

People and Events leading to the Voyage of the Beagle, 1831-1836

Lunar Society Grandfathers
Josiah Wedgwood and Erasmus Darwin
The Lunar Society was an 18th century group of practically minded intellectuals and included Joseph Priestley and James Watt

Parents
Robert Darwin and Susanna Wedgwood
Brought together two great families. Susanna died when Charles was 8

Siblings
Raising Charles fell largely to his older sisters (especially Caroline) when their mother died. Brother Erasmus taught him chemistry. He corresponded frequently with all his siblings.

John Edmondstone
Black former slave who taught Charles taxidermy while at Edinburgh

Robert Grant
Zoology Professor at Edinburgh, interested Charles in sea invertebrates; admired Lamarck's ideas of evolution

John Henslow
Botany Professor at Cambridge who took Charles under his wing at Cambridge. Proposed him for Beagle naturalist

Adam Sedgwick
Geology Professor at Cambridge, Took Charles on geology tour of Wales.

Uncle Josiah Wedgwood II
When Robert Darwin objected to Charles become naturalist on the Beagle Uncle Josiah stepped in and changed his mind.

Cousin William Darwin Fox
Sparked Charles' interest in "the science," beetle collecting

Charles Darwin
Beagle Naturalist, 22 years old at start of voyage, "the most important event in my life, and has determined my whole career."

Robert FitzRoy
Captain of the Beagle, 26 years old at the start of this, his second voyage as captain. Needed a gentleman companion and chose Darwin in spite of his "weak nose."

Aristocratic Relatives
FitzRoy was a descendent of Charles II and had influential uncles on both sides of his family

Capt. Pringle Stokes
First Captain of the Beagle. Committed suicide along the Strait of Magellan and opened the way for FitzRoy's appointment

Fuegians
On an earlier voyage Indians near the tip of South America stole a boat from the Beagle. FitzRoy took hostages in retaliation. The boat was never returned and FitzRoy took four Fuegians home to England in hopes of "civilizing" them and returning them to their homeland. Boat Memory died of small pox, but York Minster, Fuegia Basket, and Jemmy Button survived and one purpose of the second voyage was to return them with a missionary to Fuegia.

Admiralty
Prompted by wishes of his relatives FitzRoy was given the task of surveying the coast of southern South America and thereby being able to return the Fuegians to their homeland

Missionaries
The Church Missionary Society took an interest in the Fuegians and arranged to send a young missionary back with them with abundant gifts that turned out to be of little use.