



Public Record Office
of Northern Ireland

INTRODUCTION

TURNER PAPERS

November 2007

Turner Papers (D4123)

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Summary

The Turner papers consist of c.650 documents and 60 volumes and notebooks, along with 15 maps and plans. They offer an interesting insight into the operation of a medium sized estate in Leitrim, a notoriously unadvanced and 'poor' Irish county.



Background and Papers

The collection mainly comprises the estate papers of the Lauder (or Lawder) family of Bunnybeg, Drumsna, Co. Leitrim. This family were descended from William Lauder of Bunnybeg, sheriff of Co. Leitrim during various years between 1699 and 1712, who married Catherine, daughter of Arthur Auchmuty of Brianstown, Co. Longford, and died in 1715. William Lauder's grandson, also named William, married Elizabeth Span, the daughter of Rev. Benjamin Span, of Dublin and Co. Longford, whose will, dated 1718, is included within the collection.

William Lauder had two sons, William and Samuel Span Lauder who died in 1844 and 1846 respectively. William's eldest son William Arthur (died 1866) became manager of the estate and married Elizabeth Gregg, daughter of Hubert Gregg, who had acted as agent for William Arthur Lauder. William Arthur had two children, Mary and William Sydney. The latter inherited the estate in 1866 and lived at Mount Cambell House. William Sydney Lawder was the last of the Lawders and he left the estate to his cousin, Richard Garrett of Belfast and Helen's Bay, Co. Down, grandfather of the depositor, Capt. Richard Turner.

The Co. Leitrim estate consisted of the lands of Keelogue, Listermagiville, Gorthenury, Drumoula, Bonymore, Boneybeg, all in the Parish of Mohill, and Annahassna, Parish of Kiltoughart. The archive includes maps drafted by Robert Donnelly in 1758 and title deeds and leases which cover the period 1759-1880.



The Albemarle Estate

During the 19th-century William Arthur Lauder acted as agent for the Co. Leitrim estate of the Earl of Albemarle (who owned two and a half thousand statute acres worth £1,000 per annum in 1883). Their correspondence begins with the Co. Leitrim election of 1846, when the 4th Earl of Albemarle sought the assistance and support of William A. Lauder for the election of his son Col. G. Keppel as M.P. (in the event John Brady was returned in the Conservative interest). Most of the letters, however, involve Col. G. Keppel and William A. Lauder. The Albemarles were absentees, like many of the major Co. Leitrim landlords. Col. Keppel and his wife, Susan, did however take an active interest in the estate and corresponded frequently with their agent. The Albemarles paid half of the schoolteacher's salary and running costs for a school on their estate [D4123/5/5/5].

The failure of the potato crop in 1845 occurred when Col. Keppel was one of the private secretaries to Lord John Russell (the Prime Minister). He writes to Lauder from his Downing Street office, instructing him not to press for rent payments. Keppel's wife, Susan, with the help of Lauder's wife and daughters, established a 'penny clothing' shop. Writing on behalf of her husband in 1847 she informed Lauder that 'the gathering in of the rents must for the present be quite a secondary consideration and the providing for the poor and destitute the primary objective' [D4123/5/5/12]. In 1851, Col. Keppel's brother died (Augustus Frederick, the 5th Earl of Albemarle) and he succeeded as 6th Earl of Albemarle.

After the death of William Arthur Lauder in 1866, William Sydney Lauder became the agent for the estate. During the final decades of the 19th century the family house at Mount Cambell began to fall into disrepair and was in need of major renovation. A list of 'dilapidations and requirements' is listed in D4123/8/2/3.

