



Selection of books from the Thomas Scott Collection. Rare Books Collection

Thomas Scott Collection

Rare Books Collection

Acquired 2011

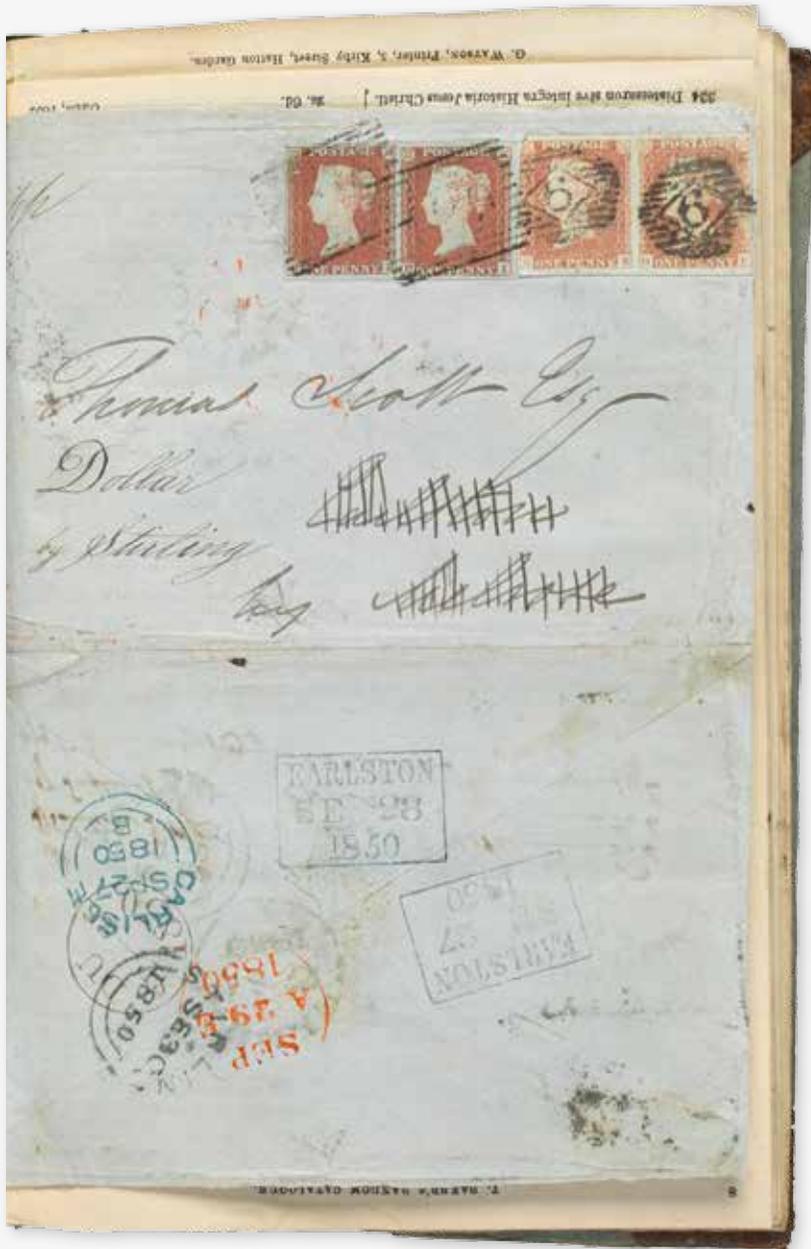
The library of Van Diemen's Land surveyor Thomas Scott (1800–55)¹ and his descendants represents a colonial working library of the 1820s and 1830s. It was acquired through funding from the State Library Foundation, a private donation and the Library itself.

Scott's library consists of about 700 volumes and 400 separate titles published between 1747 and the mid-20th century, and includes numerous works relating to Scott's profession as a surveyor. There are works on particular subjects of interest, such as Scotland and the Napoleonic wars; books presumably acquired for his children; and many literary works, including by Anthony Trollope, Walter Scott, Percy Bysshe Shelley, George (Lord) Byron and others. There are also numerous works of a humorous nature, with an emphasis on English caricaturist George Cruikshank, as well as books on card games and reference works.

The highlights of Scott's library include an almost complete set of the original *Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*, published from 1808 to 1830, in an original binding; four works by noted engraver and publisher Rudolph Ackermann on mechanical drawing and related technical subjects, given to Scott by George Evans, the deputy surveyor-general of Van Diemen's Land; and a 1747 set of Shakespeare's plays, that include space for annotations for performance. But perhaps most striking is an item hidden in an 1842 copy of *An Atlas of Modern Geography*, which belonged to Thomas's son George: glued to the inside cover is the skin of a mouse, species unidentified.

The original library of Thomas Scott was preserved in the family for many generations, and it has been supplemented with books owned by his children and grandchildren. It is easy to determine the original titles owned by Thomas Scott, as he regularly signed his books and generally added the date of purchase. His descendants' additions include works such as school textbooks from the 1850s, complete with boyhood annotations, professional works on geology from the late 19th century and an assembly of light, popular fiction from the inter-war period.

The great strength of the collection is that it is an almost complete library assembled for family use, not a collection on a particular theme or interest. Such libraries are rare, and they are important to the history of the book and book collections in Australia, and to those interested in family reading habits in colonial Australia.



Postal wrapper addressed to Thomas Scott, bound in *Thomas Baker's Cheap Random Catalogue of Second Hand Books*, no. 6, October 1850, opposite page 9. In 'Old book catalogues', vol. 3. Rare Books Collection, RARETS 018.4 OL13S (V.3)