

WWCA/B1

Weir Collection

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Descriptive List

Identity Statement

Reference Code: IE WWCA/B1
Title: Weir Collection
Date: 1825-1939
Level of
Description: Fonds/ Item
Extent: 1 box

Context

Creator

Weir Family of Tinahely, Co Wicklow.

Archival History/ Source of Acquisition

The collection was created by the Weir Family of Tinahely and donated to Wicklow County Archive in December 2021 by Lenoard Weir.

Biographical History

The Weir family has deep roots in Tinahely, County Wicklow, dating back to the early 1800s. Their presence in the village has been marked by both personal and business achievements, with the family making significant contributions to the local community over the years. The Weir family's connection to Tinahely begins with two brothers, William and Samuel Leonard Weir, who are the central figures in the family's historical narrative. According to records found on the Weir family through census, personal records and on gravestones at Kilcommon Graveyard, the family had lived in Tinahely since the early 1800s. The family had a long-standing retail business operating at "The Corner House" from at least 1825.

Samuel Leonard's father, also named Samuel, passed away in 1866 at the age of 52, leaving his wife, Rachel, and their young son, Samuel Leonard. Samuel Leonard married Annie Pasley in 1887. The couple took over the family business at "The Corner House" in 1888, expanding the establishment from a drapery shop to include groceries, which helped the

business thrive. Samuel Leonard and Annie Pasley Weir had a large family, with nine children in total. By the time of the 1911 Census, seven of the children had survived, including three sons; Hubert, Reginald (Reg), and Horace, and four daughters; Millie, Evelyn, Beatrice, and Eileen. The family business grew steadily during this time, employing several shop assistants, with some of the Weir children also working in the store. Evelyn served as a bookkeeper, while Hubert and Eileen worked as shop assistants.

In 1917, Horace joined the military during World War I, enlisting in the Royal Flying Corps. Horace trained as a pilot, but his service was cut short after he suffered severe injuries when his plane crashed due to an engine failure. He spent several months recovering in hospital before being discharged. After the war, Horace married Dorothy Wright, a secretary from Warrington, Lancashire, in 1920. The couple returned to Tinahely in 1921, and Horace along with his brother Hubert, took over the family business.

The Weir family business, now known as S. Weir & Sons, expanded in the 1930s to include the manufacture of furniture. The family also established a market garden. The business operated out of a property in Market Square, where the family home was also located. At that time, the upper floor of the building housed the local Protestant primary school, which served as the place of education for Horace's children: Harry, Stanley, and Brian. In 1955, Horace and his family donated land for the construction of a new Protestant primary school, located next to Kilcommon Church. This new school still stands today, and a plaque by the front door honours the Weir family's contribution.

In his later years, Samuel Leonard Weir retired from active business life and focused on documenting his life and the history of Tinahely. In 1938, he wrote an unpublished memoir titled *"A Short History of the Village of Tinahely – Tales of a Little Village High Up in the Wicklow Mountains."* The memoir offers anecdotes and reflections on his life, as well as the history of the community. Samuel Leonard passed away in 1939.

The Weir family's business continued to grow through the early and mid-20th century, but by the late 1960s, the landscape had changed dramatically. The rise of supermarkets, combined with the increased mobility of consumers and the decline of traditional Fair Days, meant that the business struggled to remain viable. As a result, S. Weir & Sons was sold to the Moynahan family, and later to the Menton family. Despite the closure of the family business,

the Weir family continued to make significant contributions to the local community. Harry and Stanley remained active in various local activities, such as the Tinahely Agricultural Show and other community organizations.

The Weir family's contributions to Tinahely span several generations and touch on various aspects of local life, from business to education and community service. Through their memoirs, business ventures, and active involvement in the town's events, the Weir family has left a lasting mark on Tinahely's history. While the family may no longer reside in the village, their legacy endures in the memories of the people of Tinahely and in the spaces they helped shape, such as the Protestant primary school and the historical records preserved at the County Wicklow Archive. The Weir family's enduring influence remains a vital part of the story of Tinahely.

See also: <https://tinahely.wicklowheritage.org/people/the-weir-family>

Content and Structure

This small collection contains an accounts ledger detailing local names of the area and their professions. Also, the handwritten memoir of Samuel Leonard Weir. Both the ledger and the memoir are essential tools for preserving the cultural heritage of Tinahely. They provide future generations with a glimpse of what life was like in the early 1900s, the types of work people did, the challenges they faced, and the resilience of the community.

Scope and Content

The collection houses an account book and memoir of the Weir Family.

System of Arrangement

Documents are arranged from fonds to item level description.

Collection description adheres to ISAD(G).

WWCA/B1

1 Account Book & Receipts of Weir Shop

1/1 31 March 1825

Accounts book of S. Weir, Tinahely, provides the names of customers, along with their respective trades or occupations. Names of those included are; John Haragh, Michael Mernagh, Thomas Kavanagh, Matthew Haragh, Thomas Byrnes, James Horton, Michael Heffron, Denny Byrne, John Nowland, John Hara, James Byrne, Buck Myres, Byrne Mullins, Lawerance R. Green, John Mc[.]jully, Catherine Kavanagh, Edward Norton, Thomas Gilbert, Paddy Kavanagh, Luke Toole, James Doyle, Anthony Murphy, Thomas Cavanagh, Patrick Cavanagh, James Browne, Thomas O'Neill, Jim Healy, and Michael Mernagh. Account book provides

1 item

1/2 08 Dec 1893

Receipt from S. Weir, Draper, Grocer, Hardware and General Fancy Goods Merchants to Mrs Sullivan.

1 item

1/3 No date

Note "Pasley's Quality Fruit Slab 7/6", "They were 3 ½ lb weight"

1 item

1/4 17 May 1924

Receipt from S. Weir, Draper and Outfitter to M Steadman.

1 item

2 Memoir

2/1 1939

Copybook "Short history of the Village of Tinahely" written by Samuel Leonard Weir. Book "looks back over seventy years of the primitive life of the people then living compared with the life that people live today." Refers to the account book of the Weir shop to highlight the simple way people lived in regards to food and commodities. Typed transcript also included with the copybook.

2 items