

Irvine Weir

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Early Workers

November 24, 2025

[View Weir Family Tree](#)

JAMES IRVINE WEIR was the 4th child born September 7, 1878, on Beachwood Avenue, Dublin, Ireland to William Caldwell Weir and Susan (Tinkler) Weir.

He was one of the first original twelve (12) workers; shown on the 1905 Workers List as entering the work in 1900.

He was one of the FIRST three workers to come to America, as well as the first worker to pioneer the State of California; the other two pioneers were William Irvine and George Walker.

He was one of the first team of workers gathered by Wm. Irvine for a bicycle mission to Scotland in 1899. From left: Jack Douglas, William Gill, George Walker, John Hardie (wearing black hat), William Irvine, William Carroll, **Irvine Weir** and Warren Hastings. [View photo in TTT Photo Gallery.](#)

Irvine Weir said, *"Then in October 1899 Wm. Irvine, still in the Faith Mission, but not satisfied, got seven men and with himself we toured Scotland using the Faith Mission converts to entertain us."* Referring to the photograph taken of the young men on their bicycles, Mr. Weir said that this *"in my mind was the start of the work of Wm. Irvine outside the Faith Mission"* (Secret Sect, Doug Parker's Personal communications with Irvine Weir, Jan. 7, 1955; Nov. 23, 1954, p. 37 Fn 23).

Irvine Weir told Doug Parker that: *"William Irvine's ideas of preaching and tramp preaching were founded entirely on his idea of the tenth Matthew where Jesus told them to go, providing themselves neither gold nor silver nor script or staff for their journey, neither two coats, neither shoes nor staves for the workman is worthy of his hire. William believed that what was good for the apostles was also good for the preachers of that day. He forgot that this message was given to the apostles to give to the Jewish nation only"* (**Secret Sect** by Parker, Fn 5, pp. 2, 9).

It is commonly known in Ireland that the first fellowship meeting in Dublin, Ireland took place over the store Weirs of Baggot Street Store owned by Irvine Weir's parents. The Weir family's home was over their store. Whether this was the first fellowship meeting ever held in a home, or the first meeting to be held in the City of Dublin is not clear. See photos: [TTT Photo Gallery](#). See also: [History of Weirs of Baggot Street building.](#)

1905. Irvine's older sister Edie Weir entered the work in 1905 and reportedly left the work due to rheumatic fever. She lived above Weir's store and the Sunday meeting was held there until her death in 1959.

Harry Weir was in the work for a short time and married Agnes Carroll. Harry was briefly a companion of John Long. Harry and Agnes moved to California in 1911 and are buried there. They had 4 children, Don, Edith and two daughters who became sister workers, Gladys and Primrose Weir. [View Weir Family Tree](#)

Doug Parker personally visited Irvine Weir and some of the following quotes by and about Irvine Weir were taken from the book *The Secret Sect* by Doug Parker.

"One of the first missions he [Wm. Irvine] held after his beliefs crystallized was among some farmers in Rathmolyon, about twenty-five miles from Dublin. The Carrolls, with whom he stayed, were deeply impressed by him and described the 'rough Scotsman' to Irvine Weir who was invited to travel from Dublin to Rathmolyon for fellowship with them." (Secret Sect by Doug Parker, p 1) Note: Irvine Weir's brother Harry married Agnes Carroll, Bill Carroll's sister.

"Then in October 1899 Wm. Irvine, still in the Faith Mission, but not satisfied, got seven men and with himself we toured Scotland using the Faith Mission converts to entertain us. Referring to the photograph taken of the preachers setting out with their bicycles, see p.5, Mr. Weir said that this "in my mind was the start of the work of Wm. Irvine outside the Faith Mission." Doug Parker Personal communications with Irvine Weir July 1, 1955 and Nov. 23, 1954. (p. 37; Footnote 23)

John Long wrote about Irvine Weir: *"On my return journey, I spent another week in Dublin City, and met with Irvine Weir, George Walker, Albert Quinn, and others who soon afterwards gave up their situations to go fully on the Lord's work."* (John Long's Journal, March 1899)

"About that time (Wm.) Irvine returned when I had started the mission in Condarrat (Scotland), and he left me a partner named Irvine Weir. The mission was a splendid success, upwards of thirty persons decided for Christ. Irvine Weir returned to Ireland and Samuel Boyd joined me." (John Long's Journal, Nov. 1899)

1901. "I met Jack (Jackson) in 1901 when he came to a meeting Edward Cooney had in Edenderry, Co. Offaly, Ireland. Wm. Gill and I went to visit Edward Cooney at this, his first mission." (John Long's Journal, 1901)

1903. "In the year 1903, William Irvine and Irvine Weir began preaching on the streets in Springfield, Massachusetts; Irvine Weir then preached in Buffalo, Chicago and California." (Secret Sect by Doug Parker, p 31)

1901 IRISH CENSUS. Three unmarried male "visitors" were listed at the residence of James Wilson Robinson at 3 Castle Street, Nenagh East Urban, Co. Tipperary, Ireland. The occupation given for all these men was Evangelists/Preachers. They were:

William Irvine (age 37, not married, Birthplace: Stirlingshire, Scotland; Religion: Presbyterian)

Irvine Weir (age 22, not married, Birthplace: Dublin, Ireland; Religion: Presbyterian) and

Alexr W. Bradley (age 20, not married, Birthplace: Co. Down, Ireland; Religion: Methodist)

The men gave their religion as Presbyterian or Methodist, the faith they were brought up in. Irvine did not give Faith Mission as his religion—as it is not a sect or denomination, but a mission only.

1904: After arriving in New York, Irvine Weir travelled alone to California in 1904, and was a guest of a newly married couple, Clyde and Grace Brownlee, who were thinking of becoming missionaries in China. Clyde was the father of Harry Brownlee, deceased, who entered in the Work in 1934. Clyde helped in Missions for a time. "Irvine Weir was the first worker to come to California in 1904. He met Mr. and Mrs. Brownlee in Dec. 1904 in Long Beach. Mr. Brownlee tried to help Irvine with the gospel work for awhile, but as the family increased, he was advised to establish a home and support his family" (**The Early Days in California, 1904** by Mrs. Alex McPhail).

In 1905, Irvine Weir persuaded Walter Slater, who had listened to him preach, to accompany him on some missions. In so doing, Walter became the first native American brother Worker on the west coast and was possibly the first native Brother Worker in all of America. "There was a tent put up in Paso Robles in the fall of 1905...and **Irvine Weir**, being impatient to get started with a tent he had gotten, invited Walter Slater to join him...so when Walter was asked, rather suddenly by **Irvine Weir** to join him in this tent ministry, he was too impressed with all this to refuse... Walter always said he got saved after he went in the work " (**When the Gospel Came to the Weibe Family** by Elma Wiebe Milton).

Reportedly, Irvine Weir and his sister Edie had the first meetings in Texas, preaching in the open air in Galveston for a few days while waiting for a boat to take them back to Ireland for a visit. (date unknown)

On September 30, 1911, ship records show James [Irvine], Edith (both "Evangelists") and their sister Letitia Weir sailing from Londonderry, N. Ireland on the SS *Columbia* to New York City.

1918. Irvine Weir left the work sometime before 1918, as his draft card for WWI shows he was working at a steel mill in Pittsburgh in 1918. The 1930 U.S. Census shows he was married to Lillian Reid. They had a son, Donald Weir and a daughter, Kay (Weir) Paddon (who married Noel Paddon). The family lived in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. His granddaughter, Kathy Paddon, was in work in California from 1972-1979, and is now married with children. He died October 18, 1957, and is buried in North Weymouth, Massachusetts.

1935. Irvine told Doug Parker: "In the American territories there was continuing antagonism between George Walker and Jack Carroll, as **Irvine Weir** discovered in 1935. A pioneer of the sect's mission in California, Weir asked George Walker to approve his plan to return to California but, to his amazement, the overseer turned to him and said, "I would not like you to go to California now. I am sorry but I may have to cut the West off". When he later travelled through the state of Colorado, Weir found that sect members in Denver had declared their support either for Jack Carroll or George Walker; the overseers each forbade visits or contacts with preachers who were loyal to his opponent. Although preachers had hoped for improved relations, after the 1930 conference difficulties arose during the next two decades in different places and many became perplexed who once believed that harmony existed within the fellowship." (Secret Sect by Doug Parker, p 86)

"Some while later I asked George (Walker) about the two men which came with him in 1903. **They were Irvine Weir and William Irvine.** Sadly both men got off on the wrong track. George said that **Irvine Weir** had a weakness for divine healing and later on in life wrote his sister that nothing could hurt him because he served God. Before the letter arrived, he fell off a ladder, rose up and said, 'I'm all right,' then died. He had said that some of the friends, who got killed couldn't have been doing God's will." (**From Notes on George Walker's Early Days in America**)

Irvine Weir compared William Irvine's 'fall' to that of David who...when he didn't go forth to battle himself, but sent his armies out, fell into temptation of adultery..."There is no question that William had a weakness along that line and...that he had fallen. I know positively that there were women who have confessed to me of trouble with him along those particular lines." (Secret Sect by Doug Parker, Interview with Irvine Weir in 1954 p 61)

1947. "After a brief stay in New York, Edward (Cooney) went to Boston by bus to visit **Irvine Weir**...In 1947, he (Irvine Weir) was apparently in good standing in the Testimony when he invited (the excommunicated) Edward to visit him in Boston. Of this visit Edward reports: "He (Irvine Weir) was glad to renew his fellowship with me although he risks being put out in doing so. His wife improved much during my stay at his home. She was timid and feared to have me stay, but Irvine was firm." Weir spent his week's vacation with him (Cooney) and accompanied him to Philadelphia and New York... Irvine left me in New York and proceeded home to Boston to, I hope, take a bolder stand for the truth than ever." (Life and Ministry of Edward Cooney by Patricia Roberts, p 192)

In 1948, Irvine learned that George Walker registered a church name with the U.S. government in 1941 of **Christian Conventions Representing Assemblies of Christians Assuming this Name Only**. [Click Here to view George Walker's letter](#). Irvine strongly disapproved of the registration, and believed it was "a sad departure from the spiritual birth which took place at the beginning of the 20th century." In speaking about these things, he was viewed as an enemy by some. George Walker put him out of the Two by Two fellowship, wouldn't allow him to attend convention or his Sunday meeting. Irvine Weir told Doug Parker about his disapproval and the consequences of his stand:

"To me and others this was a sad departure from the spiritual birth which took place in the close of the last century (1800) and the beginning of this century (1900). We had gone from 1903 to 1942, thirty-nine years unknown. When our leaders in 1942 sought favours, the U.S.A. Bureau of Census found no record of the "Testimony". There are many who have no knowledge of what took place in 1942. I did not know until 1948. So in speaking about these things I became an enemy to some. September 1903, Wm. Irvine, George Walker and I came to America. We were the first of the "Testimony" in this country." (Secret Sect by Doug Parker, p 86)

Irvine Weir was excommunicated from the Two by Two church:

1948 Irvine Weir said: *"Jack Jackson from South America was in charge of the morning meeting. I was met outside by workers in charge who wanted me to promise I would not speak, so I did not speak. I met Jack in 1901 when he came to a meeting E. Cooney had in Edenderry, Ireland. Wm. Gill and I went to visit E. Cooney at this, his first mission. I had not seen Jack for some years so after the meeting went up to do so, asked him to my home and also asked him if he would see E. Cooney before going back. He got quite stirred."* (Secret Sect by Doug Parker, p. 86)

"Soon afterwards I saw George Walker and some other workers coming from the meeting tent, and was surprised as it was almost meeting time. He said, "Jack Jackson has just sent a message to me that Irvine [Weir] should not be allowed to stay on the grounds." George seemed glad he had the backing of Jack to order me off the convention grounds. I did not dispute, but got my wife and my boy and left." (Secret Sect by Doug Parker, p. 86)

"George Walker and I were brought together in the closing years of the last century. He reigns today as king, and ruled that I and others should be silenced. I was cut off from those with whom I have associated in spiritual fellowship for more than fifty years" (Secret Sect by Doug Parker, p. 86).

1948. Ed Cooney wrote: **"Irvine Weir** has written me that George Walker, Tom Tuft, and the bishop in whose house Irvine meets, came to his home. George told Irvine that he would instruct the bishop to close his house to him unless he promised not to speak in the meetings. Irvine refused, so without any scriptural reason being given, he has been cut off." (Ed Cooney's Letter to the Churches in Alabama and Kentucky, August 2, 1948 in Letters Hymns & Poems of Edward Cooney by Patricia Roberts, p56).

1948. Ed Cooney wrote: *"Irvine Weir was ordered off the convention grounds for speaking between meetings to some he met; and bishops have been told not to allow him to speak in the home assemblies. He is getting from six to nine weeks leave from his work and thinks of spending it with me. Hope if we go together, we may be a help to each other."* (Ed Cooney's Letter September 27, 1948).

1949: "It is evident from his letters that Edward Cooney did a great deal of traveling in 1949. Alice Muttensbaugh of Michigan, during her three-weeks vacation, drove him between two and three thousand miles. **Irvine Weir** accompanied them, and August (Gustafson) joined them later in Alabama. In August 1949, Edward writes from Michigan: "We have been humbled here by seeing the outcome of the Holy Spirit's movement on some hearts in Ohio, Kentucky and Alabama. It was a call from Alabama that caused me to desire to cross the ocean and come to seek to help. Alice Muttensbaugh drove me between two and three thousand miles during her vacation. **Irvine Weir** accompanied us and I had the joy with them of seeing some confess willingness to follow Jesus by being baptized. Others are willing, and we expect to revisit the places where we hope to disciple others and see those willing to follow Jesus 'buried with him by baptism into death.' Personally I don't feel worthy of such a privilege as having any part in such work. **Irvine Weir** was a great help, and August Gustafson followed up the work by confirming the disciples and seeing some others become interested." " (Life and Ministry of Edward Cooney by Patricia Roberts, p 199-200).

It would not have been unusual for Irvine as one of the first 3 pioneers to America to have written his memories or an account of his early days in America. However, after checking with a few sources, it appears that Irvine Weir did NOT write a historical account. We know he wrote a letter because Ed Cooney wrote in his letter to Irvine Weir dated January 17, 1950: *"August (Gustafson) and I have talked over the wisdom or other wise of advising you to have your letter copied and send to others. We both think that your guidance in the matter should be between God and yourself."* (Life and Ministry of Edward Cooney by Patricia Roberts, p 62)

Letter written to Irvine Weir by Joe Kerr in 1950's

History of Weirs on Baggot Street building (Weir family store in Dublin)

View Weir Family Tree