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My dear Mrs. Wood:

Please allow me to add to the many notes of condolence you are receiving these days by sending you the enclosed memo I asked to have included in the archives of The Elmendorph Inn and Historic Red Hook. The background is as follows:

The old inn adjoined the Grand Union store in Red Hook - the one in Dutchess County - and was about to be sold to a restaurant that seemed to have a reputation for fires. A group of us wanted to save the building as a historic site **and** center for local meetings. Some of our group were perhaps over-zealous in their efforts and became a nuisance to the Grand Union's real estate office.

On the sort of whim that sometimes overtakes all of us, I decided to go directly to the president of Grand Union and present our case to him. I discovered it was a Mr. Wood and made an appointment with him in his office in Elmwood Park. The trip down the Thruway in my ancient VW lacking most of most of its floor must have given me the appearance of an aquatic animal when I met Mr. Wood. However, he was most cordial and, much to my surprise, immediately sympathized with our cause. In a matter of minutes, and over the objections of the real estate men who were present for part of our discussions, he proposed selling us the old building for \$30,000 at, I think, interest of 5%. The "rest is history", literally: the inn has been restored and is a much-used center for civic events in Red Hook, and houses the archives of the local historical society. The debt was, I think, paid ahead of time.

I keenly recall two things about my conversation with your husband. First, he hinted that a change in his own situation in Grand Union might be imminent, so he asked that his decision to sell to us at such a reasonable price not be broadcast in the community. We complied with this.

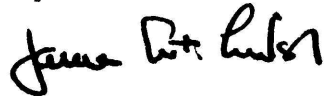
Second, while his secretary was typing a letter of agreement, he asked me, in a conspiratorial voice, "Are you R.C., Father?" Sensing that he was himself Roman Catholic, I replied with emphasis, "Am I R.C.!. I'm glad to say he didn't pursue the

topic, else the deal might have been lost to us. I like to think that now that "the secrets of all hearts have been disclosed", he forgives what might, at best, be called a falsehood based on the better good.

I never saw Mr. Wood again. I suppose in his busy and productive life he never had occasion to think about the Elmendorph and what has been done there, thanks to his consideration and faith in a small group of people unknown to him. Now, of course, I wish I had at least let him know that he made it possible for people work together to preserve this fine old building and its heritage. With your permission and that of the Elmendorph Board I propose to have a modest plaque made to perpetuate the memory of a man who will always be important to us.

I'm sure I needn't add that this letter goes to you and your family with my best wishes and assurance of my prayers.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James B. Lusk".