

Letter of J.D. and Emma A. Esarey of Branchville, Ind.
Addressed to Mr. Frank La Croix, 1322 - 25th St., Louisville, Ky.
Dated January 31, 1914. In possession of Betsy Smith

Branchville, Ind.
January 30, 1914

Frank La Croix, Wife and Eds

Dear Children: I write you once more. This leaves us only tolerably well and we hope you find you all well. We hope Susie is better by this time. I suppose you have heard before this time that our Hotel and near everything we had burned up Sunday at 1 o'clock afternoon. Emma and I were in the kitchen at the time I was shelling some corn in a barrel that was rattling, so I could not hear the fire. We heard something fall. We thought it was somebody at the front door. She said "Oh Pop, Look at the smoke in the yard", so I jumped up and went out the back door. I had only to go 10 or 15 feet until I could see the flue, and when I looked up the blaze was 15 feet high. I grabbed the bell cord and the second time I pulled I sent the bell over and the cord broke at the ball. But that was enough. I went into the house as fast as I could. When I got to the front door there were 20 men in the back room and yard. I looked for Emma and could not find her, nor never saw her until the house was burned down. Just as I got to the front door App Esarey hollered at the top of his voice, "Let the house go and see what they could". I stepped into the hall and App said, "Squire, save Aunt Emma". I said, "Where is she?" He said, "Up stairs". He said "Willie Pollard is trying to get her down". I went up the stairs. Newton Pollard said, "Hold on. Let me go". I never recollected any more what I did or where I went. After the house fell in there was a man by the name of Kirk said, "Mr. Esarey help me move this meat tub back". Emma came near losing her life. 75% of our things in the house burned up and the house was a total loss. We lost all of our things upstairs, and lots that was down. We had 5 rooms full and about 10 minutes to work but after it was over, we thanked God that our lives were spared. We lost upstairs 2 bedsteads and bedding, a set of buggy harness; one side saddle; one marble top dresser; one heating stove; one rocking chair; 4 com-chairs; one carpet; my trunk full of the two crazy quilts we thought so much of; one box of 15 quilts; 100 half gallon glass cans of fruit; 100 qt. cans of fruit; 10 gal. of apple sauce; 2 doz. glasses of jelly; 1-1/2 bushel of onions; all of our clothes; all of our books; our Bible; the family record; all of my office except my law book and docket; all of our fine enlarged pictures burned only what we had in one room. We were remodeling our front room and had all of our pictures upstairs. We just finished our room Saturday Evening. Charley Esarey was doing the work. The best we can count our loss in the house is \$300 and our loss on the loss \$500. Sam Colby, Trustee, appraised our house at \$1000. He appraised everything and sent to the fire marshall of the state. We had \$500 insurance on the house and \$150 on the household. All three of our fine stoves burned. All of the Esarey records burned. That never can be replaced. I saved Sallie's big picture and Jesse's and Lula's. What furniture we saved is ruined in looks. We want you to come down. We are living in the Branchville Schoolhouse. Emma said tell you that our parlor, bedroom, kitchen, dining room, smokehouse and woodbox are all one. We will build in the near future. I am bothered with rheumatism. This winter Emma has bronchial trouble. Dr. Lomas is doctoring her. Sister Annie Frakes is bad off with cancer in the left side between the left breast and under the left arm. The doctor tells her she is bound to be operated on. She is just waiting. She dreads to come. She is coming to Louisville. When she starts I will write you at once. Emma and I are by ourselves every night. Clarence stays with your Aunt Sallie Miller every night. Fred Greiner's little boy is about to die. Charley Esarey has rented two rooms of the Mrs. Allinger place. He is working some in Branchville. We will close. Hoping to see you or hear from you soon. Remaining your Father and Mother.

J. D. and Emma A. Esarey