

## Letter from Chicago Historical Fiction based on the Chicago Fire

*This is a letter someone might have written after the Chicago fire.*

Dear Mother,

I hope you are well. I miss the family. Don't worry. I am doing fine. As you know, we had a big fire. I was scared. But it turned out all right for me. I don't have a place to live right now. I'm living in a tent. But I am healthy. And soon I will have a new home.

When the fire started, we all ran out into the street. We had never seen such a big fire. There was smoke. You could not see the stars because of the smoke.

You would have been proud of me. I did not run away. I went to help. I knew that this would be a big job. The fire department could not put the fire out. If we ran, the city was lost.

I joined a line of people passing buckets along. One person was at the river's edge. We were on the north side of the fire near the north branch of the river. He pulled water from the river in the bucket. Then he gave that to the next person in line. We all kept passing the bucket along. The last person handed it to a fireman who would pour it on the street to stop the fire from going farther.

We wanted to keep doing that. But the fire kept coming closer. We had to turn back. We walked all the way downtown. Even there the fire was burning. I was afraid.

I went into the river. It was cold. Then I swam to the other side of the river. There were many people in the river. They were in boats. One of them pulled me up into his boat. He said, "We need to pull together to get through this." I don't know how to find him now. I want to thank him. He did not have to take care of me. He had his whole family to take care of in that boat.

Now I am very tired, so I will stop my letter. I have been working hard all day. We are building our new home. I hope you can come to visit soon. Can you bring some clothes? Don't worry. We have enough. I would like some new ones. The stores are not open yet.

Your loving son, John

**What is the central idea of this letter?**

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**Underline the parts of the letter that show that is the central idea.**