Bill Mooney's opening and closing speeches
Mooney family reunion at Doolin
16 August 2013

Opening address:

Good Evening, my name is Bill Mooney, son of the late Jack Mooney of Rathkeale, Co Limerick and of the late Maura Gaynor of Newcastle, Galway. My grandfather, William, also known as Bill, left Grennan, Attanagh, Co Laois in the early 1900s and settled in Limerick where he married Ann Gaynor.

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the 'Mooney Family Reunion 2013'. We have family members here tonight from the USA, Canada, UK, France and from all over Ireland, North and South.

The idea for this reunion came from my eldest daughter, Niamh, who was prompted by the Irish Government initiative called 'The Gathering 2013'.

This evening's format is as follows:

- I hope that you have all signed the Visitor's Book with postal and email addresses and contact numbers. To enable people to keep in touch in the future visitor's book details will be forwarded to everyone in the coming weeks as well as a copy of a DVD being made here tonight.

- A copy of the family tree prepared by Niamh is available to everyone who did not receive a copy on arrival. Niamh is already working on an extension to the family tree based on information received since it was printed. It has been and continues to be a labour of love for Niamh.

- We also have a family tree prepared by Tony Mooney of Bedford in England whom Niamh made contact with over the internet. She phoned me full of excitement at having made contact with a relation who has done extensive research and who for a long time has been interested in the family tree. Tony is here tonight with his wife, Judith, and I'm pleased to say will give a talk which I'm sure we can look to.

- There will be Irish music later and finger food will also be provided.

I would like to comment briefly on the family tree. It appears that the Mooneys originated in Ballyfin, Co Laois and moved to Grennan, Attanagh, Durrow, Co Laois c. 1750. Both Jack and Bridie Mooney still live in Grennan and are a direct link to the ancestral home. Both, I'm delighted to say, are here tonight. From Grennan the Mooneys migrated to all over Ireland and to the rest of the world.

The oldest family member that we have traced is Patrick Mooney and the youngest is Peyton Broderick Mooney, aged two months, who is here tonight with his mum, my daughter Ailbhe.

From the census records and a marriage cert of 1890, the Mooneys appear to have been mainly Roman Catholic, farmers, coopers, policemen and teachers with a sprinkling of clergymen and nuns.

I hope that the family tree will be added to, revised and rewritten in the future and I would ask anyone who has relevant information to make contact with Niamh or Tony.

I would like to ask anyone who wishes to say a few words to contact Niamh or myself. Margaret, daughter of Mona, sister of my father Jack speaks a few word 'when finished'. Thank you Margaret.

I would now like to ask an old family friend of at least two generations, John Griffin from Rathkeale, Co Limerick to say a few words.

(John gives his address and Bill adds "Thank you John.")

I would now like to ask Tony Mooney to speak.

(Tony speaks for about 40 minutes on the descendants of Patrick Mooney and Bill adds "Thank you Tony for that Interesting talk.")

Closing address:

I would again like to thank everyone for coming here tonight and I look forward to chatting to you over the next few hours and indeed the next day or two. I hope that this event will have the effect of renewing and establishing links between family members however remote they are 'generation-wise' or 'geographically-wise'.

During the reunion I'm sure that individually we will remember family members who have gone before us and who have a special place in our hearts.

A special word of thanks to everyone who helped in any way to make this event possible. Niamh has suggested having a similar reunion every two years and I am sure many others share this aspiration.

Again many thanks for coming. Enjoy the evening and the weekend.