

For submission to the *Maize Genetics Cooperation Newsletter* for 2019

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### **Misspoken words: errata for my presentations, and thoughts on oral history**

- Kass, LB

While reviewing some of my presentations on the history of maize genetics and geneticists, I noted a few “slips of the tongue” that I wish to correct at this time. The Department of Plant Breeding was located in the Forestry Building, on the Cornell University Campus (*Cornell Daily Sun* 1914), later named Fernow Hall (*Cornell Daily Sun* 1922), and not in Rice Hall, as I mistakenly mentioned in my 2013 and 2019 presentations (Kass 2013, 2019). In my recent presentation (Kass 2019), I should have said that at the 75<sup>th</sup> Synapsis Reunion held at Cornell in 1982, Marcus Rhoades gave the 1929 group photo to Professor William Provine, via one of the other attendees, and not to Emerson, as I stated by mistake. Also, I should have said that I had spoken with the former editor of *Genetics*, Jim Crow, instead of referring to him as the former publisher of *Genetics*. Furthermore, I mentioned that R. A. Emerson was the second president (1933) of the Genetics Society of America (GSA), and that the society was founded in 1932. More accurately, the society was reorganized in 1931 as the GSA, from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Joint Genetics Sections of the American Society of Zoologists and the Botanical Society of America. L.C. Dunn was the first GSA president for 1932. The first annual GSA meeting was held in December of 1932, only months after the Sixth International Congress of Genetics met at Ithaca, New York.

It may be noteworthy to mention that interviews and presentations are unreliable for the very reason I felt compelled to write the clarifying paragraph above. While reviewing many of the interviews I conducted for my research on the history of botany and genetics, I found many words misspoken by myself and others. It is wise for historians to document stories with many other sources for corroboration (Kass 2003).

#### **References**

Forestry Building dedicated: *Cornell Daily Sun* May 13-16, 1914.

Forestry Building named in honor of Dr. Bernard Eduard Fernow in 1922: *Cornell Daily Sun* Oct. 4-16, 1922.

Kass, Lee B. 2019. Celebration of the 90th Anniversary of the founding of the *Maize Genetics Cooperation News Letter* at Cornell University.” Seminar, Plant Breeding & Genetics Section, SIPS, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, Cornell University, April 23, 2019; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKrRBfwlyEY>

Kass, Lee B. 2013. “Cornell University: the McClintock Years, 1919-1939 and beyond,” Symposium, Department of Plant Biology Centennial Celebration, June 29, 2013; Cornell University, Plant Sciences Building, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences; <https://www.ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/33663>

Kass, Lee B. 2003. Records and recollections: A new look at Barbara McClintock, Nobel Prize-Winning geneticist. *Genetics* 164 (August): 1251-1260. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1462672/>

lbk: for MNL, 8 May 2019