

Pre-Darwinian Evolution Reading Group

III. The Life of Robert Chambers

Robert Chambers (1802-1871): Scottish publisher, poet, journalist, encyclopedist, and anonymous author of the most widely read book on the topic of evolution (*Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*) between Lamarck's *Philosophie Zoologique* (1809) and Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859). Chambers will be the focus of the spring semester reading group which will explore the historical context within which Charles Darwin began his analysis of the process of evolution.



Readings will include:

Just Before Darwin (1959, Milton Millhauser - a biography of Chambers and analysis of *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*)

Victorian Sensation (2000, James A. Secord - an historical analysis of the publication of *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*)

Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation (1844) and *Explanations: a Sequel to Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1845)

Critiques of *Vestiges* by Thomas Huxley, Adam Sedgwick, Hugh Miller, Charles Darwin and others

Students, postdoctorals, and faculty are welcome. The reading group will meet monthly, in the evening, on the following dates: January 18 (Saturday), February 16 (Sunday), March 18 (Tuesday), April 16 (Wednesday). If you are interested in participating in this group (limited to 13 members), contact [William \(Ned\) Friedman](mailto:ned@colorado.edu) (ned@colorado.edu, 492-3082, or in person). The first organizational meeting will be in December, 2002.

Nota bene: This reading group will not count for graduate credit, and will require attendance (with preparation) at all sessions. Reading loads will be significant.