The Big Picture – Discovering Your Property's History

http://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/content.php?pid=125467&sid=1077704

How to locate pastoral/agricultural properties

Here are some resources for researching a particular property.

1. Township, parish or county plans. These plans show the boundaries of each property in the mapped area. They mark the first owner/lease-holder to take possession of each parcel of land from the Crown, but do not indicate the names of later owners or lease-holders. To use township, parish or county plans to locate a property you will need to know the name of the first lease-holder or owner of the land. If you don't know who first held the property but you do know the name of the property, try referring to a squatting directory to find the name of the first land-holder (see option 3 below).

2. Library catalogue. Most of our Victorian maps have been catalogued. To find maps that may show the property in the online catalogue, choose the Maps tab and then try searching with various keywords relating to the area, such as the name of the region, names of local towns or settlements, or even the name of the property itself. You may find it useful to refine your results by creation date.

3. Agricultural/pastoral/squatting directories. These are books which list who held or owned various properties at different times, and include information about the location of properties. Some directories include a map.

4. Maps of historical pastoral runs of squatter holdings. There are a variety of maps available from different dates. Some also include indexes or directories so you can look up the name of the property owner/lease-holder and find out the name of their property. Some of these maps can be viewed online, others can be viewed at the Library.

5. The Historical plans collection. This set of microfiche contains the earliest maps available for many areas of Victoria. It covers the first 60 years of European settlement in Victoria. The series includes a wide variety of types of maps, some of which show information relating to property holdings, such as run plans, pastoral run plans, parish plans, agricultural area plans and preemptive rights plans.

Township, parish and county plans

Township, parish and county plans (or "cadastral" plans) record information about the transfer of land from the Crown (the Government) to private ownership or lease-hold. Plans were produced for each of Victoria's 37 counties, 2004 parishes and 909 townships. They show the boundaries of lands which were occupied, reserved or sold. Some parishes in remote areas have no parish plan - in these cases the county plans act as record plans. These plans provide information about land-ownership (such as property boundaries, names of grantees, and dates of grants), as well as general information about an area. They are particularly useful to identify the properties that a particular local historical figure purchased from the Crown. They also indicate correspondence file numbers used to request correspondence files at

the Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV).

These plans record only the transfer of land from the Crown to private ownership - not information about subsequent sales. Contact the Land Titles Office for this information.

Cadastral maps also provide information such as the size and shape of local settlements, the location of buildings or other structures and the location of natural features. However, the level of detail varies greatly. Many parish plans provide very little detail, perhaps just marking major rivers or the outline of the coast, while others provides details such as the location of local schools, churches or shops, the names of streets and parks. Occasionally plans include notes on vegetation and soil.

The SLV has an extensive collection of over 10,000 plans in print, microfiche and aperture card, but do not have copies of every Victorian cadastral plan.

Identify your parish: refer to the township and parish guide which is available online. Search for a town in the *list of townships proclaimed* to discover the name of the relevant township. Alternatively, refer to the online map of Victorian parishes

Find and view plans: In the online catalogue, choose the Maps tab, then enter the terms *real property parish*, and the name of the parish.

Interpret plans: refer to the guide created by PROV.

Plans in other agencies available online: Significant collections of Victorian parish plans are available online from PROV (series 16171). This PROV*guide* outlines how to access the online parish and township working plans. The series contains digitised copies of parish and township working plans, as well as closer settlement, land settlement, soldier settlement, county and other working plans.

Collections of parish plans are also available from Landata (click on Central Plan Office Records) and the National Library of Australia.

Squatting directories list who held or owned various properties at different times and include information about the location of properties.

1835-1851, Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip by R.V. Billis and A.S. Kenyon. Lists holders of leases.

1834-ca.1880 - Victorian Squatters by R. Spreadborough & H. Anderson. Entries list who held or owned various properties and when, as well as a reference number. At the back of the book are maps of each region showing the location of each pastoral run. To make it easier to use the maps from this book, there is also a complete map of Victoria. 1849 -

The Squatters' directory (online). Provides a list of all the occupants of crown lands in the intermediate and unsettled districts of Port Phillip.

1874-75 - The Victorian squatting directory. Lists the lessees and runs.

Source: State Library of Victoria as the owner (slightly edited)