



Sensational sources

Finding an original source

The National Archives

This website is full of original sources. Most of them come from the National Archives. The National Archives has almost 1000 years of documents stored on almost 100 miles of shelving. A guide who takes groups around the National Archives says that when you are in there you can smell the history on the shelves!

How do you get a source about the Civil War?

Many Civil War sources come from the National Archives' collection of State Papers. When you want to look at the State Papers, the best place to start is the Calendar (or guide) of State Papers. These books list, in date order, the documents that are in the collection and give a summary of each.

A page from the Calendar of State Papers

Here is a page from the Calendar (guide). We've added some labels to show the kinds of information that historians can find here.

DOMESTIC—CHARLES I. 395

1642.
Sept. 29. 25. Note by William Jessop. That he sent from Guildhall, 29 Sept. 1642, in a wagon, eight chests of money containing 10,000*l.*, to be delivered to Capt. Francis Vernon, one of the deputies of Sir Gilbert Gerard, Treasurer of the Army, for the service of the army. [$\frac{1}{3}$ p.] Underwritten,

25. 1. Receipt by Captain Francis Vernon for 10,000*l.* received of William Jessop for the service of the army. Worcester, 11 October 1642. [Endorsed: "Sent to my Lord General 10,000*l.*" $\frac{1}{4}$ p.]

Sept. 30. 26. The Committee of Lords and Commons for the Safety of the Kingdom to Thomas Willoughby, captain. Commission to be captain of a foot company in Colonel John Barker's regiment for defence of the King, Parliament, and kingdom. [$\frac{2}{3}$ p.]

Sept. 30. 27. Robert Earl of Essex, Captain-General of the Parliamentary forces, to Theophilus Earl of Lincoln. Commission to raise all such volunteer forces in co. Lincoln as he shall think fit for the security of the county and parts adjacent to serve for the defence of the King, Parliament, and kingdom, and constituting him Colonel of all such forces. [Copy. 1 p.]

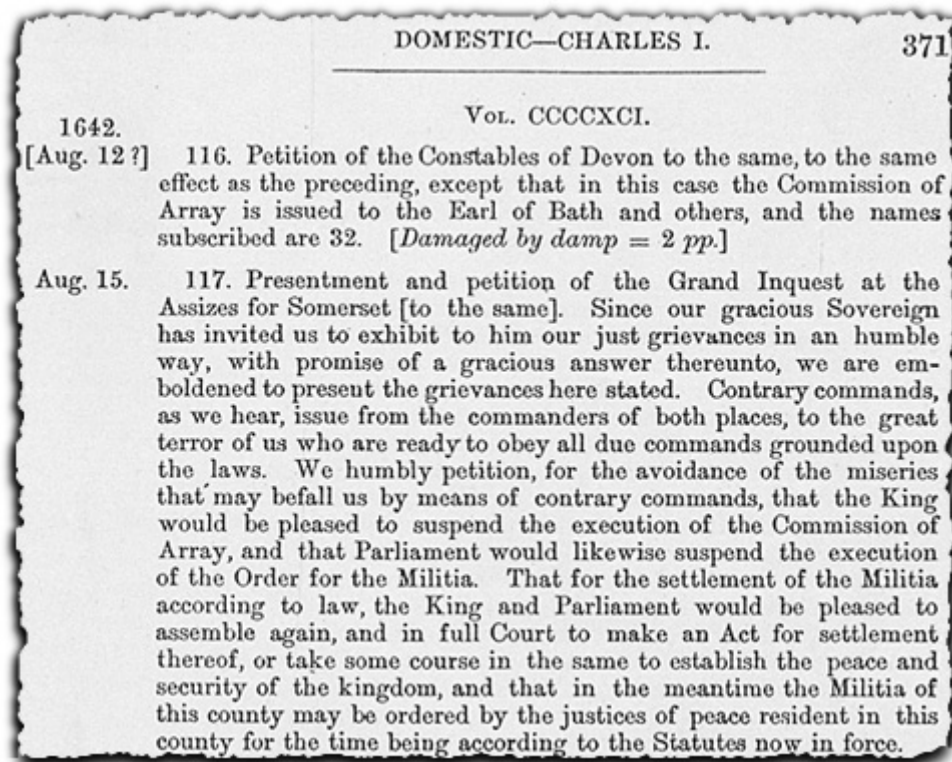
Annotations:

- Date of source: 1642. Sept. 29.
- Writer of source: William Jessop.
- Person he was writing to and information about this person: Capt. Francis Vernon.
- Summary of what the source was about: Receipt by Captain Francis Vernon for 10,000*l.* received of William Jessop for the service of the army.
- Extra document attached to this document: [Endorsed: "Sent to my Lord General 10,000*l.*" $\frac{1}{4}$ p.]



Another page from the Calendar of State Papers

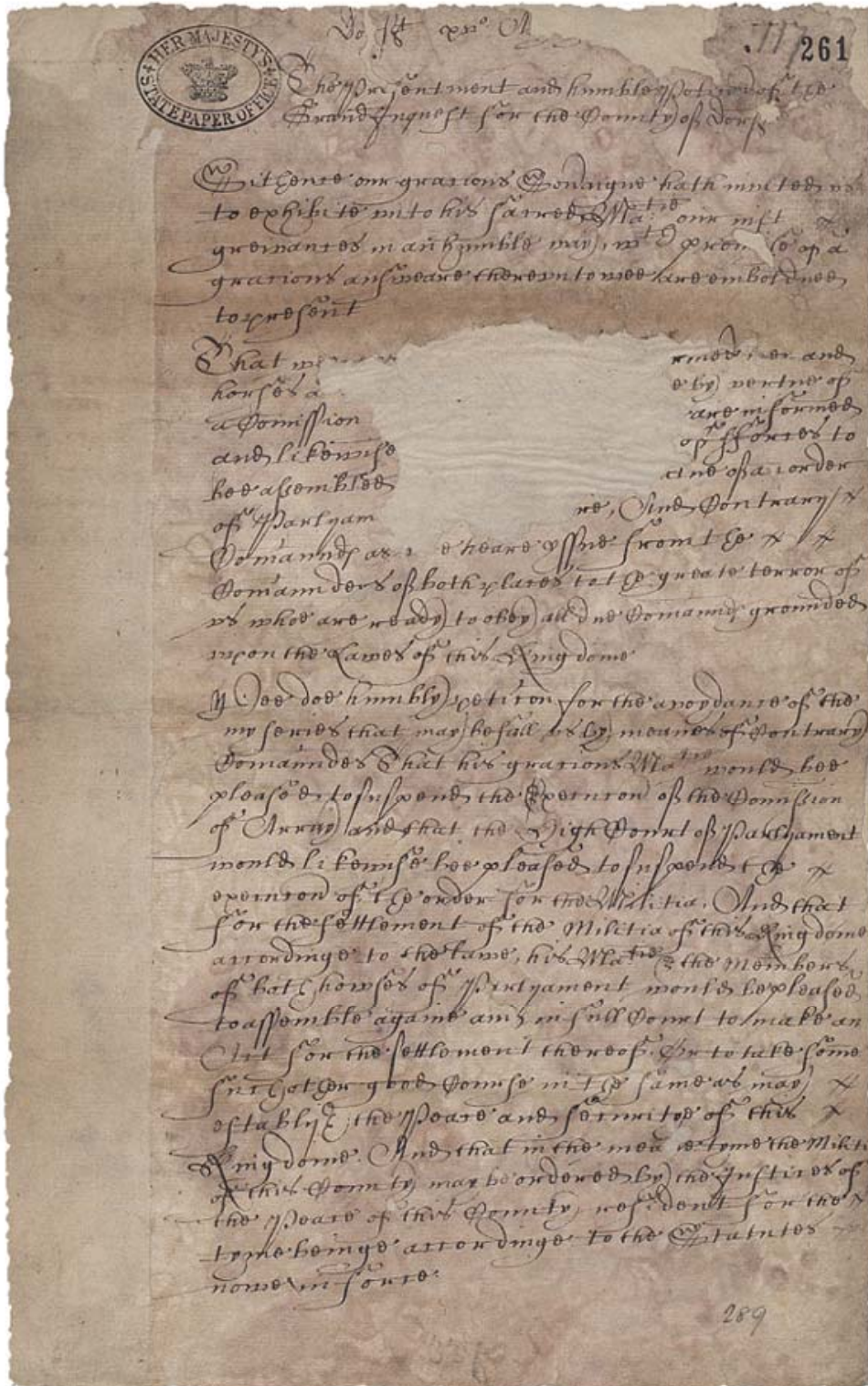
Add your own labels to this page from the Calendar. Think about how historians might be able to make use of these sources.





A real State Paper

Page 371 of the Calendar (the guide which you just looked at above) listed a document dated August 15. When we went to look at the original in the State Papers, this is what we saw.



This document got damp and so has been damaged. Remember, it is over 350 years old. There is a hole so we can't read the words in the middle of the document. Luckily the calendar was written before the damage happened. Now the calendar is the only way we can know what words were written there.