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## Lyons and Donohoe Families Gather for Sesquicentennial Reunion

**THE LYONS and DONOHOE** families of Yankton held a reunion on Sesquicentennial Weekend June 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Journeying from afar to join the families of Pat & Pearl Lyons and Jack and Margaret Lyons were brothers with their wives: Frank and Jean, Illinois, Gene, Kentucky, Tom and Marcia, Texas, Bob and Nona, Maine. The three Donohoe brothers joining the celebration were Jim, Texas, George, California, and Jerry, Illinois.



**Brothers: Tom Pat, Gene, Frank, Bob, Jack**

A welcome breakfast was hosted by the six daughters of Pat and Pearl Lyons, Saturday on the original Lyons family farm, established by William and Mary Lyons, 1930. The daughters who grew up on the family farm, Susan Streedbeck, Linda Slowey, Mary Gross, Carol Reade, Barbara Goeden and Kathy Johnston provided a breakfast worthy of a thrashing crew to the fifty five guests including several generations of nieces, nephews and their children. Pat Lyons gave tours of his farm and antique car collection to interested parties. Paddy Homan of Cork, Ireland, the Lyons-Donohoe family bard, joined for his first visit to South Dakota. Gloria Kennedy Herman, an old family friend whose grandfather, Bill Hickey was the popular sheriff of Yankton for sixteen years, also came to the reunion.

Jim Donohoe hosted an evening dinner with brothers George and Jerry. The local Donohoe residence is part of a housing development built on land which was part of the original James and Mary Donohoe farm, established in 1911. Fifty members of the two families enjoyed a superb dinner, provided by Hy-Vee catering. During the evening, Paddy Homan entertained the guests with a variety of traditional Irish songs. The founding Irish ancestors of the Donohoes were from County West Meath and of the Lyonses from County Waterford.

Dr. Gene Lyons was feted on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday with a lemon poppy seed cake, a family favorite. It was also the occasion for the launch of a new book: *DAKOTA IMPRINTS: A Sesquicentennial Anthology: Contributions by Lyons & Donohoe Families on Yankton & the State of*



*South Dakota* by Robert F. Lyons ([williammarylyons.com/yankton\\_sesquicentennial\\_1861-2011](http://williammarylyons.com/yankton_sesquicentennial_1861-2011)).

Frank Lyons gave a reading from his book in progress, stories of aunts and uncles, including Francis Donohoe, father of Jim, George and Jerry. The book entitled: *Dakota Days* may be released later in the year.

The family reunion continued Sunday at St. Benedict's Church for a special mass of thanksgiving. Paddy Homan sang before mass and joined the choir under the direction of Dr. Jack Lyons. He performed songs in Irish and English during mass including an offertory

hymn *Ag Criost An Siol* (Christ the seed) by Ireland's leading composer Sean O'Riada. The congregations' warm reception to the guest cantor prompted Pastor Ken Lulf to comment after mass that "*the angels in the heavenly choir must all be Irish.*"



**Paddy Homan sings at Cramer-Kenyon Garden Sesquicentennial Celebration**

The weekend reunion concluded Sunday afternoon at the Cramer-Kenyon Sesquicentennial Garden celebration where the two families joined the community for a concert of traditional Irish music by Homan with accompaniment by Dr. Jack Lyons of the Board of Directors. Homan began with *The Gal I Left Behind*, an Irish song associated with Gen. George Custer's encampment in Yankton in 1873 and sang a wide selection of songs including an original Irish version of Danny Boy, *Maidin i mB'earra* (Morning in Beare).

The Lyons family discovered the talented singer, Paddy Homan, ten years ago when Bob and Nona Lyons who were living in Ireland hosted Pat and Pearl Lyons for a weekend in the Dingle Peninsula. Homan was singing in a pub at the traditional Irish music session on a Sunday afternoon when the Lyons family first heard his passionate and energetic singing. He is now based in Chicago and recently received multiple awards as Male Vocalist and Male Vocal Album based in Chicago and recently received multiple awards as Male Vocalist and Male Vocal Album of the Year (2009) and Male Newcomer of the Decade (2011) by [liveIreland.com](http://liveIreland.com) which called him "*the real voice of Ireland.*" Homan, a social worker, is the Community Services Advocate with Lutheran Life Communities based in Arlington Heights, Illinois which serves the entire Chicago and Metropolitan area ([www.paddyhoman.com](http://www.paddyhoman.com)).