

June 16, 2010

Dear Jan:

First of all, I would like to thank you for your letter. It is not every day or every year that someone wants to remember my long-deceased brother. That was a heart-warming, very emotional surprise that sent both my husband and me into tears; at our age it is allowed.

I also want to congratulate you on the final saving of the Kemper Memorial Park and the creative use of it to make it meaningful now and for the coming generations. I can only imagine the amount of dedicated work that has gone into the project.

Perhaps you know of the Hebrew proverb, "He who saves a single soul, it is as though he has saved a whole world." True, those brave young men were not saved, but saving their memory is a sacred duty which you and your group are performing. Perhaps the civic battle in the town was not easy, but my memories of Mamaroneck lead me to venture that the title, "The Friendly Village", that Mr Fulcher gave to his little booklet in 1946, still applies. For me, Mamaroneck was a very good place to grow up and I look back with fond memories to my childhood there.

Now to the business at hand. We have a few photographs of Solomon and I will send them to be included in your archives. Unfortunately, my memory in general has never been so good but I will share with you a few things that I can tell you about Solomon in order to make him into a real person, not just a name.

We looked alike. He had a round face, sandy-colored hair and thick lips. He was not handsome but his friendly, sunny disposition made him well-loved. He got on well with everyone.

We had moved to Mamaroneck in 1934 and so Solomon must have been in the ninth grade. Our father was a Conservative rabbi for the small Jewish community. Solomon was the oldest and the only son, with two sisters, myself and Miriam, who was four years younger than Solomon. Our mother taught home economics, working mainly in New York City as a substitute teacher.

Solomon volunteered for the Marine Corps to be a Combat Correspondent. Thus, he integrated his life ambition to be a newspaper man with his patriotic duty. He trained at Quantico, Virginia and was sent to California and from there to New Zealand and, after it was conquered, to Guadalcanal.

In the summer of 1944, on the first day of the invasion of Guam, he was mortally injured while closely reporting the battle. He died shortly and was buried at sea, which was the custom in those days in the middle of a fierce battle. We were not notified until several weeks later and then by a Western Union telegram.

These memories of Solomon's last days tell little of the young man who had just graduated in June of 1942 from Union College in Schenectady, New York. There he majored in history and also prepared himself to teach it. Solomon wanted to be a journalist but our mother convinced him to have a backup profession. Those were the days of the great economic Depression.

I was eight years younger than Solomon and so I don't really know too much about those college years, except that Solomon had a girl-friend, Corinne "Corky" Kramer. It seemed quite serious and she, too, mourned his death very much.

My more vivid memories of Solomon go back to his high school years. He very early on became interested in history and the year 1936 was the two hundred and seventy-fifth anniversary of the first settling of Mamaroneck. His mentor, Mr. Fulcher, our high-school history teacher, was very active in planning and executing the celebrations. I remember that Solomon worked with him doing many errands on his bike as a valued helper. Later, during the war years, when Mr. Fulcher was responsible for the sale of war stamps and I was a helper, he reminded me of how much he had appreciated Solomon.

Solomon had other interests. He was a railroad buff. He would travel all over the area taking pictures of various railroad engines, of course with their identity numbers, and exchanged the photographs with other enthusiasts. He would avidly read a monthly magazine about railroads to which he subscribed. He certainly knew a lot about the various lines that still existed in that long-gone era.

Another hobby was a forerunner of his interest in newspaper writing. After earning the money for it, Solomon bought a small but useable hand printing press which he set up in the garage. I think that he printed only one or two news sheets but what fun it was! I still remember the tiny lead type that had to be set by hand and the messy black ink. It was a couple of generations before the computer made the old-fashioned printing press obsolete.

Solomon had a dog, a real mutt named Duke. They were good friends and when Solomon went away, Duke became

the family dog. They appear together in one of the photographs.

Now another personal note. When Solomon died, each member of the family mourned and reacted in their own way. I remember very well that I would take long walks and often would end up at Harbor Island, sitting on a sea-wall. There my thoughts would go out to Solomon: how to make it up to him for his sacrifice and unfinished life. There I vowed to make my life meaningful, to do something outside of myself for mankind. It was four years later that I found myself caught up with the birth of Israel in 1948 and decided that I must contribute to its development by coming to Israel, and here I am still sixty years later.

Thank you again for your interest in the memorial and for including us in your search. Please send me your postal address for sending photographs of Solomon.

Sincerely yours,  
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