

EXPLORER



SIR THOMAS
MITCHELL



**HERITAGE
SERIES**

SIR THOMAS MITCHELL

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HISTORY

Name: Sir Thomas Mitchell
Born: 15 June 1792
Died: 5 October 1855
Known for: Surveyor, Explorer of the Australian Interior and one of Australia's early inventors

An Australian Explorer from Scotland who served as both the Assistant Surveyor General and Surveyor General for the Australian Government. He was knighted in 1839. He was also a map maker, inventor, artist, poet, and naturalist.



Thomas Livingstone Mitchell was born in Stirlingshire, Scotland on 15 June 1792 to parents John Mitchell and Janet Wilson. He received a reasonable education and joined the British Army as a volunteer upon his uncle's death.

He received his first official military commission on 24 June 1811 when aged 19 years. His commission saw him promoted to 2nd Lieutenant of the 1st Battalion (95th Rifles) and during military campaigns during the Napoleonic Wars, he came to the attention of his superiors.

His superiors recognised him for having outstanding draughtsman skills, which unknown to him at that time were to become central to the rest of his life. He later received the Military

General Service Medal with additional Bars for the numerous engagements in which he was involved and achieved the military rank of Major. Throughout the rest of his life he was often referred to as 'Major Mitchell'.

After the War had ended and while serving in Spain and Portugal, he met and married Mary Blunt, the daughter of General Richard Blunt. They went on to have 12 children together.





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Time in Australia

In 1827 Mitchell was awarded the position of Assistant Surveyor General of the Colony of New South Wales. After the passing of his superior Surveyor General John Oxley on 27 May 1828, Mitchell took his place as the official Government Surveyor General for the Colony of New South Wales. By 1829 his Department was responsible for surveying bridges and roads and by 1830 he was solely responsible for the Survey Department.

As the colony was growing quickly, new settlers needed accurate survey maps in relation to the purchase and sale of land, and Mitchell's skills as a leader and surveyor saw him bring significant improvements to the quality and accuracy of local survey maps. He also made improvements to the techniques used in surveying and brought about a general improvement in the quality and number of survey tools used by his surveyors.

During his time as Surveyor General, the Great North Road which linked the Hunter Valley with Sydney, was surveyed and constructed by convict labour (1826–36). The Great South Road which linked Sydney with Goulburn, was also surveyed and constructed by convict labour. Later, a long section of this road became the modern-day Hume Highway. He also surveyed the first road from high in the Blue Mountains to the township of Bathurst. The alignment of the current day highway follows most of his original survey. He was also responsible for the completion of survey maps for areas including: Sydney City, Port Jackson and Darling Point. He was awarded a Knighthood for his detailed and accurate map of the 'Nineteen Countries' (a map that he had divided into 19 sections to best represent the furthest reaches of white settlement in the Colony of New South Wales at that time).

However, after suffering through a protracted public conflict with then Governor Sir Ralph Darling, who was critical of some of Mitchell's work, Mitchell set his sights on exploring. This became a reality for him when Darling left the Colony and Mitchell first sought permission from Darling's replacement to lead an expedition into the interior.

First Expedition (24 November 1831 – February 1832)

His first expedition was a failed attempt to discover if there was a large river flowing to the north-west of Sydney, between the Castlereagh and Gwydir Rivers. Later these rivers were found to make up a part of the Murray-Darling River System of New South Wales.



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Mitchell's first expedition party was made up of Assistant Surveyor George Boyle White and 15 able bodied convicts. The expedition was supported by 20 bullocks which were used for the carting of goods. The expedition also included three drays, three carts and nine pack horses.

The expedition set out from Sydney on 24 November 1831 and on arriving at Wollombi in the Hunter Valley, they met Surveyor Heneage Finch. Finch was known for his surveying of a track from Sydney to Wollombi and expressed a strong interest in joining the expedition. Mitchell agreed and instructed Finch to secure his own additional men and supplies and then catch up with them once he had done so.

By 11 December the expedition had reached *Wallamoul Station* near Tamworth, which at that time was the furthest outlying locality that white settlers had opened up and made secure. They continued on and reached the Gwydir River in mid January and located the Barwon River in late January. Around this time Finch finally caught up and brought with him bad news.

Finch reported how two of the three convict men that were travelling with him had been murdered by the Indigenous people. Finch had left the two men at camp and then left with a third convict man to find water. Upon arriving back at camp, they found it ransacked and the men murdered. This caused Mitchell great concern and resulted in him abandoning the expedition. When they arrived back at the camp where Finch's men had been murdered, Mitchell took the time to bury them before continuing south to Sydney.

Some 14 years later it was revealed that the two convicts who had been murdered had been involved in sexual relations with some Aboriginal women and it was considered possible that this was the catalyst for the murders. Mitchell had possibly encountered for the first time the problems associated with using convict labour on long expeditions.

Second Expedition (6 April 1835 – mid September)

He returned to surveying after his first expedition. However as the colony grew, so did discontent within Government ranks about the quality of his previously performed works. Growing more frustrated with this constant criticism of his works, Mitchell again set his sights on exploring.



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On 6 April 1835 he set out to survey the Darling River from its known source, through the uncharted lands of the Interior to where it met with the Murray River. In doing so, he would confirm that the Darling River was a tributary of the great Murray River, something that was still yet to be established. The expedition was made up of 21 convicts and botanist Richard Cunningham who acted as second-in-charge. Cunningham had previously served as Colonial Botanist.

By mid April the expedition had reached the Bogan River where they made camp. Then on 17 April 1835 Cunningham wandered away from camp while looking for plants and was never seen again. A search party organised by Mitchell found Cunningham's dead horse and some of his belongings scattered on the ground. A later search party sent from Bathurst found he had survived for a short period with a local tribe of Aborigines, who had killed him when they became suspicious of his erratic and uncertain behaviour. Cunningham's remains were recovered and buried at Lower Tabratong. A tombstone records his murder on or about 15 April 1835 and that he was aged 42 years at the time of his death. A later 1836 Survey Map compiled by Mitchell shows the position of Cunningham's murder.

Mitchell decided to continue on with the expedition and a few days later they had an unfortunate altercation with an Aborigine, which resulted in him being shot. Mitchell's journal records how the man's wound was dressed and he later left. The expedition then continued and they located the Darling River by the end of May. They then made their way some distance downstream before setting up camp. Concerned for their safety, they fortified their camp as much as possible. Mitchell named the site Fort Bourke in honour of Governor Richard Bourke and in reflection of their camp fortifications.

Two whale boats, which they had carted on drays, were launched from their campsite on 1 June, in order to speed up the task of reaching the Murray River. The river soon shallowed and they were forced to return to overland trekking.

During their journey, they came upon numerous Aboriginal tribes, with some showing levels of hostility towards them. One in particular was of great concern to them, though no fighting occurred and they were able to pass by.

On 9 July Mitchell became concerned when it appeared that a number of Aboriginal groups were banding together nearby. Then a skirmish occurred just upstream from



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where he was and near the later township of Menindee. The deadly skirmish occurred between some of Mitchell's men who were reportedly out looking for food. One of the party was injured and an Aboriginal man, lubra and child were killed. At this point Mitchell decided to end the expedition and return to Sydney. Mitchell left the area on 14 July and arrived in Sydney in mid September.

A journal entry withheld from an inquiry but added later by Mitchell, suggested that the skirmish near Menindee was likely the result of actions by some of his convict party.

While Mitchell was not successful in the main purpose of the expedition, it did mean that 483 km of the Darling River had now been charted. Further, much had been learnt about the outlying tribes of Aborigines.

Third Expedition (17 March 1836 – November 1836)

Mitchell's Third Expedition was once again centred on the Darling River, though unlike his previous expeditions where he started from near Sydney and headed downstream towards the Murray River, this expedition would commence at what was believed to be the Darling River's mouth at the Murray River. This site would later be known as Wentworth, a short drive from Mildura. Ultimately Mitchell planned to make his way up the Darling, then back to Sydney via settlements established near Yass.

Mitchell was again in charge and was assisted by assistant surveyor Granville Stapylton who acted as second in command. The party also consisted of 23 convicts. They first travelled from Sydney to the mouth of the Murray using the safest inland route they knew, then commenced travelling up what they believed was the Darling River.

After reaching the Murrumbidgee River, they encountered Aborigines with hostile intentions. Large numbers were gathering and Mitchell gained intelligence from his Aboriginal guide John Piper that the group planned to attack the expedition.

Mitchell was short on men as he had already divided his party into two groups the week before and now only had 15 men with him. Mitchell's journal tells us that he made a decision to split his 15 men into two groups, one to move forward and the other to keep hidden and create a defensive ambush if the main group was attacked by the Barkinji tribesmen. A deadly skirmish occurred soon after and a number of Aborigines were killed.



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Interestingly, Mitchell's report of the incident prepared for his superiors after his return to Sydney, suggested that his men had acted out of self-defence when taken by surprise. However this was in contrast to how his journal explains the skirmish. His journal reports how one of the convicts in the other group had fired upon the tribesmen without orders, then that group had pursued the tribesmen through bushland, firing upon them at will. Mitchell's report suggested that seven Aborigines were killed and four wounded during the incident.

Mitchell continued his journey to the mouth of what was thought to be the Darling River, arriving on 31 May. He then explored the lower regions of the large river until he had convinced himself that it was indeed the Darling River. They then returned to the Murray River and slowly made their way upstream until they arrived at the site of the present day major township of Swan Hill on 20 June which Mitchell named after the hill they camped on and some black swans which had kept him awake.

They then left the region of the Murray River to explore areas to the south west. Mitchell climbed Pyramid Hill, naming the impressive area *Australia Felix*. They crossed the Loddon River in early July and made their way to the Grampians and later the Glenelg River on the southern coastline. They then travelled south-east to Portland, arriving on 29 August. Here they were surprised to discover some deserted sheds and hear a shot from a rifle.

A little later they met farmers Frank and Edward Henty, brothers who had successfully established a farm in the area over two years previous. Mitchell noted in his journal how 'it was very obvious indeed from the magnitude and extent of the buildings and the substantial fencing erected that both time and labour had been expended in their construction. A good garden stocked with abundance of vegetables already smiled on Portland Bay.' He also learnt that the Henty brothers were importing sheep and cattle from Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) as quickly as they could.

Whalers were also active in and around Portland Bay and Mitchell was surprised to hear that whalers had already shipped 700 tons of whale oil that season. One boat was visible in Portland Bay upon their arrival and they were informed that just a few days previous, there had been five boats in the bay. As they were preparing to leave Portland, a whale alarm was sounded and Mitchell recorded how 'instantly three well manned boats were seen cutting through the water, a harpooner standing up at the stern of each with oar in



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hand...' He described the whale as a hunchback whale (humpback whale) and wrote how 'it would like occupy the boats for some time'.

The expedition party then headed for Sydney, splitting into two groups with Mitchell in the advance (faster) group. During his return, Mitchell climbed and named Mount Arapiles and Mount Macedon and on 8 October 1836 he crossed the Goulburn River near the current day locality of Mitchellstown after taking a series of measurements, including the water temperature which was 54° Fahrenheit (12.2° Celsius). He communicated with the local Aboriginal peoples via his Aboriginal guide John Piper and they informed him that the name of the river was 'Bayunga'.

Today the location of Mitchell's campsite near the Goulburn River is recognised by a rock memorial cairn and plaque located just west of the Majors Creek Streamside Reserve near the locality of Mitchellstown. The reserve is managed by Parks Victoria and the roadside monument is located on Mitchellstown Road.

When both groups had made it safely back to Sydney in early November, Mitchell faced an enquiry by the Legislative Council in relation to the massacre of Aborigines during his expedition. He later received an official rebuke for his handling of the event.

The Aboriginal female guide who had helped Mitchell during much of the expedition was invited to join Mitchell's family of eight children, which she did. Later reports tell us how she was even taught how to read and write.

Fourth Expedition (15 December 1845 – 20 January 1846)

Mitchell's fourth and final expedition was not associated with the Darling River. This time his expedition was into what is now known as Queensland and his objective was to discover the truth about a possible river system that reportedly ran north-west into the Gulf of Carpentaria. The large expedition group left from near Boree and included Second in Charge Edmund Kennedy who died at a later time after being speared by an Aborigine at Escape River near Cape York.

The expedition first travelled to the Upper Darling River, then made their way north before arriving at a large natural rock bridge where the township of St George now stands. Being a suitable place for a good camp, Kennedy was left there with most of the

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party and supplies, while Mitchell took a smaller group and moved on ahead of the main party. It was agreed that Kennedy would follow a little later at a slower pace.

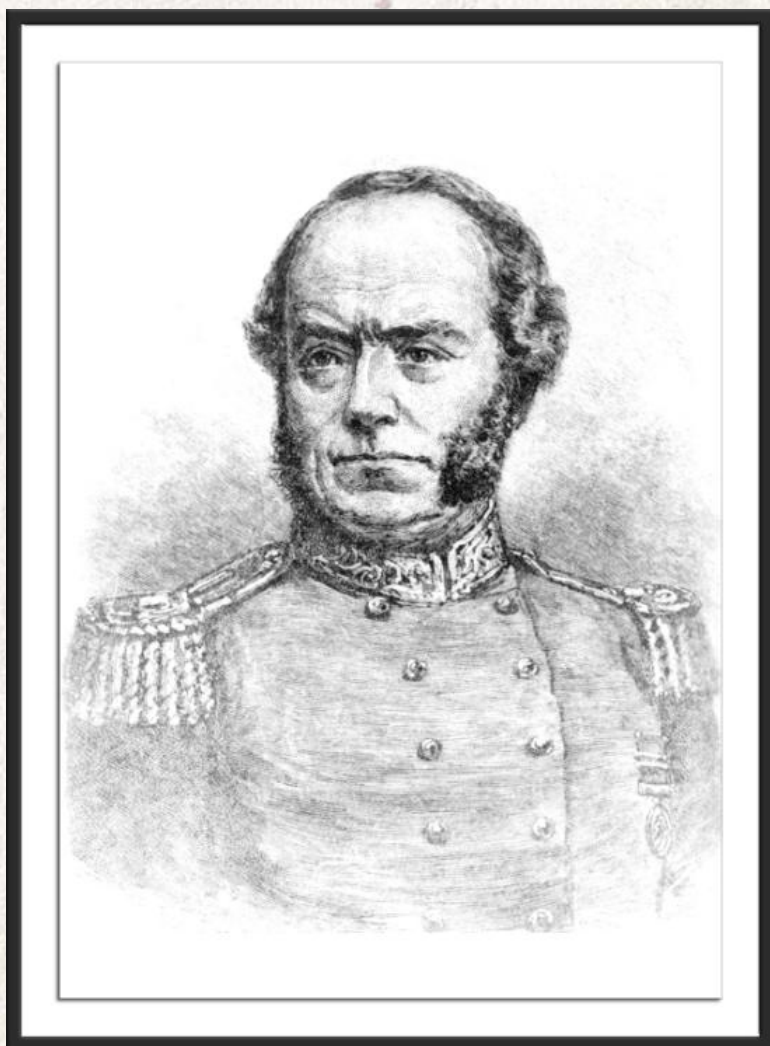
Mitchell made it to what is now the open pastoral area surrounding Mount Abundance, which he named upon its discovery. He then waited for Kennedy who joined them on 1 June 1846. After a short sojourn Mitchell again went ahead. This time the two groups were apart for over four months, during which time Mitchell investigated the head of the Maranoa River and discovered the Warrago River.

He then travelled to the Claude and Nooga Rivers before reaching the Belyando River (which had been discovered in 1845 by explorer Ludwig Leichhardt). Mitchell continued to explore the area and discovered what he incorrectly believed was the fabled north-west river. He named it Victoria River before commencing his long return to Sydney. They arrived on 20 January 1847.

A year later, Kennedy proved that the Victoria River was not the great north-west river as Mitchell had previously thought, but instead that it ran into the Cooper Creek. Kennedy renamed the River Barcoo River—as it was known by local Aborigines.

Later Life

Mitchell secured leave from his position in early 1837, travelling in May to London and published his work on his explorations named *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*. It includes descriptions of the recently explored region of Australia Felix and of the present colony of New South Wales. The two volume set is available freely in digital form and also includes maps, sketches and watercolours produced by Mitchell.





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After extending his leave numerous times, he finally arrived back in Australia in 1841. In March 1847 he left for London again and published his book:

Journal of an Expedition into the Interior of Tropical Australia, in search of a route from Sydney to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

His books were considered rich and informative works and were widely regarded for their accurate accounts of what the Interior of Australia was like and of his portrayals of the local indigenous people that he met and worked with on his expeditions. His publications helped elevate him to the position of most celebrated Australian Interior Explorer of his time.

In April 1844 Mitchell was elected to the New South Wales Legislative Council for the electoral district of Port Phillip, but he resigned from the Legislative Council after just five months. Then in 1851 Mitchell, along with his son Roderick and the Government Geologist Samuel Stutchbury, prepared a report on the goldfields at Bathurst. This led him to later select the site of the township of Ophir of which he also conducted the initial street survey. His report was presented to the Legislative Council in February 1852.

Last Duel in Australia

Mitchell is notably remembered as being possibly the last person on record in Australia to challenge another man to a pistol duel. The duel occurred on 27 September 1851 after Mitchell challenged Sir Stuart Alexander Donaldson for publically criticising him. The men were each equipped with one of a set of two French 50 calibre duelling pistols. Both men fired three times but both failed to connect their opponent. The pistols survive today at the Canberra National Museum of Australia as a record of early colonialism.

Inventor - Boomerang Propeller Screw

Mitchell was also a broad thinker and was not afraid to experiment with new ideas. One of his resulting inventions was the *Boomerang Propeller Screw* (initially spelt 'Bomerang' though generally reported by the media as 'Boomerang'). The Boomerang Propeller Screw which was first patented in 1849 and consisted of an iron propeller with a blade (or blades) shaped in a manner that was inspired by a wooden Aboriginal hunting tool he had witnessed many times in Australia called the Boomerang.



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The main difference between a normal iron screw and his iron screw was that Mitchell had cut away more of the iron on each blade—near where it attached to the main shaft. This made the blade thinner and more akin to the blade of a boomerang. This reportedly had the effect of slightly decreasing the level of drag upon the ship, thereby slightly increasing a ships overall speed and slightly lessening the amount of fuel needed for a trip. On Saturday 11 January 1851 he defended his invention in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, giving a detailed description of his invention which he felt had been widely misunderstood.

Mitchell went public with his *Boomerang Propeller Screw* invention in May 1852. His first test of the screw was held in Sydney Harbour after it was fitted to the merchant ship *Keera*. Mitchell considered the results were promising and continued to promote his invention. Then after travelling to England in 1853, he had his screw fitted to the merchant ship *Genova* which according to media reports, also produced an average increase in speed.

The screw was then trialled by the Admiralty on the English Ship of War *HMS Conflict*. This test likewise proved promising. According to media reports, the *Conflict* was propelled at 9 1/4 knots with the boomerang screw, compared to 8 3/4 knots with a standard screw.

With the boomerang propeller screw fitted, the steam engine aboard the *Conflict* rotated at 10 revolutions slower (65 revolutions) than the normal 75 revolutions with a normal screw. One newspaper reported:

If it cost 800 pound for fuel to send the Conflict from Portsmouth to New York, propelled by a boomerang, in 16 days, it would cost 900 pound for fuel to send her the same voyage in 17 days, propelled by a common screw!

In March 1854 Sir Thomas Mitchell took his invention to an English shipyard in Glasgow, where he discovered shipbuilders were already using a slightly modified version of his invention without his knowledge or permission.

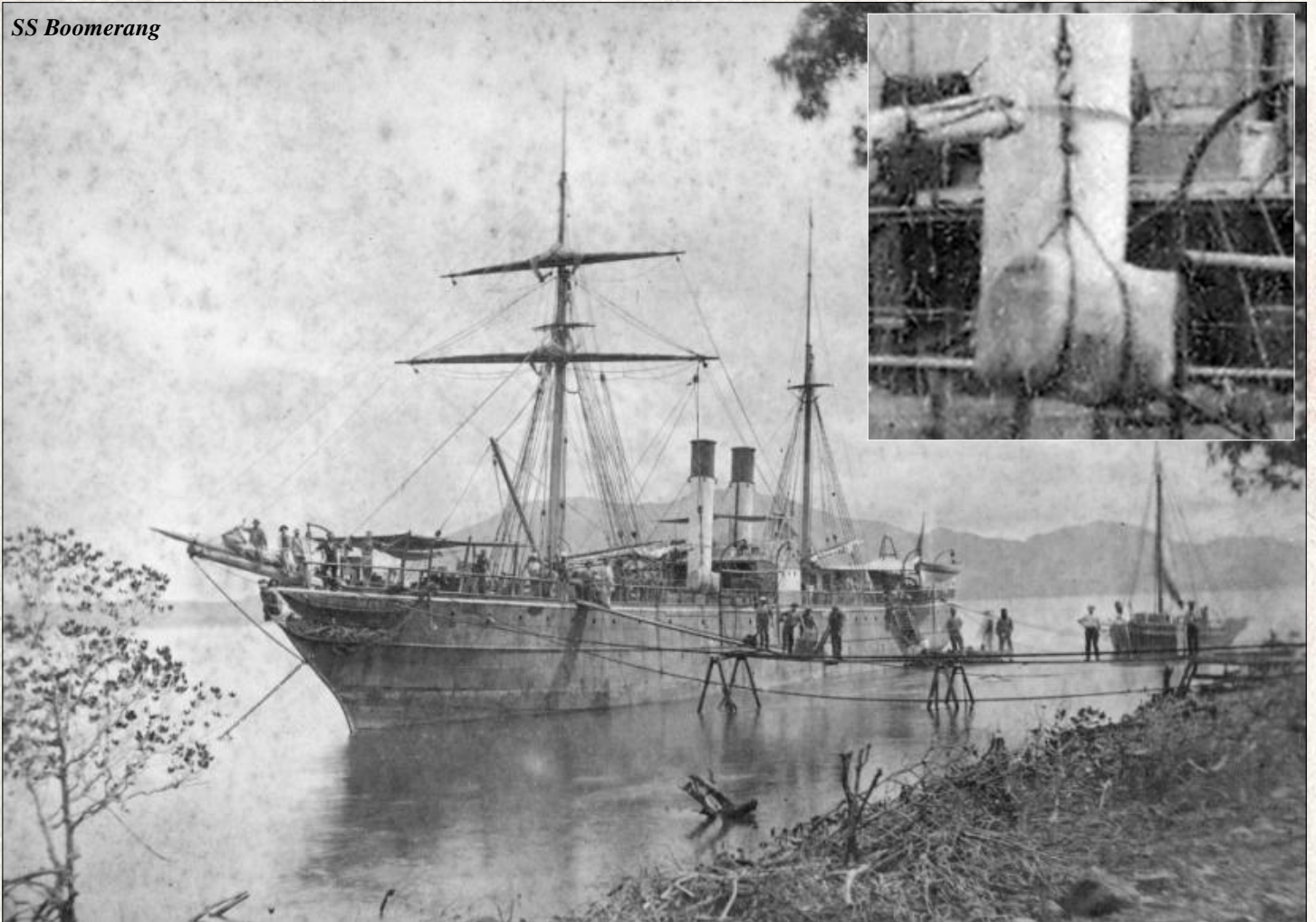
In an article in the Sydney Morning Herald on Saturday 18 March 1854, it is stated that:

...the Savages of New South Wales—who are presumed to be the original inventors—knock down birds and beasts, and likewise used in warfare, but on being examined mathematically it is found simply and actually to be the effective portion of the helix of the screw.

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SS Boomerang



A possible connection between the Boomerang Propeller Screw and the S.S. Boomerang

On 28 January 1854, the Steam Ship *S.S. Boomerang* was launched at Glasgow, having been built by shipbuilder Thomas Wingate & Co., Glasgow. The ship was built for the Australasian Steam Navigation Co., Melbourne and sailed to Australia in 1854 by Captain Munro. The ship was described as being an 'iron screw steamer with two masts'.

It is not currently known if the ship was named the *Boomerang* for being one of the early adopters of the Boomerang Propeller Screw. It is interesting that she shared the same name as the invention, was built in the same year that other ships were first being fitted with Boomerang Propeller Screws, and was built at the same shipyard that Thomas visited to promote his invention earlier that year. During that visit he discovered the shipyard were already fitting ships with a version of the Boomerang Screw.

We may never know why this ship was called the *Boomerang*, though we do know that it was



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built for service in Australia and it was here that it served out its days. Its period of service even included doing the regular mail run between Melbourne and New Zealand for many years. She was finally hulked in 1894 and scrapped in 1898.

According to the website *Scottish Built Ships*, owners of the *SS Boomerang* included:

- W H Eldred (1881)
- J J Ames & R H Willis (1881)
- Newcastle Steamship Co Ltd, Newcastle NSW (1882)
- Newcastle and Hunter River Steam Navigation Co, Sydney NSW (unknown)
- T. M. Goodall, Sydney and hulked in Sydney Harbour (1894)

Death of Sir Thomas Mitchell

Mitchell died on 5 October 1855 at Darling Point. He had contracted a chill while surveying a section of road in New South Wales, which developed into bronchitis. He was an esteemed explorer of the Colony, of which he had dedicated 28 years exploring. He was buried at the Camperdown Cemetery at Newtown.

Mitchell is remembered as one of the most significant early surveyors of the Colony of New South Wales. He was responsible for surveying towns, roads and reserves, while as an explorer he helped open up the Interior of Australia, discovered that the Darling River flowed into the Murray River and discovered some of the most fertile farmland in both Queensland and Victoria. He is also remembered as a mapmaker, artist, inventor, a student of fossil studies, a poet and an early naturalist.

Since his death, a large number of localities, infrastructure and even items such as a train, have since been named in his honour. A list illustrating some of these is shown later in this factsheet. There are also over 35 cairns and memorials that have been erected across Australia in honour of Sir Thomas Mitchell. Finally, he also named a number of natural features during his expeditions and a partial list follows later in the factsheet.

TIMELINE

BASIC TIMELINE OF EVENTS



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

BASIC TIMELINE

- 15 June 1792** Thomas Livingstone Mitchell was born in Scotland.
- 24 November 1831** Left on his first expedition, returning to Sydney in February 1832.
- 6 April 1835** Left on his second expedition, returning to Sydney in mid September.
- 17 March 1836** Left on his third expedition, returning to Sydney in November 1836.
- 15 December 1845** Left on his fourth expedition, returning to Sydney on 20 January 1846
- 1845** Awarded a knighthood.
- 1849** Patent received for the *Boomerang Propeller Screw*.
- 11 January 1851** Mitchell defended his invention in the media (*Sydney Morning Herald*, Saturday 11 January 1851).
- 27 September 1851** Mitchell challenged Sir Stuart Alexander Donaldson to a pistol duel for publically criticising him. This is possibly the last recorded duel in Australia.
- May 1852** Thomas tested the *Boomerang Propeller Screw* in Sydney Harbour when it was attached to the merchant vessel *Keera* in May 1852.
- 12 June 1852** A newspaper article describing the Boomerang Propeller Screw makes mention of how the boomerang was 'first in ancient Egypt for the main purpose for which the aborigines of Australia use it—namely, to kill ducks.' Further it was stated that 'some of the paintings in the tombs of Thebes, especially in one engraved in Wilkinson's Egypt; and also, that Egyptian boomerangs made of hard wood, about an inch



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and a-half or two inches broad, curved, and about two feet long, are still to be seen in museums in Europe, having been found by explorers among the tombs of Thebes. Sir Thomas also observed, that the 'throwing stick' of the ancient Irish was a missile of the same nature of the boomerang' (*Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*, Saturday 12 June 1852).

1853

Sir Thomas Mitchell took his invention to England where further tests on it were conducted with great success. After being trialled on the civil ship *Geneva*. it was then trialled by the Admiralty on *HMS Conflict* at Geneva resulting in much promise.

5 October 1855

Sir Thomas Mitchell died.

14 August 2018

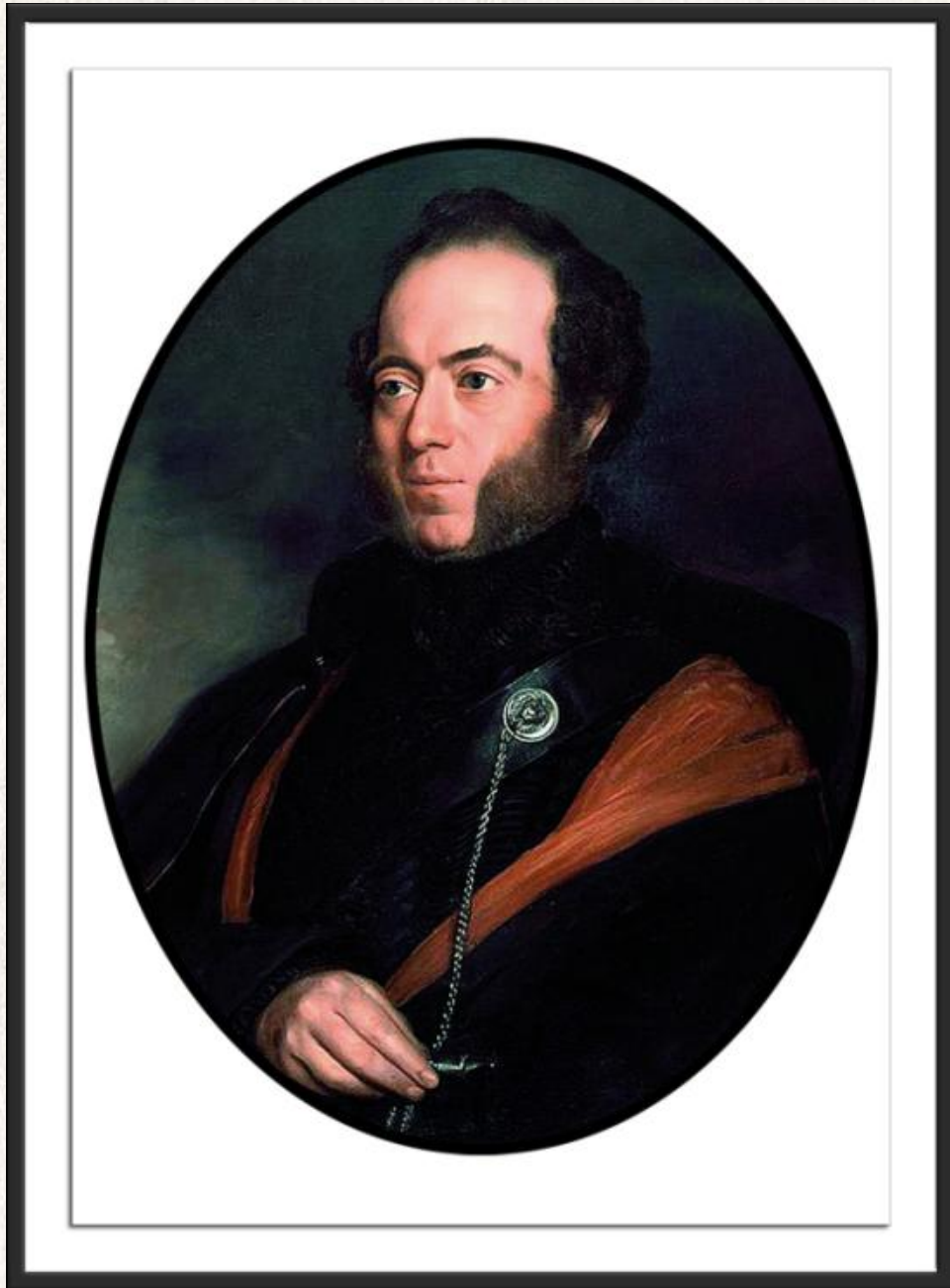
Artworkz commenced work on this factsheet.

GALLERY

RELATED IMAGERY

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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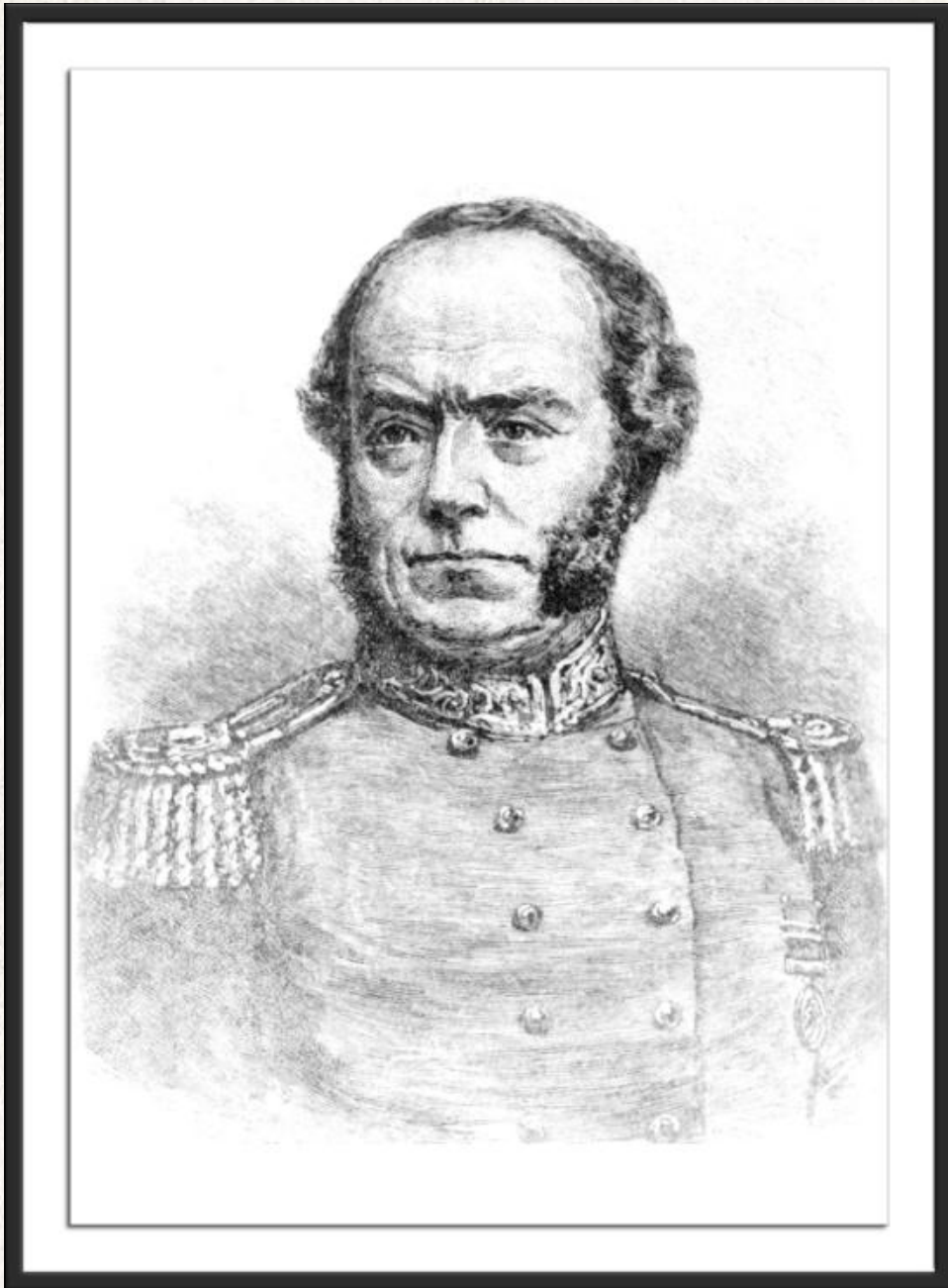


**Painting of Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell by an unknown artist
and likely painted in the 1830s**

Public Domain Image courtesy Queensland Digital Library

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell

Public Domain Image courtesy Queensland Digital Library

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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1836 lithograph of John Piper, an Aboriginal man from the Wiradjuri tribe who travelled with Mitchell during most of his third expedition into the interior of Australia.

Artist Sir Thomas Mitchell
Courtesy Art Gallery of
South Australia

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



New line cleared of trees, 31 July 1830

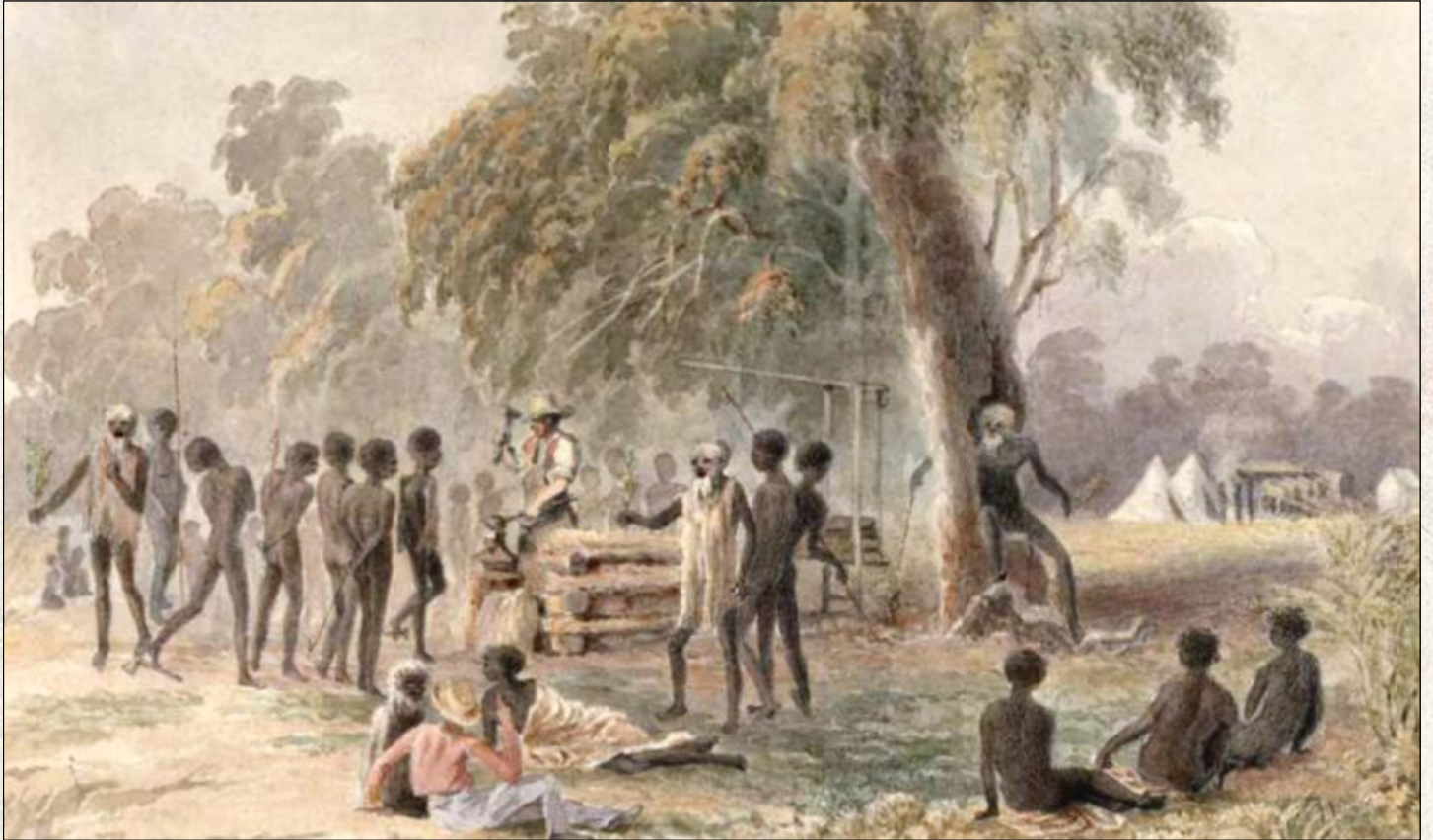
Artist Sir Thomas Mitchell (Watercolor)

Courtesy State Library of NSW

Mitchell Library's Pictures and Manuscript collections

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Robbing the blacksmith, 1835

From book *Three Expeditions into the Interior – Volume 1*

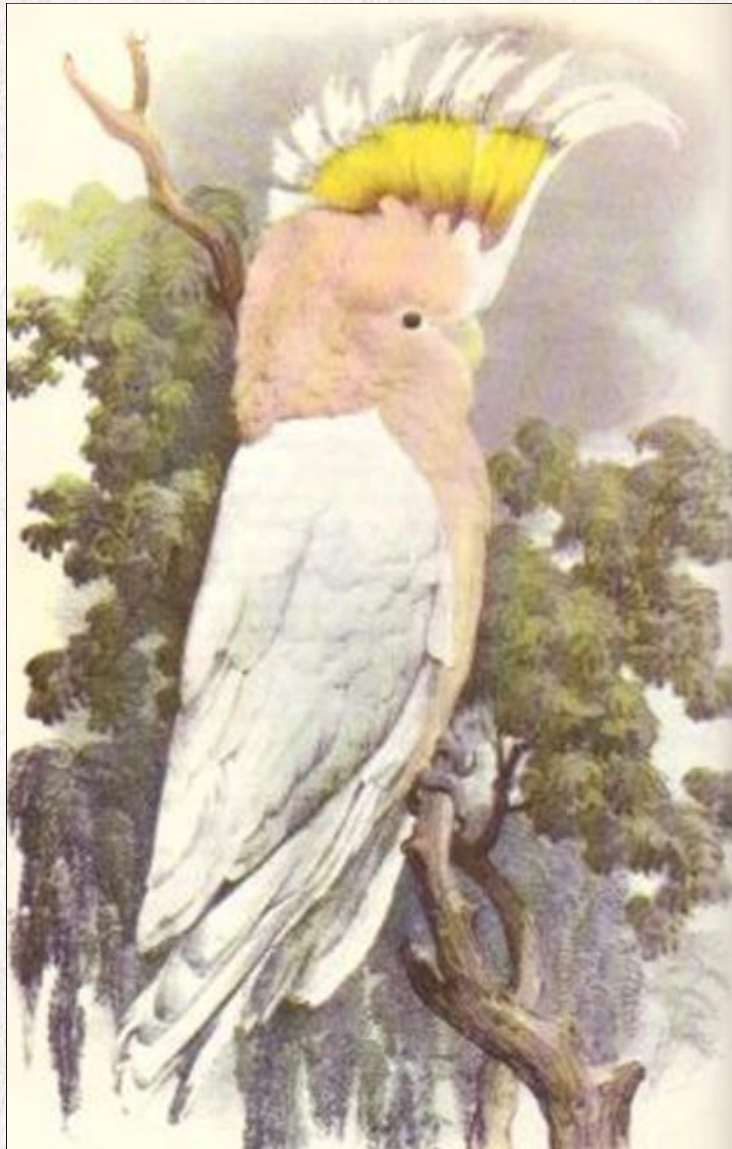
Artist Sir Thomas Mitchell (Watercolor)

Courtesy State Library of NSW

Mitchell Library's Pictures and Manuscript collections

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Sir Thomas Mitchell Cockatoo, 1835

From book *Three Expeditions into the Interior – Volume 1*
Artist Sir Thomas Mitchell (Watercolor)
Courtesy State Library of NSW
Mitchell Library's Pictures and Manuscript collections

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French made .50 calibre duelling pistols used by Mitchell during one of the last Australian duels on record on 27 September 1851

Courtesy National Museum of Australia



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY

Courtesy National Library Australia



Courtesy National Library Australia



Spirit of Progress

The *Spirit of Progress* was launched on 17 November 1937 and was often pulled by engine *Sir Thomas Mitchell* (S301). When the *Spirit of Progress* and the *Southern Aurora* merged into one train in 1986, it was engine S301 *Sir Thomas Mitchell* that pulled the first *Sydney/Melbourne Express*.

(Top) *Sir Thomas Mitchell* pictured near Kilmore in 1938.

(Left) *Spirit of Progress* passing Kilmore in 1939, pulled by *Sir Thomas Mitchell*.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



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Copyright © Kathie Maynes 2018

Major Mitchell's Cockatoo
(*Lophochroa leadbeateri*)



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



The Portland Monument includes a Major Mitchell plaque. Other plaques include: the first field ploughed in Victoria, the first discovery and naming of Portland Bay, the landing of William Dutton who was the first whiteman to visit Portland Bay and the Henty brothers who established the first settlement in Victoria (both in Portland Bay and inland at Henty where they later established the first inland settlement).

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Henty memorial plaque in 2021



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Mt Arapiles memorial plaque in 2018. This mount was named and ascended by Mitchell on 23 July 1866.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Harrow Major Mitchell monument in 2018



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



MAJOR MITCHELL
PASSED THIS SPOT
2ND AUG. 1836

Major Mitchell on Coleraine-Edenhope Road near Harrow in 2018



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Major Mitchell at Dunkeld in 2018

IN HONOR
OF
MAJOR MITCHELL
WHO HAVING DISCOVERED
MT ABRUPT
ASCENDED IT 14TH SEPT 1836
THIS MONUMENT WAS
ERECTED BY RESIDENTS OF
DUNKELD AND DISTRICT
14TH SEPT 1914



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Major's Creek Streamside Reserve Memorial Cairn in 2018 commemorating the spot where Sir Thomas Mitchell camped near the Goulburn River on his Third Expedition through the Australia Felix in 1834. The site is 7 km from the township of Nagambie.

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Nagambie Major Mitchell cairn in 2018 and located 20 metres north of the Nagambie Public Toilets

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Nyah Major Mitchell cairn in 2019

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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Swan Hill Major Mitchell cairn in 2019.

Mitchell camped near the present day major township of Swan Hill on 20 June 1836 which he named after the hill they camped on and some black swans which had kept him awake.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Mount William cairn at the Grampians in 2020

NEWSPAPERS

RELATED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES



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NEWSPAPERS

NOVEL PROPELLER FOR STEAM-VESSELS.

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir T. Livingston Mitchell has secured a patent for a new form of the screw-propeller of vessels. The inventor had observed the peculiar motion of the "boomerang," in its rotatory motion through the air—that of whirling round a hollow centre, leaving a vacant centre of gravity; and it suggested itself to him that this centre might be in a line dividing the two eccentric parts, so that they should be together equal to the remaining central portion. On experiment, this view was confirmed; and he considers an angle, similar to that of the "boomerang," will prove the best form for the application of the screw-principle in propelling vessels. Motion is communicated as usual to the shaft, and the blade of the propeller may be made with one side convex, and the other flat, or with two flat or two convex sides. When made, it will be necessary to chamfer the edges. It may be made with more than one blade; but it is considered one will answer better than two or more.

Adelaide Observer
Saturday 7 July 1849
Courtesy National Library Australia

The Boomerang Propeller Screw patent

Adelaide Observer
Saturday 7 July 1849
Courtesy National Library Australia

NEWSPAPERS

THE BOOMERANG PROPELLER.

We are indebted to the Melbourne *Argus* of the 13th instant for the subjoined particulars connected with the successful trial of Sir Thomas Mitchell's invention, which appeared in the London *Times* of the 5th July :—

PORTSMOUTH, Monday, July 4.—Another trial of Sir Thomas Mitchell's boomerang propeller took place this morning on board her Majesty's ship *Conflict*, under the command of Captain W. H. Henderson, U.B., of her Majesty's ship *Blenheim*, attended by Mr. Murray, chief engineer and inspector of machinery in the dockyard. The *Conflict* left the harbour at 9 a.m. for the measured mile in Stoke's Bay, when the average result of six runs was 9.378 knots—an improvement of about two-thirds of a knot on the speed attainable with the *Conflict's* own propeller. The average revolutions were 65½. This trial with the boomerang was made in order to test the action of the blades, after the two small continuations which Sir Thomas Mitchell had been induced to make had been taken off, and the propeller reduced to its original shape and proportions. The result has been a gain of two-thirds of a knot, which nautical men consider a great deal with so heavy a ship as the *Conflict*; and we understand that Sir Thomas Mitchell means to challenge Griffith's propeller to do as much with the same ship. That fine steam frigate, the *Arrogant*, went out of harbour this morning shortly before the *Conflict*, and we observed her trying her speed also at the measured mile. The *Arrogant* has been recently refitted with new boilers, &c., and her screw is a common one. We therefore watched with much interest when she turned into the measured mile, hoping to see a trial between the two ships, or rather between the two propellers; for the *Arrogant* is a remarkably fine vessel of her class, and, with respect to the *Conflict*, we need only point to the official records of her doings and misdoings. Notwithstanding the *Arrogant's* advantages, it was soon apparent that she was losing ground, and while the distance between the two vessels was growing more and more, the *Arrogant* suddenly altered her course. No accident of a serious kind could have occurred to occasion this deviation, as we perceived her again engaged upon the measured mile after the *Conflict* had finished her runs. The general result of the trials to which the boomerang has been subjected seem to us fully to establish its high claim to public favour. Its form is based upon strictly mathematical principles. In point of celerity Sir Thomas Mitchell has proved the efficiency of his boomerang in a very heavy vessel, and that efficiency will be more palpably manifest if his offer to fit one to Her Majesty's yacht the *Fairy* is accepted. In other points not so striking to superficial observers, perhaps, as celerity, but not less intrinsically important, namely, the diminished wear and tear of ships and the economy of fuel, the superiority of the boomerang is decided.

We alluded to the absence of vibration in the trial we last reported; and to-day we purposely took our station for a considerable time upon the taffrail where, of course, the vibration would be most perceptible, and were even in that position scarcely conscious of any; in the midships of the vessel and below, while the *Conflict* was making nearly 10 knots, we could perceive no vibration at all. The enterprising merchants of Liverpool have shown themselves sensible to the vast economical advantages of the boomerang, and have already fitted it to several of their ships, which have accomplished quick voyages with a much diminished expenditure, as we noticed in our former report. The propeller used on board the *Conflict* was manufactured by Taylor and Co., of Birkenhead, and Sir Thomas Mitchell pronounced an emphatic eulogium on the skill of their workmen, and their ready appreciation of the principle of his invention, or rather his ingenious application of the principle of the rude Australian weapon to the purposes of propulsion. The leading and the following blades of the boomerang propeller may be likened to the dorsal and caudal fins of fishes when swimming; act on water at similar angles; and are rooted on the shaft on the same principle of strength as those fins are attached to the fish's body, imparting the power which is to give it motion. To give the boomerang propeller full space to develop its powers larger apertures are requisite than are now generally found in either ships of the Royal Navy or in merchant vessels. The full boomerang propeller requires, we are informed, a space in length equal to one-third of the height. This alteration can, however, be easily effected. Meanwhile the exhibition of the boomerang propeller in its present compulsorily crippled form has so convinced us of its importance that we are confident of its eventual adoption.

Adelaide Observer
Saturday 1 October 1853
Courtesy National Library Australia

The Boomerang Propeller Screw invention of Sir Thomas Mitchell and patented in 1849

Adelaide Observer, Saturday 1 October 1853, Courtesy National Library Australia

OTHER

OTHER RELATED ITEMS



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NAMED BY SIR THOMAS MITCHELL

Grampians

Mount William

Mount Arapiles

Mount Macedon

Pyramid Hill

Swan Hill

Wimmera River

Avoca River

Campaspe River

Mount Napier

Discovery Bay

Glenelg River

Mount King

Nyngan

St George

Balonne River

Belyando River

Cogoon River

Maranoa River



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NAMED AFTER SIR THOMAS MITCHELL

Mitchell Grass

Major Mitchell's Cockatoo

Shire of Mitchell

Region of Mitchellstown in Victoria

Mitchelton Winery in Victoria

Victorian S Class Steam Locomotive (S301) *Sir Thomas Mitchell*

Canberra suburb of Mitchell

Electorate of Mitchell in New South Wales

Mitchell Highway (NSW to QLD)

Town of Mitchell in Queensland

Mitchell River in Queensland

Mitchell House at Seymour Technical High School

Mitchell's Hopping Mouse

The *Sir Thomas Mitchell Excellence in Surveying Award*, the highest Australian award achievable for excellence in Surveying, was named after Sir Thomas Mitchell.



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