January 15, 1957

Air Mail

Dr. J. J. Weigle
Biology Laboratories
California Institute of Technology
Pasadena 4, California

Dear Dr. Weigle:

We have your two letters from Puerto Vallerta, and the copy to Morse from Pasadena. We had waited to reply until you had returned to Pasadena thinking you went to Mexico for quiet and seclusion.

In response to your request, we sent, several day's ago a set of Gal$^-$ cultures. These include Gal 1, Gal 2 and Gal 4 mutants, both Lp^s and Lp$^+$ in a standard isogenic background so as to exclude modifiers. The same group of cultures was also sent to Francois Jacob. There is no double mutant at the moment in this group but your group could prepare it as simply as we, by looking for the proper crossover segregant from a double heterogenote.

We did not realize you seriously wanted us to comment on the advisability of your publishing the note: it appeared to us that this was already completed and submitted. This is so much a matter of personal temperament that we hesitate to forward our own views, and certainly would not insist on them. However, as you now state that you do intend to proceed with the analysis discussed in our correspondence, we do wonder if this note is not somewhat premature. In similar circumstances --e.g., the behavior of prophage markers in transduction, and the unstable Lp^r phenotypes,--we have felt that the story should be completed before it was published. But this is not a sort of question that can be profitably discussed in written correspondence. Fortunately, there is still some personal liberty in science, and not a rigid code to which we must conform.

As we also brought up earlier, Dr. Morse is most immediately interested in the problem of growth of HFT lambda. Although we are, of course, deeply concerned, he has to be consulted first with regard to any "division of labor" in further studies.

You mention some of Kellenberger's results. Morse made a study of UV effect a couple of year's ago, and Esther has been following up similar experiments using an Lp^R stock. We found an increase at first of the r-s types and finally pure s. This was also correlated with a reduction in the frequency of heterogenotes. One exceptional progeny has been a heterogenote that is segregating for the Gal factor but is pure for Lp^s.

We made an unpremeditated trip to San Francisco during the Christmas Holidays; we were disappointed to learn from Gunderson that you had departed for Mexico so we made no attempt to go further South in California this trip. We shall have to meet some other time.

We are trying as best we can to tie together various loose strings so the aspects of this work can be readied for publication. Some preliminary drafts are in the process right now but will take some time to be completed. An unpublished summary of our work in this area is being drafted soon as a "progress report" for research grants, and you will receive copies when this is ready.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua and Ester M.
Lederberg

/nhn

CC: Dr. M.L. Morse