

There are indications elsewhere that he later contemplated abandoning New Zealand altogether.²⁵

Instead, he engaged with the New South Wales Government to work on botanical surveys, and on 12 May 1851, leaving his family in the Hutt, embarked from Port Nicholson in H.M.S. *Acheron*.²⁶ In one of *Acheron*'s sister ships which left Port Nicholson about the same time was William's son Henry Gabriel, who mentions his father's departure in the journal bought by the Library with this latest acquisition of his father's drawings. When Henry arrived in Sydney in H.M.S. *Bramble* on 24 June 1851 he found that his father had gone on to Newcastle in the *Acheron* and was to go from there to Moreton Bay.²⁷

William Swainson was in Australia for three years,²⁸ during which he made botanical surveys for the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania,²⁹ and also visited Fiji. His absence lengthened as the first engagement was followed by other offers, tempting because he needed money, so that his daughter's letters³⁰ were soon full of anxious hopes that he would speedily return in order to relieve his wife of the management of Hawkshead and oversee the education of the three youngest children, one of whom was born after he left New Zealand. When at last his return was imminent Mary wrote to a friend that her father would bring 'hundreds' of sketches, '... altho' he says he sees no scenery to be compared to N.Z. anywhere.'³¹ He returned on 18 June 1854, by the schooner *Munford* from Hobart Town, via Nelson.³² Mary, who was his eldest daughter, died on 29 September 1854 and William himself died on 7 December 1855³³ at Ferngrove, his second homestead in the Hutt Valley.

During his lifetime William Swainson must have made several thousand drawings and sketches. Not only did he draw natural history specimens and prepare the illustrations for his own publications, but he recorded his surroundings — houses, trees, roads and stockades. These small, fine sketches described the local scene for his own pleasure or the benefit of distant relatives or made a naturalist's note of typical or unusual vegetation. It seems that he often did several versions of one study, sending them to friends in the manner of snapshots.

Although the family papers contain references to fires, losses and destruction³⁴ of William Swainson's effects, a great many drawings are preserved in New Zealand. On the final division of the estate, after his widow's death in 1868, the drawings were shared among the seven surviving children and the children of his daughter, Mary. Some of these collections have reached libraries and museums in New Zealand and others are held by members of the family or collectors.³⁵

Many of the scientific drawings and New Zealand and Australian landscapes already in the Library were part of the share of William Swainson's youngest child, Annette Elizabeth, Mrs Wesley Turton, who