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James Butler, 4th Earl of Ormond

James Butler, 4th Earl of Ormond (23 May, 1393 – 23 August, 1452) was the son of James Butler, 3rd Earl of Ormond. He was called 'The White Earl' and was esteemed for his learning. He was the patron of the Irish literary work, 'The Book of the White Earl'. His political career was marked by his long and bitter feud with the Talbot family.

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Family

James Butler was the second but eldest surviving son of <u>James Butler</u>, <u>3rd Earl of Ormond</u>, and his first wife <u>Anne Welles</u>, daughter of <u>John de Welles</u>, 4th <u>Baron Welles</u> by Maude de Ros, daughter of <u>William de Ros</u>, <u>2nd Baron de Ros</u> of Helmsley.^[1]

James Butler, 4th Earl of Ormond		
Born	May 23, 1393 Kilkenny, Ireland	
Died	August 23, 1452 Dublin, Ireland	
Buried	St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin	
Spouse(s)	Joan de Beauchamp Elizabeth FitzGerald	
James Butler, 5th Earl of Ormond John Butler, 6th Earl of Ormond Thomas Butler, 7th Earl of Ormond Elizabeth Butler Anne Butler		
Father	James Butler, 3rd Earl of Ormond	
Mother	Anne Welles	

Career

He prevailed upon Henry V to create a King of Arms in Ireland, with the title of Ireland King of Arms (altered by Edward VI to Ulster King of Arms), and he gave lands in perpetuity to the College of Heralds, London. He was appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland in 1405, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1420, 1425, and 1442. He appointed James FitzGerald, 6th Earl of Desmond as Seneschal of Imokilly in 1420.

The Butler-Talbot feud

His term as Lord Lieutenant was marked by a bitter feud with the Talbot family, headed by John Talbot, 1st Earl of Shrewsbury and his brother Richard, Archbishop of Dublin. The dispute reached its height in 1442 when Archbishop Talbot, supposedly acting on behalf of the Irish Parliament, presented the Privy Council with a long list of grievances against Ormonde, who was accused of being old and feeble (in fact he was only fifty, which was not considered a great age even in the fifteenth century), and of having lost most of his Irish estates through negligence; there were vague references to treason and "other crimes which could not be named". [2] The Council summoned Ormonde to account for his actions: he defended himself vigorously, and made detailed counter-charges against the Archbishop. The Council took no action against him but rebuked both sides to the dispute severely for disrupting the good governance of Ireland. The feud gradually cooled off, and friendly relations between the two families were finally established by the marriage of Ormonde's daughter Elizabeth to Shrewsbury's son and heir John. [3]

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Ireland in 1450 showing the Earldom of Ormond.

Later years

Ormonde remained an influential figure, although his last years were troubled by fresh quarrels with the <u>Earl of Desmond</u>, with <u>Giles Thorndon</u>, the <u>Treasurer of Ireland</u>, and with <u>Richard Wogan</u>, the <u>Lord Chancellor of Ireland</u>. Wogan in particular complained of Ormonde's "heavy lordship" and asked to be allowed to deputise his duties.^[4]

In 1440 Ormonde had a grant of the temporalities of the <u>See of Cashel</u> for ten years after the death of the <u>Archbishop of Cashel</u>, Richard O'Hedian. He built the castles of <u>Nenagh</u>, <u>Roscrea</u> and <u>Templemore</u> in north <u>County Tipperary</u> and <u>Tulleophelim</u> (or <u>Tullowphelim</u>) in <u>County Carlow</u>. He gave the manor and <u>advowson</u> of <u>Hickcote in <u>Buckinghamshire</u> to the <u>Hospital of St Thomas of Acre</u> in London, which was confirmed by the <u>Parliament of England</u> (in the third year of <u>Henry VI</u>) at the suit of his son. [5]</u>

Since his father-in-law had no surviving son, Ormond, in right of his second wife, claimed possession of the <u>Earldom of Kildare</u>, and for some years was able to keep the legitimate heirs out of their inheritance.

He died in <u>Dublin</u> on 23 August 1452 on his return from an expedition against Connor O'Mulrian, and was buried in <u>St. Mary's Abbey</u> near Dublin.

Marriage and Children

He married firstly, in 1413, <u>Joan Beauchamp</u> (1396-1430), the daughter of <u>William de Beauchamp</u>, 1st Baron Bergavenny and <u>Joan Arundel</u>, by whom he had three sons and two daughters:^[6]

- James Butler, 5th Earl of Ormond, who died without any legitimate children
- John Butler, 6th Earl of Ormond, who died without any legitimate children
- Thomas Butler, 7th Earl of Ormond.

- Elizabeth Butler, who married John Talbot, 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury.
- Anne Butler, who died unmarried.

He married secondly, by licence dated 18 July 1432, Elizabeth FitzGerald (c.1398 – 6 August 1452), widow of John Grey, 2nd Baron Grey of Codnor (d. 14 September 1430), and daughter of Gerald FitzGerald, 5th Earl of Kildare, by whom he had no children.

See also

Butler dynasty

Notes

- 1. Richardson I 2011, pp. 379-80.
- 2. O'Flanagan, J. Roderick Lives of the Lord Chancellors of Ireland London 1870
- 3. Otway-Ruthven, J.A. History of Mediaeval Ireland Barnes and Noble 1993
- 4. Otway-Ruthven
- 5. Lodge, John The Peerage of Ireland or, A Genealogical History Of The Present Nobility Of That Kingdom, 1789, Vol IV, p 11.
- 6. Richardson I 2011, p. 380.

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Peerage of Ireland		
Preceded by James Butler	Earl of Ormond 1405–1452	Succeeded by James Butler

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