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DIVISION OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES  
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PLANT SCIENCE BUILDING

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Professor Joshua Lederberg  
Genetics Department  
Stanford University School of Medicine  
300 Pasteur Drive  
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Josh,

On Russian Easter, 1946, Miriam and I were invited to the Dobzhansky's along with several other couples (probably the Rhoadeses, the John Moores, and the Mirskys) to sample Natasha Dobzhansky's Easter goodies. When everyone else left the dining room table, Mirsky and I stayed behind to chat. It was then that he told me I would have to read two papers in order to catch up on the advances in genetics during W.W. II: Avery's work on transformation and Sonneborn's on the killer factor (plasmagenes, in the terminology of the time).

While it is true that Mirsky was critical in seminars of the notion that DNA was the transforming substance, he expressed no reservation nor criticism when he told me that I must read Avery's paper. I doubt that his criticisms impeded the sense of importance which he himself attached to this work.

Miriam supports your claim that Columbia was very much aware of the events going on at Rockefeller. There were three excellent women students at Columbia at that time: Harriet Taylor, Evelyn Maizel (Witkin), and Evelyn Hagen. Ev Hagen did not go on in science but, according to Miriam, she was extremely excited by Avery's findings. (I believe Ev Hagen was Ballentyne's graduate student at the time,)

During your talk I thought of still another (minor) example of an "unappreciated" observation -- it has slipped my mind. Should it occur to me later, I shall send it along.

Best regards,

  
Bruce Wallace  
Professor of Genetics

BW:rts