

Keith Francis

An Introduction to the Charles Darwin and "The Origin of the Species"
(History / Arts and Sciences)

The purpose of this project is to do the research which will help me complete the first draft of my manuscript "An Introduction to Charles Darwin and 'The Origin of the Species.'" While working on my manuscript over the last year I discovered three significant pieces of information. First, no introduction to Charles Darwin or "The Origin of the Species" has summarized closely the arguments in the original editions of Darwin's primary works such as "The Origin of the Species" and "The Descent of Man." Authors of introductory books have either not followed Darwin's arguments closely or they have used later editions published in the twentieth century. Second, no introduction to "The Origin of the Species" written in English has paid careful attention to works in French and German that Darwin used. Third, introductory books on Darwin have paid insufficient attention to the importance of Darwin's home life. Where Darwin lived had a profound effect on his future career and his research and writing. I intend to remedy each of these omissions in my book.

Over the last year, since receiving a URC grant, I have made two trips to England and several trips to the Biosciences Library at the University of California, Berkeley in order to read some of the original editions of Darwin's works and to visit the places where Darwin lived. (I have paid for the trips to California myself.) My manuscript now makes extensive use of these editions. I have also used the internet to gain information from the British Library, the National Library of France, and the Library of Congress about the original works of Darwin as well as the books he consulted. (Where possible I have also written to the references librarians at these libraries for information.) Ultimately, however, I need to look at some of these books myself in order to check the accuracy of the information I have – details such as page numbers of quotations I've used and correct titles for books in French and German. The same is true of places such as the Darwin Museum in Lichfield, England: I need to go to these places in order to write about them well; the internet will not suffice.