

CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS
COLD SPRING HARBOR, LONG ISLAND, N. Y.

December 10, 1945

Dear Tracy:

I am sorry for the long delay in answering your letter. I have been, and still am, horribly busy with work. Besides, I would like to know a little more about the future before discussing your plan for a course in genetics of microorganisms. Nothing very new happened as yet. The only thing which worries me a little is the fact that according to Mac our teaching load is expanding, and I might expect a very important increase in the amount of teaching required of me, whereas I should reasonably expect the opposite. This may make me more inclined to accept some other proposition, if any of a series of feelers recently received should materialize. I certainly am enjoying the possibility for research offered by the set-up here, although I cannot always get as much done as I would because of the need to supervise other people's work. I am mainly trying to get several lines of work started, besides getting immediate results. The last success is that Miss J. Love (!), working with me, has finally got to the point to obtain consistently good stains of bacterial nuclei, so that we may look forward to lots of experimental work on cytology. Also, we are working out some basic data on population genetics of bacteria. My results include a new approach to the problem of phage multiplication: I think this time it is going to work, and, anyway, the experiments are of that exciting "high precision" type. If you are East for Xmas, I'll like to tell you more about it.

If nothing happens, I should be delighted to participate in your course on genetics of microorganisms. Genetics of viruses has recently been discussed intelligently by Burnet, whose book I am now reviewing, and new pertinent work on mutations of phages is included in our program for next month. The experimental material is available and simple. As for bacteria, there would only be the embarrassment of the choice. I am collecting lots of material for a review on bacterial genetics I promised for next July (I shall certainly be late), with the idea of using it as the first draft of a future book on the subject. We are running a seminar course on genetics for bacteriologists at N.Y.U., and more material is going to be coordinated in the development of this course. I would expect that six lectures and 4 laboratory sections would cover adequately the subject in a course like yours. However, I wonder if ~~Neurospora~~ Neurospora should get a large share in such a course, since the principles involved in their work are more of less the usual ones in genetics, and the main importance is the ~~theoretical~~ confirmation of our ideas on the enzymatic character of gene controlled reactions. From a laboratory point of view, however, Neurospora will not only be interesting, but practically useful. Bacterial problems may be the best on which to illustrate the principles of population genetics.

How are your things coming? The family all well?

Best regards,

Luria

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