

4742 Brooklyn Ave.
Seattle, WA
Oct. 4, 1918

My dearest beloved mother,

There is nothing that gives me greater joy than reading your letters to me bringing good news about yourself and your household. However, I was saddened when learning about the sickness of Ate Tia^a. What is her illness about? Is it serious?

I was gladdened by the news that all your younger children, especially Feling^b, are doing well at school. And that your expenses aren't excessive since she is able to teach some. It is my understanding that her studies and my being at a distance from you places a heavy burden because if we were there, we would be able to provide assistance and give you relief. Any thinking person should accord you utmost respect because of the hardship in getting your children educated. It is my fervent wish that your sacrifice will be short lived and that my life is not taken here. I dedicate, with all my heart, everything I have gained here will be for the betterment of you, my brothers, sisters and our household.

Through the mercy of God, Charing^c and I have finished working in Chomly^d, Alaska and God willing, earned some money. We are now in Seattle and because our salaries are higher, Charing and I are looking for a place for ourselves. We found a house on 4742 Brooklyn Ave. which is close to the university. In this house there are four families, but each has their own kitchen. Our corner kitchen is by the owner's kitchen.

Charing is working in the afternoon and evening, until eight at night. I was offered a job at the Food Laboratory by Dean Johnson^e because the former employee was sent to the war in Europe. I will write you whether I'm accepting this position or not.

We are not unhappy with Mrs. Nelson^f, who told us that we could return at any time. But the reason we thought of going on our own is that we could earn a little more. During any free time, I could sell the embroideries. If we were staying in a boarding house, it is like a prison. The only free time is during Sunday, but the stores are all closed.

With regards to the embroideries, thank God we received it. Mrs. Nelson received them while we were in Chomly. I have not counted them yet since I haven't had the time. I will go there tomorrow to gather our belongings and your packages, including the sombreros which have arrived. I will write you the complete inventory, to make sure we received everything.

When you ship more packages, don't enclose letters as you may be fined. Also do not exceed \$100 value for each package as there will be extra charges. Don't send dresses as they are not selling. Only order slips, night gown, small handkerchiefs and baby wear. They are strong sellers. Send however many handkerchiefs you can. Don't be worried, likewise with baby items. If you can handle it all yourself, you will have large profits.

Mother, who has been helping you with selling^g? How is the store going? Is Chayong^h still with you? I've have been asked by Gregorio Martinez and others and no one has told me anything.

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While we were in Chomly, Mrs. Nelson sent you two photos, one a group picture and another of just myself. The reason Mrs. Nelson sent them was that the pictures weren't ready when we left for Chomly. So, I asked her to handle it in our absence.

I will make extra copies of my picture in order to give to Ate Piciang, Manong Inte at Manong Sixtoⁱ and other close relatives.

I have not caught any sickness and have gained a little weight. I gained 5 ½ pounds during the three months we spent in Alaska.

I will write again in the coming weeks whenever I sell the embroideries. I have not yet gotten a location for selling as I just arrived from Alaska.

Your respectful and loving daughter, waiting for your blessing at all hours.

Maria Y. Orosa

Footnotes:

a – we do not know the identity of Ate Tia. The word tia, which is Spanish, means aunt. She was probably a relative on the Ylagan side. On the same day this letter was written, Maria wrote to Ate Tia.

b – at this point there were still four children in the household, with Feling (Felisa) the oldest at 18, followed by three brothers who were 16, 14 and 12. Felisa would go on to become a pharmacist and marry a physician. The 16 year old, Jose (Pepe), would join Maria in Seattle by the end of 1918.

c – Charing is Rosario Cordero, also from Taal, who came to Seattle with Maria in 1916. Charing is one of the nicknames for Rosario. My sister Rosario is nicknamed Charito.

d – Chomly, Alaska was one of the centers for fishing and canning during that era. The canneries employed a lot of Filipino migrant workers.

e – Dean Johnson is Charles Willis Johnson, a pioneering educator and fixture at the University of Washington in Seattle from 1903 to 1939. He was responsible for setting up the College of Pharmacy. He would become Maria's mentor.

f – it is obvious that Mrs. Nelson is their landlady.

g – Maria's mother Juliana supported her family operating a store called an *almacen*. This was the business Juliana and her husband Simplicio started at the turn of the century. However, Simplicio passed away in 1910, leaving Juliana to operate the store by herself.

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h – Chayong is another nickname for Rosario. I first thought she was referring to my mother Rosario, but my older sister informed me that she never stayed with our grandmother. So, we don't know exactly who this Chayong is.

i – her elder siblings were Simplicia (Piciang), Vicente (Inte) and Sixto Sr. Maria was born in 1893, the others were born in 1888, 1889 and 1891 respectively.



Filipino workers at an Alaskan salmon plant.