



Mooney / Ó Maonaigh

Virtus sola Nobilitat - Virtue alone Ennobles

(above latin motto is the correct one)

Dear Ciaran,

I put this together for you just to give you some back ground into what I have come across while researching our family name.

I did research most of what I know (believe to be true) online after I decided I didn't know much about the history of the name but when I was in school and from what the family told me as a boy I thought the following to be true:

- The family name meant “rich but dumb”.
- My grandfather had owned a lot of land but generations before him owned vastly more.

As you can imagine, as a boy with nothing but these two slights of information I thought that the literal meaning of the name was that the family had land and wealth but the dumb in the genes kicked in and the grandfather lost it all.

When I grew older I was told of the story of the grandfather selling his remaining land for “buttons” on his death bed to help the grandmother. My Mooney side of the family is huge as my grandmother had 23 kids and I currently have close to 100 first cousins.

I decided about 2 years ago when I was unfortunately unemployed to try put some parts of the family puzzle together. I knew this couldn't be too hard as I was of course still living very close to Navan which is a county town of County Meath. Navan is known to have been our family home (Mooney) for a long time and when researching the origins of the name, I found out that there are 4 families to have carried the name in from its earliest record. One of those families records a Thomas Mooney who lived in Navan.

Happy enough as I was that this man must be a direct descendant, I decided to look at the "rich but dumb" meaning of the surname and of course the family crest and what the lizard in the tree might mean. I had thought that the lizard would be something sinister and maybe foul but apparently it means royalty and the tree signifies roots to that royalty.

When I discovered this, I thought maybe I am from rich but dumb royal family which would make it a little easier to taste on the end of my tongue but after carefully reading into the literal meaning "rich but dumb", I discovered something very pleasing. Rich relates to the royal blood in our veins (this I will cover further down). Dumb is something that links directly to what I knew about my family and the huge amounts of land which were owned (or certainly taken care of) by the family.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flight_of_the_Earls

The dumb in the meaning of the family name relates to the fact that the Mooney family with all the land, churches and fine buildings had successfully hidden the Earls for a long period of time and played the dumb part very well. I also think the family links to royal blood was not known to the invading forces. I had studied the Flight of the Earls in school and I was buzzing when I read this.

Now excited and proud, I decided to find out where the royal blood came from and this is my favourite part. Once directly descended from one of the original 4 Mooney families, you will be a direct descendant of this man:

Note: It has been pointed out to me that when Irish people made a new life abroad, it was more common than not to take on a new name and surname to aid this new life. This is one of the reasons you will find a lot of misspelling in surnames and forenames, the people spelled the name as it sounded to them with little education.

Érimón - I recommend you Wiki his name and the Milesians and the Milesian Invasion of Ireland.

I trust this will give you a bit to read and I hope you find it as interesting as I did.

Beatha agus Sláinte,
Gearóid Ó Maonaigh