

State papers domestic 1642-1660

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1. Introduction

The state papers for the Interregnum (c. 1649-1660) are the papers of the Council of State and its associated committees which provided the executive government of the country during the period. Other important committees included the Committee for the Advance of Money; the Sequestration Committee, which dealt with the estates of royalists (delinquents), absorbed by the Committee for Compounding from c.1644; the Committee for Plundered Ministers; and the Committee of Indemnity. The interregnum state papers are classified by individual committee.

2. Starting a search

Most of the most important classes for the period have printed or manuscript calendars which can be used to trace an individual or a particular subject. Searches for a particular person may involve several classes. However, many of the documents are very formal and reflect the main need of the government - to raise money for the prosecution of the war and for payment of the standing army. Most of the documents are written in English but in a hand difficult to read without practice.

3. Council of State

Papers of the Council of State are in **SP 18** for 1649-1660, with Council of State Books and Accounts, 1649-1660 in **SP 25**. **SP 18** contains information on a variety of standing and ad hoc committees, including the Admiralty committee and commissions, in the form of letters, warrants, and orders. **SP 25** includes similar material, as well as Parliamentary orders.

Most (though not all) of these records are summarised and printed, with archaic references, in the *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, The Commonwealth*, ed. M A E Green, 13 volumes, (London, 1875-1886), which also refer to related documents in different classes. Use the typed keys at the front of each volume to find the modern reference.

Most of the documents which appear in the calendar can be ordered as **SP 18** plus the piece number - this is the Roman numeral at the top of each page which should be converted into Arabic.

(for example **SP 18/28**). When there is an entry in italics in square brackets at the end of the summary a different procedure should be followed, then you need to look at the key in the front of the volume for that abbreviation and the current class reference.

4. Committee of Both Kingdoms or 'Derby House Committee'

This was responsible for the negotiations with the Scots from 1644. Its books, 1644-1650, are in **SP 21**, which are summarised in the *Calendars of State Papers Domestic Charles I* up to 1649 and then partially in the *Calendars of State Papers (Domestic) Series of the Commonwealth*. After 1649 it was replaced by the Council of State (as above). See also **SP 21/26** and 28 for order and warrant books and **SP 63/266** for some references to its sub-committee on Irish affairs.

5. Committee for the Advance of Money

This was responsible for the raising of money (including donations and taxation). Books and Papers, 1642-1656, are in **SP 19**, calendared in the *Committee for Advance of Money, 1642-1656*, ed. M A E Green, 3 parts, (London, 1888). To find out what the abbreviations in the left and right hand columns of the calendar mean, look at the key in the introduction. The numbers are both document references; the first is the volume number while the second is the page number. As all the documents are in **SP 19** the reference for the first item, is **SP 19/23**, (p. 18). For a more detailed introduction to their arrangement, see the introductory note to the class list of **SP 19**. Entries in this calendar exclude references to duplicated material and documents in **SP 19/16** to **SP 19/20**.

6. Committee and Commissioners for Indemnity

These were appointed to excuse the army and parliamentary officials from liability for acts carried out during the conflict. Its books and papers are in **SP 24**, 1647-1656) and are referred to in the *Calendars of State Papers Domestic Series of the Commonwealth* (partially indexed in **IND 1/8899**) to **IND 1/8903**).

7. Committee for Compounding with Delinquents: Royalist Composition papers

This was responsible for process by which royalists paid ('compounded') with the new regime for the continued ownership of their estates. Its records are in **SP 23**, Books and Papers, 1643-1660, calendared in *Committee for Compounding with Delinquents, etc., 1643-1660*, ed. M A E Green, 5 parts, 1889-1893). The Royalist Composition Papers are the particulars of the estates and personal property of delinquents taken on oath as part of the compounding process and can be found in this class. See **SP 28** for related material concerning its County Committees.

Not all relevant documents are detailed in the calendar entry. The right hand column gives references to those documents mentioned specifically in the text, while the left hand column refers to related documents not mentioned in the calendar entry.

There is also a one volume alphabetical printed index to the Royalist Composition papers, covering A-F (**SP 23/61** to **SP 23/227**), which includes names not included in the main calendar. For the index for G-Z, and for place name indexes covering England and Wales in **SP 23/61** to **SP 23/173**, see the front note in the volume and the class list for **OBS 1/629** to **OBS 1/636**.

8. Sequestration Committee

This dealt with the confiscation of royalist estates to 1644. Its Books and Papers, 1643-1653, are in **SP 20**). The class's contents are partially described in the *Calendar of State Papers Charles I* (before 1649) and then in the *Calendar of the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents* as above. They are indexed by a one volume published index to the sequestration of delinquents' estates (covering **SP 20/1** to **SP 20/8**). These are selective indexes only.

9. Other relevant series

- **SP 22** Committee for Plundered Ministers 1642-1653 (see also **SP 23/22** and **SP 28/7**),
- **SP 26**, Trustees for Crown Lands and Fee Farm Rents: Books, 1650-1660;
- **SP 27** Parchment Documents, 1651-1657;
- **SP 28** Commonwealth Exchequer papers, 1642-1660: a particularly important collection
- **E 113** Bills and answers against defaulting accountants (for public monies received on both sides): Charles II
- **E 134** Depositions by commission: includes interesting depositions, for example those relating to administration of the army
- **E 317** Parliamentary surveys; records relating to sales of crown and church property
- **ADM 2, ADM 3, ADM 7** and **SP 46/96** to **SP 46/98**, 114-121 for Admiralty and Navy Commissioners
- Many relevant records (including the Thomason Tracts) can also be found in the collections of the British Library.

10. Further reading

G E Aylmer and J S Morrill, *The Civil War and Interregnum, Sources for Local Historians* (published for the Standing Conference for Local History by the Bedford Square Press of the National Council of Social Service, 1979)

G E Aylmer, *The State's Servants: the Civil Service of the English Republic 1649-1660* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973)

C H Firth and RS Rait, *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660* (H.M.S.O., 1911)

Guide reference: *Domestic Records Information 17*

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