

# Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz

**Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Stelitz** (Sophia Charlotte; 19 May 1744 – 17 November 1818) was by marriage to King George III the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland from her wedding in 1761 until the union of the two kingdoms in 1801, after which she was Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland until her death in 1818. She was also the Electress of Hanover in the Holy Roman Empireuntil the promotion of her husband to King of Hanover on 12 October 1814, after which she was also queen consort of Hanover

Queen Charlotte was a patroness of the arts and an amateur botanist, who helped expand Kew Gardens. George III and Charlotte had 15 children, 13 of whom survived to adulthood. She was distressed by her husband's bouts of physical and mental illness, which became permanent in later life and resulted in their eldest son's appointment as Prince Regent in 1811.

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## Early life



Queen Charlotte by Allan Ramsay, 1761

Sophia Charlotte was born on 19 May 1744. She was the youngest daughter of Duke Charles Louis Frederick of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (1708–1752; known as "Prince of Mirow") and of his wife Princess Elizabeth Albertine of Saxe-Hildburghausen (1713–1761). Mecklenburg-Strelitz was a small north-German duchy in the Holy Roman Empire.

The children of Duke Charles were all born at the *Unteres Schloss* (Lower Castle) in Mirow.<sup>[1]</sup> According to diplomatic reports at the time of her engagement to George III in 1761, Charlotte had received "a very mediocre education".<sup>[2]:16</sup> Her upbringing was similar to that of a daughter of an English country gentleman.<sup>[3]</sup> She received some rudimentary instruction in botany, natural history and language from tutors, but her education focused on household management and on religion, the latter taught by a priest. Only after her brother Adolphus Frederick succeeded to the ducal throne in 1752 did she gain any experience of princely duties and of court life.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Marriage

When King George III succeeded to the throne of Great Britain upon the death of his grandfather, George II, he was 22 years old and unmarried. His mother and advisors were anxious to have him settled in marriage. The 17-year-old Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz appealed to him as a prospective consort partly because she had been brought up in an insignificant north German duchy and therefore would probably have had no experience or interest in power politics or party intrigues. That proved to be the case; to make sure, he instructed her shortly after their wedding "not to meddle," a precept she was glad to follow

### Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz



Portrait by Nathaniel Dance-Holland, ca. 1768

### Queen consort of Great Britain and IrelandElectress consort of Hanover<sup>[a]</sup>

**Tenure**8 September 1761 – 17 November 1818

**Coronation**22 September 1761

**Born**19 May 1744

Unteres Schloß, Mirow,

Duchy of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Holy Roman Empire

**Died**17 November 1818 (aged 74)

Kew Palace, Kew, England, United Kingdom

**Burial**2 December 1818

St George's Chapel, Windsor, England

**Spouse** George III (m., 1761)

**Issue**

George IV

Prince Frederick, Duke of York and Albany

William IV

Charlotte, Queen of Württemberg

Prince Edward, Duke of Kent and Strathearn

Princess Augusta

Elizabeth, Landgravine of Hesse-Homburg

Ernest Augustus, King of Hanover

Prince Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex

Prince Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge

Princess Mary, Duchess of Gloucester and Edinburgh

Princess Sophia

Prince Octavius

Prince Alfred

Princess Amelia

**Full name**

Sophia Charlotte

**House** Mecklenburg-Strelitz

**Father** Duke Charles Louis Frederick of

The King announced to his Council in July 1761, according to the usual form, his intention to wed the Princess, after which a party of escorts, led by the Earl Harcourt, departed for Germany to conduct Princess Charlotte to England. They reached Strelitz on 14 August 1761, and were received the next day by the reigning duke, Princess Charlotte's brother, at which time the marriage contract was signed by him on the one hand and Earl Harcourt on the other. Three days of public celebrations followed, and on 17 August 1761, the Princess set out for Britain, accompanied by her brother, Duke Adolphus Frederick and by the British escort party. On 22 August, they reached Cuxhaven, where a small fleet awaited to convey them to England. The voyage was extremely difficult; the party encountered three storms at sea, and landed at Harwich only on 7 September. They set out at once for London, spent that night in Witham, at the residence of Lord Abercorn, and arrived at 3:30 pm the next day at St. James's Palace in London. They were received by the King and his family at the garden gate, which marked the first meeting of the bride and groom.

At 9:00 pm that same evening (8 September 1761), within six hours of her arrival, Charlotte was united in marriage with King George III. The ceremony was performed at the Chapel Royal, St. James's Palace, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Secker.<sup>[5]</sup> Only the royal family, the party who had travelled from Germany and a handful of guests were present.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Life as queen

Upon her wedding day, Charlotte spoke no English. She was, however, quick to learn English, albeit speaking with a strong German accent. It was noted by many observers that she was "ugly". "She is timid at first but talks a lot, when she is among people she knows", said one observer.<sup>[2]:17</sup>



In 1767, Francis Cotes drew a pastel of Queen Charlotte with her eldest daughter Charlotte, Princess Royal Lady Mary Coke called the likeness "so like that it could not be mistaken for any other person!"<sup>[7]</sup>

Less than a year after the marriage, on 12 August 1762, the Queen gave birth to her first child, the Prince of Wales, who would later become King George IV. In the course of their marriage, the couple became the parents of 15 children, all but two of whom (Octavius and Alfred) survived into adulthood.

St. James's Palace was the official residence of the royal couple, but the king had recently purchased a nearby property, Buckingham House, located at the western end of St. James's Park. The new property was relatively more private and compact and stood amid rolling parkland not far from St. James's palace. Around 1762, the King and Queen moved to this residence, which was originally intended as a private retreat. The Queen came to favor this residence greatly, spending much of her time there, so that it came to be known as The Queen's House. Indeed, in 1775, an Act of Parliament settled the property on Queen Charlotte in exchange for her rights to Somerset House (see *Old and New London* below). Most of her 15 children were born in Buckingham House. However, St. James's Palace remained the official and ceremonial royal residence.<sup>[8][9]</sup>

During her first years in Great Britain, Charlotte had some difficulty in adapting to the life of the British court due to a strained relationship with her mother-in-law, Princess Augusta.<sup>[4]</sup> Her mother-in-law made it difficult for Charlotte to establish social contacts by insisting on rigid court etiquette.<sup>[4]</sup> Furthermore, it was Augusta who initially appointed many of Charlotte's staff, among whom several were suspected to report to Augusta about Charlotte's behavior.<sup>[4]</sup> When she turned to her German companions for friends, she was criticized for keeping favorites, notably her close confidante Juliane von Schwollenbeg.<sup>[4]</sup>

The King enjoyed country pursuits and riding and preferred to keep his family's residence as much as possible in the then rural towns of Kew and Richmond-upon-Thames. He favoured an informal and relaxed domestic life, to the dismay of some courtiers more accustomed to displays of grandeur and strict protocol. Lady Mary Coke was indignant on hearing in July 1769 that the King, the Queen, her visiting brother Prince Ernest and Lady Effingham had gone for a walk through Richmond town by themselves without any servants. "I am not satisfied in my mind about the propriety of a Queen walking in town unattended."<sup>[2]:23</sup>

From 1778, the Royal family spent much of their time at a newly constructed residence, Queen's Lodge at Windsor, opposite Windsor Castle, in Windsor Great Park where the King enjoyed hunting deer.<sup>[10]</sup> The Queen was responsible for the interior decoration of their new residence, described by friend of the Royal Family and diarist Mary Delany: "The entrance into the first room was dazzling, all furnished with beautiful Indian paper, chairs covered with different embroideries of the liveliest colours, glasses, tables, sconces, in the best taste, the whole calculated to give the greatest cheerfulness to the place!"<sup>[2]:23</sup>

Queen Charlotte endeared herself to her ladies and her children's attendants by treating them with friendly warmth, as in this note she wrote to her daughters' assistant governess:

My dear Miss Hamilton, What can I have to say? Not much indeed! But to wish you a good morning, in the pretty blue and white room where I had the pleasure to sit and read with you *The Hermit*, a poem which is such a favourite with me that I have read it twice this summer. Oh! What a blessing to keep good company! Very likely I should not have been acquainted with either poet or poem was it not for you!<sup>[2]:72</sup>

Charlotte did have some influence on political affairs through the King, an influence she was not considered to abuse.<sup>[11]</sup> Her influence was discreet and indirect, as demonstrated in the correspondence with her brother Charles. She used her closeness with George III to keep herself informed and make recommendations for offices.<sup>[11]</sup> Apparently, her recommendations were not direct, as she on one occasion, in 1779, asked her brother Charles to burn her letter, because the King suspected that a person she had recently recommended for a post was the client of a woman who sold offices.<sup>[11]</sup> Charlotte particularly interested herself in German issues. She took an interest in the War of the Bavarian Succession of 1778, and it is possible that it was due to her efforts that the King supported British intervention in that war in 1785.<sup>[11]</sup>

When the King had a first, temporary, bout of mental illness in 1765, Charlotte was kept unaware of the situation by her mother-in-law and Lord Bute.<sup>[4]</sup> The Regency Bill of 1765 stated that if the King should become permanently unable to rule, Charlotte was to become Regent.<sup>[4]</sup> This was unsuccessfully opposed by her mother-in-law and Lord Bute, but as the King's illness of 1765 was temporary Charlotte was not made aware of it, nor of the Regency Bill.<sup>[4]</sup>

The King's bout of physical and mental illness in 1788 distressed and terrified the Queen. She was overheard by the writer Fanny Burney, at that time one of the Queen's attendants, moaning to herself with "desponding sound": "What will become of me? What will become of me?"<sup>[2]:116</sup> The night the King collapsed, she refused to be left alone with him and successfully insisted that she be given her own bedroom.<sup>[4]</sup> When the doctor, Warren, was called, she was not informed and was not given the opportunity to speak with him.<sup>[4]</sup> When told

	Mecklenburg, Prince of Mirow
Mother	Princess Elizabeth Albertine of Saxe-Hildburghausen
Religion	Protestant



Princess Charlotte by Johann Georg Ziesenis, c. 1761

by the Prince of Wales that the King was to be removed to Kew, but that she should move to Queens House or Windsor, she successfully insisted that she accompany her spouse to Kew.<sup>[4]</sup> However, she and her daughters were taken to Kew separately from the King and lived secluded from him during his illness.<sup>[4]</sup> They regularly visited him, but the visits tended to be uncomfortable, as he had a tendency to embrace them and refuse to let them go.<sup>[4]</sup>

During the 1788 illness of the King, there was a conflict between the Queen and the Prince of Wales, who were both suspected of desiring to assume the Regency, should the illness of the King become permanent resulting in him being declared unfit to rule.<sup>[4]</sup> The Queen suspected the Prince of Wales of a plan to have the King declared insane with the assistance of Doctor Warren, and take over the Regency.<sup>[4]</sup> The followers of the Prince of Wales, notably Sir Gilbert Ellis, in turn suspected the Queen of a plan to have the King declared sane with the assistance of Doctor Willis and Prime Minister Pitt, so that he could have her appointed Regent should he fall ill again, and then have him declared insane again and assume the Regency.<sup>[4]</sup> According to Doctor Warren, Doctor Willis had pressed him to declare the King sane on the orders of the Queen.<sup>[4]</sup> In the Regency Bill of 1789, the Prince of Wales was declared Regent, should the King become permanently insane, but it also placed the King himself, his court and minor children under the guardianship of the Queen.<sup>[4]</sup> The Queen used this Bill when she refused the Prince of Wales permission to see the King alone, even well after he had been declared sane again in the spring of 1789.<sup>[4]</sup> The whole conflict around the Regency led to a serious discord between the Prince of Wales and his mother. In an argument he accused her of having sided with his enemies, while she called him the enemy of the King.<sup>[4]</sup> Their conflict was publicly demonstrated when she refused to invite him to the concert held in celebration of the recovery of the King, which created a scandal.<sup>[4]</sup> Queen Charlotte and the Prince of Wales finally reconciled, on her initiative, in March 1791.<sup>[4]</sup>

After the King's recovery in 1789, he remained mentally fragile, and his health was easily provoked by emotional stress.<sup>[4]</sup> The necessity to spare the King anything that could upset him and provoke a new outburst of illness placed the Queen under considerable stress.<sup>[4]</sup>

As the King gradually became permanently insane, the Queen's personality altered: she developed a terrible temper, sank into depression, no longer enjoyed appearing in public, not even at the musical concerts she had so loved, and her relationships with her adult children became strained.<sup>[2]:112–379 passim</sup> From 1792, she found some relief from her worry about her husband by planning the gardens and decoration of a new residence for herself, Frogmore House in Windsor Home Park.<sup>[12]</sup> From 1804 onward, when the King displayed a declining mental health, Queen Charlotte slept in a separate bedroom, had her meals separate from him, and avoided seeing him alone.<sup>[4]</sup> From this time, Charlotte cultivated a better relationship with her eldest son the Prince of Wales together with her daughters Princess Augusta and Princess Elizabeth, and her sons the Dukes of Clarence, Kent and Sussex, while her younger daughters as well as her other sons (the Dukes of York, Cumberland and Cambridge) supported their father

## Interests and patronage



"Patroness of Botany and of the Fine Arts"

King George III and Queen Charlotte were music connoisseurs with German tastes, who gave special honour to German artists and composers. They were passionate admirers of the music of George Frideric Handel<sup>[13]</sup>

In April 1764, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, then aged eight, arrived in Britain with his family as part of their grand tour of Europe and remained until July 1765.<sup>[14]</sup> The Mozarts were summoned to court on 19 May and played before a limited circle from six to ten o'clock. Johann Christian Bach, eleventh son of the great Johann Sebastian Bach, was then music-master to the Queen. He put difficult works of Handel, J. S. Bach, and Carl Friedrich Abel before the boy: he played them all at sight, and those present were quite amazed.<sup>[15]</sup> Afterwards, the young Mozart accompanied the Queen in aria which she sang, and played a solo work on the flute.<sup>[16]</sup> On 29 October, the Mozarts were in town again, and were invited to court to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the King's accession. As a memento of the royal favour, Leopold Mozart published six sonatas composed by Wolfgang, known as Mozart's Opus 3, that were dedicated to the Queen on 18 January 1765, a dedication she rewarded with a present of 50 guineas.<sup>[17]</sup>

Queen Charlotte was an amateur botanist who took a great interest in Kew Gardens. In an age of discovery, when travellers and explorers such as Captain James Cook and Sir Joseph Banks were constantly bringing home new species and varieties of plants, she ensured that the collections were greatly enriched and expanded.<sup>[18]</sup> Her interest in botany led to the South African flower the *Bird of Paradise*, being named *Strelitzia reginae* in her honour.<sup>[19]</sup>

Among the royal couple's favored craftsmen and artists were the cabinetmaker William Vile, silversmith Thomas Heming, the landscape designer Capability Brown, and the German painter Johann Zoffany, who frequently painted the king and queen and their children in charmingly informal scenes, such as a portrait of Queen Charlotte and her children as she sat at her dressing table.<sup>[20]</sup> In 1788 the royal couple visited the Worcester Porcelain Factory (founded in 1751, and later to be known as Royal Worcester), where Queen Charlotte ordered a porcelain service that was later renamed "Royal Lily" in her honour. Another well-known porcelain service designed and named in her honour was the "Queen Charlotte" pattern.<sup>[21]</sup>

The queen founded orphanages, and in 1809 became the patron (providing new funding) of the General Lying-in Hospital, a hospital for expectant mothers. It was subsequently renamed as the Queen's Hospital, and is today the Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital. The education of women was of great importance to her, and she ensured that her daughters were better educated than was usual for young women of the day; however, she also insisted that her daughters live restricted lives close to their mother, and she refused to allow them to marry until they were well-advanced in years. As a result, none of her daughters had legitimate issue (one, Princess Sophia, may have had an illegitimate son).

In 2004, the Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace staged an exhibition illustrating George and Charlotte's enthusiastic arts patronage, which was particularly enlightened in contrast to that of earlier Hanoverian monarchs. It compared favorably to the adventuresome tastes of the King's father, Frederick, Prince of Wales.

Up until 1788, portraits of Charlotte often depict her in maternal poses with her children, and she looks young and contented;<sup>[22]</sup> however, in that year her husband fell seriously ill and became temporarily insane. It is now thought that the King was suffering from porphyria, but at the time the cause of the King's illness was unknown. Sir Thomas Lawrence's portrait of her at this time marks a transition point, after which she looks much older in her portraits; the Assistant Keeper of Charlotte's Wardrobe, Mrs. Papendiek, wrote that the Queen was "much changed, her hair quite grey"<sup>[23]</sup>

## Relations with Marie Antoinette



Queen Charlotte with her Two Eldest Sons, Johan Zoffany, 1765



Queen Charlotte in middle age, 1779



The French Revolution of 1789 probably added to the strain that Charlotte felt.<sup>[25]</sup> Queen Charlotte and Queen Marie Antoinette of France and Navarre kept a close relationship. Charlotte was 11 years older than Marie Antoinette, yet they shared many interests, such as their love of music and the arts, in which they both enthusiastically took an interest. Never meeting face to face, they kept their friendship to pen and paper. Marie Antoinette confided in Charlotte upon the outbreak of the French Revolution. Charlotte had organized apartments to be prepared and ready for the refugee royal family of France to occupy.<sup>[26]</sup> After the execution of Marie Antoinette and the bloody events that followed, Charlotte was said to have been shocked and overwhelmed that such a thing could happen to a kingdom, and at Britain's doorstep.

## Husband's illness

After the onset of his permanent madness in 1811, George III was placed under the guardianship of his wife in accordance with the Regency Bill of 1789.<sup>[4]</sup> She could not bring herself to visit him very often, due to his erratic behaviour and occasional violent reactions. It is believed she did not visit him again after June 1812. However, Charlotte remained supportive of her spouse as his illness, now believed to be porphyria, worsened in old age. While her son, the Prince Regent, wielded the royal power, she was her spouse's legal guardian from 1811 until her death in 1818. Due to the extent of the King's illness he was incapable of knowing or understanding that she had died.

During the Regency of her son, Queen Charlotte continued to fill her role as first lady in royal representation because of the estrangement of the Prince Regent and his spouse.<sup>[4]</sup> As such, she functioned as the hostess by the side of her son at official receptions, such as the festivities given in London to celebrate the defeat of Emperor Napoleon in 1814.<sup>[4]</sup> She also supervised the upbringing of Charlotte of Wales.<sup>[4]</sup> During her last years, she was met with a growing lack of popularity and sometimes subjected to demonstrations.<sup>[4]</sup> After having attended a reception in London on 29 April 1817, she was jeered by a crowd. She told the crowd that it was upsetting to be treated like that after such long service.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Death

The Queen died in the presence of her eldest son, the Prince Regent, who was holding her hand as she sat in an armchair at the family's country retreat, Dutch House in Surrey (now known as Kew Palace). She was buried at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. Her husband died just over a year later. She is the second longest-serving consort in British history (after the present Duke of Edinburgh), having served as such from her marriage (on 8 September 1761) to her death (17 November 1818), a total of 57 years and 70 days.

Her eldest son, the Prince Regent, claimed Charlotte's jewels at her death, but the rest of her property was sold at auction from May to August 1819. Her clothes, furniture, and even her snuff were sold by Christie's.<sup>[27]</sup> It is highly unlikely that her husband ever knew of her death. He died blind, deaf, lame and insane 14 months later

## Legacy

Places named after her include the Queen Charlotte Islands (now known as *Haida Gwaii*) in British Columbia, Canada, and Queen Charlotte City on Haida Gwaii; Queen Charlotte Sound (not far from the Haida Gwaii Islands); Queen Charlotte Bay in West Falkland; Queen Charlotte Sound, South Island, New Zealand; several fortifications, including Fort Charlotte, Saint Vincent; Charlottesville, Virginia; Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; Charlotte, North Carolina; Mecklenburg County, North Carolina; Mecklenburg County, Virginia; Charlotte County, Virginia and Charlotte Harbor, Florida. The proposed North American colonies of Vandalia (because of her supposed Vandal ancestry; see below)<sup>[28][29][30]</sup> and Charlotina were also named for her.<sup>[31]</sup> Queen Street, or Lebuh Queen as it is known in Malay, is a major street in Penang, Malaysia named after her. In Tonga, the royal family adopted the name Sālote (Tongan version of Charlotte) in her honour, and notable individuals included Sālote Lupepau'u and Sālote Tupou III.

Her provision of funding to the General Lying-in Hospital in London prevented its closure; today it is named Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital, and is an acknowledged centre of excellence amongst maternity hospitals. A large copy of the Allan Ramsay portrait of Queen Charlotte hangs in the main lobby of the hospital.

A statue of Queen Charlotte stands in Queen Square in Bloomsbury, London, and at the Charlotte/Douglas International Airport in Charlotte, North Carolina

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey was chartered in 1766 as *Queen's College*, in reference to Queen Charlotte. Despite the American Revolution, it was not renamed until 1825, in honor of Henry Rutgers, a revolutionary war officer and college benefactor. The link to Charlotte is retained by its oldest extant building, Old Queen's (built 1809–1823), and the city block that forms the historic core of the university Queen's Campus

Queen Charlotte was played by Helen Mirren in the 1994 film *The Madness of King George*.

## Titles, styles and arms

### Titles and styles

- 19 May 1744 – 8 September 1761** *Her Serene Highness* Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg<sup>[32]</sup>
- 8 September 1761 – 17 November 1818** *Her Majesty* The Queen

### Arms

The Royal Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom are impaled with her father's arms as a Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. The arms were: Quarterly of six, 1st, Or, a buffalo's head cabossed Sable, armed and ringed Argent, crowned and langued Gules (Mecklenburg); 2nd, Azure, a griffin segreant Or (Rostock); 3rd, Per fess, in chief Azure, a griffin segreant Or, and in the base Vert, a bordure Argent



A 1792 caricature of William Pitt the Younger informing the King and Queen about the shooting of the King of Sweden



Charlotte sat for Sir Thomas Lawrence in September 1789. His portrait of her was exhibited at the Royal Academy the following year. Reviewers thought it "a strong likeness".<sup>[24]</sup>



Arms of Queen Charlotte, used from 1816

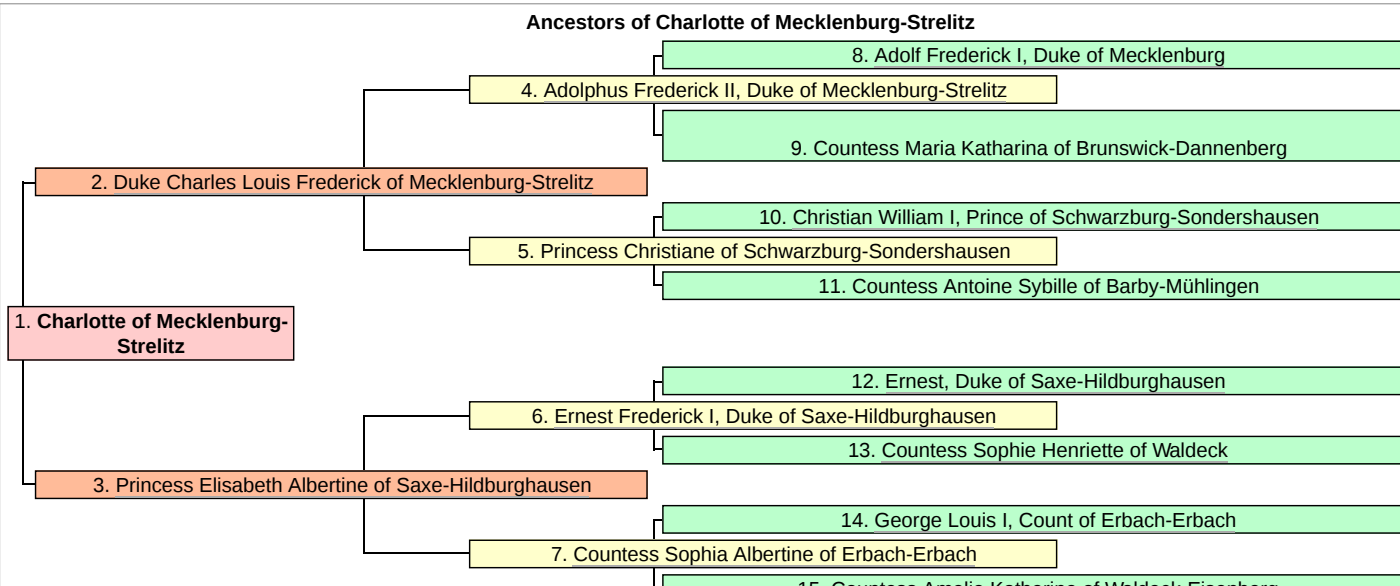
(Principality of Schwerin); 4th, Gules, a cross patée Argent crowned Or (Ratzeburg); 5th, Gules, a dexter arm Argent issuant from clouds in sinister flank and holding a finger ring Or (County of Schwerin); 6th, Or, a buffalo's head Sable, armed Agent, crowned and langued Gules (Wenden); Overall an inescutcheon, per fess Gules and Or (Stargard).[33]

The Queen's arms changed twice to mirror the changes in her husband's arms, once in 1801 and then again in 1816. A funerary hatchment displaying the Queen's full coat of arms painted in 1818, is on display at Kew Palace.<sup>[34][35]</sup>

Issue

Name	Birth	Death	Notes
George IV	12 August 1762	26 June 1830	married 1795, <u>Princess Caroline of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttele</u> ; had issue, but no descendants today
Prince Frederick, Duke of York and Albany	16 August 1763	5 January 1827	married 1791, <u>Princess Frederica of Prussia</u> ; no issue
William IV	21 August 1765	20 June 1837	married 1818, <u>Princess Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen</u> ; no surviving legitimate issue, but has illegitimate descendants, including <u>David Cameron</u> , former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
Charlotte, Princess Royal	29 September 1766	6 October 1828	married 1797, King <u>Frederick of Württemberg</u> ; no surviving issue
Prince Edward, Duke of Kent and Strathearn	2 November 1767	23 January 1820	married 1818, <u>Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld</u> ; had issue, descendants include <u>Queen Victoria</u> , <u>Elizabeth II</u> , <u>Felipe VI of Spain</u> , <u>Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden</u> , <u>Harald V of Norway</u> and <u>Margarethe II of Denmark</u>
Princess Augusta Sophia	8 November 1768	22 September 1840	never married, no issue
Princess Elizabeth	22 May 1770	10 January 1840	married 1818, <u>Frederick, Landgrave of Hesse-Homburg</u> ; no issue
Ernest Augustus I of Hanover	5 June 1771	18 November 1851	married 1815, <u>Princess Friederike of Mecklenburg-Strelitz</u> ; had issue, descendants include <u>Constantine II of Greece</u> and <u>Felipe VI of Spain</u>
Prince Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex	27 January 1773	21 April 1843	(1) married in contravention of the <u>Royal Marriages Act 1772</u> <u>The Lady Augusta Murray</u> ; had issue; marriage annulled 1794 (2) married 1831, <u>The Lady Cecilia Buggin</u> (later <u>1st Duchess of Inverness</u> ); no issue
Prince Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge	24 February 1774	8 July 1850	married 1818, <u>Princess Augusta of Hesse-Cassel</u> ; had issue, descendants include <u>Elizabeth II</u>
Princess Mary, Duchess of Gloucester and Edinburgh	25 April 1776	30 April 1857	married 1816, <u>Prince William Frederick, Duke of Gloucester and Edinburgh</u> ; no issue
Princess Sophia	3 November 1777	27 May 1848	never married
Prince Octavius	23 February 1779	3 May 1783	died in childhood
Prince Alfred	22 September 1780	20 August 1782	died in childhood
Princess Amelia	7 August 1783	2 November 1810	never married, no issue

Ancestry



## Claims of African ancestry

According to Mario de Valdes y Cocom, Charlotte may have had African ancestry, via descent from Margarita de Castro e Souza, a 15th-century Portuguese noblewoman, who traced her ancestry to King Afonso III of Portugal (1210–1279) and one of his mistresses, Madragana (c. 1230–?),<sup>[36]</sup>

In a 2009 episode of the PBS TV series, *Frontline*, Valdes speculated that Scottish painter Allan Ramsay emphasized the Queen's alleged "mulatto" appearance in his portrait of her to support the anti-slave trade movement,<sup>[37]</sup> and noted that Baron Stockmar had described the Queen as having a "mulatto face" in his autobiography and that other contemporary sources made similar observations.<sup>[37]</sup>

Critics of Valdes's theory point out that Margarita's and Madragana's distant perch in the queen's family tree – nine and 15 generations removed, respectively – makes any African ancestry that they bequeathed to Charlotte negligible and even doubt whether Madragana was black. In addition, Charlotte shared descent from Alfonso and Madragana with a large proportion of Europe's royalty and nobility.<sup>[36]</sup>

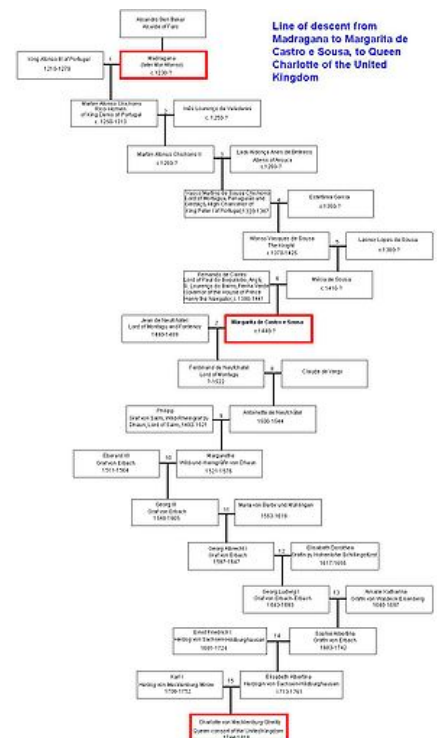
The House of Windsor has never denied Queen Charlotte's claimed African ancestry. David Buck, a Buckingham Palace spokesperson, was quoted by the *Boston Globe* as saying "This has been rumoured for years and years. It is a matter of history, and frankly, we've got far more important things to talk about."<sup>[38]</sup>

## Notes

- Queen consort of the United Kingdom* from 1 January 1801 onwards, following the *Acts of Union 1800*  
*Queen consort of Hanover* from 12 October 1814 onwards.

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- Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald:*The good Queen Charlotte* 1899; page 7
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- Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald:*The Good Queen Charlotte* 1899; pp. 32-33.
- Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald:*The Good Queen Charlotte* 1899; pp. 32-33.
- Levey, pp. 8–9.
- Westminster: Buckingham Palace*(<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45183>) *Old and New London*: Volume 4 (1878), pp. 61–74. Date accessed 3 February 2009. The tradition persists of foreign **ambassadors** being formally accredited to "the **Court of St. James's**", even though they present their credentials and staf to the Monarch upon their appointment at Buckingham Palace.
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Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz <div>House of Mecklenburg-Strelitz</div> <div>Cadet branch of the House of Mecklenburg</div> <div>Born: 19 May 1744Died: 17 November 1818</div>		
British royalty		
Vacant <div>Title last held by Caroline of Ansbach</div>	Queen consort of Great Britain and Ireland <div>1761–1800</div>	Acts of Union 1800
	Electress consort of Hanover <div>1761–1814</div>	Title abandoned <div>Holy Roman Empire dissolved in 1806</div>
New title	Queen consort of the United Kingdom <div>1801–1818</div>	Vacant <div>Title next held by Caroline of Brunswick</div>
	Queen consort of Hanover <div>1814–1818</div>	

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