Henry Fielding (April 22, 1707 – October 8, 1754) was a British novelist and dramatist.

Born near Glastonbury in Somerset in 1707, Fielding was educated at Eton College. His younger sister, Sarah, was also destined to be a successful writer. After a romantic episode with a young woman which ended in his getting into trouble with the law, he went to London where his literary career began.

In 1728, he travelled to Leiden to study. On his return, he began writing for the theatre, some of his work being savagely critical of the contemporary government under Sir Robert Walpole. The Theatrical Licensing Act of 1737 is alleged to be a direct result of his activities. The particular play that triggered the Licensing Act was The Vision of the Golden Rump, but Fielding's satires had set the tone. When the licensing act passed, political satire on the stage was virtually impossible, and playwrights whose works were staged were viewed as suspect. Fielding therefore retired from the theatre and resumed his career in law, becoming a Justice of the peace in 1748 for Middlesex and Westminster.

Fielding never stopped writing political satire and satires of current arts and letters. His Tragedy of Tragedies of Tom Thumb was, for example, quite successful as a printed play. He also contributed a number of works to journals of the day. He wrote for Tory periodicals, usually under the name of "Captain Hercules Vinegar." As Justice of the Peace, and not as an author, he issued a warrant for the arrest of Colley Cibber for "murder of the English language."

In 1743, his first novel appeared in the Miscellanies volume III (which was the first volume of the Miscellanies). This was The History of the Life of the Late Mr Jonathan Wild the Great. It is a satire of Walpole that draws a parallel between Walpole and Jonathan Wild, the infamous gang leader and highwayman. He implicitly compares the Whig party in Parliament with a gang of thieves, being run by Walpole, whose constant desire to be a "Great Man" (a common epithet for Walpole) should culminate only in the apotheosis of greatness: being hung. Fielding's first major success in a novel was Shamela, a parody of Samuel Richardson's melodramatic novel, Pamela. Like Jonathan Wild, it is a satire that follows the model of the famous Tory satirists of the previous generation (Jonathan Swift and John Gay, in particular). He followed this up with Joseph Andrews (1742), an original work supposedly dealing with Pamela's brother, Joseph. This parody, however, far outstripped Richardson's original in popularity.

His greatest work was Tom Jones (1749), a meticulously constructed picaresque novel telling the convoluted and hilarious tale of how a foundling came into a fortune.

His first wife, Charlotte, on whom he modeled the heroine of Tom Jones, died in 1744. Three years later Fielding married her former maid, Mary, disregarding public opinion. Despite this, he became London's Chief Magistrate and his literary career went from strength to strength. Joined by his younger half-brother John, he helped found London's first police force, the Bow Street Runners in 1750. However, his health had deteriorated to such an extent that he went abroad in 1753 in search of a cure. He died in Lisbon in 1754. Despite being blind, John Fielding succeeded him as Chief Magistrate.

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Henry Fielding: Henry Fielding, novelist and playwright, who, with Samuel Richardson, is considered a founder of the English novel. Among his major novels are Joseph Andrews (1742) and Tom Jones (1749). Fielding was born of a family that by tradition traced its descent to a branch of the Habsburgs. The 1st earl of. Early life. Fielding was born of a family that by tradition traced its descent to a branch of the Habsburgs. The 1st earl of Denbigh, William Fielding, was a direct ancestor, while Henry's father, Col. Henry Fielding facts: The English author and magistrate Henry Fielding (1707-1754) was one of the great novelists of the 18th century. His fiction, plays, essays, and legal pamphlets show he was a humane and witty man, with a passion for reform and justice. Henry Fielding was an 18th century English writer and magistrate who established the mechanisms of the modern novel through such works as Tom Jones and Amelia. Synopsis. Henry Fielding was born on April 22, 1707, in Sharpham Park, England. After beginning his writing career as a playwright and editor of satirical publications, he found his footing by penning Joseph Andrews and other parodies. Through later works such as Tom Jones, Fielding earned acclaim for helping establish the foundations of the modern novel.