

## Sir Charles Augustus FitzRoy

(3 August 1846 – 20 January 1855)

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### Falling deeply into debt

The Ducal house of Grafton had its origins in the relationship between King Charles II and Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland. One of the offspring of that liaison, Henry, known by the surname FitzRoy, was ennobled in 1672 when aged nine, and three years later, in 1675, was created Duke of Grafton. The second son of the third Duke of Grafton was General Lord Charles FitzRoy. His first son, Charles Augustus (by Frances, daughter of Edward Miller-Mundy MP of Shipley, Derbyshire) was born on 10 June 1796 in Derbyshire, England. By marriage to the eldest daughter of Charles, fourth Duke of Richmond, and Charlotte, daughter of Alexander, fourth Duke of Gordon, Charles Augustus FitzRoy allied himself with two further Ducal houses.<sup>1</sup>

Aristocratic birth and connections encouraged an expensive and ostentatious lifestyle that could not be well maintained without an income. Charles Augustus, throughout his life, rarely managed to live within his means. In due course that would provide grist for the mills of his detractors in New South Wales, particularly JD Lang – an implacable critic – who claimed that FitzRoy “was a man with neither head nor heart”:

*By orders from home we had to pay him 5000l. a year with various valuable perquisites besides, for governing the colony; but as he was universally understood to be somewhat effete and incapable in matters of government, we had to pay 1500l. a year to a colonial secretary, as Governor’s keeper; the latter doing most of the work, without sharing the responsibility.<sup>2</sup>*

Charles Augustus was educated at Harrow – though not in the art of calligraphy, his handwriting always being formless and at times illegible. In April 1812, aged not yet 16, he was commissioned an Ensign in the

This is a preview. Not all pages are shown.

## Notes

- 1 Generally, “FitzRoy, Sir Charles Augustus”, *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol 19, p 202; Ward, JM, “FitzRoy, Sir Charles Augustus”, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol 1, Melbourne, 1966, p 384; Buckner, P, “Sir Charles Augustus FitzRoy”, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol 8, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2000; [Mrs Flannigan (or Lanaghan)], *Antigua and the Antiguans*, Saunders and Otley, London, 1844, vol II, Appendix, no 17, p 348; Fletcher, BH, “FitzRoy, Charles Augustus”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, OUP, Oxford, 2004, vol 19, p 931. Sir Stephen Roberts, *The Squatting Age in Australia*, MUP, Melbourne, 1975 reprint, p 270, considered FitzRoy’s links to three Ducal houses to be “the only positive thing about him”.
- 2 Lang, JD, *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales*, vol I, 4th ed, London, 1875, p 352. By contrast, Flanagan, R, *The History of New South Wales*, London, 1862, vol II, pp 358-9, wrote in high praise of FitzRoy.
- 3 Although in some otherwise scholarly works FitzRoy has been referred to as Lieutenant-Governor of Prince Edward Island (the style given to his predecessor and successor), the correct designation of his office was Governor: Vice-Regal website of Prince Edward Island <[http://www.gov.pe.ca/olg/gallery/picture\\_setup.php?lg=08Fitzroy](http://www.gov.pe.ca/olg/gallery/picture_setup.php?lg=08Fitzroy)>. See *Colonial Office List for 1877*, pp 33-4.
- 4 Most biographical works and writings concerning FitzRoy identify that honour as a Knight Commander in the Royal Guelphic Order (also referred to as the Order of Hanover, FitzRoy being also described as a Knight of Hanover or as a Knight of the Hanoverian Order). See, however, *London Gazette*, 2.6.1837. All official instruments from England concerning FitzRoy in New South Wales, before he was appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath in 1854, use only the designation “Knight”. In the colony the designation “Knight Companion of the Royal Hanoverian Guelphic Order” was used.
- 5 Buckner, “Sir Charles Augustus FitzRoy”.
- 6 FitzRoy in Prince Edward Island (and also later, in New South Wales) has, however, at least in areas such as education, been described as “a do-nothing-Governor” (Francis, M, “Colonial Political Culture and the Mentality of British Governors”, in *Political Science*, vol 38, no 2, December 1986, p 133).
- 7 *The London Gazette*, Tuesday, 3.8.1841.
- 8 *The Times*, London, 18.3.1842, Supplement, p 15. The family sailed in HMS *Hecla*.
- 9 Watson, F (ed), *Historical Records of Australia (HRA)*, series i, vol 25, Introduction, p x.
- 10 [Mrs Flannigan (or Lanaghan)], Supplemental Chapter, p 285.
- 11 FitzRoy to Grey, 1.4.1847, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, pp 446-7.
- 12 Baird, R, *Impressions and Experiences of the West Indies and North America in 1849*, Philadelphia, 1850, p 52, cited in Dyde, B, *A History of Antigua*, London, 2000, pp 156-7. “[Sir Charles and Lady Mary FitzRoy] by their assiduous and self-denying exertions to relieve the sufferings caused by that terrible visitation, endeared themselves to all ranks of the community”: “Brief Memoir of Lady Mary FitzRoy”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, Friday, 10.12.1847.
- 13 [Mrs Flannigan (or Lanaghan)], p 293; Lady Mary FitzRoy to Duke of Richmond, 10.2.1843, West Sussex Record Office, Goodwood ms 556 (Goodwood ms), quoted in Browne, JFR, *The Life of Lady Mary FitzRoy: Governor’s Lady*, privately printed, 1979.
- 14 [Mrs Flannigan (or Lanaghan)], p 293; Lady Mary FitzRoy to Duke of Richmond, 10.2.1843, Goodwood ms.
- 15 Gipps to La Trobe, 8.5.1846, Shaw, AGL (ed), *Gipps – La Trobe Correspondence*, MUP, Melbourne, 1989, p 389.

- 16 Quoted from Stephen's diary – Foster, SG, *Colonial Improver*, MUP, Melbourne, 1978, p 85.
- 17 The contrast has been made that “Earl Grey was a good example of the British aristocracy at work, and it was a widely held opinion that FitzRoy was a good example of British aristocracy at play”, Thompson, MMH, *The Seeds of Democracy: Early Elections in Colonial New South Wales*, Federation Press, 2006, p 185.
- 18 Therry, R, *Reminiscences*, 2nd ed, London, 1863, p 376.
- 19 Roberts, p 270.
- 20 FitzRoy to Pakington, 9.5.1853, Hampton Family Archives, BA 3835/16 (xi) 152, Worcestershire Record Office, Worcester, United Kingdom.
- 21 Their eldest son Augustus, an officer in the Royal Artillery, later joined them and served as his father's ADC.
- 22 FitzRoy to Gladstone, 18.8.1846, *HRA*, series 1, vol 25, p 169. Fitzroy had been given two Commissions, dated respectively 20 and 21 February 1846, the first as Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of the territory of New South Wales, and the second as Governor and Commander-in-Chief over the colony of North Australia, a new colony created by Letters Patent dated 17 February 1846. Watson, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, Introduction, p x. FitzRoy's Commission as Governor of North Australia was revoked in 1847, as also were the foregoing Letters Patent, after the British Government decided to abandon the new colony in Northern Australia (Grey to FitzRoy, 18.11.1846, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, pp 262-3; see also Introduction, by Watson, *ibid*, p xii, n 31, p 784).
- 23 *Maitland Mercury*, 5.8.1846, p 2.
- 24 *Ibid*.
- 25 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4.8.1846.
- 26 Molony, JN, *An Architect of Freedom: John Hubert Plunkett in New South Wales, 1822-1869*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1973, p 78.
- 27 Georgiana Lowe to Mrs Sherbrooke, 30.9.1846, 13.10.1846, Lowe Papers, quoted Knight, R, *Illiberal Liberal*, MUP, Melbourne, 1966, p 140.
- 28 Quoted, Foster, *Colonial Improver*, p 84.
- 29 *Atlas*, 12.6.1847, p 281.
- 30 *Atlas*, 14.11.1846, p 451. See also *Atlas*, 29.8.1846, p 409; 5.9.1846, p 421; 12.9.1846, p 433.
- 31 *Atlas*, 23.9.1848, p 461.
- 32 FitzRoy had retired from the Army in 1833. All previous governors of New South Wales had been serving officers in either the Royal Navy or the Army. Although Gipps had retained his Commission in the Royal Engineers, the Army Lists described him as “civil governor” (see Watson, F, “Introduction”, *HRA*, series i, vol 19, p xi), which, in the view of Thompson, *The Seeds of Democracy*, p 176, “made him, strictly speaking, the first civilian Governor of New South Wales”.
- 33 Lang, *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales*, p 352.
- 34 Rusden, GW, *History of Australia*, 2nd ed, Melbourne, 1897, vol II, pp 350-1.
- 35 Molony, p 70.
- 36 When Plunkett was selected by Governor Denison as President of the Legislative Council after responsible government, *Australian Banner*, 3.1.1857, quoted by Molony p 248.
- 37 FitzRoy to Gladstone, “Private and Confidential”, 19.8.1846, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, pp 169-70.
- 38 FitzRoy to Grey, 1.1.1847, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, p 296; Grey to FitzRoy, 30.6.1847, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, p 640.
- 39 Grey to FitzRoy, 29.5.1847, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, p 606; Grey to FitzRoy, 19.3.1848, *HRA*, series i, vol 26, p 283.

- 40 Gladstone to FitzRoy, 30.4.1846, "Private and Confidential", *HRA*, series i, vol 25, p 34.
- 41 FitzRoy to Gladstone, 6.11.1846, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, pp 249-50.
- 42 FitzRoy to Grey, 25.9.1847; Shaw, AGL, *Convicts and the Colonies*, London, 1966, p 324.
- 43 Melbourne, ACV, *Early Constitutional Development in Australia*, 2nd ed, UQP, Brisbane, 1963, pp 363, 406.
- 44 Patchett Martin, A, *Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Robert Lowe Viscount Sherbrooke, GCB, DCL*, London, 1893, pp 383-9; Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies*, p 324.
- 45 Patchett Martin, p 385ff. A somewhat different account is given by Martin, AW, *Henry Parkes*, OUP, Melbourne, 1980, pp 58-9.
- 46 Quoted Patchett Martin, p 385ff.
- 47 Quoted Patchett Martin, pp 386-7.
- 48 Quoted Patchett Martin, p 389.
- 49 Ward, "FitzRoy, Sir Charles Augustus", p 386.
- 50 FitzRoy to Grey, 30.6.1849, CO 201/414, folios 328, 338, 336, minute by Hawes, endorsed by Grey, 7.11.1848.
- 51 Francis, "Colonial Political Culture and the Mentality of British Governors".
- 52 Ward, "FitzRoy, Sir Charles Augustus", p 385.
- 53 FitzRoy to Grey, 25.3.1847, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, p 416.
- 54 Grey to FitzRoy, 26.9.1847, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, p 765.
- 55 Clark, CMH, *A History of Australia*, vol III, MUP, Melbourne, 1973, p 344.
- 56 Grey to FitzRoy, 30.6.1847, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, p 640.
- 57 FitzRoy to Grey, 4.1.1848, *HRA*, series i, vol 26, p 140.
- 58 Grey to FitzRoy, 2.6.1848, *HRA*, series i, vol 26, p 438.
- 59 Grey to Lord John Russell, 9.3.1848, Russell Papers, PRO 30/22/7D, folios 425-6.
- 60 FitzRoy to Gladstone, 23.2.1846, *HRA*, series i, vol 24, p 828, n 81; Gladstone to FitzRoy, 28.3.1846, *HRA*, series i, vol 24, p 828; FitzRoy to Grey, 27.4.1847, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, p 520; Grey to FitzRoy, 23.7.1847, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, p 675; FitzRoy to Grey, 23.12.1847, *HRA*, series i, vol 26, pp 117-18.
- 61 FitzRoy to Grey, 24.8.1847, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, p 714.
- 62 FitzRoy to Grey, 14.10.1848, *HRA*, series i, vol 26, p 638 (and enclosure, at p 641).
- 63 FitzRoy to Grey, 2.4.1847, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, p 450.
- 64 FitzRoy to Grey, 2.4.1847 ("separate"), *HRA*, series i, vol 25, p 435; Grey to FitzRoy, 25.2.1848, *HRA*, series i, vol 26, p 239; Whittington, FT, *William Grant Broughton*, Sydney, 1936, p 196.
- 65 FitzRoy to Grey, 22.9.1851, CO 201/442, folio 300; Foster, WC, *Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell and His World*, Institution of Surveyors, Sydney, 1958, pp 428-30.
- 66 Lieutenant Masters, by FitzRoy's desire, was interred in the same vault as Lady Mary FitzRoy (Walker, M, *The Life and Times of Lady Mary FitzRoy*, Wise Owl Research Publishers, Maryborough, Queensland, 1994, p 11).
- 67 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10.12.1847; *Maitland Mercury*, 15.12.1847, p 4.
- 68 Baker, DWA, *Days of Wrath: A Life of John Dunmore Lang*, MUP, Melbourne, 1985, pp 375-8; Pearl, C, *Brilliant Dan Deniehy*, Thomas Nelson, Melbourne, 1972, pp 40-3; Hirst, JB, *The Strange Birth of Colonial Democracy in New South Wales 1848-1884*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1988, pp 22-3.
- 69 Duke of Newcastle to FitzRoy, 3.12.1853, *Newcastle Letter Book*, Ne C 9555/2, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom.

- 70 Butlin, SJ, *Foundations of the Australian Monetary System*, MUP, Melbourne, 1953, p 354, n 154.
- 71 Powell, A, *Patrician Democrat*, MUP, Melbourne, 1977, p 57.
- 72 Flanagan, p 359.
- 73 Martin, *Henry Parkes*, p 58.
- 74 Powell, *Patrician Democrat*, p 57.
- 75 Golder, H, *High and Responsible Office*, SUP, Sydney, 1991, p 67.
- 76 Therry, p 378.
- 77 FitzRoy to Pakington, 10.2.1853, Hampton Family Archives, BA 3835/16 (xi), p 158, Worcestershire Records Office, Worcester, United Kingdom.
- 78 CO 201/474 folios 311, 312, Legislative Council, *Votes and Proceedings*, 6.6.1854.
- 79 *Ibid*; Larcombe, FA, *The Origins of Local Government in New South Wales, 1831-1858*, vol 1, SUP, Sydney, 1973, p 177.
- 80 Flanagan, p 359.
- 81 Steel, WA, "The History of Carcoar, 1815-1881", in *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society (JRAHS)*, vol 17, 1931, p 272.
- 82 Bennett, JM, *In Witness Whereof*, Armidale, 2001, pp 30-1.
- 83 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16.3.1850; Jervis, J, "FitzRoy Falls", in *JRAHS*, vol 29, 1943, p 252.
- 84 Mundy, GC, *Our Antipodes*, 4th ed, London, 1857, p 44.
- 85 The first sod of the Sydney to Goulburn Railway was turned by FitzRoy's daughter on 3 July 1851 (Mennell, P, *The Dictionary of Australasian Biography*, London, 1892, p 167).
- 86 Quoted, Barff, HE, *A Short Historical Account of the University of Sydney*, Sydney, 1902, p 41.
- 87 Serle, G, *The Golden Age*, Melbourne, 1968 reprint, p 11.
- 88 Ward, JM, *James Macarthur*, SUP, Sydney, 1981, pp 179, 184, 189.
- 89 FitzRoy to Grey, 15.1.1852, CO 201/450 folios 152-157.
- 90 FitzRoy to Pakington, 1.1.1853 ("Confidential"), CO 201/463.
- 91 Grey to FitzRoy, 31.7.1847, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, p 698ff; Ward, JM, "Australia's First Governor-General Sir Charles FitzRoy 1851-1855", *George Arnold Wood Memorial Lecture*, University of Sydney, 23.9.1953.
- 92 Ward, "Australia's First Governor-General", p 5.
- 93 Grey to FitzRoy, 31.7.1847, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, pp 698-703, especially at p 702.
- 94 FitzRoy to Gladstone, 29.9.1846, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, pp 198-9.
- 95 Watson, *HRA*, series i, vol 25, p 782.
- 96 FitzRoy to Gladstone, 29.9.1846; minutes to despatch no 23, 13 March, 15 March 1847, CO 201/368, p 236. It is interesting that as early as November 1846 it was being rumoured in Sydney that upon the separation of the Port Phillip District, La Trobe would be appointed. Lieutenant-Governor of the new colony, Deas Thompson would be appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the remaining part of New South Wales, and FitzRoy would be appointed Governor-General of all the Australasian colonies (*Australian*, 5.11.1846).
- 97 Grey to FitzRoy, 31.7.1848, CO 201/394 (referred to in New South Wales as the "Golden Despatch", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17.11.1848); *Confidential Minutes printed for use of Cabinet*, CO 201/438; Ward, "Australia's First Governor-General", pp 6-7.
- 98 Quick and Garran, *The Annotated Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth*, 1901, reprinted 1976, Legal Books, Sydney, p 89.
- 99 Quick and Garran, p 90.

- 100 Ward, JM, *Earl Grey and the Australian Colonies 1846-1857*, MUP, Melbourne, 1958, p 231.
- 101 Ward, "Australia's First Governor-General", p 13.
- 102 La Trobe to Newcastle, 19.11.1853, CO 309/19, minute by Merivale thereon.
- 103 Minute by Merivale, 19.11.1853, CO 309/19. See also La Trobe to Pakington, 15.3.1853, and minute thereon by Gairdner, CO 309/15.
- 104 On the other hand, FitzRoy's successor, Sir William Denison, who, upon appointment as Governor of New South Wales, also received a similar Commission as Governor-General of the Australian Colonies (and who, equally with FitzRoy, in that role lacked advisers and officials), had a remarkable record in promoting intercolonial cooperation, in such matters as the Murray River Convention of 1855, the intercolonial agreement of 1856 (regarding steamship communication with Britain), the conference of 1856 on ocean highway lights for the Australian coastline, this all despite his strong dislike of the institution of the Governor-Generalship (Denison to Sir George Grey, 18.11.1854, reproduced in Denison, W, *Varieties of Vice-Regal Life*, London, 1870, vol I, pp 261-3). According to Ward, "Australia's First Governor-General", p 20, it was only the fear of seeming to discourage the emergence of a federation movement in Australia and unwillingness to rob the people of New South Wales of the dignity of calling their Governor, Governor-General, that led the Colonial Office to appoint Denison to that latter office.
- 105 FitzRoy to Duke of Newcastle, 28.7.1853, *Newcastle Letter Book*, Ne C 9555/1, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom.
- 106 Duke of Newcastle to FitzRoy, 3.12.1853, *Newcastle Letter Book*.
- 107 Sir George Grey to FitzRoy, 1.7.1854, CO 202/63, folio 220; FitzRoy to Sir George Grey, 9.9.1854, CO 201/475, folio 66.
- 108 Parkes, H, *Fifty Years in the Making of Australian History*, London, 1892, p 505.
- 109 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1858, vol 1, p 449; Fletcher, p 933.