

LaMont C. Cole

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LaMont C. Cole came to Cornell from Indiana in 1948 and within four years rose from assistant to full professor. In 1964 he was chairman of the Department of Zoology. In that year the Division of Biological Sciences was created, and he was influential in forming its Section of Ecology and Systematics, which he chaired for its first three years.

At the same time, LaMont's national and international reputation was expanding, and he played a fundamental role in the activities of the Ecological Society of America, serving a series of editorial functions for its *Journal of Ecology*, over twelve years between 1946 and 1963 and serving as vice President (1964) and president (1967-68). He was also on the executive committee of the Board of Governors of the American Institute of Biological Sciences and was vice president in 1968 and president in 1969.

LaMont Cole's greatest influence was through his contributions in a wide-ranging research career. His first publication, at the age of nineteen, was a report on the herpetology of the Navajo country, the first product of his four-year stint as chief herpetologist on the Rainbow Bridge and Monument Valley expeditions of the U.S. National Park Service and the American Exploration Society.

His master's thesis (1939) at the University of Utah, on the effects of radiant energy on reptiles, was the beginning of his interest in the ecological effects of radiant energy and temperature variation. It led in a natural way to his later involvement with the study of environmental insults and their effect on natural populations.

LaMont's early work included a classic thesis (under Thomas Park) on the cryptozoa of a woodland in Kendall County, Illinois. In this work was rooted his later interest in population and community theory and in the statistics of population distributions over space. LaMont's conclusion that it would be a mistake to refer to the cryptozoans as a supraorganismic community, as Harshbarger had argued in 1911 for the soil fauna in general, was an early and important ingredient in later changes in the community concept.

LaMont's unique talents, however, were his tremendous ability to blend analytic thought and biological fact and his knack for interesting others in these problems. His earliest theoretical study was his 1946 paper, "A Theory for Analyzing Contagiously Distributed Populations," which grew out of his thesis work and was followed by an important 1949 paper, "The Measurement of Interspecific Association." From these purely statistical studies of