

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS AND DEVELOPMENT

515 Morrill Hall
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June 17, 1977

Dr. David R. Goddard
Home Secretary
National Academy of Sciences
2101 Constitution Avenue
Washington, D. C. 20418

Dear Dave:

Since June 1st I have been in New York and Pennsylvania and just returned home last night, so did not see your letter dated June 2nd until this morning. I was so pleased to receive your letter and by your favorable comments about the Willier memoir written at the request of the editor of Developmental Biology.

On April 4, 1977, Viktor Hamburger wrote me as follows about the memoir. "In rereading your excellent publication on Benjie recently, I had an idea, for which I should like to have your approval before carrying it out. I should like to propose to the Home Secretary of the Academy... that your article be accepted as the Memoir, and published under your name--memoirs have been written occasionally by non-members--or that I expand a bit on the scientific discoveries, especially the feather story, and it could be published jointly by you and me. I'll tell him (meaning you) that you (meaning me) knew him ever so much better than I did, that if I would have to write it, I would have only your article for background information, since he himself left practically nothing in the Academy files, and that your article, in my opinion, fulfills all the requirements of an excellent memoir."

On May 10, 1977, I replied to Viktor's letter with the following remarks(xeroxed) from the part of the letter pertinent to the above proposal.

Of course the most thrilling part of your letter was your proposal that my biography of Dr. Willier be modified somehow so as to be suitable for publication as a memoir by the National Academy of Sciences. You mentioned proposing this possibility to the Home Secretary, Dave Goddard, whom I knew very well at Rochester since I assisted him in general biology labs. there, helped celebrate the birth of his daughter at a party at his house, etc. This possibility is especially interesting since one of the Willier daughters, Kathryn, wrote on March 12, 1975 upon receiving a reprint, "I just wanted you to know how very pleased Bill and I are with your work. I don't know who is doing the one for the National Academy of Sciences, but I do wish they had asked you. We thought you did an excellent job. I really think that Dad would have approved."

Naturally I am delighted to approve your using my biography for your purposes in any way you wish. There are a number of points I wish to raise.

1. The paucity of information available to me to work with was appalling. After a long delay I received from the Home Secretary what little information they had on Dr. Willier. I then flew to Baltimore to the Carnegie Lab. and went through all of Dr. Willier's papers that had been turned over to Jim Ebert, but only after Louise and Jim had gone through them and removed all papers that they felt should not be seen by others. Also, as stated in footnote 1, I contacted a number of people I thought could help provide evaluations of Dr. Willier. Some, yours included, were very helpful; most were not. Dave Goddard, Howard Hamilton, and others contacted did not respond. I finally read the entire collection of reprints of Willier and his students, three volumes, which he had given to me. Thus the time invested was unbelievable, as was the amount of blood, sweat and tears. One of the most difficult problems of all that faced me was the Willier-Rawles relationships and feelings of Rawles about Oppenheimer and Rudnick."

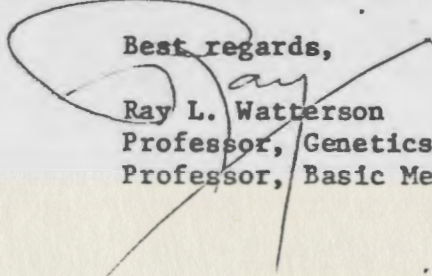
Xeroxed copy of my remarks to Viktor (continued).

- // 2. Some corrections were needed in the proof; none were permitted by the journal because they had sent the manuscript to the publishers before they sent the proof to me. Some of these corrections arose through information I later received about matters I was uncertain about. Accordingly, I am enclosing three xeroxed copies, each with the corrections indicated.
3. Since I have read many of the published memoirs and am therefore familiar with their style I don't see how the format of my biography could be acceptable to the Academy.
4. Although I recognize that it is in the best interests of all of us to have you concentrate your time and energies on the Neuroembryology book, I would prefer the second of your alternatives, viz., that you expand a bit on the scientific discoveries, especially the feather story. (space restrictions prevented me from doing so and your views would be so much more authoritative anyway) and that we publish it jointly. In addition, I would hope that you would be willing to make corrections of statements that you know to be in error and that you would feel perfectly free to use the information gleaned by me in any way you see fit. By this I mean that you should have complete freedom to modify the existing biography in any way that is needed to make it more suitable for your purposes. I would hope that perhaps this could be done with minimal demands on your time, but the decisions about all such changes should be yours. And to save time I would hope that all such changes as you deem essential be just that, namely changes, and not suggestions for change. It is certainly enough and the highest possible praise I could receive from you to refer to "your excellent publication on Benjie" Rest assured that I would not be offended by any changes made in the original paper by you; I would welcome them!"

So much for Viktor's letter to me dated April 4th and my reply to him dated May 10th. Now to answer specific questions in your letter to me dated June 2nd.

1. Yes, I am prepared (and delighted) to have my memoir -- with some editing and with bibliography in the form that you use -- printed by the Academy as their Memoir on Willier.
2. Before writing the biographical article I consulted Viktor Hamburger and most of Willier's close friends and associates for evaluations, as noted in the original publication. **THERE ARE NO OTHERS TO CONSULT AND NO OTHER SOURCES OF MATERIAL ON DR. WILLIER THAT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LOCATE.**
3. Of course I understand that the published biographical article is simply the basis for the Academy Memoir. It was never intended for any purpose other than publication in the journal, and I realize many changes will be needed for it to fit your purposes. Therefore, if I am to be the author of the Academy Memoir, I would indeed welcome suggestions for editorial changes and would like to have these suggestions at your earliest convenience.
4. However, if you will consult the statements above from Viktor's letter to me and my response to him, you will note that he originally suggested **TWO ALTERNATIVES**: 1st, that I do the rewriting and be the sole author; alternatively, that he revise the original article from its content, expanding certain sections, and that we publish the Memoir jointly. I have not heard from Viktor since he proposed to you that my biographical article be published by the National Academy of Sciences in your Biographical Memoirs series. I believe he is in Europe now, perhaps for quite some time. Did he tell you that he wished to spend no time on the Memoir and that he wanted me to do the rewriting? In stating my preference for the joint publication I gave my reasons for doing so in the material above quoted from my letter to Viktor.
5. I am still willing to go ahead with this Memoir under either alternative.
6. Since I am very heavily committed to both our School of Basic Medical Sciences and our College of Liberal Arts, as well as to completing the 4th edition of a book, I cannot at this time tell you when I could complete the rewrite job, if I am to do it alone.

Best regards,


 Ray L. Watterson
 Professor, Genetics & Development
 Professor, Basic Medical Sciences

cc: Dr. Viktor Hamburger ✓