

British Consulate for the State of Maryland  
Baltimore, May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1861.

My Lord,

At a time when events of such transcendental importance are occurring in this Country, it may seem somewhat inappropriate to trouble Your Lordship with an account of the Fire Department of the City of Baltimore, but so perfect is the organization - so simple, but efficient, is the working of the system - and so rare the occurrence of any large conflagration, that I think it a matter of sufficient importance to report upon to Your Lordship.

Until the year 1858 the Fire Department of this City was composed (as is still the case in New York, Philadelphia, & elsewhere) of Volunteer Companies, many of them made up of the very worst characters. So great was the jealousy existing between the different Companies, that every fire was the scene of a sanguinary conflict between rival districts, and cases often occurred of wilful arson,

John Russell Esq.  
Esq.      Esq.      Esq.

perpetrated