

10/14/72

Dear Josh, Your letter of October 11 and the copy of Olby's very useful paper which you enclosed put the questions you ask about Harriett Taylor in a clearer light. I have doubts that I shall be able to answer them from documents since apparently all of my correspondence with students was kept with department matters (I was then executive officer) and cannot now be found. Nor does Harriett's name appear in the index of my correspondence which is now in the APS library. But, I shall hunt when next I go to Columbia library for Len's dissertation & notes and have another go at an ex department secretary to see what became of department papers of that era.

On only a few questions will I trust my memory. 1) Harriett came to work on developmental genetics in mice - but during my absence one term she got interested in yeast & called me to a new room she had acquired on 10<sup>th</sup> floor

near Ryan's to show me material & observations she  
had already made. I believe I said I could be of  
little help with such a problem - but felt that students  
should be free to choose sponsor & problem (better sponsor  
or first) She didn't ask for other sponsorship, but  
just went ahead largely on her own. I'm sure she  
must have talked with Francis. I have no memory  
of how she found an interest in yeast - later it  
crossed my mind it might have come via Boris.  
What is certain is that long afterward she & Boris  
came together to enquire how she could get her  
degree awarded, something in which she herself  
had no great interest. I told them the University  
& Science Faculty <sup>still</sup> maintained the requirement that after all  
other conditions had been met the find a necessary  
one was publication in an acceptable journal.  
As I recall Boris said "Then Harriett let us publish  
But if it happened I don't know, that's a question  
to be settled from faculty records with the dean's office.  
(George Wald as I remember, was for long in  
the same position - if in limbo, then not suffering for it)

I recall no relationship with Delig Heekt. She probably spent one summer at Cold Spring Harbor as genetics students often did since we had one (or two) scholarships there. I believe that's where Bryson got interested in microbiology & perhaps it was the same in Harriett's case.

But how Avery's work was transmitted I don't know. She certainly understood the problems consequent upon DNA as transformant - Her 1951 CSH Sympo paper shows that clearly - but if she told you about Avery it must have been soon after the 1944 paper was published. I don't believe we had discussed that <sup>paper</sup> in seminar until two or more years later. I tried just now to reach Harriett's ~~former~~ <sup>friend of that time</sup> ~~graduate student~~ - Reba Mirsky - but she's apparently away. Mirsky may just possibly have been the liaison in this case. (Reba, I believe was somewhat later than Harriett as graduate student)

I'll send you news as I get it - but I think it must come from written records  
Good luck to your memoirs  
with love  
L. D. Lewis