



Major Mitchell

Major Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell (1792–1855), was a surveyor and explorer of south-eastern Australia. Born at Grangemouth in Stirlingshire, Scotland, Major Mitchell took up the position of Surveyor-General (also known as a surveyor-artist) of New South Wales in 1827. In this post he did much to improve the quality and accuracy of surveying — a vital task in a colony where large parcels of land were being opened up and sold to new settlers.

In 1834 he was commissioned to survey a map of the Nineteen Counties. The map he produced was done with such skill and accuracy that he was awarded a knighthood.

In 1836, Mitchell and his party were the first Europeans to travel across the plains of Western Victoria — where he saw the answer to Britain's need for pastoral land.

"The scene was different from anything I had ever before witnessed, either in New South Wales or elsewhere. A land so inviting, and still without inhabitants. As I stood, the first European intruder on the sublime solitude of these verdant plains, as yet untouched by flocks or herds; I felt conscious of being the harbinger of mighty changes; and that our steps would soon be followed by the men and animals for which it seemed to have been prepared."