Dr. Albert B. Sabin
The Children’s Hospital Research Foundation
Cincinnati 29, Ohio

Dear Doctor Sabin:

While conducting a survey in non-sanguivorous bats of Texas we have established two things, (1) that the Mexican free-tailed bat (Tadarida mexicana) is a host for the virus of rabies; and (2) extensive inapparent infections occur in this species as evidenced by the development of antibodies for the virus of rabies.

Since I am unable to find reference to any previous observation pointing to our serologic findings, I should like to ask if this appears to be in fact and to gain your immediate impression concerning the presence of this natural reservoir and its public health significance.

We have identified the bat isolates and accomplished our serologic studies employing the standard neutralization technique described by Dr. Harald N. Johnson of the Rockefeller Foundation in New York, and accepting as minimum positive criterion those sera which will neutralize 100 LD50 of a fixed strain of virus.

Because of the small quantity of blood obtained from each individual bat, we have of necessity pooled serums from 5-10 bats and run this as an entity, assuming that when this pool is positive at least one of the sera has an extremely high titer or that a great majority, if not all serums, have considerable degree of inherent protection.

I should certainly appreciate your comments and criticisms concerning these assumptions.

With kindest personal regards, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

KENNETH F BURNS
Lt Col VC
Chief, Veterinary & Virology Sections