

June 8, 1950.

Mr. Gordon Allen,  
155 Corona Avenue,  
Pelham 65, N.Y.

Dear Gordon-

I am sorry to see you so discouraged about your year's work. It doesn't seem to be entirely warranted; you can't deny that you have learned a great deal yourself, and the field is not unenriched by your efforts. I will appreciate very much receiving the summary you mentioned in your letter, but even without that, there is one point that I wonder whether you shouldn't publish briefly, namely the segregations in nutritionally complementary genotypes. Even without the demonstration of complementary segregants from a single zygote (the status of which I am waiting to see in your summary account), it is important to show that one of the assumptions, complementary segregation, used in my earlier computations of linkage relationships, is incorrect. I say this, because Newcombe and Cavalli are both disputing [meditatively] the concept of linearity on the basis of prototroph data. Instead of appreciating the role that failure to get both complementary types would play in perturbing the results, Newcombe especially may be toying with dumping the whole concept of linearity which, I think, is premature. Your work may indicate that some factors yield both types, others not. The conclusion is consistent with the reported behavior of ~~some~~ persistent diploids (PNAS 1949), but your system is much closer to the prototrophs which have been used primarily in collecting linkage data. I think that a brief paper in PNAS describing your original aims and techniques, and reporting the uniformity for some factors in nutritionally complementary selections, thus bridging the gap between persistent diploids and the usual prototrophs, would be a definite contribution. I am sure that Dr. Hink here would be glad to transmit such a paper, if you have no more convenient access to a member of the National Academy of Sciences during the summer.

Ether and I will be leaving here about June 22 + . Between August 1 and Sept. 6, we will be at Dept. Bacteriology, University of California, Berkeley 4, Calif.

I am afraid I don't quite understand your diagram. But unless I am mistaken, it seems to concord with our multi-point tests [which we have, unfortunately, done many times].

Sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg