

Mutation

THE HISTORY OF AN IDEA
FROM DARWIN TO GENOMICS

From the Book

"The idea of mutation is rooted in our awareness of change over time. In the life sciences, consideration of change is essential to evolutionary biology and also, perhaps less obviously, to the study of genetics. Ideas or concepts also change, or evolve, over time. Each generation of scholars is bound by the terminology and ideas current in its period but as new tools and approaches generate new findings, the scholars' vocabulary changes to accommodate what has been discovered. This book examines the meaning of mutation when the term was first adopted, how the meaning changed, and why that alteration was forced on the terminology. Among professional scientists, there is further complexity, with the coexistence of contending terms for the same phenomenon used in different fields (e.g., microbial and *Drosophila* genetics). I also show that a somewhat different sense of the term mutation prevails among the general public."



Cold Spring Harbor
Laboratory Press
www.cshlpress.com

ISBN 978-193611330-9



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