the fire from the start, and had not the least idea, that they were to share its fate. Papa carried those book away immediately (which I named) and his workman some others. By the time they returned the hear and 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 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 now without a bindery and a fine and well-equipped bindery it was- his joy and pride. Many artistic, as well as solid grand 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 commerce, 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  
remember her of the great Chicago fire-  
the destruction and devastation being so  
great. About (60) block burned  
which equal 120 acres. All the beautiful  
brick blocks are swept away including the  
following: Opera House build 5 years ago,  
San Francisco (Store) built 6 months ago,  
Yesler Leary built 7 yrs. Ago, New Yesler  
block built 6 mo ago.

The Beautiful Occidental completed  
8 mo ago and many, many more.  
(I think Mama send you the Christmas notes of  
the "Press". which has all these buildings in)  
It took only 7 or 8 hours to destroy 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 calley  
(of which I suppose you have heard.) The  
next evening we ourselves were in a  
similar circumstance. Imagine yourselves  
in a beautiful city one day and the next a  
city of ashes. It was dreadful to think back  
only two days.  
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 out beautiful Catholic Church, built about 6 yrs. ago.*

*It was saved only through a miraculous power-no human power saved it.*

*The Altars 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 and 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 today is Sunday and everybody is building up tents and shantys 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 cars) which is run by electricity was stopped but is now running again (Of course not through the burned district) It makes one encouraged to see it fun.*

*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 seems through a large portion of the burned district. The cable was saved by constantly turning the turn table.*

*The Yesler Avenue which goes to Lake Washington and it 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 its 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 so and some are still fiercely burning, that it will be impossible for at least 2 weeks. While the flames are still active and while the embers are still glowing, preparations are making for establishing every line and department of business.*

*Papa received several letters and telegrams from kind parties who are willing to help him to establish again.*

*Did I tell you Pap had insurance?*

*No I do not think I did, of 500.00*

*He has an insurance of \$500 although  
it does not cover 1/8 of the loss, it is better  
then none at all.*

*Pap thinks with the \$500 insurance and  
what Aunt Dora left to Mama, he May 24, 2011 be able to  
establish again.*

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

*Mama thinks he needs a dew months  
rest and distraction and he has gone to take it.*

*Papa and Mama send their kind wishes  
and regards, so does Julia and Robert.*

*Your loving niece,  
Helen Anthony*

*N.B. Please address your letter to  
the house. 1522 7<sup>th</sup> Street*

*Though Papa retains his P.O. Box 633.*