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DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS

Area Code 415
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October 18 1972

DUNN

Dear Les:

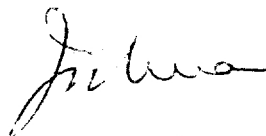
Thank you for your note and letter of October 14. The disappearance of papers is all too typical; I hope you do have some luck in tracing the departmental files.

It may help if I put down some factual dates, for which I have reliable records. Harriett met Ephrussi at Cold Spring Harbor in 1946. He in any case did not publish on yeast until 1949; if they had any mutual influence about working on this material it would more likely have been the converse. Her 1951 and other papers certainly indicate a confluence of genetic and biochemical thinking -- at the time I must say I was puzzled how reluctant she was to attempt a synthesis that would embrace pneumococcal and more traditional studies. The period that most puzzles me is 1943 - 1945: did her interest in Avery respond to the existing currents at Columbia (and Pittendrigh says yes; but he came a bit later) or vice versa.

Your note remarked that Dawson (I presume M.H. Dawson, who had worked with Avery at Rockefeller and published with him in 1931) "came to discuss the transformation work in a seminar at Schermerhorn". I do not have any further detail on Dawson's career after 1931; his later publications are in allergy and rheumatism. Sol Spiegelman has, however, a similar recollection. Is there any chance of pinning down when that might have been.

How Harriett came into her dissertation topic is of ancillary interest; but if you can find any more detail on that at the library, it might shed some light on the rest of the story. I wonder if there are still checkout cards in the library holdings of the J. Exp. Med. for 1944 that would also say something of who was aware of what, when.

Yours,



Prof. J. Lederberg
Department of Genetics