

September 21, 1999

To
Dr. Charles Gore
Dear Sir,

I beg your permit to tell a very brief history:

In the early years of this ending century use to live in my hometown a man known as Custódio, "The Prince", or in Portuguese, "O Príncipe Custódio". He was Negro, rich and a notorious medicine man -- and people used to say that he came from Africa. Well, this is not an indicative mater enough to trace a man coming from a whole Continent of many Nations and States.

But "The Prince", for the patterns of that time, used to be a wealthy person. Times when black descendant people where discriminated, he frequented the Jockey Club, not only as a gambler, but essentially because he had first class race horses of his own. He was a very famous horse lover. And, is said, a gentleman.

Again, in times of racial barriers, he used to assist high life people in their anxieties . Is said that he has saved the life of the State Governor, a man of fragile health; and more, that lays, out of his religious work, a "bara" (maybe a rotten African word) deep inside of the ground in the State Governor Palace -- an impressive building still very well kept.

And, in times when the Negro community was just emerging out of slavery, almost all of them just recently bearing the status of freedman, living in poor wooden houses, in ghettos far from downtown, "The Prince" lived near downtown, in a classy neighbourhood in a first class house, where there was too a shrine.

At last: this man used to visit, it is said, monthly, until he lived, the local branch of the "Bank of London" or "London Bank" to collect a pension

The question: there is any chance that The Prince is from the royal family of Benin, and his pension part of any agreement between Obas and the British, sometime around the year 1897?

That's the story.

There is any means that you can help me to solve the question, or by yourself or giving me e-mails of historians that may solve the question?

If you may need any information from Brazil please write to me.

Anxiously waiting for a reply, accept my best regards,

JOSE LUIZ PEREIRA DA COSTA

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