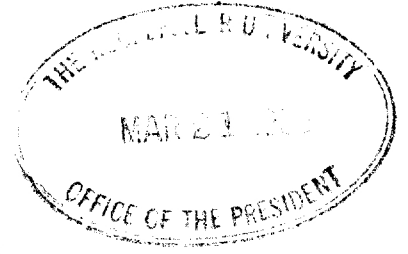


p 285

p27x



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS
MADISON, WI 53706

JAMES F. CROW
608-263-4438

March 19, 1988

Dr. Joshua Lederberg, President
The Rockefeller University
1230 York Avenue
New York, NY 10021-6399

Dear Josh:

A belated answer to your letter of February 22, with the usual apology for not getting my act together.

Yes, an article on replica plating would certainly be in order. We have already filled 1988, but some time in 1989 would be fine. So the earliest deadline would be some time in, say, October.

Your letter unleashed a flood of memories. I vividly remember a conversation about indirect selection in which I suggested (perhaps in answer to a question from you) a reference to Lush's textbook in which performance of relatives is taken into account in selection.

Something else that I surely must have told you, but may not have, is this. Before meeting you or coming to Wisconsin I played with the distribution of mutants in a growing culture, a problem inspired by the Luria-Delbrück paper and later solved by Lea and Coulson. I got nowhere with it, but I raised the question with R. A. Fisher in Raleigh, N. C., during the summer of 1946. He sat and thought for what seemed like 5 minutes, but was probably only one or two, and then wrote a generating function on a scrap of paper. He said "try this". Not understanding generating functions very well, and not wanting to display my ignorance, I thanked him and left. Months later, after learning about generating functions, I couldn't find the scrap of paper in my files. So, unless the scrap of paper shows up, we'll never know whether Fisher was the first to solve the problem.

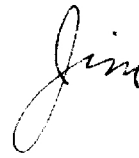
I enjoyed your piece on the search for life on the moon and other planets in the recent Journal of Genetics. Also, what you had to say about privatizing NIH in the NY Times.

So far, I have made no progress whatsoever in finding the archives that would answer the questions about your applications and program statements. But I hasten to add that the search so far has not taken me outside the Genetics Department. I have calls in to the Graduate School and to the College of Agriculture and will write again when I get the information.

I am writing this at home, with Ann about 6 feet away at another desk. She sends her fondest greetings. So do I.

All the best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jim". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

P.S. Are all the "blotting" techniques direct derivatives of the replica plate method?