

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-01953-9 - George Frideric Handel: Collected Documents: Volume 1: 1609–1725
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Excerpt
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The Documents
1609–1725



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1609–1683



‘Old Style’ dates are primary until the end of 1699

14 March 1609 Handel’s grandfather registers as a citizen of Halle

Senatus Hallensis. 1609
Johann Drachstedt undt Johann
Tentzer Rathsmestere
FACTI SUNT CIVES.

Valtin Händell Ein Kupffer Schmidt von Preßlau *promotus per* Martin Empff unndt
Bastian Götzen ddi 6f *in auro et literas suff: Juravit Act.* dinstags nach *Reminiscere*
Ao 1609

Halle Council 1609
Johann Drachstedt and Johann
Tentzer, chief councillors.
Appointed as citizens:

Valtin Händell, a coppersmith from Breslau, presented by Martin Empff and Bastian Götz, gave 6 gold guilders and sufficient documentation: Publicly sworn on Tuesday after Reminiscere [i.e. 14 March] in the year 1609

D-HAsa HB B 1 Bd. 1 fo. 215r. This entry in the Halle *Bürgerbuch* refers to Handel’s grandfather, Valentin (1582–1636). A *Bürgerbuch* recorded those who had become official citizens of a town by swearing an oath to the city and paying a fee (*Bürgergeld*). In return for this, the resident would be assigned the rights, privileges and duties associated with this citizenship. The *Bürgerbuch* often listed the place of origin of a new citizen. Breslau is now Wrocław in Poland. *Reminiscere* is the second Sunday in Lent, 12 March in 1609. The previous year Valentin had married Anna Beichling (1586–1670; see her funeral oration, 9 January 1670). Handel’s father Georg (or George) was the youngest son of Valentin and Anna, born in Halle on 24 September 1622 (Marx 2008, I, p. 517).

30 June 1666 Georg Händel purchases the house ‘zum gelben Hirsch’

Georg Händels
Kauff
v Johann Georgen Bleÿens Wittbe:
Hauss,

Kund und zuwissen seÿ hiermit allen, denen es zuwißen von nöthen, das untengesezten dato zwischen Frauen Susannen, Herrn Johann Georg Bleÿens, Fürstl: Magdeb: geheimbten Cammerdieners, seel: nachgelaßener Wittben, ahn Einen: Herrn Georg Händeln, Fürstl: Sächß: Magdeb: Geheimbden Cammerdienern Unnd leib: *Chirurgo* andern theils, nachfolgender Kauffcontract, abgehandelt Unnd geschlossen worden, Nemblichen es Verkauftet obgedachte Frau Susanna Bleyin, mit autorität Unnd Vollwort ihres *ad hunc actum in specie* bestätigten Vormundes, Herrn Benjamin Schmiedens, Fürstl: Sächß: Canzeleÿ *Secretarij* Zu Weißenfels, bemelten Herrn Georg Händeln ihr alhier Zu Halle, in der kleinen Claußstraßen gelegenes Hauß Unnd Hoff, Zum gelben Hirsch genant ... vor Dreÿtzeihen Hundert undt Zehen gülden Meißnischer wehrung ...

Alß ist darüber gegenwertiger Kauffbrief unter ihrer eigenhändigen unterschrifft Unnd Siegeln, aufgesezet, Unnd soll denen Gerichten Zur *Confirmation* gebührendt Vorgetragen werden, Treulich Unnd ohne gefehrde. Actum Hall den 30. Junij Anno 1666.

L.S. Susanna Bleÿin L.S. George Händel mpr
Wittbe.
L.S. Benjamin Schmiedt, Christoff Händel.
cur. von der Frau Bleÿin

*Georg Händel’s purchase
of the house of Johann Georg Bleÿ’s widow*

Herewith be it announced and made known to all who need to know, that on the date given below, the following contract of sale has been negotiated and concluded between, on the one hand, Frau Susanna, widow of the late Herr Johann Georg Bleÿ, private valet of the Prince of Magdeburg, and Herr Georg Händel, private valet and personal surgeon to the Prince of Saxony-Magdeburg on the other hand. Namely, that the aforesaid Frau Susanna Bley, with the authority and consent of Herr Benjamin Schmied, secretary to the ducal Saxon Chancellery in Weissenfels, the trustee authorised to act for her in this matter, [has sold] to the aforementioned Herr Georg Händel her house and home called [at the sign of] the Yellow Stag, which lies on the Kleine Claußstraße here in Halle ... for thirteen hundred and ten Meissen guilders ...

This present letter of purchase, prepared under her own signature and seal, shall now be conveyed to the courts for confirmation in the appropriate way, in good faith. Executed at Halle 30 June 1666.

In place of a seal. George Händel by his own hand

In place of a seal. Susanna Blej
widow
In place of a seal. Benjamin Schmiedt Christoff Händel.
representative of Frau Blej

D-MAI Rep. Db Halle, A la, Nr. 54, fos. 155v–156v. The house here identified as ‘Zum gelben Hirsch’, where Handel was born in February 1685, is located at the corner of the present Grosse Nikolaistrasse and Kleine Ulrichstrasse. Georg Händel had returned to Halle in 1643, and in 1645 he was appointed the official surgeon of the Giebichenstein authorities. In 1660 he became private surgeon and *valet de chambre* to Duke August of Saxe-Weissenfels (1614–80). The Duke, first brother of the Elector of Saxony, was the last administrator of the Archbishopric of Magdeburg and, as such, resided mainly in Halle from 1638. Handel’s father purchased ‘Zum gelben Hirsch’ for 1,310 guilders, making an initial payment of 800 guilders and paying the rest by instalments. There was a licence to sell wine in the house: this was subsequently contested by the city council, and Georg fought for the renewal of the privilege until it was confirmed by Duke August on 8 January 1668 (D-Bga Rep. 52. Nr. 95). The wine trade was carried on by a tenant, Augustus Lehmann. Numerous records refer to the ongoing dispute between the Council and Duke August about the licence (see D-MAI Rep. A II, Nr. 888), which Georg eventually renounced on 9 February 1682, although Lehmann was permitted to continue trading for another two years (D-HAsa U 1 B Nr. 546). Georg Händel had inherited from his father a vineyard in Müllerdorf, a village near Halle, but sold it in 1652 in exchange for an annual supply of wine (see Hofestädt 1993). Christoph Händel (1612–78) was Georg’s older brother, a blacksmith and a member of Halle council. For a summary of Georg Händel’s life, see Werner 1994/5 and Piechocki 1990.

30 June 1666 Handel’s father registers as a citizen of Halle

Georg Handel, Balbier, und Fürstl. Magdeburg. Cammerdiener *promot*: Herr Amtm. Jacob Lüdicke, und H. Christoph Handel dt: 8 Rgf. *et iuravit* den 30ten Junij 1666.

Georg Handel, barber-surgeon and private valet of the Prince of Magdeburg, recommended by the senior magistrate Herr Jacob Lüdicke, and Herr Christoph Handel, gave 8 gold guilders, and swore the oath on 30th June 1666.

D-HAsa HB B 1 Bd. 1 fo. 284v. Christoph Händel was Georg’s brother (see previous entry). For further details of the *Bürgerbuch* (register of citizens), see the entry for 1609. For Georg Händel’s appointment by Duke August of Saxe-Weissenfels, see the previous document.

9 January 1670 Funeral oration for Handel’s paternal grandmother

Handel’s paternal grandmother, Anna Beichling, died on 5 January 1670, and her funeral took place on 9 January. The funeral oration, by Johann Gottfried Olearius (1635–1711), Deacon, and

later Pastor, at the Marktkirche Unser Lieben Frauen in Halle, was published in Halle with the title *Das höchste Neu Jahr-Geschenck, Welches Die Weyland Erbahre, Gottsfürchtige und Tugendsame Matrone, Fr. Anna Beichlings, [Tit.] Hn. Valentin Händels, Weiland Rathes-Verwandten und Schmiede-Meisters allhier, sel. nachgelassene Witbe. Vermittelst eines seel. Abschieds aus dieser Welt, von Gottes Gnaden-Hand erlanget hat: Bey Ihrer Christlichen Leichbestattung, Hall den 9. Januar. 1670.* [*The greatest New Year's gift, which the honourable, God-fearing and virtuous matron, Frau Anna Beichling, deceased, widow of Herr Valentin Händel, late councillor and master smith in this city, has, by a blessed departure from this world, obtained from God's gracious hand: At her Christian burial, Halle 9th January 1670*] (D-HAu Pon Zb 4916, QK).

Olearius' father, Gottfried (1604–85), mentioned in the sermon as Anna Beichling's father-confessor, was Superintendent for the Halle region and chief Pastor at the Marktkirche. Johann Gottfried's paternal grandfather, Johannes Olearius (1546–1623), was Handel's maternal great-great-grandfather. The Marktkirche (as it will be referred to here) is also known as the Marienkirche.

Several members of Handel's family are mentioned in the funeral oration. Anna Beichling's parents (Handel's great-grandparents) were Samuel Beichling, town councillor and coppersmith in Eisleben, Saxony, and Barbara Ziehbogen. Handel's grandfather Valentin, who married Anna in 1608, is referred to here as master blacksmith and town councillor in Halle. Also mentioned are Anna and Valentin's six children: Valentin, Christoph (see previous documents), Barbara, Samuel, Gottfried and Georg (Handel's father). Handel's father's first marriage is also referred to: in 1643 he had married Anna Kathe (c. 1610–82), previously the wife of Christoph Ettinger (or Oettinger), barber-surgeon of Neumarkt, a suburb of Halle. After his marriage, Georg Händel took over Ettinger's practice in the town, becoming a resident there. Of the six children of the marriage, only three outlived their parents: the oldest daughter Dorothea Elisabeth (1644–90; married the barber-surgeon Michael Beyer in 1659, and Zacharias Kleinhempel, another barber-surgeon, in 1672); the youngest son Carl (1649–1713); and the youngest daughter, Sophia Rosina (1652–1728, married the bailiff Philipp Pferstorff in 1668). Kleinhempel and Pferstorff were Handel's godparents (see 24 February 1685). For further details of Handel's family tree, see Landgraf and Vickers 2009, Appendix 3.

4 June 1680 Death of Duke August of Saxe-Weissenfels

Under the terms of the Peace of Westphalia (1648), the Archbishopric of Magdeburg was transferred to Elector Frederick William of Brandenburg (1620–88) on the death of Duke August – subsequently becoming a Duchy – and the Saxon court under August's son, Duke Johann Adolph I (1649–97), removed from Halle to Weissenfels. The change of administration required Georg Händel to re-establish his position in Halle. On 14 August 1680 he wrote to the Elector in Berlin about his promised appointment as 'Kammerdiener von Haus aus', that is, as a member of the court staff though living in Halle, and he received confirmation of the appointment on 10 December 1680. The position was unsalaried, but on 6 September 1682, the Elector granted him 100 Reichsthalers annually for life, on condition that he continued to treat plague

victims in Halle (D-Bga Rep.52 Nr. 76). For further details of Georg Händel's career, see Piechocki 1990.

April 1683 Banns of marriage between Georg Händel and Dorothea Taust

Anno 1683.

Den 9 Aprilis Wie auch den 15. und 22 ejusdem ist der Edele, WolEhrenVeste, Grosachtbare und Kunstberühmete Herr Georg Händel, Churfürstl. Brandenburgischer Wolbestalter Kammerdiener mit Jungfer Dorotheen Taustin, Meiner l. Tochter aufgeboden und den 23 Aprilis öffentlich zu Gibichenstein copuliret worden.

Anno 1683.

On 9th April, as well as on the 15th and 22nd of the same, the banns of marriage were called for the noble, most honourable, highly esteemed and renowned Herr Georg Händel, officially appointed valet to the Elector of Brandenburg; with the spinster Dorothea Taust, my dear daughter, and they were publicly married in Gibichenstein on 23rd April.

D-GBCb Kirchenbuch I, Aufgebotsregister 1594–1684, p. 277. This refers to the marriage of Handel's father and mother (Dorothea, 1651–1730). The entry must have been written by Dorothea's father, Georg Taust (1606–85), then Pastor of Giebichenstein near Halle, who performed the wedding ceremony himself.

23 April 1683 Marriage of Georg Händel and Dorothea Taust

Der Edele WolEhrenVeste, Grosachtbare und Kunstberühmte Herr Georg Hendel, Churfürstl. Brandenburgischer Wolbestalter Kammerdiener Mit Jungfer Dorthen Meiner Tochter den 23 Aprilis Zu Giebichenstein copuliret.

The noble, honourable, highly respectable and renowned Herr Georg Hendel, officially appointed Valet to the Elector of Brandenburg, was married to the spinster Dorothea, my daughter, on 23rd April in Giebichenstein.

D-GBCb Kirchenbuch III, Getaufte, Getraute, Gestorbene 1654–1700: Actus ministeriales bey der Kirche zu Giebichenstein meo tempore ab anno 1654 et porro . . . Georg Taust Pf, p. 166, column 'Getraute'. Facsimile in Hünicken and Serauky 1939, p. 4. This record of the marriage of Handel's parents was again apparently written by Dorothea's father, Georg Taust (see previous entry). Dorothea was thirty-two years old and Georg Händel sixty at the time of their marriage. They had four children: a son in 1684, who died within an hour of his birth; Georg Friedrich (1685–1759); and two daughters, Dorothea Sophia (1687–1718) and Johanna Christiana (1690–1709).

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1685–1699

**23 February 1685 Birth of Handel**

Georgen Friederichen, geboren den 23. Febr. Anno 1685.

Georg Friederich [Händel], born 23rd February, in the year 1685.

The earliest known document to give Handel's birth-date (quoted here) is the oration delivered at his mother's funeral in 1730 (see 22 December 1730). During Handel's lifetime his birth-date was also published in Stössel's *Kurtzgefaßtes Musicalisches Lexicon* (1737) and Johann Christoph von Dreyhaupt's *Pagus Neletici et Nudzici* (1750, p. 625). The earliest contemporary record of Handel is the register entry for his baptism, which took place on the following day (see 24 February 1685).

[23 February 1685] From Mainwaring's *Memoirs* (1760)

GEORGE FREDERIC HANDEL was born at HALL, a city in the circle of Upper-Saxony, the 24th February 1684, by a second wife of his father, who was an eminent surgeon and physician of the same place, and above sixty when his son was born.

Memoirs, pp. 1–2. Mainwaring's account contains several inaccuracies, which are nevertheless instructive about the information that was available in London at the time of Handel's death. The form of the name is not precisely that used by Handel in English signatures – George Frideric Handel. Although Handel himself still referred to 'Halle in Sachsen' in his will in 1750, the city of Halle (Mainwaring's 'Hall') was part of the Saxon territory that had been transferred to Brandenburg (Prussia) in 1680 on the death of the former Duke (see 4 June 1680). Mainwaring's birth-date is incorrect or misleading on two counts: 24 February was the date of Handel's baptism, not his birth, and the year is given in 'Old Style' (with the year-end on 25 March), which was current in Britain and Germany at the time of Handel's birth, but not by 1760. Mainwaring's text may have influenced the birth year carved on Handel's monument in Westminster Abbey (see 15 July 1762), and the timing of the anniversary celebrations in 1784.

Handel was born in his father's house, 'Zum gelben Hirsch' (see 30 June 1666): his father was sixty-two years old at the time. The building, on the corner of Grosse Nikolaistrasse and Kleine Ulrichsstrasse, has been a museum since 1948.

24 February 1685 Handel’s baptism at the Marktkirche, Halle

Febr.			
Martius		1685.	
	Väter	Täuffling	Paten.
		Die Woche Sexagesima	
			Herr Philipp Fehrsdorff, hochfl. Sächs. Verwalter Zu Langendorff, Jungfer Anna, Herrn Georg Taustens, gewesenen Pfarrers Zum Giebichenstein S. nachgel. Jgfr Tochter, und H. Zacharias Kleinhempel, Amts Barbier auffm Näumarckt alhier.
♂ 24.	H Georg Händel, Cammerdiener und Amts Chirurgus.	Georg Friederich	
February			
March		1685.	
	Fathers	Infant to be baptised	Godparents
		The week of Sexagesima	
			Herr Philipp Fehrsdorff, Administrator of Princely Saxony at Langendorff; the spinster Anna, daughter of the late Herr Georg Taust, formerly Pastor of Giebichenstein; and Herr Zacharias Kleinhempel, official barber on the Näumarckt [Neumarkt] here.
	Herr Georg	Georg Friederich	
Tuesday 24.	Händel, Valet and Official Surgeon.		

D-HAmk B. Specialia. II. Klasse. Die kirchlichen Handlungen betreffend. Lit. a. Den öffentlichen Gottes-Dienst betr. No.7. F. Taufregister v.J. 1667–1686, p. 663; facsimile in Rackwitz and Steffens 1962, Plate 14, and complete page in Polka 1991, Plate 11. The column heading ‘Martius’ applies to the births listed after the above entry on the same page. ‘Sexagesima’ is the second Sunday before Lent, which fell on 22 February in 1685. Handel’s baptismal names are given here as ‘Georg Friederich’. Philipp Pferstorff (1619–97) was the husband of Handel’s half-sister, Sophia Rosina; Anna Taust (1654–1725) was Handel’s aunt, his mother’s younger sister. Zacharias Kleinhempel (1648–98) was the husband of Handel’s other surviving half-sister, Dorothea Elisabeth. Following the death of Handel’s father, Kleinhempel was appointed his successor as surgeon in Giebichenstein (see 18 February 1697). Although Handel’s maternal grandfather is referred to here as the ‘late Herr Georg Taust’, he did not die until 8 April 1685 (see the following item); this entry in the register was presumably written after that date, along with others from the same period.