

= James Balfour ( died 1845 ) =

James Balfour ( c . 1775 ? 19 April 1845 ) was a Scottish nabob who became a landowner and politician . The son of a prosperous and influential gentry descent , he became a trader in India . Having made a fortune supplying the Royal Navy , he returned to Scotland to buy several landed estates , including Whittingehame in East Lothian where he built a classical mansion .

Balfour became a Tory Member of Parliament ( MP ) from 1826 to 1834 , but never achieved ministerial office . However , many of his descendants found fame and success , including his grandson Arthur Balfour , who served as prime minister from 1902 to 1905 .

At his death , Balfour 's estates in Scotland alone were estimated to be worth over £ 1 million ( equivalent to £ 89 @. @ 2 million in 2016 ) .

= = Family and early life = =

Balfour was born in about 1775 . He was the second son of John Balfour ( 1739 ? 1813 ) , an advocate who owned Balbirnie House , near the town of Glenrothes in Fife . His elder brother Robert Balfour , who inherited Balbirnie , became a Lieutenant @-@ General in the British Army .

His ancestor George Balfour had purchased Balbirnie in the late 16th or early 17th century , and by the late 18th century its land included profitable mines in the Fife Coalfield .

Balfours had fought with Robert the Bruce at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 , and a pedigree written under the authority of the Lord Lyon King of Arms traced James Balfour 's descent in a direct line from King Robert II , son @-@ in @-@ law of Robert the Bruce .

= = Career = =

= = = India = = =

After studying book @-@ keeping and accountancy in Edinburgh , Balfour went to Madras in March 1795 as a writer ( junior clerk ) for the British East India Company . He held several posts in the following years , before being sent back to Britain after a disciplinary issue .

Balfour returned to India in 1802 , where he became a merchant in partnership with James Baker . His breakthrough came in 1806 , when the partners obtained the contract with the Victualling Commissioners of the Royal Navy to supply their needs throughout the East Indies .

The contract had been held since 1796 by the Hon. Basil Cochrane , who had built his own flour mills and bakeries in Madras . Cochrane returned to England in 1806 due to ill @-@ health , and had intended to appoint Balfour and Baker as his agents . However , before leaving , Cochrane was notified that the Navy was reviewing his accounts dating back to 1794 , and that the Navy had lost much of the paperwork . He then returned to England permanently to settle the accounts , which took until 1820 .

Instead of engaging agents , Cochrane passed the contract to Balfour and Baker , who held it until at least 1815 . At some point the partnership was dissolved , and the contract held by Balfour alone . When he left India , he had accumulated a fortune of £ 300 @, @ 000 ( equivalent to £ 24 @. @ 6 million in 2016 ) .

The Indian business did not end with Balfour 's return home . It was run on his behalf by agents , and within a few decades the family 's assets had grown ten @-@ fold to £ 3 million ( equivalent to £ 246 million in 2016 ) .

= = = Scotland = = =

On his return to Scotland in 1815 , Balfour married Lady Eleanor Maitland ( 1790 ? 1869 ) , daughter of the Tory politician James Maitland , 8th Earl of Lauderdale . They had five children , one of whom died in a fire in infancy .

Within two years of their marriage , Balfour had bought two large county estates . The first was a sporting estate with shooting lodge in the Highlands , at Strathconan in Ross @-@ shire . In 1817 , he purchased the 10 @,@ 000 @-@ acre ( 4 @,@ 000 ha ; 16 sq mi ) Whittingehame estate in Haddingtonshire from Colonel William Hay of Duns Castle , which provided a net rental income of £ 11 @,@ 000 per year ( equivalent to £ 981 @,@ 000 in 2016 ) . He also bought a town house in London , No. 3 Grosvenor Square .

In the 1820s the Balfours employed the architect Robert Smirke , designer of the British Museum , to build a large classical mansion at Whittingehame , along with a stable block and gate lodges . They equipped their home with French furniture and Sèvres china . Built of pale cullalo stone , the house was expanded and altered in 1827 to the designs of William Burn , which were not entirely successful . Colin McWilliam and Christopher Wilson describe them as having changed " a dry composition into a boring one " .

They then rebuilt the local church , and created a new model village to the north @-@ west of the old one . Built in about 1840 of red sandstone , it consists of a row of cottages and a school .

Established as a country gentleman , though known locally as " the nabob " , Balfour became a justice of the peace , and in 1822 was appointed as a Deputy Lieutenant of Haddingtonshire .

In about 1823 or 1824 he paid £ 104 @,@ 000 ( equivalent to £ 8 @.@ 25 million in 2016 ) to buy from the 10th Earl of Leven a large estate in his native Fife , including Balgonie Castle . Adjacent to his native Balbirnie , the Balgonie estate included coal mines which worked seams described as " inexhaustible " and iron workings .

= = = Parliament = = =

In November 1820 , the death of Henry St Paul MP triggered a by @-@ election for the borough of Berwick @-@ upon @-@ Tweed , where Balfour 's father @-@ in @-@ law Lord Lauderdale had great influence . Balfour was also supported by Admiral Sir David Milne , who had defeated St Paul at the general election in March 1820 but was unseated on petition in July .

However , Lauderdale was disliked for his opposition to the popular Queen Caroline , which became a significant issue in the campaign . His agents claimed that Balfour would have opposed her trial for alleged adultery , but he was portrayed as too close to Liverpool 's Tory ministry to properly represent interests of the borough . After four days of polling , Balfour lost by 9 votes ( 374 ? 363 ) to the Whig baronet Sir Francis Blake .

A further vacancy occurred in Berwick in 1822 , but Balfour did not contest the seat . Instead , he turned his attentions to the Anstruther Burghs , a set of five burghs which were located only 15 miles from his newly purchased estate at Balgonie in Fife . At the 1826 general election he won the support of three burghs of Pittenweem , Anstruther Easter and Crail , whereas the sitting MP and Lord Advocate of Scotland Sir William Rae won only Anstruther Wester and Kilrenny . With three out of five votes Balfour was declared elected , and a petition lodged by Rae was rejected in March 1827 .

In 1829 , several groups of his constituents submitted petitions against the Roman Catholic Relief Bill . Balfour presented all the petitions to Parliament , but in April he voted with the majority in favour of the Bill .

Balfour was opposed at the 1830 general election by Robert Marsham , the Warden of Merton College , Oxford . However , he won the seat , taking three of the four boroughs remaining after Kilrenny 's disenfranchisement in 1829 .

At the 1831 general election , Balfour was drafted to stand instead in the county seat of Haddingtonshire , the area which included Whittingehame . The sitting MP Lord John Hay had been an advocate of Parliamentary reform , a view which was supported by the county 's voteless tenant farmers but opposed by the existing voters . Lord John 's position looked untenable , so Balfour was drafted by Lord Lauderdale and Hay 's brother Lord Tweeddale . Describing himself as an opponent of the current reform proposals , but a supporter of a " wise and prudent amendment to the representative system " , he won the seat by a margin of 40 votes to the 11 of his opponent Sir David Baird , Bt . However , a crowd of non @-@ voting residents of Haddington shouted down his

attempts to make a speech of thanks .

The new Parliament was dominated by the Reform Bills , and in the last Parliament of the Unreformed House of Commons Balfour voted against them at most opportunities . At the general election in December 1832 , with the franchise expanded under the Scottish Reform Act , Balfour was re-elected but with a much narrower majority of 271 votes to 232 .

His health had been declining , and he cited that as his reason for retiring at the dissolution of Parliament in December 1834 . At the general election in January 1835 , the Haddingtonshire seat was won by the Whig Robert Ferguson .

= = Death and legacy = =

Balfour died at Whittingehame in April 1845 , aged about 70 . He was survived by his wife , two sons , and two daughters . One daughter had died in infancy .

James Maitland Balfour ( 1820 ? 56 ) , MP for Haddington Burghs 1841 ? 47 , father of five sons and three daughters

Charles Balfour ( 1823 ? 72 ) , who married Adelaide Barrington , daughter and 8th child of the 6th Viscount Barrington .

Mary Balfour ( 1817 ? 93 ) , a noted watercolour artist who married Henry Arthur Herbert , owner of the Muckross estate in County Kerry , and Chief Secretary for Ireland 1857 ? 58

Anna Balfour ( 1825 ? 57 ) , who married Lord Augustus Fitzroy , later 7th Duke of Grafton

On his death , Balfour 's estate was valued at over £ 1 million . His widow Eleanor ( who survived him by 24 years ) was left a legacy of £ 31 @, @ 000 and a life annuity of £ 3 @, @ 760 .

The rest was divided between his children . The estates at Whittingehame and Strathconan were left to his eldest son , along with a house in Grosvenor Square , London . His property in Fife , including Balgonie Castle , was left to his second son Charles , while his daughters Mary and Anna had each been given a dowry of £ 40 @, @ 000 ( equivalent to £ 3 @. @ 28 million in 2016 ) .

Until the Reform Act in 1832 , political power in Britain had been dominated for centuries by a land @-@ owning oligarchy , and for another century they shared power with the rising bourgeoisie . The Balfour family straddled both groups . James Balfour 's new wealth brought new vigour to the ancient family , with many of his grandchildren and great @-@ grandchildren achieving notability . They include :

James Maitland Balfour 's children :

Arthur Balfour , the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1902 to 1905

Eleanor Mildred Sidgwick ( 1845 ? 1936 ) , Principal of Newnham College , Cambridge

Alice Blanche Balfour ( 1850 ? 1936 ) , amateur entomologist

Francis Maitland Balfour ( 1851 ? 1882 ) , one of the greatest biologists of his day

Gerald Balfour , 2nd Earl of Balfour ( 1853 ? 1945 ) , a cabinet minister from 1895 to 1905 . His daughter Lady Eve Balfour ( 1899 ? 1990 ) was an early advocate of organic farming , and co @-@ founder of the Soil Association

Colonel Eustace James Anthony Balfour ( 1854 ? 1911 ) , an architect who served as ADC to King Edward VII .

Charles Balfour 's son Charles Barrington Balfour became an army officer and an MP . One of his sons was knighted for his work as a diplomat

Mary 's son Henry Arthur Herbert , was MP for Kerry from 1866 to 1880

Two of Anna 's sons became Dukes of Grafton

As with many other estate houses in Scotland , Balfour family ownership of Whittingehame House ended in the 20th century . Arthur and Gerald lost a lot of money in a series of poor investments , particularly in their efforts to develop peat processing as a green alternative to coal @-@ mining . In the 1930s , death duties forced the mothballing of the house and sale of its contents . The building was leased for various purposes before being sold in 1963 to become a residential school , and has since been converted into apartments . The older Whittingehame Tower has been restored and remains the residence of the Earls of Balfour , descendants of James Balfour .