

THE SWEETMAN IRISH COLONY

Ireland is said to be the only country where population declined during the nineteenth century. Among the reasons for the depopulation were poverty and starvation, especially in the period following the potato famine of the late forties. Emigration, however, is the real explanation for the steady drain of Ireland's population and it is apparent that of the millions who left, the greatest number went to the United States, — known as the land of opportunity, — the political refuge where the oppressed would be free from the hated British rule and where they would find great numbers of their own countrymen already established. Many of these Irish-Americans sent money to their relatives to pay the passage from the old country; some of the distressed ones managed to procure enough to pay their own way; and frequently groups were sent to America by well-intentioned individuals or organizations who hoped by this method to help not only the emigrants but also the less-burdened community they left behind them. In America the Irish immigrants congregated in the large cities, where their poverty forced them to resort to the crowded tenements and where the unhappy surroundings, their susceptible natures, and the lack of any prospects of betterment made them a prey to the unscrupulous and had much to do with the discreditable impression they made in the new country. Of all the evil ways into which they fell, there was none greater than that of intemperance. Little experience or capital was required to engage in the liquor business, and the lowest class of grog shop became a common meeting place in the densely crowded Irish sections of American cities.¹

¹ Charles D. Hazen, *Europe since 1815*, 470 (New York, 1910); Stanley C. Johnson, *History of Emigration from the United Kingdom to*

Certain Irish-Americans of the better class observed that their countrymen were in as bad a plight as they had been in their homeland. The remedy seemed to be to get them once more onto farms, where they would be away from the temptations of city life. The Reverend John Ireland of St. Paul was a pioneer in the movement to lift worthy Irish Catholics from their dissolute life in the crowded eastern cities and to help them secure low-priced farm lands in the West. In the spring of 1864 he was made the president of a small group of zealous Irish patriots organized in St. Paul under the name of the Minnesota Irish Immigration Society, whose avowed mission was to encourage and promote Irish immigration to the Northwest. At the second annual meeting of this organization, held in St. Paul in October, 1865, another indefatigable worker for the Irish cause, Dillon O'Brien, reported on his achievements in New York, where he had spent the summer in the service of the society. He boasted that the organization was now known in every northern state in the United States, in every parish in Ireland, and had even obtained flattering mention in English newspapers. Interest in the matter seemed to lag, however, only to be renewed in the year 1869 when, at the instigation of the same Dillon O'Brien, a convention was held in St. Paul to discuss the "long neglected subject of Irish emigration." It was largely owing to the enthusiastic appeal to all Irishmen in the United States sent out by this convention that representatives from ten states and two territories met at St. Louis in the fall of the same year and drew up plans to help the Irish immigrants to become landholders in the United States. Nothing came of the meeting, however, and in Minnesota the state organization confined its efforts for some time to the writing and issuing of pamphlets advertising the state. The next effort proved to be a success;

North America, 1763-1912, 42, 50-53, 73-80 (London, 1913); Edward Self, "Evils Incident to Immigration," in the *North American Review*, 138: 78-88 (January 1884).

in 1876 a stock company known as the Catholic Colonization Bureau of Minnesota was formed, a few shares were sold, and under its auspices groups of Irish immigrants were assisted in securing farms in Swift and Big Stone counties. Again the work of the Minnesota Irish spurred their countrymen in other states to similar efforts, and in 1879 a considerable group met, organized, subscribed capital stock, purchased land — largely in Minnesota and Nebraska — and, with Bishop Ireland's settlements as models, actually planted colonies in these states.²

It was the success of these enterprises that inspired an Irish gentleman who visited Minnesota in the spring of 1880 to enter upon a somewhat similar undertaking. John Sweetman, a wealthy landowner of County Meath, Ireland, had for a number of years hoped to ease the plight of the poor peasants and laborers around him. He heartily supported the Irish National Land League in its attempts to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, but disapproval of its methods and its leaders influenced him to turn to some other method of reform. A decline in the price of cattle in the fall of 1879 had had an immediate effect on the Irish farmers, and soon many were facing starvation. The eagerness of the people to walk seven or eight miles to work on a drainage project on his estate for a shilling a day suggested to the large-hearted Irishman the desirability of these men's emigrating to America, where they could receive far larger wages. He determined to go there

² *Saint Paul Pioneer*, May 22, June 5, 1864; October 6, 1865. After the establishment of the Catholic weekly newspaper, the *Northwestern Chronicle*, in St. Paul in 1866, much space was given in it to the subject of Irish immigration. See especially the issues for December 5, 1868; January 23, March 20, October 16, 1869; March 26, 1870; and May 13, 1871. For further information on the colonies in Minnesota see "Irish-American Colonies," in the *Catholic World*, 32: 346-353 (December, 1880); Catholic Colonization Bureau of Minnesota, *Catholic Colonization in Minnesota* (St. Paul, 1879); and Howard E. Egan, "A History of Irish Immigration to Minnesota, 1865-1890," a manuscript study in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society.

himself to survey the possibilities of such a move. Stories of the work of Bishop Ireland of St. Paul may have influenced Sweetman to go to that city; at any rate he and a young companion procured through tickets from Dublin to St. Paul by way of Montreal, arrived at their destination on the evening of April 23, 1880, and immediately called on Bishop Ireland and presented letters of introduction from the bishop of Dublin.

It must have been a happy evening for the young Irish enthusiast when at the end of his long journey he found the bishop who, like himself, was eager to better the conditions of his less fortunate countrymen. Plans and prospects were discussed; Bishop Ireland described the success of his pet project, but suggested that the visitors go and view the colonies for themselves. After two days spent in comparing notes and interviewing Dillon O'Brien, secretary of the colonization bureau, Sweetman set out for Avoca, in southwestern Minnesota. Before completing his tour of examination he inspected three of the colonies — Avoca, Adrian, and Minneota — and investigated the prospects around Winnipeg in Canada, and Bismarck, Jamestown, and Watertown in the Dakotas. None of these locations looked more promising to Sweetman than the first one that he saw, the region around the colony of Avoca. He returned to that place and spent three days visiting in the town and making long drives through some lands north of the colony that were for sale by a railroad company. He was pleased with the peace and isolation of the prairie and with the picture of rural contentment presented by the Catholic settlements, and so he made up his mind that the best place in which to make his air castle a reality was in that vicinity.

Money was apparently no object with this young man of enterprise, for immediately upon his return to St. Paul, on June 1, he made arrangements with the railroad company that owned the tract around Currie, north of Avoca, for the

future purchase of approximately ten thousand acres at about a pound sterling the acre. Armed with the detailed information he had acquired in his investigations, he returned to Ireland and interested a small group of wealthy Catholics in a plan for organizing a stock company with headquarters in Dublin, selling stock, and, with the money acquired, buying land in America to sell to Irish settlers on reasonable terms. He must have received some assurance of the willingness of his countrymen to engage in the enterprise, for, although no formal organization was completed at that time, he hurried back to Minnesota and made definite arrangements for the purchase of lands for the prospective settlers.³

Currie, the county seat of Murray County, had at that time a population of only a few hundred; the village itself had been in existence about ten years, but most of the land around it was in the hands of the Winona and St. Peter Railroad Company, a local organization affiliated with the Chicago and Northwestern Railway. Statements in a letter written on November 3, 1880, by Charles E. Simmons, land commissioner of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway, to Sweetman, who was at that time in Chicago, indicate that a large quantity of land was transferred to him. The part of the letter describing the transaction reads as follows:

As you have heretofore purchased from the Winona and St. Peter Compy 10808.48 acres of land and have this day negotiated for the purchase of additional lands to the amount of 7,692.36 acres: now therefore if you shall within sixty days from the date of this letter make payment for the quantity of lands last above mentioned, according to the statement of prices thereof herewith submitted, it is agreed by the Chicago and North-Western Railway Compy that said companies will furnish upon your order within three (3) years from the date hereof, free transportation from Chicago to Tracy for one adult person for each eighty (80) acres of land so purchased and to be purchased by

³ John Sweetman, "The Sweetman Catholic Colony of Currie, Minnesota: A Memoir," in *Acta et Dicta*, 3: 41-61 (July, 1911).

you as aforesaid, provided that such person is sent by you to be and become a bona fide settler upon some portion of the lands purchased by you.⁴

A deed from the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad Company to Sweetman, dated January 4, 1881, transferred possession of 591.48 acres for \$2,839.19. In a statement made on April 3, 1882, Sweetman reported that eighteen thousand acres of land in Murray County had been purchased for about eighteen thousand pounds sterling and sixty houses for an additional thirteen hundred pounds. He contracted to have sixty-nine cottages built on the land before the spring of 1881, so that everything would be ready for settlers when they arrived, and upon the recommendation of Bishop Ireland he employed a manager, John O'Connor, to take care of all arrangements until the settlers came.⁵

Sweetman returned to Ireland in June, 1880, and a formal organization, the "Irish-American Colonization Company, Limited," was effected. The aims of the concern were by no means purely philanthropic. A prospectus issued in the spring of 1881 stated that the association had been formed not for charitable purposes but to supply capital that would enable labor to create wealth out of natural agents now lying dormant

⁴ Mr. Walter Sweetman of St. Paul, a cousin of the originator of the colonization company, recently presented to the Minnesota Historical Society a collection of many of the papers of the company. It consists of four journals and ledgers dating from 1881 to 1904, two small notebooks, and a large number of legal papers of various sorts. The Simmons letter is one of the few letters in the collection. Another letter from Simmons, dated September 5, 1883, extends the free-transportation arrangement to November 3, 1886. In an interview on December 28, 1927, Mr. Sweetman stated that the railroad company did not hold strictly to the terms of the agreement; that many settlers who were not heads of families secured free transportation; and that he himself did not pay any railroad fare on the Northwestern line for twenty years.

⁵ *Southwest Minnesotian* (Currie), May 11, 1881; Irish-American Colonization Company, *Annual Report*, 1882. This report and the deed mentioned are among the papers of the company. Numerous deeds in the company's papers show that it carried on a fair-sized real-estate business.

in the fertile soil of the prairie. Land had been purchased from the railroads at reasonable rates and in the rapidly growing state of Minnesota this was a profitable investment in itself. Settlers would be charged interest at the rate of six per cent on lands and eight per cent on all advances for supplies. In addition to these advantages there was the consideration that a valuable service would be done to humanity in general, and to the church in particular. As one of the directors said, it was hoped that the colony would form a nucleus of Catholics who would propagate the faith and constitute a "direct remedy to all that is most unsatisfactory and lamentable in Irish emigration."⁶

The board of directors in the spring of 1881 consisted of eight prominent Catholics, including Sweetman and Bishop Ireland. The capital stock was placed at a hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling, to be sold in shares of ten pounds each. Sweetman, the moving spirit of the enterprise, invested twenty thousand pounds in the concern and served as managing director without pay. He was given a power of attorney to act for the company in all respects in America. The land in America that had been purchased by him in his own name was transferred to the company. The organization was not completed until March 31, 1881, because of delays in securing a charter in Minnesota, but arrangements were completed before that time for the selection of settlers.⁷

⁶ Irish-American Colonization Company, Limited, *Prospectus*, 1881; R. H. Froude, in *Northwestern Chronicle*, May 7, 1881. Sweetman was back in Murray County in October, 1880, but he returned to Ireland again in time to arrange for sending out the first emigrants to the colony the following spring. Sweetman, in *Acta et Dicta*, 3: 61.

⁷ Philip H. Bagenal, *The American Irish and Their Influence on Irish Politics*, 88-93 (Boston, 1882); *Prospectus*, 1881; John Sweetman, *Statement Made at the Ordinary General Meeting [Irish-American Colonization Company, Limited]*, April 3rd, 1882, 1. Mr. Walter Sweetman says that the company obtained a charter in Minnesota granting permission to buy and sell land in the state for twenty-five years, and that this charter expired in 1905, when he closed up the real-estate business for the company.

In view of the fact that almost all the prospective settlers were absolutely penniless, very liberal terms were made for the sale of lands by the company and a schedule of payments was evolved under which a farmer by dint of rigid economy and hard labor could without any ready cash purchase land and pay for it from the proceeds of his crop sales. The company agreed to advance the passage money for the settlers and sell them eighty acres of land at an average price of six dollars an acre plus six per cent interest. No payment was expected until a year and a half after the arrival of the settlers, and then only the interest due at that time was required. For each of the two following years one-twentieth of the principal, plus interest on the balance, was charged; for the next three years, one-tenth of the principal and the interest; and for the next three years, one-fifth of the principal and the interest.⁸

The first colonists arrived in Currie on May 8, 1881. They had been delighted with the opportunity to start life over again in America and had agreed to the terms laid down by the company for the purchase of land. To an Irishman who put any faith in omens the beginning must have seemed inauspicious. Plans that would enable the settlers to reach Currie by the middle of March had been made, but a cablegram from Bishop Ireland advised them to postpone their departure for at least two weeks, and when they finally arrived in Minnesota they were detained in Mankato three weeks because the spring floods had washed out the bridges. The long waits and the long journey must have been wearisome to the 191 colonists, and perhaps ere they finally arrived at their destinations some had regretted their eager impulse to leave the friendly villages at home and come to this bleak, sparsely settled country where there were few of their own faith or tongue and none of the old care-free existence. Yet the arrival was doubtless a happy

⁸ Irish-American Colonization Company, Limited, *Farms for Sale in Minnesota*, 7 (Chicago, 1881).

one, for most of the immigrants had never slept in any dwelling but a sod shanty, had never owned a foot of ground, had never done a day's work for themselves, but had lived in constant dread of starvation, debt, and eviction by the landlord. To these people the small fourteen by eighteen foot frame houses, built and furnished crudely but with methodical care by the company, must have seemed an answer to their prayers. There was no time for exploration of the new country or for becoming homesick that summer. Some had accepted the company's offer to have a piece of land prepared for the crops; others had to manage as best they could, and it was already late in the season to plant Indian corn, flax, and potatoes. Oxen, farm equipment, seed, food enough to last until harvests should be garnered, fuel, cattle, feed for the cattle, and insurance on the buildings were advanced by the company, for most of the first settlers were entirely destitute.⁹

Nothing was omitted that would contribute to the success of the experiment. The industrious, capable young superintendent, John O'Connor, acted as bookkeeper, clerk, and general overseer. He resided at the model stock farm that was being developed at Buffalo Lake, four miles east of Currie. Among the varied tasks of the agent were keeping minute accounts of every item purchased by each settler and of each payment made, advising the new-comers how to work their farms, managing the stock farm, taking charge of each new group of settlers as they arrived, superintending the building of the Catholic church, entertaining visitors to the stock farm, and taking general control of the whole colony during the absences of Sweetman. The small town of Currie was obviously unable to supply enough equipment for so many new establishments, and supplies were therefore purchased in large

⁹ *Southwest Minnesotian*, May 11, 1881; Sweetman, *Statement*, 2. When the immigrants were finally permitted to leave Mankato, they were carried on a special train composed of seven caboose cars, passenger coaches being too heavy to use on the water-soaked roads. Their board bill at Mankato amounted to \$840. *Review* (Mankato), May 3, 1881.

quantities in St. Paul and Chicago and sold to the settlers on time at reduced prices.

During the first year the settlers had to drive to Avoca to church, but through the interest and help of Bishop Ireland arrangements were made to erect an imposing church and parish house in Currie, a ten-acre tract being donated by the town for the purpose. A priest arrived from Ireland to take charge, and the church building was completed and dedicated with elaborate ceremony in the fall of 1883. Bishop Ireland was at all times deeply interested in the project. He was made the company's St. Paul agent with powers to enter into any necessary negotiations in its name. Early in 1881 he wrote to Sweetman, "With the present year I will conclude with my colonies to make way for your work and to co-operate more freely with you to the best of my ability." Sweetman himself spent most of his time in the settlement, doing countless things that seemed insignificant in themselves but would contribute toward improving the situation of the immigrants.¹⁰

Still, in spite of all the efforts to make the colony a success, even the hopeful organizer felt somewhat disappointed at the end of the first year. In the beginning he attributed all failures to the type of immigrants he had brought. Forty-three heads of families joined the colony the first year. Most of them were married men with families, but a few men brought their sisters to keep house for them. This proved unfortunate, however, for the sisters were not inclined to drudgery on the lonely farms when they could easily obtain good wages as servants in the cities. In five cases where the women left, the

¹⁰ Sweetman, *Statement*, 2; Bagenal, *American Irish*, 95; *Southwest Minnesotian*, September 7, December 1, 1881; August 30, 1883. Ireland's letter is quoted in the *Northwestern Chronicle* of May 7, 1881. Some very soiled pages at the end of O'Connor's private notebook contain a price list of everything that a farmer's establishment might need. The items include a house at \$110, ropes, salt, brooms, bunks, dippers, milk-pans, barrels of pork, seeds, soap, cordwood, yeast, mittens and many other things. The daily entries in the journal show that the settlers did not overlook this opportunity to get goods for which they could pay at some time in the misty future.

farms were given up almost at once. One recently married couple moved to Chicago, where they had relatives, for the wife found life on the prairie too dreary. These colonists, of course, found departure very simple, for they had put themselves to no expense in immigrating and had invested no cash in their farms. The company was obliged to take back the farms and equipment, consoling itself, perhaps, with the thought that the improvements made and the work done on the farms compensated for the expenses incurred. Of the original group only thirty-seven families were still on their farms in April, 1882.¹¹

Nevertheless, twenty-five houses were built in the spring of 1882 and preparations were made for the arrival of a new group. On April 15 twelve families, consisting of fifty-nine persons, arrived in Currie after a two-weeks' trip from Liverpool. At about the same time several other families signed agreements to purchase land, and still others may have come later, for the immigrants were not required to come in one group. The idea of emigrating to the colony was very popular in Ireland, and many requests came into the Dublin office of the company. The requirement that the colonists pay their own fare probably prevented a number from taking advantage of the offer, and, moreover, it was expected that the applicants would be young, married, Irish, and Catholic. Most of the men who arrived the second spring were between the ages of twenty and forty. That the Irish nationality prevailed is evident from a glance at some of the names — Kelly, Lynch, O'Reilly, Donnelly, McMahan, Murphy, Carroll.¹²

Even though this second group was more carefully selected than the first and the members had been anxious enough to come to pay their own transportation, many of them did not remain in the colony for long. Sweetman learned by experi-

¹¹ Sweetman, *Statement*, 3; Irish-American Colonization Company, *Farms for Sale*, 10.

¹² This information was obtained from Mr. Walter Sweetman, the company's daily journal, and O'Connor's notebook.

ence that unless a man had some money invested in his farm the difficulties of pioneer life would often be so discouraging that he would seize the earliest opportunity to use the proceeds of his first harvest — for which he had paid nothing — to go to the city and work for wages. The ingratitude of human nature was manifested in the reasoning followed by some of the settlers — since the company seemed so very anxious to have them come to America, they must be doing a great deal of good to the company, so they had better leave at once and escape further abuse. The improvident habits of years were not to be easily broken. O'Connor notes on one page of a small notebook in which he kept various miscellaneous accounts: "K ——— is a humbug — wanted sugar today May 1st — Got 20 lb. on 15 of April." And a few pages farther on he adds: "L ——— is just as bad as K ———. Came again May 2 — Out of groceries, sugar." The Currie newspaper mentions a suit brought by the company to recover a yoke of its oxen that had been sold by a colonist. Sweetman observed that during the first winter, when the company was selling merchandise on credit, the settlers required coal for fuel, but that in the second winter, when they had to pay cash for everything they consumed, they managed to tie up bundles of hay for fuel as the old settlers did. As he expressed it, the company did too much spoon-feeding for the colonists and they acted like spoiled children. Items recorded in the journals and ledgers carefully kept by the agents from 1881 to 1904 show instances of farms purchased on which no payments or only one or two payments ever were made, and of heavy bills run up with the company, which doubtless helped to make December 1, pay day in the colony, a time to be dreaded.

After two years of experimenting Sweetman was able to draw some conclusions regarding his enterprise. Excluding unmarried men from his calculations, for he counted them absolute failures as settlers, he found that out of thirty-five families who arrived during the first year, ten, or twenty-

eight per cent left; out of eighteen settled the second year, eight, or forty-four per cent left; that out of a total of fifty-three families for the first two years, eighteen, or thirty-four per cent left. Out of the eighteen families who left, nine had remained about four months; four, twelve months; and five, seventeen months. Of the thirty-five families remaining, twenty-one were from Ireland, six of Irish descent, four were English, two Scotch, and two American.¹³

The promoter of the enterprise concluded from these observations that a man's interests are where his money is invested and that the hope of making over human nature by a change of environment is futile, indeed. In November, 1882, the first appearance in the Currie weekly newspaper of an advertisement of land for sale by the company heralded a change of policy. Land was thereafter offered to all who desired to purchase, although undoubtedly those of the Catholic faith continued to be especially attracted to the settlement. It was made the invariable rule that no passage fares would henceforth be paid by the company, and that one-tenth of the price of the land must be paid upon the date of the purchase. The company refused to advance any live stock, fuel, food, or any other perishable articles, but the settlers were still permitted to procure goods at wholesale prices, and liberal terms of payment on the land were continued.¹⁴

¹³ John Sweetman, *Recent Experiences in the Emigration of Irish Families*, 5-7, 10 (Dublin, 1883); *Southwest Minnesotian*, June 14, 1883. O'Connor's notes are in a small bound book entitled "Bills Receivable."

¹⁴ Sweetman, *Recent Experiences*, 7, 9; *Southwest Minnesotian*, November 30, 1882. In a number of letters printed in the *Boston Pilot* and other Catholic publications in 1883 and 1884, Father Martin Mahoney, the priest at Currie, and O'Connor speak enthusiastically of the merits of the colony—the climate, the soil, the crops, and the church. These letters and the advertisements of the colony's lands in the *Pilot* were instrumental in attracting settlers from various parts of the country. Some of the letters, together with several by Sweetman, were collected in 1885 in a pamphlet entitled *Sweetman Catholic Colony in Murray County, Minnesota*.

Although no Irish families were brought to Currie in groups after 1882 and the project ceased to be a colonization enterprise, for many years the colony retained characteristics that made it unique among American frontier settlements. Sweetman continued to spend the greater part of his time there, leaving for a few months in the coldest part of the winter for his home abroad. In some respects the situation was that of a typical European countryside; there were the tillers of the soil who depended on the landlord for their prosperity, the church that was a common bond of unity in the colony, the agent who advised and managed the affairs of the owner, and the wealthy lord of the domain who had at heart the spiritual and material well-being of his people. The local newspaper gives a few more details of the work of this benefactor. When in Rome one winter Sweetman had an audience with the Pope and secured a special blessing for the parishioners of Currie; he started a Catholic library in the town with a nominal subscription rate and urged the citizens to spend their spare time in improving their minds instead of in dissipation; for a while he had a weekly column in the Currie newspaper, containing news of interest to Catholic readers; and he frequently displayed his strong aversion to the use of liquor, urged the colonists to establish prohibition through the Minnesota local-option privilege, and admonished them not to let the evil that kept many of them failures in their former homes get a foothold in their new one. Other brief glimpses of the interests of this leader of the colony are given through the improvements that he made in the establishment at Buffalo Lake. It became known for miles around as a model stock-breeding farm; illustrious visitors were frequently entertained at the agent's house; the buildings and grounds were improved and beautified; the owner brought various kinds of sailboats for use on the lake; and it seems that he even tried to introduce California salmon into the lakes around Currie.

One may wonder how the rest of the inhabitants of Currie felt regarding this invasion of a group foreign in religion

and interests, who so obviously kept to themselves. There are a few evidences of ill-feeling toward the new neighbors and their leader; there was even some bitterness, perhaps, on the part of other land speculators and merchants who felt that competition with the wealthy capitalist was unfair, and of individuals who charged that Sweetman was trying to "run the country." For the most part, however, the earlier residents were pleased with the extensive advertisement the region received, the growth of the town, and the increased trade brought by the new arrivals. The older settlers found in the growing community a handy market for their farm products. Many who were anxious to dispose of their homesteads and move to newer fields sold their land to Sweetman, and he gave financial aid to some who were in need of help to carry them through the first trying years of pioneer life. As the years went on the colony ceased to attract notice as an experiment in assisted emigration. The gradual influx of people of other nationalities and creeds, attracted by the offers of fertile land, the thinning of the Irish population as a result of the never-ceasing attractions of city life, and the adoption by the settlers of American modes of life, all combined to help the colony lose its individuality. O'Connor resigned his position, which was for many years held by a man named Hugh O'Callahan, and Mr. Walter Sweetman managed the land sales from 1897 until 1905, by which time all the land was disposed of. Most of the stock of the small shareholders in the company was bought up by John Sweetman, so that he himself, the promotor of the concern, would not cause monetary loss to others.¹⁵

¹⁵ *Southwest Minnesotian*, March 2, May 11, September 28, 1882; March 13, June 26, 1884; July 30, November 26, 1885; January 14, 1886; April 7, 1887; May 10, 1888. Most of these facts were corroborated by Mr. Walter Sweetman. A map entitled "Selected Murray County Farm Lands," issued by the company about 1890, shows the location of approximately twenty-five sections of land in and around Currie for sale by the company. The property consisted at that time of scattered tracts reaching eight miles north of Currie and four miles on each of the other three sides. The land was advertised at ten dollars an acre.

In the history of attempts to assist worthy emigrants to start life anew in America, the Currie colony is usually regarded as a failure. John Sweetman's account books indicate that the project was not a financial success. Perhaps the only eulogy that can be written for the colony is the one expressed by Sweetman — it had been instrumental in taking a few families away from crime and poverty and the children of these people might do their part in building up the new state and in preserving the faith of their fathers.¹⁶

ALICE E. SMITH

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ST. PAUL

¹⁶ Sweetman, in *Acta et Dicta*, 3: 65; Sweetman, *Recent Experiences*, 13; Johnson, *Emigration from the United Kingdom*, 236.



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