

CARL HERRMANN correspondence

Charles H. Carstensen, age 14, letters to home from Chicago, 1887

On Carstensen Bros. & Co. stationery

Carstensen's Patent Iron Harrow, with Reversible Steel Teeth, Patented November 30, 1886 with photo of building

June 3, 1887

The concervitory is a very nice building built of stone. It has an elevator and a boy on it who runs it if you are in the lower story. There is a button you have to push and the elevator will come down and take you to which story you want to go, and then you step off. The concervitory also has a branch house on 401 Adams St, Chicago.

But I am in the Main College on the corner of State and Radolf Sts, Chicago Ill.

Chicago is a great city, every body (no matter what street) has to look out. Every body that you see is running up and down the street or making a fast walk. I have also seen a great many steamboats from 30 to 80 ft in length. I had a narrow escape of being run over by a wagon and team. Yesterday I and one of the baggage men were walking across the st and didn't notice any teams, when one of the horses run against the baggage man but he didn't get hurt. And I was not even touched by the team.

You may send me the money as I stated and also send me a nice letter.

Your most obedient son. Charlie H. Carstensen.

Enclosed please find an envelope with my full address on it. All you have to do is to write your letter, put some bills (money) in the letter, put the two in the envelope and register it and seal it good, and put it in your P.O.

June 3, 1887 (perhaps same mailing)

My Dearest Father and Mother.

I have arrived all right in Chicago, and have made arrangements. I could have wrote you last night, but the letter wouldn't have reached you any sooner. I had a good time on the cars, but I couldn't get a sleeper because the sleeper was full. So I just went into the car next to the smoker. I could not find any boarding houses at \$2.00 per week but soon found this one. The man wanted \$8.00 at first, but he is charging me only \$2.00 per week now. Enclosed please find a receipt upon which I undersign to promise you that I will practise (10) ten hours every day no matter what is going on, while I am in the Concervitory in Chicago.

My address is Charlie H. Carstensen, violinist

care of Lima House, 145 S. Canal St, Chicago, Ill

I have not heard this violinist Jacobsohn play yet, but I am going to receive a lesson from him this afternoon. My first lesson in the Chicago Con. Then you will see me practise.

You must send me a small sum of money because I am a stranger in this city. I will let Mr. Jacobsohn buy a cheap bow for me.

I will send you a catalogue of the Conservatory in extra package. Saturday will be the first concert tomorrow night.

Please write me a fine letter put in a \$10 bill and register it to me in Chicago. If there is anything in the Walnut P.O. for me send to me (see sheet no. 2), no matter what it is except catalogues.

(On the envelope):

Addressed to:

Mr. Peter C. Carstensen, blacksmith

Walnut, Iowa (Pott.Co)

I have lots of friends here. I and some of my friends of the hotel are going to Lincoln Park Sunday or tomorrow. There will be a grand concert in the Con on the ___ of June, 1887. I am going too (free to me).

(Enclosed sheet):

Chicago, Ill, June 3, 1887

I under sign & promise my father and mother that I will practise (10) hours per day while I am in the Chicago Con. The undersigned, Charlie H. Carstensen, violinist

Carstensen Bros stationery

June 7, 1887

Dear Father and Mother.

I received your kind letter with pleasure and I found \$12.00 in it.

I do as you wanted enclosed are account of what I bought and paid for.

You asked me several questions which I now answer.

1st I paid \$40.00 in advance for 10 weeks lessons at the Concervitory.

2nd I board at the hotel called the Lima House. Mr. _____ is manager they are Germans and are fine people. The hotel is built of stone brick and is finished off in the finest style on the inside. Yesterday a farmer came in and wanted to get supper. They showed him to the dining room and as he opened the door he turned around and went to go out. They asked him why he didn't go in and he said it was too fine. So he went into an old shanty near by.

3rd They did not have a concert on the day I come there, but they had one on Saturday fore-noon. I seen the whole concert. One young man that played had taken lessons of Jacobson for over 6 years. They

gave away 1 gold & 1 silver medal to every best violinist, pianist, & singer. The violinist that got the gold medal had played for over six (6) years. (Look - 2nd sheet)

(2nd sheet)

4th Yes I am taking lessons of Mr. Jacobsen. He is an old man, with gray hair and bald-head. There is no doubt but that he is one of the best teachers in the United States. I have bought me a map of Chicago. It is a nice book telling the history of Chicago and also give you fine engravings of the best or finest houses in Chicago. Also it contains two maps of Chicago. Tell Mother not to be sorry for me being away because I am in a safe condition as long as I have money.

I have a nice room in the conservatory where I practise. I only take my lessons in the conservatory. I have to commence clear from the first and learn everything over, and on a different position and course altogether.

I have bought me a fine hair brush & 2 upstanding linen collars. I couldn't get paper collars to my size.

I can't take 10 hours practise because Mr. Jacobson told me not too. But I will practise 8 hrs. My eyes are getting a little better. I am feeling happy. I sent for two things which I got as a premium please send them to me when they come. I have payed my board for 2 weeks in advance (look, 3rd sheet)

(3rd sheet)

The two premiums were a bouquet & a toilet case. I did not buy a new violin bow but got mine fixed for \$7.

I hope you are all well, and happy.

Please answer my letter as quick as you can.

Yours Truly.

Your son, Charlie H. Carstensen

Enclosed find an envelope with my address.

June 7, 1887

Dear Father and Mother.

I write you another letter on account of Mr. Jacobsen. He says I must have a better bow and also a better violin. He says I can or rather he will buy a violin for \$72 or \$82 just as good or sounds just as good for me as one of the genuine Cremona(?) violins.

I asked him how much my violin was worth and he said that it was worth nothing. He said that he had one of those \$72 violins that I am writing about. Please answer me as soon as you can.

Your son. Charlie H. Carstensen

(Back) The man that runs the hotel that I board in his name is Sfrotz or Sfrots or Sfrotts.

Two sheets:

June 12, 1887

Dear Father and Mother.

I received your kind letter and also your \$240 (?) violin from Story. I will write you just what the Prof said. 2 men and myself have tried it. Jacobsen and a violin maker of the city. I will tell you what Jacobsen said. 1st it is not a genuine Cremona, but an old German violin about 75 or 100 years old. 2nd It is not worth \$240 (?). The violin without the rest of the outfit was worth about \$100. 3rd It is not the right kind of a violin for me. Those above are the words he told me. Now I tell you that you cannot believe Jacobsen nor Story. Because Jacobsen is working for another man's violin called the Balsona Violin. I will keep Story's violin until I receive an answer from you. Jacobsen says that the violin is not worth one half the price Story asks for it. I will write you out a letter that you may send to Story. I send it to you so that you may read it. Did you deposit any money at the depot? Please let me know. If you did not have to deposit any money let me know and I might send the violin back to Story from here and it wouldn't cost so much. I would like to keep all the outfit except the violin. You may offer Story \$24 and my case and bow for the rest of the outfit all except the violin. I will write it in the letter I want you to send Story.

You will please send me some more money?

I cannot get board for \$2 per week any more I have to pay \$6.00 per week now. You may send me \$12 or \$10 just as you wish you may put it in bills in the letter and register it because then I won't have so much trouble in getting my money. As soon as I receive an answer from you I do as you tell.

I will send it to you or to Story from here.

I enclose a better _ you may take the letter out & read it then put it in again and send it to Story.

Hoping to receive a letter from you soon. I remain, Your Son

Charlie H. Carstensen

Ps - how is your Brass-Band getting along. Be sure and send that letter I enclose to Story. I enclosed so you might read it.

June 15, 1887

Mr. C.W. Story

Boston, Mass

Dear Sir,

Your violin was sent to me in Chicago. I opened the box took the violin out and looked it over. The first thing I found out was that it was not a genuine Cremona, but an old German violin perhaps 75 or 100 years of age. 2nd It had not the tone of a genuine Cremona violin and was worth about 75 or 100

dollars without the rest of the outfit. 3rd It has not got the quality of tone. This violin has been tested by 3 of the best musical men in Chicago. Each one gave his own therie separate, beside I gave mine.

I will give you \$25, my case and my bow for your case, bow, sack, chin rest, rosin & tuning _____, and send you, your violin in my case securely packed and prepaid. If you will take that offer. I will keep the articles mentioned. Otherwise you will receive them all.

Please answer me

Yours Trully

CHCarstensen, Chicago, Ill. Care of Lima House, 145 S. Canal St.

June 19, 1887

Dear Father and Mother

I have sent back Story's violin by Adam's Express, prepaid to Boston.

Enclosed please find a slip on which Mr. Jacobsen has written in German about the \$100 violin.

You will have to send the money to me and I will make payments with Mr. Jacobsen.

He will select one for me. He says that if I get it once I will have one for life, that is I won't need any better. it is called the Balsom violin.

Please answer me as soon as you can.

Your most obedient son.

Charlie H. Carstensen

(Back) We did not see much in Lincoln Park as we did not stay long enough. There is a small lake about 40 or 50 ft wide where we took a boat ride for 2 hours.

June 22, 1887

Dear Father and Mother.

I wrote you a letter before this but did not answer your questions. I will answer them now. Story's violin was better than mine, and I believe it's worth about \$40.00. I wrote him that was worth about \$20.00. I met Palmrich Johannesburg at the depot when he came. I and Palmrich have two rooms – one room for parlor and the other for bedroom, both sleep in one bed and get board for \$5.00 a week a little bit over. I am not improving in expression as well but I am improving in fast reading exercises. Canal St is a pretty rough place, that is some parts of it. The west side within 2 & 3 blocks of it is almost all restaurants, saloons and hotels.

I think I have had better players than Thomas.

Yes I received \$5.00 in the letter you sent before the last one.

The express from her to Boston for that violin of Story's was \$1.30.

The violin of or the one Jacobsen is to get for me costs \$100.

I have \$12.00 paid in advance for board, to run from the 17 June. I have the receipts to show you. I will send them if you wish to have them.

If you would send me \$16 or \$17 I would pay my board in advance to the later part of next month.

Now I must close. Your Son, Charlie H. Carstensen, violinist.

3 pages

June 28, 1887

Dear Father and Mother.

I received your last letter just after I had send mine. I will write a short letter to Mr. Gloe (?), the implement man of Walnut.

You told me to, and I'll do it.

I have got that \$100 violin from Mr. L.S. Jacobsen. Now what I need is a good violin box, a good violin bow, & a chinrest.

Mr. Jacobsen says that he will select me an extra fine bow if I wish to have it, as he knows all about it, where to get one. My bow broke a week ago in the same place that it broke before. I was up to Mr. Jacobsen's house & saw the two violins.

He had two. one of them he had played on for a long time himself. He gave me the best one that he had. It is of a bright amber color, brighter than Mr. Copley's violin was. It has a very fine tone, and is a very fine looking instrument besides. Tel Mr. Jerry Longnecker to come up with some cattle and then come to the hotel where I board and see me. I should like to speak to him.

In regard to my \$100 violin, Mr. Jacobsen says that it is 3 or 4 times as good as Story's.

Also, he says that if I want to have an extra fine bow that is a good one and one that will last. I must get one at 20 or 25 dollars. he says I can get a good bow for 3 to 15 dollars but in a year they will be way out of shape. I shall get a leather box and a cheap chin-rest.

I must say that I like it real well but it is hard work to run over them exercises so long, playing them over and over. It tires me out. You will notice when I get home that my position is entirely different. I am not allowed to play any of my old pieces over nor even any of my pieces. So I must play his old exercises.

Mr. Jacobsen is getting to be my best friend. He acts kinder to me than Palmrich Johannesburg does.

He is going to give me a one hour lesson every day this week and charge me not a cent extra for the extra lessons.

Tell me how your 4th of July turns out. I guess the new Walnut Band will turn out too.

Lend me some money if you can. I received your \$12.00 and your \$100.00 draft.

Mr. Jacobsen says that I am getting my lessons very good.

The Stockyards of Chicago caught on fire and killed over 2,000 hogs, about over \$2000.00 worth of stock it caught on fire and burned all day yesterday and all night and all day today. Some fires in Chicago are said to last over a week.

Now I must close, please answer me as soon as you can.

Your most obedient son

Charlie H. Carstensen

(Back) I just gave Mr. Jacobsen my draft and undersigned my name.

Two pages

Dear Father & Mother

I received your kind letter yesterday so I must answer it.

Did you not receive the letter I sent off? I hope that you did? Enclosed please find my post-box key. My eyes are not getting better, as it seems they looked bad until this morning. I can't play the La Petite Pagonette (?) Waltz any more. I am not allowed to use it or any of my pieces but the exercises he gives me on account of my position. I am not learning in expression but all exercises. To play on.

I received your \$17 and have payed my board until the 17 of July 1887 when I should pay more.

Mr. Jacobsen says that I get my lessons splendid.

I have received the \$100.00 and also the \$12.00. I like the tone of the violin well. Prof. Jacobsen has played over a year on it now. It is the best violin that Mr. Jacobsen had. He said it sounds as good as a Cremona. I wrote a letter to Grandfather in Goose Lake. And a postal card to Bernie Nickelsen in Clariton.

I send you the P.O. box key. When you stick it in raise up on it and turn to your left & it will work always be sure to raise it when you have it in the key-hole.

Yes I only take my lesson in the concervitory.

Mr. Jacobsen gives me lots of extra lessons, some times 4 lessons a week. He is getting to be so good friended with me that he wants to give me extra lessons for nothing. He didn't charge me for the extra lessons.

I have not heard of nor seen the Hyde Park Concervitory yet. I am getting along well with David's Violin School No. 2 and finger exercises. They are very difficult.

I'll send you some of my receipts for lessons and board to assure you that they are payed for. It is fingers exercises I am studying out of instead of Schneider's, as you called it in your last letter.

I hope that you will have a very happy time on the 4th of July.

Now I must close. Hoping to receive a letter here from you before the 4th of July.

I remain your most obedient son. Charlie H. Carstensen

Ps - I received a letter from Story. He said that he would like to send me one more.

3 pages

July 2, 1887

Dear Father & Mother.

I have received your kind letter just one month ago. Today I am one month in Chicago. It seemed to me as if it had been but one week. I met a man in Chicago today who used to clerk for Lebeck Bros. Of Walnut Iowa last winter. He didn't have much to say. I met him in the union depot of the _____ rail-road.

I took a lesson this morning of Mr. Jacobsen of whom I always take. Tell Jerry Longnecker that I shall be glad to meet him when he come if you have the time. Are the saloons closed in Walnut yet?

I am well and hope that you are also very well. Katie, Willie, Annie and all of you. Tell Grandmother to enclose a small sheet with your letter in the same envelope. It will make her feel happy to do so I am sure. She can write German. I have not herd of the Reno family, only somebody said that they were drunkards. I have not heard of Miss Higgins sister yet nor hunted the street up yet. I may go tomorrow. Fireworks are very cheap. Fireworks are 10 bunches for 25 cents, while in Walnut they are 10 cents a package.

Tell Katie to write me a letter too, just put it in the same envelope you put yours in when you write again. I enclose a letter for Katie.

I hope that you are all well and happy. I hope that you all will have a grand celebration and an awful good time. I guess that Willie will ask for firecrackers the very first thing. I guess that Willie has got my clocks running up to glory hallelujah, has he not.

I have to be very careful to get in time to take my lessons in the concervitory so as not to get to late. But I get there just the same & the right time.

My \$100.00 violin has got its tone in quality and soft or loud tone. Mr. Jacobsen said it sounds just as good as a genuine Cremona violin. He has played on it for over a year himself. He had them but this was the best, he got the other 2 sent to him just before I bought mine.

When I get home I am not going to play for public or for anybody for the first 3 months. I hope you won't care, because I must practise up what I have learned.

I have bought some salve called Pherne Salve to cure my eyes. It cost me 25 cents if it cures. If it don't it won't cost me a cent.

Now I must close, your most obedient son. Charlie H. Carstensen

July 5, 1887

Dear Father and Mother.

I did not receive a letter from you yet since I wrote one to you, but I write you one more. It will bring us into conversation more.

I received the last letter from you on the 28th of June 1887.

I told Mr. Jacobsen that I should stay until the 1st of Sept. And so he said is that all you, you must stay a year. 3 months is nothing. Stay a year I will make a violinist player of you when you get home you will forget what I have told you. So I said that I could not stand it to stay so long. And so he said that I should have it a little cheaper. And I said that he must write you an letter himself. And he said that he would in a month or so.

We do not know what the bow will cost yet.

My board has not run off yet but you may send me some more money so as I can pay it off when the time comes, say \$15 or \$16.

I did not go out on the 4th of July until 6 or 7 o'clock, when went out on the lake and took a nice boat ride.

Please answer me, your obedient son Charlie H. Carstensen.

(Side) Mr. Jacobsen has given me 6 extra lessons for nothing. Mr. Jacobsen is getting to be a very kind man.

(All remaining letters on plain paper)

7/8/87

Dear Father & Mother

I received your fine letter today and must say that I should please me very much if I could stay her and take lessons a year longer. The climate has been quite healthy for me. I feel just as good or nearly as good as I do at home. You always spoke of (me getting fine potatoes?) at home, but I am here. I will tell you what they have on the table to eat. We always get more than we can eat, especially me. Breakfast – cirloin steak, potatoes, beans, bread, butter and milk, tea or coffee, sugar, salt, alastor? Fine cakes.

I will tell you what it costs to stay until Sept 1st 1888. For board \$260.00, for lessons \$104.00, making my bill \$364.00. I should like to stay a year longer. I shall promise you surely that some day you shall have every cent back and more too. It will be the best thing you can do. If you will do it, I will promise

you that you shall be happy in your old days. A good player can always make good money. Keep this letter but don't show it to anybody except mother. And I shall have good luck in learning.

Answer me as soon as you possibly can. Your most obedient son. Charlie H. Carstensen. (I will keep Mr. Reno's letter).

You asked me how it would be about the school. You can go to school here for nothing and still have time to practise 4 or 6 hours per day. I have been told so by some of my friends that they had very fine schools here. I should like to stay here a year if you would let me.

(Small note enclosed):

Tell Katie that I will write her soon. When I write you again. Lend me \$40 and I will come home. I will not need all of that so I will bring the balance home, I only wish to feel safe. I did not tell you yet that I had a nice large revolver. you know the 2 bottles of perfume I sent you? I _____ the revolver with these so it cost me nothing. Mr. Hector got me a very nice suit. It is a good one.

Answer me as soon as you can. Your son. Charlie H. Carstensen

July 17, 1887

Dear Sister Katie.

I received your letter all right. I am well and hope you are well too.

I believe I can hear you play the piano wa out here in Chicago.

You must tell Miss Higgins to learn you how to play accompaniment on the piano.

You must not let any one see this letter but mama & papa.

Please answer me. Your brother. Charlie H. Carstensen

July 18, 1887

Dear Father and Mother,

I received your kind letter just a moment ago, and see that you have not received the last letter I sent you. I have got the piece called Playful Rockets now.

I received those \$16.00 from you. I got that price in Root & Son Music Store. Also, I got some melodramatic music. Mr. Jacobsen said to me just in these words: You have done well in the time you have been here. But when you go home you will forget all you have learned of me, then of course that is for nothing. But if you stay a year longer I will make a violin player of you. If Mr. Jacobsen says anything he means just what he says. I hope that you will let me stay a year longer. I shall do my duty.

Palmrich is just as he was at home. I guess he is getting a little home-sick.

You asked me if I could stand the climate. Yesterday fore-noon it was the hottest day that Chicago ever had. Over 200 people were sun-struck and brought to the hospital. I felt all right.

I think I am a little heavier than I was when I came.

These shoes of Wm Moershells are no good. They go to pieces.

I am in the very best health, and have a number of friends. Also I am very happy here. You must excuse me for writing so bad. I have been practicing all fore-noon on hard scales, and am a little tired.

I will not go out in a small boat in the lake anymore. The weather here is cool at night and hot while the sun is up. Today it is cool. I can stand it all right. I can stand all kinds of weather.

I am in good health now, and that's all I care for. When I walk on the streets I walk in the shade when I can. I wish to tell you how the streets are.

Most of the streets are paved with stones, _____, etc. If you would go along State St, you would see it so crowded that you could hardly get along. And everybody is in a hurry. Day before yesterday, a man got run over by a train. His 2 legs and his head were cut off.

You can't cross the street without seeing a cripple of some kind. There are cripples on every street in this city. You can see all kinds of people.

I have to learn 40 scales by heart for my next lesson.

You must write me a long letter back. And tell me all the news you know.

Your most obedient son. Charlie H. Carstensen

July 22, 1887

Dear Father and Mother.

I received your kind letter this forenoon, and now sit down and write another one. I received a letter from Prof. O.J. Netter and I answered it. He said that he was teaching another class in Walnut, Iowa.

I wish to tell you that on the first floor of this hotel that I board in they have a drug store. I draw a picture of it which I send you. Also I send you a plan of it which I made.

I was a little sick last night but I am a little better now. I was a little sick in the stomach.

Perhaps I shall go to a picnic with a clerk in the drug store below here.

I can read your writings real well. There is one thing that I have not seen since I came from home: A farmer's wagon, plow, or grain. You don't see that in this part of Chicago. They are all express wagons, cabs, omnibuses, coaches, street cars. All business houses, saloons, and hotels have done business in the new P.O. Supposed to have cost over \$1,000.000. Every time I get a registered letter, I have to go to the P.O and undersign my name on a card before I can have the letter.

I put my new violin in the box of my old violin, and ten put them in my trunk.

I always wear linen upstanding colars now. I shall get my tintype taken and send to you. They cost 4 for \$25.

Palmrich is well.

You may send me some more money. I do not need it just yet, but I should like to use it or have it on hand so as that I have it when I need it.

I hope to receive a long letter from you soon.

My lessons run out the middle or near the middle of Aug, when I will have to pay for more lessons. Send me \$20 so that I have some on hand. Please write me how much you have given out for me in Walnut, for my trunk, etc. I want to see that every thing is correct.

Please answer me as soon as you can.

Your son. Charlie H. Carstensen

July 26, 1887

Dear Father and Mother.

I received your letter last night. I wish to tell you that I shall write a letter to Mr. Johannsen. I am well and happy. I am glad to hear that you are well & happy.

Also, I hear that you did not receive the plan I made out – perhaps it will come yet. I had the 40 scales by heart. I am learning the 2nd position. I got it in my last lesson. I have the 40 scales by heart, and played them for Mr. Jacobsen.

Please tell Mr. Fred Gloe to write me a letter. I wrote him 2 times and didn't receive an answer yet.

It cost me 25 cents to hear Theodore Thomas. It was worth 1 dollar.

You must not worry of me getting sick any more. I am as well as I ever was, and I always will be. You must let me stay until Sept because I am at positions now.

I have not been allowed to play my old pieces. So I can't play a piece of music only my hard old exercises. I shall write you a letter as soon as I receive one of you or as often as you like. Be sure to send some money.

Your most obedient son. Charlie H. Carstensen.

July 28, 1887

Dear Father and Mother.

I received your letter with \$20 in it. I have bought a cash box for you to put your money in here which I shall bring along when I come home. I lost my account book and have bought me a new one. you must

wait till I write you next letter then I shall perhaps have my accounts straight. That cash box I was speaking of is very strong, with a combination lock the same as on a safe. It costs me \$2.50.

Mr. Jacobsen will perhaps write you a small letter next week. He wants to see my next lesson, then he will write you if he has time.

In your last letter you wrote as if you thought that I didn't tend to my business. I wish to tell you that if you think that I am not tending to my business and am not practicing over 6 hours a day with hard study, you may write to Mr. Jacobsen and see about it.

The reason Palmrich wanted to go away was because they do not sit as good a table as they used to, and besides he did not feel very well four being away from home. I think that was the reason he wanted to leave the hotel. Still he didn't like to leave without me I believe. It was not on any of our accounts.

You may do as you please about the lessons. I am well and so is Palmrich.

Hoping you are all in very good health. I remain, your son. Charlie H. Carstensen

Ps – please send the memorandum I made before back and I will make a memorandum of the whole thing.

August 8, 1887

Dear Father and Mother.

I received your letter together with \$20.00. I made a mistake about the lessons. My lessons hold on till Aug, Monday 12th 1887.

I shall start here on the 15 and be home thursday on the 5 o'clock train. Will that suit you?

I bought a rose-wood case for my violin. It costs \$18. I bought it of Mr. Jacobsen. he said it costs \$25. You may send me \$18.00 more.

I am in good health and I hope that you also are.

You told mother I didn't put on stamps on the last letter I sent. I sent 3 letters and 1 postal card and put a stamp on each one, but I didn't receive an answer but an hour ago.

Every time I come to Mr. Jacobsen, for to take a less, he takes my violin, runs his fingers over it and says Ah! This is an elegant instrument, it is getting better every day. I like it myself.

I shall expect a letter from you Thursday, so answer me right away.

Your son, Charlie H. Carstensen

Ps - don't let any body see any of my letter. Not Johanssen more Palmrich when he gets home. Your son.

August 16, 1887

My Dear Father and Mother.

You wrote that I had used so much money or something. I wish to tell you that I did not use so very much for foolishness but I have bought me a few household articles to take home. Also I have bought such things as hair brush, clothes-brush, etc. and such things. As I have got all the things I need here now I can get along cheaper here now that I could before.

Mr. Jacobsen told me he had sent a telegram and didn't receive an answer. Now he is going to write you a letter.

I did not see the letter but he told me he wrote you about me staying a year. Mr. Jacobsen is claimed to be one of the best teachers in the United States or perhaps the best.

I had my new violin tested by a fine violinist and he estimated the worth about \$150 or \$200. So you see I made a good deal that time. I guess I told you why I wanted the money you sent last? I bought a new violin box made of Rosewood. It cost me \$18.00.

You wrote me that you thought it wouldn't do me much good for to stay here a year. If you were here and seen what an increased amount of work it took to make a good violinist, you would think different. When I was home I thought that the lessons were not of much use. But now I see that it is just the lessons and practice from which you have to learn. You can't learn without lessons. I wouldn't say if it wasn't just as I say. I am just in the best part of my lessons. Called the positions. I will tell you how much it will cost you. For board and room \$240. For Lessons \$104. Total \$344. It shall not exceed \$400. I shall need a new suit of clothes and a pair of new shoes for winter. The bill may be \$370. And if I wish I can go to school here too if I wish.

Let me stay a year and you will see my fortune when I get home. It shall lbe for your good as well as my own. I have \$10 here yet. Write a letter right now before supper for so that it goes on the night train. And I will receive it here the next day at 4 o'clock P.O.

I'm praying to receive an answer from you in my wishes. I remain your most obedient son.

Charlie H. Carstensen

August 18, 1887

Dear Father and Mother.

I received your kind letter just a moment ago and see that Walnut has had a large fire.

I spoke to Mr. Jacobsen and he said that he was going to write you soon again.

I am well and hope the same of you.

I tell you father I have an excellent idea. If I stay here a year, after I have learned 4 to 6 months longer here I can get a position in some Opera House as 2nd violinist and make good weight here if I wish to

take the situation. And thereby make a good deal of money and have my lessons free. You may send me \$5. I have done a great deal of practicing today, so you must excuse me for writing so bad.

Your son. Charlie H. Carstensen.

Aug 23, 1887

Dear Father and Mother.

I received your letter together with \$5.00.

You asked me how I come to that idea of playing for some theatre. Well, I will tell you just how it was. I went to theatre the other night to the Chicago Opera House. I thought that I would like to play there too. You may know it well that when I take so many more lessons I will be quite a good player on my violin.

Palmrich has not sent the money yet. I don't lend money to anybody, but I guess it's all right to lend it to Palmrich aint it?

When I get lessons for \$104.00 I get one lesson for each week. I guess you can pay for each term in advance. It will cost \$20 per term of 10 weeks. \$2 a week. I get the same lessons of Mr. Jacobsen as I did before. Only I get one lesson a week. My suit of clothes will last me till about the middle of September. I shall be glad to meet Mr. Hector when he comes here.

Did Mr. Johannsen give you my tintype? I told him to.

They stold my hat and cane when I was in another room. But now I have the best room in the house heated by steam. A steam heat is in the room and it is also of very good size.

The fire department is so strong here that it is made out in has there no time.

I will tell you how I make it now. I and another young man from Boston have rented this room at \$3 a week so it costs each of \$1.50 a week for room rent. And then our meals cost us from 10 c to 25 c each. I have as good comodations here as I can get for the money.

I have my violin box locked up in my bureau drawer. I have been getting lessons right along the same as before.

I'll send you my bill for 18 lessons, till Sept 8 or Sept 9.

I hope you are all well as I am very well. Send me about \$20.00 and a long letter. I will send you my memorandum on the 1st of September 1887. I shall stay here in Chicago till September 1st, 1888, if you wish it to be so.

Hoping to hear of you soon. I remain your son. Charlie H. Carstensen

Enclosed find an envelope.

Do not let any body see this letter. Enclosed find 2 cards with my full Chicago address – give 1 to Hector.

September 2, 1887

I received your kind letter together with \$20.00.

I have been taking 2 lessons a week ever since June. The bill for lessons now is \$16.00. The lessons won't be up till either the 8th or the 12th. When I came to take my lessons yesterday Mr. Jacobsen asked me "how long I would stay?" in German. (written in German too). And I told him I would stay a year and he said "(in German).

I got the (5th?) position in the violin now. I have bought a lot of music for theatres and (overtures and melodramatic) a nice No.1 Folio.

I and my room-mate are getting along at first rate. His home is in Exeter, Mass. He is now working in the Van Defrole Electric Works. His salary is \$2.00 per day. He is a kind man, does not drink nor loaf out at nights. He and I sometimes go to a theatre or dime museum if we get to feel too lonesome. His name in full is Fred L. Phing.

I am in the most unfortunate point of music now. There is not much from here. I wonder how Christmas will be.

I am very glad to hear of your progress in business and Katie's progress in music.

The weather here is damp.

I wish to tell you that I have bought a coffee mill for mother and a kind of a safe for you. I wanted you to have it to use instead of the box you always take to the shop. It is made of sheet iron. And has a combination lock on just like a safe. So no one can open it but those that know the combination. As you don't need any key. I shall put the coffee mill in the box and you can put the coffee mill together again. I will send them by express as soon as I receive an answer of you.

Also 2 bottles of perfume – 1 for Katie and 1 for Mother. And 2 lbs of Young Hyson tea it cost 40 cents per lb. I am going to send you how to open it are as follows: Turn the nob to the right at least 3 times to 37, then turn to the left 2 times to 10, then turn the nob to the right to 14 and box will be open.

Mr. Jacobsen said I had ought to take 2 lessons a week but I guess 1 lesson a week is enough. I shall stay in Chicago till 1st of Sept 1888. A year from yesterday. It is a long time and I will have an excellent chance to learn. I am going to buy me some books to instruct me about the leaders part. I bought a book telling me just how to get a job playing for a traveling show. When I get home I will want you to learn me how to play the cornet, so I can make lots more money if I can play both cornet and the violin. I shall go out as leader if I can.

A man who plays 2nd violin gets from \$15 to \$18.00 and traveling fare per week. And Leaders get from \$25 to \$50 and traveling fare. So you see the difference between the price, and a leader must play more than one instrument. Enclosed please find the bills for lessons. Please lend \$20.

That case I am going to send cost \$5.95. The general price is \$7.00 but I got it cheaper. The coffee will cost \$1.25, perfume \$.50 and tea \$.80.

Don't let Uncle Ingwer Carstensen or any body else know how to open it. If they should find out you can change it to a different number.

My violin box is made of Rosewood just like our piano. It attracts lots of attention on the street I have got a large shape as I had at home only is wider. When I took my lesson Mr. Jacobsen said he used to stand up at 5 o'clock and practice till 10 o'clock. And then some in the afternoon besides. I guess I will try that too.

I guess my trip to Chicago will be about \$700.00 from June 1, 1887 on till Sept 1, 1888. 15 months.

Now I must close. Your most obedient son.

Charlie H. Carstensen

Ps – let Mr. Hector take my overcoat along when he comes, or else you must send it.

Sept 11, 1887

Dear Father and Mother.

I received your letter and \$20.0. I have now good news. It makes me happy just to think of it. In one week from now I can get a situation as soloist on the stage just for one week and can get from 25 to 35 dollars a week. I guess I'll wait till the middle of October.

This place is called the South Side Dime museum. I can play the same piece over every hour from 12 am till 10 pm o'clock. I thought of this by introducing myself to the piano player of the museum. He told me I could get \$40.00 for a week easy. So I am going to try it once. I have also bought some more music.

I have been using lots of money now but I shall work for it so as to pay it all back to you. I have payed \$8.00 down on my lessons. I must pay \$28.00 for lessons in advance, so send me \$40.00 if you can spare it. Enclosed find bill.

So you see that I can get a job if I wish.

My roommate has left me. So I am all alone. Don't tell any-body about that I said I was going to get a job.

Mr. Jacobsen must not know it.

I will room with a pianoist private house in 3 weeks.

Answer me as soon as you can.

Your Son. Charlie H. Carstensen

(several round stamps on the page with his name, Walnut, Iowa and Violinist)

Sept. 23, 1887

Dear Father & Mother.

I wish to tell you I have received your \$40 on the 16th last. How much have you sent me in all now? I believe it is about \$368.00.

My bow broke again in July and I lent a bow from the manager of the hotel. He had one it was a cheap bow not worth 50 cts. I used it till now and he asked to have it back. I gave it to him and asked Mr. Jacobsen where to get a good bow for little money. He advised me not to go to a music store because you could pay a high price for a bad bow. So he said he would be get me a nice bow that I could keep for years. So I told him to do so, and 3 days afterwards I came to get a lesson and he said to me "I have got a great bow for little money, and a chinrest. The bow costs \$11.00 and the chinrest \$1.25, making the \$12.25.

I have been taking 2 lessons a week till now right along from June 1. Mr. Jacobsen told me to do so. I will commence to take 1 lesson a week soon.

Be sure and send the money. I want to pay Jacobsen for his bow. I payed \$26 for lesson and some for board. I have my accounts about straight now. After this I will need no more money only for lessons and board.

I received a letter from Miss Higgins and see you are all well. Tell Katie to play accompaniments a little and practice on singing.

My pants are too short and nearly worn out. My old coat and vest is all right.

I tell you my position, fingering, and bowing was wrong to the outmost when I came here. If I had stayed home another year I could not have been reformed. And it is so with all the rest of Miss Hugginsschoolars. Don't tell any body of it. I cannot play so well with impression as I went away. I have the 6th position now, and singers exercises. There are excercises in all the positions.

I will have lots of work to get through. I had lots of work to reform my position. Just look at the piano. How easy it is to learn against the violin. I thought I could play pretty well when I came here, but when I stood before my teacher and showed him my positions he said in German "(in german)". So I had to learn everything over.

Please answer me I am making progress now.

Your Son. Charlie H. Carstensen

Ps – Jacobsen sayed the next lesson he was going to learn me something else soon.

Ps – I will meet Hector at the CRIPRR Depot.

Sept 31, 1887 (!)

Dear Father and Mother.

Mr. Hector has been here, he has bought me a new suit of clothes, under ware, shoes, and a plug hat, something like yours. Now I lack of money. I have been waiting for a letter from you but I have not received only one after the \$40 were sent.

I am improving well now and am getting better in style. I bought a bow and chinrest as I wrote you \$12.25 in all. Send me \$20.

I may get a job in 2 week if I try. Send money as soon as you can I am out.

Your Son. Charlie H. Carstensen

Oct 10, 1887

Dear Father & Mother.

I received your letter with pleasure. I wish to let you know that my lessons that I have paid for are nearly up. If you will let me stay out of school for to practice for 3 or 4 months when I get home I will home as soon as I receive an answer from you. I didn't get that job nor I didn't pay for my bow. If you want me to come home send me \$40 I will take off as much as I need and bring the rest home. I will need \$12.25 for bow and chinrest and \$12.35 for fare some for board trunk and hauled 40 cents, etc.

When I get home you will find that my position is very different from what it used to be.

I paid \$34 on the new term and it is almost exp. I guess you will soon let me go again. The greatest deal I have made in Chicago was my new violin. It is worth over \$150 or \$200 you will see. Hoping you are all well. Sending you love. Charlie H. Carstensen

Atlantic, Iowa

Nov 2, 1887

Dear Father and Mother.

I wish to ask of you if I can go and travel for a few months. It is a little like going to college. For we practice 2 hours in the forenoon, and afternoon and then play ofr the audiences. The Opera House here is full every night. If you will let me go with them I can earn between 30 and 35 dollars per month, free money, as my expenses will be paid by Mr. Payton. Last night I and Mr. Angell played a duet for 2 violins with our face to the audience. It went fine.

Answer me right away for I want to know if you will let me go with them. For I will learn a great deal and make money. Mr. Bruce was here too on some business.

If you will let me go I will come home Sunday and get all my things and start out with the rest of the company. Answer me quick. Your Son. Charlie H. Carstensen, Violinist.

