

Victorian Local History Thesaurus

The thesaurus, a list of subject terms used in RHSV cataloguing projects, has been developed from the experience of preparing regional subject listings for cataloguing projects during the past ten years as well as from cataloguing the books in the RHSV collection.

In the 1980s a number of regional local history thesauruses were published. Perhaps the best known is *Local studies collections: guidelines and subject headings for organizing and indexing resources* by John Flint and Anne Berry first published in 1981 with a second edition in 1985. The thesaurus was prepared for two local history collections in New South Wales and the headings have become the basis for cataloguing local history text-based collections. Flint and Berry has become the starting point for most local history thesaurus projects in Australia.

Other regional local history thesaurus prepared in the 1980s included Gillian Pearson's *A local history handbook: establishing local history collections and information services* (Blackwood: AUSLIB, 1986) – a South Australian publication; Lea Giles-Peters' *Regional Information: a thesaurus for database building* (Footscray: Footscray Institute of Technology, 1987); David Tuck's *Carringbush local studies thesaurus* prepared for the Richmond area in Victoria and *GIPPSDOC Thesaurus: subject headings for publishing Gippsland material*. 1988.

Thesauruses prepared for libraries tend to be for text-based collections but photographs form a major part of many local history collections. A thesaurus for cataloguing photographs needs to contain specific or concrete terms to describe items in the photograph, rather than broad or abstract concepts required for describing information in books.

The Australian pictorial thesaurus is based on a thesaurus used to catalogue the photographs in the State Library of New South Wales and has been available on the Internet for several years. As Flint and Berry has become the standard for headings for text-based items, this thesaurus will become the standard for cataloguing images.

The Victorian Local History Thesaurus has been developed to catalogue all information items in local history collections whether text-based collections or image collections. The thesaurus is not complete but will continue to evolve as new terms are required for cataloguing projects.

References

Flint John and Anne Berry (1985) *Local studies collection: guidelines and subject headings for organizing and indexing resources*. Sydney: Library Association of Australia

Australian pictorial thesaurus – www.picturethesaurus.gov.au

Court, Vicki ((2002) Thesaurus for local history collections *in* *Local-Link*, 14 (3): 14-16