

= Prince Octavius of Great Britain =

The Prince Octavius (23 February 1779 ? 3 May 1783) was the 13th child and 8th son of King George III and his queen consort Charlotte of Mecklenburg @-@ Strelitz . Six months after the death of his brother Prince Alfred , Octavius was inoculated with the smallpox virus . Several days later , he became ill . His subsequent death at the age of four devastated his parents , and in particular his father . George bemoaned the death of his son , of whom he was exceedingly fond ; the king 's later bouts of madness would involve hallucinations of his young son .

= = Life = =

Prince Octavius was born on 23 February 1779 , at Buckingham House , London , England . He was the thirteenth child and eighth son of King George III and his queen consort Charlotte of Mecklenburg @-@ Strelitz . The prince 's name derives from Latin octavus , the eighth , indicating that he was the eighth son of his parents .

Octavius was christened on 23 March 1779 , in the Great Council Chamber at St James 's Palace , by Frederick Cornwallis , The Archbishop of Canterbury . His godparents were The Duke of Brunswick @-@ Wolfenbüttel (husband of his first cousin twice @-@ removed , for whom The Earl of Hertford , Lord Chamberlain , stood proxy) ; The Duke of Mecklenburg (his first cousin once @-@ removed , for whom The Earl of Ashburnham , Groom of the Stole , stood proxy) ; and The Duchess of Saxe @-@ Weimar @-@ Eisenach (wife of his sixth cousin , for whom Alicia Wyndham , Countess of Egremont and Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Charlotte , was proxy) .

King George was extremely devoted to Octavius , who was too young to cause the kinds of trouble that his elder brothers were by the year of his birth . The king was affectionate and indulgent with his young children , and strove to attend their birthday parties and other events organized for their merriment ; on one occasion a friend witnessed a happy domestic scene that involved George " carrying about in his arms by turns Sophia and the last prince , Octavius . " Another witness wrote George and Charlotte " have their Children always playing about them the whole time " ; during most evenings the children were brought to their parents between 6 and 7 O 'clock to play for an hour or two . The king also was kept informed of his children 's educational progress .

Octavius was close to his nearest sister Sophia , who called Octavius " her son " , and went with her and their siblings , Elizabeth and Edward to Eastborne on the Sussex coast , where he could take in the fresh seaside air during the summer of 1780 . When he was nineteen months old , Octavius became an older brother with the birth of his younger brother Prince Alfred . Octavius was three years of age when Alfred died on 20 August 1782 , and he again became the youngest surviving child . Horace Walpole wrote to Sir Horace Mann that upon Prince Alfred 's death , King George had declared " I am very sorry for Alfred ; but had it been Octavius , I should have died too . " In 1820 , historian Edward Holt would write of the prince 's character , " Though Prince Octavius had not passed his fifth year , he was considered very docile , and possessed good @-@ nature in such an uncommon degree , that he was the delight of all about him . " Biographer John Watkins added Octavius was " reckoned one of the finest of the royal progeny . "

= = Death and aftermath = =

Six months after Alfred 's death , Octavius and Sophia were taken to Kew Palace in London to be inoculated with the smallpox virus . While Sophia recovered without incident , Octavius became ill and died several days later , around 8 o 'clock PM , on 3 May 1783 , at Kew Palace . He was four years old . As was traditional , the household did not go into mourning for the deaths of royal children under the age of fourteen .

Octavius has the distinction of being the last member of the British royal family to suffer from smallpox . On 10 May , he was buried alongside his brother Alfred at Westminster Abbey . Their eldest brother , now King George IV ordered their remains transferred to St. George 's Chapel , Windsor Castle on 11 February 1820 , at about 3 o 'clock .

According to Queen Charlotte , Octavius ' death was unexpected ; she wrote to a friend who faced a similar tragedy that " twice have I felt what you do feel , the last time without the least preparation for such a stroke , for in less than eight and forty hours was my son Octavius , in perfect health , sick and struck with death immediately . " The prince 's death had a marked effect , both mentally and physically on Queen Charlotte , who at the time was pregnant with her youngest child Princess Amelia .

Octavius 's death devastated his father ; Walpole wrote " the King has lost another little child ; a lovely boy , they say , of whom their Majesties were dotingly fond . " Shortly afterward , King George said " There will be no Heaven for me if Octavius is not there . " The day after his son 's death , the King passed through a room where artist Thomas Gainsborough was completing the finishing touches on a portrait of the family . The King asked him to stop , but when he found out that the painting was of Octavius , allowed the painter to continue . When this same painting was exhibited a week later , Octavius ' sisters were so upset that they broke down and cried in front of everyone . Three months after Octavius ' death , his father was still dwelling on his son , writing to Lord Dartmouth that every day " increases the chasm I feel for want of that beloved object [Octavius] . " In later years , King George imagined conversations with his two youngest sons . During one of the king 's bouts of madness in 1788 , George mistook a pillow for Octavius , who by that time had been dead for five years .

= = Portraits = =

Several portraits of Octavius survive . Five portraits of him alone and one with his brother Alfred are housed in the Royal Collection of the United Kingdom . The first is the more famous painting by Thomas Gainsborough in 1782 , which is part of a series of paintings of the younger royal children . The second one is after the 1782 portrait by Gainsborough (see above) and is dated to about 1782 or 1784 . The third portrait is by Benjamin West and was painted shortly before Octavius 's death . Furthermore , among these five portraits , there are two enamels , both after Gainsborough 's 1782 portrait ; one is by William Bone and the other one is by an anonymous master . The sixth and last portrait represents the apotheosis of Octavius and Alfred (see above) and was painted by West . Another portrait , this time of Queen Charlotte , features Octavius . Painted in 1779 by West , this is both a portrait of the Queen and her children , who are featured in the background . Prince Octavius is at the centre of the group , wearing baby clothes and riding in a little phaeton . He is pulled along by Prince Ernest and pushed by Prince Adolphus .

Two other portraits are housed by the National Portrait Gallery in London . The first is an 1817 engraving by Samuel Freeman , after Gainsborough . The second is another engraving , entitled The Apotheosis of the Princes Octavius and Alfred and of the Princess Amelia , published in 1820 by Robert Hicks .

Three more portraits , less known are housed variously overseas . The first one is by West and is housed by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts . It was painted in 1783 and measures 59 @. @ 21 x 41 @. @ 43 cm . Two more engravings after Gainsborough are scarce throughout the United States .

= = Titles , styles , honours and arms = =

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23 February 1779 ? 3 May 1783 : His Royal Highness The Prince Octavius

= = Ancestry = =