



U.K. Government Collection



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The U.K. Government Collection is a rich archive of essential primary sources documenting U.K.'s transformation from imperial power to modern democracy from 1660 to present. Through bills, reports, debates, and public petitions, these working documents reveal how Parliament shaped policy across three centuries of governance.



Built upon the foundation of both House of Commons and House of Lords Parliamentary Papers, along with Public Petitions to Parliament, these materials serve as key resources for examining parliamentary activities, legislative processes, and the U.K.'s colonial relationships and international influence. The digital format makes these historical records more readily available to researchers and scholars interested in studying U.K. governance and parliamentary history.

“...no single library brings together all parliamentary papers in their original format...”

— Chelcie J. Rowell, Boston College

A study in cooperation with Jisc, a higher education company in the UK, focused on the impacts to research and teaching of two ProQuest collections – Early English Books Online and House of Commons Parliamentary Papers. The research used the principles of the Toolkit for the Impact of Digitized Scholarly Resources toolkit, which was created by Oxford Internet Institute, to better understand the quantitative and qualitative empirical evidence for the impacts that digital collections can have when it comes to research.

The study found ten key findings. What was found was that the use of digital resources is changing. It's not a “big bang” type of movement. Instead, it's an ongoing process that can be perfected. While universities tend to use both databases, many individual researchers do not use both Early English Books Online and House of Commons Parliamentary Papers. Users are more concerned with gaining vital access, but not necessarily who the information comes from originally. The ability to dive in and experiment with keyword searching, without knowing what the search will retrieve, is a powerful experiment for the researcher.

The overall growth in the usage of these collections takes time. It can also be seen that the measures of impact take longer because practices constantly change and improve over time. Researchers need to look at the broader picture to conclude their research. Without collections like Early English Books Online and House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, researchers would be vastly set back if the databases provided to them simply disappeared. ProQuest products are not only fundamental, but a necessary and vital part of modern research and scholarship studies for universities, faculty, students, and researchers alike.

“I use primary resources a lot in teaching and digital resources are a really good way of getting those, and I have lots of activities where students have to go and find a particular thing from a digital resource.”

— (UK History Faculty Member)

U.K. Parliamentary Papers 18th Century (1660-1834)

58,000+ records | ~600,000 pages

Comprehensive parliamentary documents from 1660-1834 covering major historical events including the Industrial Revolution, American Revolution, vaccination development, slavery abolition, and maritime exploration. The collection includes Commons and Lords sessional papers, History and Proceedings/Debates, Commons and Lords Journals, and Bills and Acts. Created through collaboration with Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), British Official Publications Collaborative Reader Information Service (BOPCRIS), British Library, and University of Cambridge.

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers 19th Century (1801-1900)

87,000+ records | 4.2 million pages

Digital compilation of Parliamentary Sessions Papers (1801-1900), featuring complete government documentation and reporting during Britain's Victorian era. Combines Chadwyck-Healey's microfiche collection with Cockton's comprehensive subject index, covering topics from industrialization to colonial interactions with indigenous peoples in Australasia and North America.

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers 20th Century (1901-2004)

100,000+ records | 5.6 million pages

Extensive collection of parliamentary papers from 1901-2000 with comprehensive subject indexing combining Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) Indexes, Parliamentary On-Line Information Service (POLIS) database, and modern terminology. Covers pivotal events including World Wars, decolonization, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) formation, Cold War, Falklands War, and early anti-terror legislation.

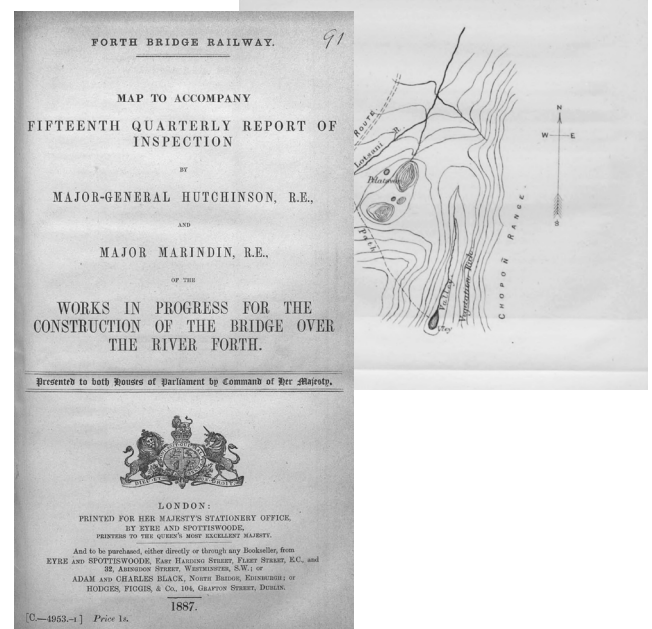
U.K. Parliamentary Papers Collection 21st Century (2005-present)

21,000+ records | 950,000+ pages

This authoritative collection captures the living record of British governance, legislative development, and policy formation, serving as an indispensable resource for understanding Britain's response to modern challenges and its evolving role in global affairs. Researchers and institutions gain access to primary source documentation essential for analyzing contemporary British policy, governance, and social change.

“The resulting concentration of the world’s best expertise in the field of large-scale digitization and record preservation has produced a world class resource in House of Commons Parliamentary Papers. We should be clear that providing a full-text version of these papers on this scale is a considerable undertaking.”

— Martin Myhill



House of Lords Parliamentary Papers 19th Century (1801-1910)

Composed of nearly 3400 volumes, 43,000 documents, and 2.1 million pages of content heretofore unavailable

An essential research resource that, along with the rest of the U.K. Government Collection, presents a complete and total view of the influence of the Parliament of the UK and in the administration of empire during the height of British global dominance.

The House of Lords Parliamentary Papers provides online access to previously unseen and valuable historical documents and is the only digitized collection of 19th century House of Lords Parliamentary Papers.

This unique project, done in partnership with the National Library of Scotland, allows those who are not able to access the documents in their physical form to broaden their research into this essential 19th century government documents resource. This collection improves research outcomes for scholars of British History, British Government, Political Science, History, and more.

Opening a hitherto untapped resource essential to understanding the workings of Parliament, including:

- Essential evidence heard by Commissioners, but not included in the Commons Papers
- Lords Minutes of Proceedings
- Papers on Peerage cases
- Lords' Private Members' Bills

These papers allow researchers to:

- Compare different versions of bills between the legislative bodies and track legislation that originated in Lords
- Review the Lord's views on issues covered in the Commons
- Research topics dealing with trials of Lords
- Explore a whole host of issues for the period from the Lords' perspective

International Relevance

The research value is of international significance, revealing previously unknown material such as statistical data, oral evidence, and letters and business papers relating to not only Britain, but also to the many parts of the world that were under British influence. For example, researchers can delve into Lords' investigations into Irish Nationalism and analyze its impact on the budget crisis of 1909; review slavery in the West India Colonies and the 1849 Lords committee evidence for the final eradication of the African Slave Trade; and examine the activities of the East India Company in both India and China.

Public Petitions to Parliament (1833-1918)

Included are individually rekeyed metadata records for every one of the more than 960,000 petitions accepted by Parliament

The collection includes Records of the Select Committee on Public Petitions, allowing researchers to gain insight on the formative role of petitions to Parliament during the 19th century (1833-1918), an unparalleled period of political modernization and democratization in Britain. Public Petitions to Parliament are very important indicators of the views and priorities of both the populace and Parliament. How Parliament addresses the petition, or doesn't address it, is a stark indicator of political and social priorities.

Petitioning was by far the most popular form of political participation, but it has long been overlooked by historians and social scientists preoccupied with elections and election rituals, campaigns to extend the right to vote, and the rise of national political parties. However, the utility to scholars of public petitions is not just limited to political historians studying the groundswell of public pressure for the expansion of the voting franchise.

This material appeals to all social, cultural, and religious scholars of Britain, and contains materials on:

- Petitions on ecclesiastical issues.
- Crime and criminals.
- Colonies, taxation, education, and every other issue of interest to the populace of Britain.
- Religious scholars interested on Methodism and the Church of England.
- Scientists concerned with pollution and pollution controls during the Industrial Revolution.
- Sociologists concerned with how these issues were influenced by the people.

The popular constitutionalism inherent in this collection (as opposed to the "top down" approach to looking at history), is at the cutting edge of historical research today and has wide appeal across campus.



Hansard (1803-2005)

Included are nearly 72,000 publicly available XML files created by the Hansard Digitization Project (led by the Directorate of Information Services of the House of Commons and the Library of the House of Lords) are the source for this material, which is being made available in its entirety at no extra cost for all institutions currently accessing any modules.

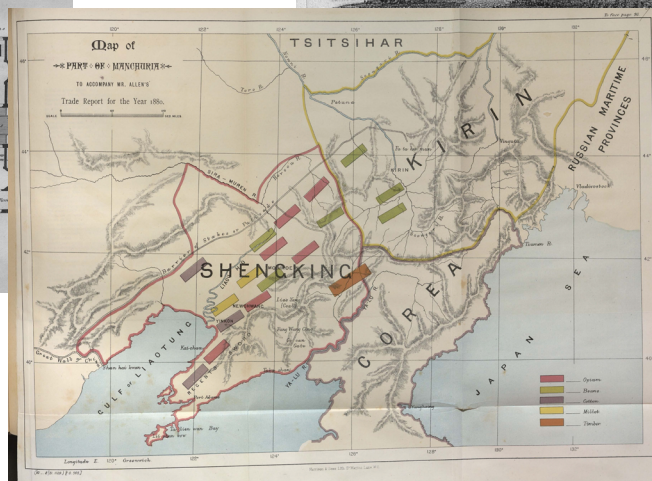
This significant enhancement enables the sessional papers and parliamentary petitions to be searched alongside Hansard from one interface.

Researchers can use Hansard alongside parliamentary papers to see how legislation and topics covered in reports, Command Papers, and other publications were discussed and debated in Parliament throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

- The debates around the final passage of the Bill outlawing slavery in the British Empire in 1833.
- The discussions in the House of Lords about the passing of the Parliament Act of 1911, which limited their power.
- The debates on the Suez intervention in November 1956, alongside the treaties and agreements concerning the Suez Canal.
- Debates on the European Union and the single currency and potential for a referendum, together with Treasury papers on economic and monetary union, reports of the Select Committee on European legislation, and proposed referendum bills.

“The new interface comes close to replicating the ease of using the print [Hansard] volumes, useful for certain types of non-specific browsing, easier for scanning through and picking out particular terms, with the advantage of being more easily searchable.”

– Kate Wilcox, Institute of Historical Research



Key Features

Faceted Search Results

- Open up the collection to new avenues of discovery and an easier and more intuitive research experience with post-search filtering.
- Facets are arranged by Paper Series, Paper Type, Century Collection, Subject, Chair/Author, and by Document Feature (map, illustration, etc.).
- Include or exclude multiple facets via the “More options” faceting button after retrieving search results.

Ability to Bookmark the Search Form

- Bookmark the search form with certain search segments, date parameters, collection, and paper types preselected.

Dedicated Search by Number Form

- Facilitate known-number searches (a Command Paper number, for example) so that the users won't need to know how the format of certain citations changed over time.

Full-text Searchable PDFs for Download

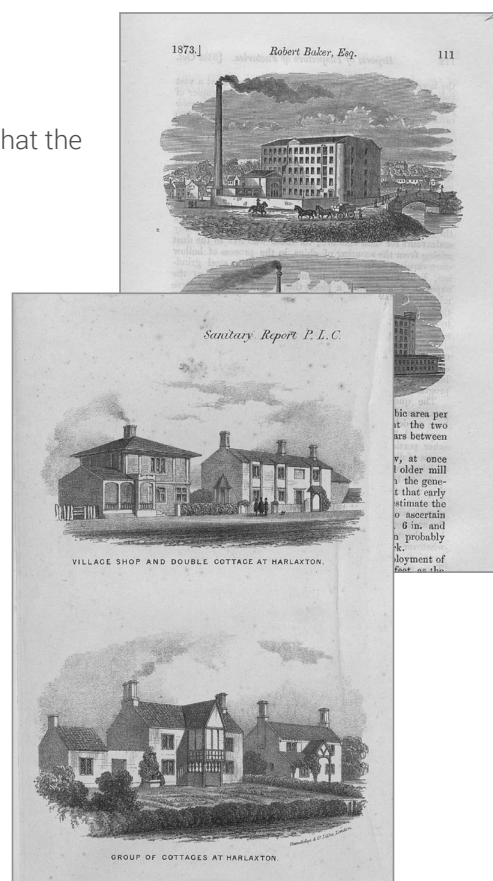
- Full-text searchable and fast web-enabled PDFs.
- Researchers can delve deeper into a document with enhanced navigation allowing the results to guide continued research.

Integration of MyResearch

- Private research space that allows users to save, manage, and organize the content and supporting materials they find in U.K. Government Collection.

“Parliamentary papers are sources not only for traditional forms of scholarship, such as scholarly journal articles and monographs, but also for emerging forms of digital scholarship such as text analysis, mapping, and network analysis.”

— Chelcie J. Rowell, Boston College



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