

38 Albatross Street  
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August 3, 1989

Conversation with Ethel Browne Harvey

We happened to meet as she was leaving the MBL building where she had a lab. Somewhat out of the blue she said: You know that it was I who first discovered the organizer? Not an exact quotation. I replied that I did recognize that this was indeed the case.

As to the date of this conversation: Ethel Browne Harvey died Sept 2, 1965. There is an obituary in the Biological Bulletin p.11, vol 133. It does not mention her transplants with hydra. at MBL

The last year that she is listed as an investigator is 1962. My guess as to the date of the conversation is late summer of 1961 or 1962.

How would I know, you ask, about her hydra transplants? I think it likely that it was in connection with my studies as a grad student with H. W. Rand. H.W. had himself done some interesting work on hydra. At one point, much later, I think, I read her paper carefully to see whether she had been lucky enough to use the word "organizer".

Why did the Nobel committee pick Spemann rather than EBH?

Hydra versus amphibian.

Female vs male.

Without academic rank vs with.

Reputation?

*Sears Crowell*  
Sears Crowell

*No Nobel Prize to Spemann in 1935*