

November 10, 1949

Dr. James M. Sherman,
Editor,
Journal of Bacteriology,
Cornell University Press,
Ithaca, N. Y.

Dear Dr. Sherman:

Thank you for your kind comment and prompt acceptance of my manuscript. I hope you will not regard it presumptuous of me to remark that you are doing an incredibly effective job in bringing papers to prompt publication, judging from the date received lines on papers in recent issues.

Your comments on "prototroph" are, of course, justified. I coined this supposed neologism in 1945 to describe reversions to the ancestral nutritional type in *Neurospora*. Auto-autotroph and the like would not do because the wild type still requires biotin, in this instance. The term has proved its usefulness in the jargon, at least, of several laboratories. It was first used in print by Ryan and myself in 1946, after which Lwoff pointed out that he and others had made prior use of it in a slightly different sense. We agreed, however, that the definition of "prototrophy" as autotrophy, *sensu strictu*, had lapsed by disuse, and that in any event the current usage was essentially a specialized application of its original sense. It has since appeared in several publications, including an earlier one in *J. Bact.* (Tatum & Lederberg, 1947). I hope that before too many more years, it will be possible to use it without specifically redefining it.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg