

The Limerick Estate of Sergeant Warren during the Great Famine

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Land agency records are used to study economic conditions on an estate in the Ballingarry district of Limerick during the decade of the great famine. While ejectment decrees were obtained, few appear to have been executed. Tenants unable to pay rents were encouraged to surrender their holdings in return for compensation or assistance to emigrate to America.

As has been indicated in an earlier article in this *Journal*¹, some years ago the author acquired about 30,000 letters written mainly in the 1840s. These pertained to estates throughout Ireland managed by James Robert Stewart and Joseph Kincaid, hereafter denoted SK. During the 1840s, their firm was the most important land agency in Ireland. Most of the letters are addressed to the SK office in Dublin. This accumulation probably constitutes the largest single archive of its kind on the decade of the great famine. It is the principal primary source for what follows.

During the 1840s SK managed properties in County Limerick on behalf of three proprietors. Apart from the Mount Blakeney estate of Gertrude Fitzgerald discussed in the earlier article, these were the lands of John Stratford² in the Robertstown district on the Shannon estuary (the 'Robertstown estate') and those of a person known as Sergeant Warren, near Ballingarry (to which the SK correspondence variously refers as the 'Ballinruane' or 'Ballyroan' or 'Ballingarry' estate). The surviving SK correspondence on the Warren estate is less extensive than that on either the Fitzgerald or the Stratford properties. However, each of the three subsets of correspondence is broadly similar in content: they each reveal that although there was extreme distress in the respective districts during the 1840s, SK's treatment of the tenantry, on behalf of the proprietors who their firm represented, must be considered generally humane.

Sergeant Warren

Some of the agencies held by SK in the 1840s were obtained through the firm's reputation for professionalism and honest dealing. Others originated from friendship or marriage links, as well as, it seems, through powers of 'influence' (i.e., active membership of both Stewart and Kincaid in the 'right' societies). The contract to manage Sergeant Warren's Limerick estate, obtained in 1843 or early in 1844, was presumably a consequence of the marriage, in 1835, of James Robert Stewart and Martha Eleanor, daughter of R.B. Warren.³ The latter was Richard Benson Warren - the person known as Sergeant Warren - and the James Robert Stewart was J.R. Stewart of SK; thus, Sergeant (R.B.) Warren was our J.R. Stewart's father-in-law.⁴ *Thom's Directory* for 1848 lists R.B. Warren, Sergeant at Law, at 35

¹ Desmond Norton, 'Distress and Benevolence on Gertrude Fitzgerald's Limerick Estate in the 1840s', *NMAJ*, vol. 42, 2002, pp 21-34.

² For details about developments on Stratford's properties in the 1840s, see Desmond Norton, 'Stratford's Robertstown Estate during the 1840s', in Thomas J. Culhane, *The Barony of Shanid (Incorporating Connello Lower), A Short History of Shanagolden, Foynes and Robertstown*, forthcoming 2003, chapter 20; idem, 'Progress and Distress on the Stratford Estate in Clare during the Eighteen Forties', *The Other Clare*, vol. 26, 2002, pp 50-7.

³ Edward Walford, *The County Families of the United Kingdom*, London 1860, p. 610.

⁴ Edward Walford, *The County Families of the United Kingdom*, new edn., London 1893, pp 959-60.

Leeson St, Dublin.⁵ The same publication for 1849 lists Robert A. Warren, barrister, also at 35 Leeson St, but it does not mention Sergeant Warren, who almost surely had recently died: he was definitely dead by 1852.⁶ We can be confident that Robert A. Warren of Leeson St was Sergeant Warren's son. *Thom's Directory* for 1849 also lists another Robert Warren, at 39 Rutland Square, Dublin, and Killiney Castle, Co Dublin. This Robert Warren, who was SK's solicitor⁷, was almost certainly related to the Warrens of Leeson St. In 1860 Walford indicated that Robert Warren, SK's solicitor, was 'eldest son of the late Robert Warren' of Dublin, 'by Barbera, dau. of Joseph Swan'; that he had been born in 1787 and that his heir was also named Robert, who had been born in 1820.⁸

Taken together, the above details and those in the supporting reference notes indicate that the wife of (the late) Robert Warren, senior (the father of SK's solicitor), was daughter of Joseph Swan; this Swan was probably related to Graves Swan of the land agency firm of Stewart and Swan in the 1820s, which had evolved into SK by the 1840s; the Warrens of Leeson Street and the Warrens of Rutland Square were almost surely related; finally, J.R. Stewart had family and/or other close ties with all of the above-mentioned Warrens. The foregoing details illustrate how family and other social links facilitated expansion of SK's business interests. Similar examples can be found in the correspondence pertaining to several other estates, apart from that of Sergeant Warren, which SK managed in the 1840s.

The Ballinruane Estate, 1845-8

Sergeant Warren's lands were within a few miles from, and to the south and southeast of, Ballingarry. They included all or most of the 436 statute acres on the townland of Kilmihil just outside Ballingarry, and all or most of the 1,561 statute acres on Ballinruane townland to the south, as well as other properties in that district.⁹ In reference to these lands, the SK correspondence contains no letters dated before January 1845, very few for 1847, and ends with a letter dated December 1848. Many tenants on the Ballinruane estate were very poor: in February 1845 Arthur Vincent, an SK agent who resided at Shanagolden beside the Robertstown estate, wrote to J.R. Stewart that 'a large portion of them are run to the lowest ebb of poverty'. On Warren's behalf, SK made subscriptions to two dispensaries which his tenants attended - the Feenagh and Kilmeady Dispensary and that at Ballingarry.¹⁰

In January 1845 John Stewart, an agricultural adviser employed by SK, went to Ballinruane and reported that he 'never saw such exhausted lands. On the evening I left I met all the tenants together and gave them a lecture on the utility of thorough draining and on the use of lime'. On 25 January he recommended that SK should give the lime free of charge. SK responded quickly: on 4 February, Philip O'Hanlon of Rathkeale sent SK a tender for 'from fifty to two hundred pounds worth of Lime ... at the rate of ten pence halfpenny per Barrel'. The lime was actually obtained more cheaply: on 24 February, Vincent informed J.R. Stewart that he had 'agreed this day with one of the Rathkeale Limeburners for 500 Barrels @ 9d per [barrel] The Barrel contains 42 Imperial gallons'. In the same letter, Vincent stated: 'I think the [Ballinruane] tenants with few exceptions unable to bear the cost'. It seems that the tenants did get the lime free of charge.¹¹

⁵ *Thom's Irish Almanac and Official Directory ... 1848*, Dublin, p. 931. A letter dated 16 February 1846 from a tenant on Ballinruane is addressed to Richard B. Warren, Leeson St, Dublin.

⁶ See *County of Limerick, Barony of Connello Upper ... Primary Valuation*, Dublin 1852. This publication lists Robert A. Warren as immediate lessor of most of Ballinruane. It also lists the representatives of Sergeant Warren as immediate lessors of Kilmihil and Gorteen West. In 1876 Robert A. Warren was listed as owner of over 1,500 acres in Co Limerick. See *Return of Owners of Land ... in Ireland*, Dublin 1876, p. 154.

⁷ See the letters from Robert Warren, solicitor at 39 Rutland Square, to SK, 7 March 1843 and 17 January 1847.

⁸ Walford, 1860, p. 670. *Thom's 1848*, p. 931, lists Graves Warren, solicitor, at 40 Rutland Square. This Graves was probably another son of SK's solicitor, Robert at 39 Rutland Square. Hence, from the detail on Robert Warren (the solicitor) in Walford, 1860, Graves was probably a grandson of Barbera, daughter of Joseph Swan. The same listing in Walford indicates that in 1846 the eldest son of Robert the solicitor, also named Robert, married Anne Waddy. *The Post Office Annual Directory for 1845*, Dublin, p. 475, lists Joseph Swan Waddy as a solicitor. In the early nineteenth century a barrister named Graves Swan had been partner with Henry Stewart (also a barrister), in the firm which evolved into J.R. Stewart and Joseph Kincaid in the 1840s. These details indicate very strong family links within the legal professions. Along with details provided in the main text, they also minimize any doubt about family links between the Warrens of Rutland Square and those of Leeson St.

⁹ *Valuation*, pp. 9, 21, 24, 25, 93, 94.

¹⁰ Henry Harte to SK, 10 July 1845 and 14 March 1846; George Gubbins to Arthur Vincent, 3 November 1846.

¹¹ Edward Lloyd to SK, 10 March 1845.

Following John Stewart's recommendations, some of the tenants on Ballinruane worked on drainage in the Spring of 1845. In his letter of 24 February to J.R. Stewart, Vincent wrote that 'those Tenants who intend to Drain asked me for Crows and Picks and a few Sledges. I said I would ask you to allow me get them a few, at their paying half price'. Further drainage was conducted by tenants late in 1845. They were remunerated in the form of rent allowances. In a letter to SK, 10 February 1846, Vincent mentioned three tenants who had 'a good deal of drains made which when surveyed by [John] Stewart will amount to more than their balance due'. Two weeks later, John Stewart wrote to SK that the Ballinruane tenants wished 'to know if they will get lime this year. If they do get it ... give a greater allowance [of lime] to the Tenants who have Thoro. Drained most'. SK did provide them with a fresh supply of lime in the Spring of 1846.¹²

On 1 April 1846 John Stewart wrote to SK that the tenants on the Ballinruane estate were 'in a very bad way with potatoe rot', and he added that 'it would be a charity to do something for them in the way of giving them employment. There is a river along the bottom of that estate that wants to be sunk' (ie. to have its bed deepened). SK's major project providing employment on the estate during the Summer of 1846 was the sinking and straightening of the 'Ballinruane River' (the correct name of which is the Finglasha). This involved access to lands of contiguous estates, for which the tenants on those lands were compensated. On 9 July, Stewart wrote to SK: 'I have some Days a 108 men at work and none but the Tenants on each side of the River ... I am oblige[d] to employ more men than I want so as to be allowed [to trespass] to cut off the short turns on the river'. The labourers on the river works were paid in cash, at fortnightly intervals.¹³ The river work was near completion by mid-August 1846, when Stewart explained to SK that its final cost would be a little above his original estimate, partly because 'Warrens tenants forced themselves into the work both old and young and showed me a letter from Sergt. Warren promising them support and the fact is they should be supported or they would starve and I am afraid that they will be as bad next year for the Potatoes are beginning to look very bad'. On 24 September 1846 Vincent sent SK a summary of the work on the river during the Summer, stating: 'I consider it a work of the greatest benefit to the property and not only to Sergeant Warrens but also [on neighbouring lands] to Mr Lockes, Mr Mahers, Mr Staveleys and Mr Masseys ... The extent of the work done is 572 perches' (about two miles). He added that the cost of the river work was £100 and that 'the number of labourers employed from Mr Lockes property were 124, from Mr Mahers 135 and Mr Staveleys 319. Low lands ... which have hitherto been perfect swamps ... will now if drained become ... most valuable'.

The SK correspondence provides no definite indications of improvements on the Ballinruane estate, organised by SK, after the Autumn of 1846. As already indicated, the correspondence for 1847 pertaining to the estate is very sparse and much of what survives for 1848, a year at the end of which J.R. Stewart reported that 'the Ballingarry Estate is in a most wretched state', pertains to emigration. Some improvements (drainage, buildings and fencing) were implemented by a few of the tenants during the Summer of 1848.¹⁴

Most of the tenants who had been on the estate in 1845-6 seem to have died or left by the end of 1848. This is inferred from the following (amongst other) considerations: First we know, on behalf of the landlords in various parts of Ireland who SK represented, that the firm engaged in very large-scale programmes of assisted emigration in 1847-8, and that such assistance must have been on a much smaller scale thereafter.¹⁵ Secondly, the SK correspondence lists the names of about fifty tenants on the

¹² Vincent to SK, 17 March 1846; John Stewart to SK, 21 March 1846.

¹³ Vincent to SK, 27 July 1846.

¹⁴ H.M. Sankey to SK, 14 June 1848.

¹⁵ I intend to provide further details on this point, mainly in book form, at a later stage. For the present, however, see the three items cited in notes 1 and 2 above, and Desmond Norton, 'Lord Palmerston and the Irish Famine Emigration: A Rejoinder', *The Historical Journal*, 46, 1 (2003), pp 155-65.

lands of Sergeant Warren, mainly in 1845-6. It is probable that these included almost all those heads of households who were immediate tenants to Warren. The Griffith *Valuation* indicates that only about nine of them were still on the estate in 1852.¹⁶

On behalf of almost all of the landlords whose estates were managed by the firm in 1847-8 SK applied for a government loan, or loans, in order to finance improvements. The SK correspondence provides no evidence that the firm sought a loan on Sergeant Warren's behalf. However, it seems that he was dead by the end of 1848.

Rent Collection and Distress on the Ballinruane Estate

On Tuesday, 1 July 1845, Vincent wrote to Kincaid: 'If you have a list of the Ballyroan [Ballinruane] defaulters made out send it to me as Friday [next] will be the fair day of Ballingarry'. Late in July he wrote to Kincaid: 'Dont be disappointed about the Ballyroan tenants as you know they are very generally poor, and they made great promises to carry the time until harvest when I expect they will meet us better'. He indicated, in the same letter, that he had recently received £20-odd from four named tenants on the estate.

On 12 November 1845 Vincent informed SK that 'the potatoe crop on Ballyroan I fear will turn out as bad as in all other quarters where the lumper is the kind chiefly planted'. The partial failure of the potato in the Autumn of 1845 had little or no immediate effect on rent payments from some of the other estates managed by SK. The same kind of time lags may have also applied on the Ballinruane estate: on 15 November, Vincent sent SK first half-notes¹⁷ for £165 received from the tenants there. In the accompanying letter, he mentioned the name of only a single tenant on the estate 'who did not come in with his balance'. However, the rents had not been otherwise fully paid up: in a communication to SK dated 27 December, he referred to defaulters on Ballinruane and asked: 'How do you wish I should proceed against those who are so deep in arrear as I fear we will not find enough of means on the land if we go to distrain'.

On 7 January 1846 Vincent sent SK first half-notes for £59-odd, received from the Ballinruane tenants. He informed: 'The defaulters begged time until the 7th of February the Fair day of Rathkeale ... Collins has paid more than his land made as he was obliged to give a large abatement to his conacre tenants in consequence of the disease. I am certain many of them could pay better but fearing the potatoes will grow worse'. The reference to Collins in this passage is the first clear indication that the partial failure of the potato in the Autumn of 1845 was beginning to have an effect on rent receipts from the Ballinruane estate. On estates managed by SK elsewhere in Ireland, middlemen tended to be early casualties of the failure.

On 10 February 1846 Vincent was able to send SK first half-notes for £57-odd, which sum he had just received from the Ballinruane tenants. In his accompanying letter, he indicated that he did 'not see any chance we have of getting much more out of them as they are I am sure keeping up some of their money fearing a scarcity ... as the potatoes are every day rotting'. Properties of some tenants on the estate were distrained within the few days which followed.¹⁸ It can therefore be inferred that the potato failure of the Autumn of 1845 began to have a serious impact on rent receipts from Ballinruane in the Spring of 1846 - as was also the case on other estates managed by SK.

¹⁶ *Valuation*, pp. 9, 21, 24, 25, 93, 94. The heads of households still on the estate in 1852 appear to have been the following: Johanna Baggot, John Donohoe, Peter Dunworth, Michael Guiry, John Herlihy, Mark Kennedy, Daniel O'Connor, John O'Donnell and John Quilty. It seems that none of Warren's tenants on either Cloonregan or Gorteen West in 1845-6 were still there in 1852. Liam Irwin informs me that descendants of many of the 1840s tenants are still farming the same holdings today in the Ballinruane district.

¹⁷ When sending cash to SK in Dublin, the firm's local agents invariably sent it as halves in two batches. After receipt of the first halves had been confirmed by SK, the local agents (usually a day or two later) sent the second halves. This practice was to secure against theft.

¹⁸ Vincent to SK, 19 February 1846.

During the Summer of 1846 some of the Ballinruane tenants complained to SK in regard to the operations of the local relief committee - the Kilmeedy¹⁹ Relief Committee - and on 18 June 1846 the Secretary of that committee, William Willis of Charleville, responded in a letter to SK: 'The Chair is filled by either Mr Lloyd,²⁰ the Roman Cath. Clergyman, or the Poor Law Guardian ... I have been present at every meeting of the Committee, and also on every day when meal is sold at our depot ... We grant tickets, entitling the holders to purchase ... meal at our depot, to a certain amount according to the number of individuals in each family, at a rate per lb. considerably under first cost Such tickets are confined to the destitute ... certified to be in want. To all other parties we sell the meal in any quantities at the rate of 1s/9d per st., being a fraction over the first-cost, carriage etc.'

SK's river works in Ballinruane during the Summer of 1846 helped some tenants to pay rent arrears. However, those works were largely completed by mid-August. Their termination was not immediately offset by public works. The almost total failure of the potato in the Autumn of 1846 greatly accentuated the existing crisis, which Warren tried to abate: on 26 September, J.R. Stewart observed to Kincaid: 'Sergt. Warren is willing to forgive the quarters Rent - I wish we had the other $\frac{3}{4}$ '.

Vincent was not optimistic on the matter of rent receipts from Warren's estate late in 1846. On 2 October he went to Kilmihil in order to get the tenants there to sign promissory notes for their rents. Back at his residence in Shanagolden that night, he wrote to SK stating that the Kilmihil tenants 'told me if I delayed coming until tomorrow when a public meeting takes place they could not answer for their own lives or mine if it was known they consented to sign Bills for rent. Mr Gubbins [Rev George Gubbins of the Glebe in Ballingarry] also told me the same'. Vincent also referred to the prospect of public works in the Ballingarry district, and rates of pay thereon. Thus, he continued:

Mr Devonport [?] had a great escape of his life at a meeting on Monday last as it was reported he said 8d per day was enough to pay labourers. The[y] overpowered the Police to get hold of him and were it not for Mr Gubbins, the Priest & Mr Power²¹ nothing could have saved his life. But he never said so. An adjourned meeting takes place tomorrow for the purpose of arranging some works which is expected to be very turbulent. The Dragoons & soldiers are ordered out ... Several works are expected to open immediately which will give only partial relief which if they are only to get 8d per hire ... will drive them to madness ... How can the Widow with a helpless family subsist. How can an aged man with a family unable to earn their hire and himself infirm get on ... How can a man of 8 or 9 in family support his charge on 8d per day ... The Government plans ... if not improved will plunge us into awful difficulties.

There are reasons for believing that Warren's tenants obtained little employment on the public works which commenced in the Ballingarry district late in 1846.²² On 24 October 1846 Vincent informed SK: 'I hear even the liberality of Sergeant Warren [in waiving one quarter's rent] will not bring them forward' to pay. On the next day he reported to SK: 'I have written to notice the Kilmihil Tenants to meet me in Ballingarry [to pay rent] ... There have been two large meetings of the people in Askeaton [less than ten miles from Ballingarry] within the last week. The Bakers shops have been plundered of all Bread'

Vincent's "notice" to meet him with their rents frightened the Kilmihil tenants, and on 4 November ten of them signed the following petition addressed to Warren: 'We the undersigned tenants on the

¹⁹ The townland of Kilmeedy, in which the village of the same name is located, is contiguous to Ballinruane townland.

²⁰ This person was Edward Lloyd of Heathfield House in Ballinruane, I am grateful to Liam Irwin for this identification.

²¹ Probably Daniel Power, a landowner in the Ballingarry district who, in 1852, also held about 40 acres of the Warren lands on Kilmihil.

²² Vincent to SK, 7 and 18 November 1846.

lands of Kilmihil ... have passed our [promissory] notes, payable on the 18th Nov Inst ... Our provision has been gone from us, our familys solely dependent on the portion of corn which we now have. Want and destitution day after day threatens us ... Help us in this time of distress and calamity by not looking after the amt of the aforesaid notes'. Warren forwarded this petition to SK. Around the time at which SK received it, J.R. Stewart wrote to George Gubbins at the Glebe in Ballingarry, seeking information. In his reply to Stewart dated 9 November 1846, Gubbins informed: 'We expect to have a Company of Infantry placed here. Provisions are so high now Farmers are frightened to part with their corn'.

Vincent was in a giddy mood on 6 November when he wrote to SK: 'I am just going up [to Ballinruane] to meet the boys there ... I fear my purse will not be very heavy returning'. He reported to SK on the following day: 'I returned ... without receiving one shilling. The tenants are in such fear of famine that they will not sell their small store of oats ... I told them if they showed an inclination to pay ... their Landlord was inclined to carry on works on his property and send Meal for their support but from their not making any payments I could not recommend them ... They begged I would make no bad report of them until after the Fair of Rathkeale the 18th of this month'.

Recall, from the petition which the Kilmihil tenants had addressed to Warren, that the promissory notes which they had signed were due for payment on 18 November. A few of them did pay in full on that date. Vincent allowed others to renew their notes, and by the end of 1846 most of the Kilmihil tenants had paid the full amounts which they had promised.²³ These payments exposed them to great dangers in 1847: following the potato failure of the Autumn of 1846, by what means could they be expected to acquire food in the months which followed? It is likely, at the end of 1846, that rents were in substantial arrears elsewhere on Warren's estate.

Departures from the Ballinruane Estate

Some holdings on the Ballinruane estate were vacant during the Summer of 1847. This may have been through death, ejectment or 'voluntary' emigration. SK organised a programme of emigration from the estate in 1847: in a letter to Kincaid dated 4 May of that year, J.R. Stewart referred to 'the numbers sent [to America] from Col Stratfords Clare Estate' (near Ennistimon) and he added: 'I fear we shall have to pay the increased rate [of transatlantic passage] for Sergt Warrens People'. In at least one case, SK showed sympathy toward a tenant against whom an ejectment decree had been obtained. Thus, on 1 June 1847 J.R. Stewart wrote the following letter, to be brought by a tenant who had come to Dublin from the estate, to Warren in Leeson St:

The Bearer Michl. Fitzgerald is one of your Tenants in Ballyroan [Ballinruane] under Ejectment who foolishly came up to Dublin about his farm ... He is rather a decent industrious man & were he clear from law Cost & from his Brothers & Sisters I dare say he would be able to pay up the Rent ... But he has foolishly allowed the farm to be divided 8 years ago ... and only now complains of its being done against his wishes - and the rest of the family will not be easily induced to go to America ... I should be glad if you would see him ... With respect to Jas. Guiry, Son in law to John Gayer, ... I heard ... that he made opposition to Quiltys getting the 19 acres given up by his Father in law, but we have the Habere [a document in connection with execution of an ejectment decree] ready to issue & perhaps when he finds that he may withdraw his opposition. I would be very glad they would also go to America.

The SK correspondence pertaining to the Ballinruane estate in 1845-6 mentions three tenants named Guiry (Michael, Patrick and James). In the relevant volume of Griffith's *Valuation* of 1852, only one

²³ Vincent to SK, 26 December 1846.

of those Guirys - Michael on about 50 acres - is listed as a tenant on the estate of the late Sergeant Warren. The same listings do not mention the aforementioned Michael Fitzgerald and John Gayer. It is therefore inferred that each of those missing names had left the estate by 1852. The same volume of the *Valuation* indicates that John Quilty was then a tenant on Ballinruane townland. (It is understood that descendants of Michael Guiry and John Quilty are today farming in the Ballinruane district.²⁴)

It is likely, in 1847, that SK was selective in reallocating lands which had become vacant on the Ballinruane estate: SK wanted solvent tenants, not merely tenants. On 7 June 1847 Richard Holmes, of the nearby townland of Gortalassa (not among Warren's properties) offered £1-5-0 per acre for the lands on Ballinruane townland lately held by John Enright. On 23 June John Gaffney, 'now of Garbally [also a nearby townland] but late of Ballinruane', offered the same rental for the Enright lands.²⁵ Neither is listed as a tenant on the Ballinruane estate in the Griffith *Valuation* of 1852.

Departures from the estate continued in 1848. John Scollard was one of the tenants on Kilmihil who had signed promissory notes for payment of rent in November 1846. By 24 November of that year, he had made partial payment of £10. He renewed his note for the balance, to be paid on 10 December. But it seems that he was one of three tenants on Kilmihil whose notes were not settled by 26 December 1846, and that SK subsequently had him imprisoned for nonpayment of debt.²⁶ On 7 March 1848 Scollard sent the following petition to SK:

I most humbly solicit your Goodness for Mercy ... on Myself and my Dear Brothers and Sister as I am now come out of Goal last week ... By giving me liberty to Carry on Business I do promise to Satisfy your demands ere long ... By giving me another trial [as tenant] I hope I will follow the Rules of my ancestors who lived in Kilmihil these 70 years past ... until they left me the oldest of five orphans which caused my downfall".

In the same communication, Scollard indicated that he saw 'by the ejectment' against him that SK claimed that he was £85-odd in arrears. Scollard, however, claimed that Vincent had forgotten to record £10 which he had paid him 'in Rathkeale 18th Nov. 1846'. This was partial payment on the promissory note which Scollard had signed, and which was mentioned above. For this and another reason, Scollard claimed (in his petition dated 7 March 1848) that he owed SK only £42-odd, which was, nevertheless, a substantial sum.

On 14 March 1848 Scollard wrote to SK that he would 'give you up the possession of my part of the lands of Kilmihil by your assisting me and family in Going to America I would wish to prepare for the first of April, in procuring some Clothes'. SK's response was favourable. This may be regarded as surprising, in view of the extent of Scollard's existing debt to the firm. However, SK recognised that 'chasing losses' did not make commercial sense. On 22 March, Scollard informed SK:

I have made up my mind with Mr Sankey [an agent of SK] ... to go to America ... He told me that you would not give us any Clothing until we would go to Dublin. We are to[o] naked and we could not leave home without the Clothing My Brother is in a bad state of health at the present and if he does not meet with any Disappointment we will be Redy from the 10th to the 12th of April if we get the Clothing and Some Cost.

This letter was signed in the names of John, Edmond, William and Eliza Scollard.

On 22 March 1848 Sankey wrote to SK from Shanagolden, stating that 'David Dunworth [of the

²⁴ Liam Irwin informed me that persons named Guiry and Quilty 'are still prominent farmers there'.

²⁵ Richard Holmes to Sergeant Warren, 7 June 1847; John Gaffney to Sergeant Warren, 23 June 1847.

²⁶ Vincent to SK, 24 November, and to J.R. Stewart, 26 December 1846

Ballinruane estate] has been with me begging to be sent to America. I offered to send 6 of his family'. Sankey's letters make no further reference to him until 14 June 1848, when Sankey wrote to J.R. Stewart: 'I know he wants me to send out 6 of his family which will cost £35 and then I calculate £10 for James Dunworth & his wife. Shall I do this?'. Sankey was on the Ballinruane estate on 23 March, when he got possession from Patrick Guiry and from some other tenants. In a letter to SK dated 23 March 1848, he reported:

I know not whether you will think I have gone too far but when I looked over his [Patrick Guiry's] farm and saw the good state it is in at present I settled on giving him £40 and £10 to Brosnaghan ... Fitzgeralds gave up quietly and I have arranged with Michl. [apparently, the Michael Fitzgerald who had visited SK and Warren in Dublin in June 1847, and who, in J.R. Stewart's words, was then 'under Ejectment'] in case he does not go to America that he is only to get £20.²⁷ His brother Patt will not go so I gave him £8 and £5 settled the two cottiers.

In the same letter of 23 March 1848, Sankey added: 'I understand that many good men are on the lookout for' Patrick Guiry's farm. A letter from Sankey dated 24 March indicates that he had agreed to pay £10 each to two named tenants on Gorteen West when they surrendered their holdings. Possession was obtained from other tenants on the estate, who received compensation, in the Summer and Autumn of 1848.²⁸

It has been seen that there were major changes in the composition of the tenantry on the Ballinruane estate between 1845 and the Autumn of 1848. However, it was not the case that all of those on the estate in the Autumn of 1848 promptly paid their rents. On 12 September 1848 Sankey informed J.R. Stewart: 'I have put keepers on several of the Kilmihil tenants as I found they were carrying away the crops as fast as they could cut them'. One of the final letters in the SK correspondence on the Ballinruane estate is dated 14 September 1848, when Sankey indicated to SK: 'I have left Notices with Griffin [the bailiff] who intends seizing at the first opportunity'.

Concluding Observations

Many ejectment decrees were obtained against tenants on the Mount Blakeney and Ballinruane estates during the period 1845-8. It seems, however, that few (if any) of them were terminally executed. On behalf of Mrs Fitzgerald and Sergeant Warren, SK did seek to thin the populations of those estates, especially in 1847-8 when solvent tenants were wanted. The firm sought to get the financially weaker tenants peacefully to surrender their holdings. Most of them received financial incentives to leave. The compensation often involved payment of a family's passage to America, along with sums for purchase of clothing. In some cases tenants themselves asked to be sent to America. But in many or most cases, it is likely that terminal ejectment was the alternative to surrender of holdings. Thus 'voluntary' surrender of land, in return for accepting 'compensation' or assistance to get to America, might not be considered 'voluntary' in any accepted sense: think of agreeing to do something when a gun has been put to your head. Nevertheless, instances have been cited in which the financial packages offered by SK seem to have been surprisingly generous. Recall also that in 1846 Warren waived one quarter's rent. In regard to the treatment of the tenants on the Mount Blakeney and Ballinruane estates, neither SK, nor Gertrude Fitzgerald, nor Sergeant Warren, fit the caricatures often portrayed of Irish landowners

²⁷ Michael Fitzgerald probably stayed in Ireland. On 14 September 1848 Sankey wrote to SK: 'Michl. Fitzgerald is an invalid and unfit to go to America. He wants £20 the amount formerly offered him in case he remained at home'.

²⁸ Sankey to SK, 14 June and 14 September 1848.

or their agents in the 1840s. Similar conclusions apply to other properties in Ireland managed by SK during the decade of the great Irish famine, investigated in the larger research project from which the present article has been drawn.

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