John Ballenden was born about 1810 and came from Stromness in the Orkneys. He entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company as an apprentice clerk in 1829, being first employed at York Factory and in the Lower Red River district, and later in the counting house at York Factory. In 1836 he went to Fort Garry as accountant, and in 1840 he was given the joint management of the Saulte Ste. Marie and the Lake Huron districts. He was promoted to the rank of Chief Trader in 1844, and in 1848 he was made a Chief Factor. He was appointed to Fort Garry in 1848, and attended the Council of Assiniboia as a Councillor of Rupert's Land for the first time on September 20 of that year, In 1850-51 he was allowed leave of absence on account of ill-health. On his return from England he was appointed to Fort Vancouver, where he remained as a member of the board of management until 1853. He was on furlough during the season 1853-54, and in the succeeding outfit he was appointed in charge of Red River Settlement at Fort Garry. Ill-health prevented him carrying out all his duties during the season, and he was once again allowed furlough in 1855-56. He retired as from June 1, 1856, and died on December 7, of the same year. He married Sarah, a daughter of Chief Factor Alexander Roderick McLeod, at Red River on December 10 1836. Three sons and three daughters were beneficiaries under his will, particulars of which are in A.44/3.

(Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31