

"Trunk at Galway Station"

This a continuation of the interview with John King, Oughterard, who will be 89 years old on January 19th next.

During the time of the troubles in 1922 the roads between here and Galway were impassable because of blown-up bridges and other hazards. John recalls here the time his father and two others rowed from Oughterard to Galway and back in one day to pick up some luggage belonging to John's brother who had just returned from America to Cork.

ONL: I thought one very interesting story was about picking up the luggage. Was it in 1922?

JK: Yes, and bringing it home (from Galway) by rowboat.

ONL: And you couldn't get through the roads?

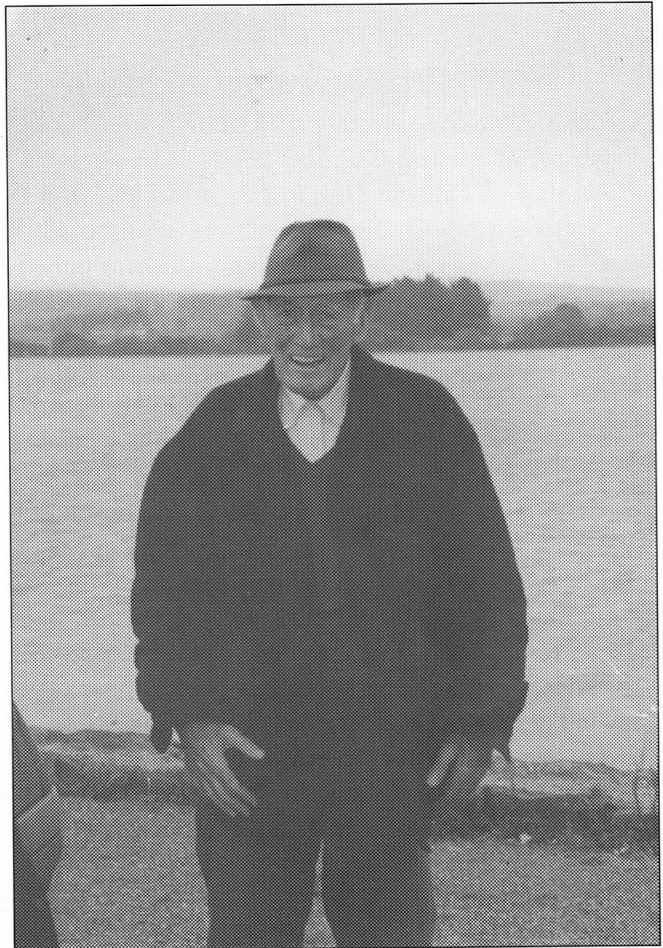
JK: No. You had to go through fields. You'd go down the new line road and past the field where the traveling crowd used to park. You'd cut up through the hay field and you'd come out through the back avenue through Lemonfield past the big house which was O'Flaherty's estate. You'd come out on the road there past the big trees at Arvannagh. You know, the dark place in Arvannagh as you come out the road. There are lights now. They knocked the trees both sides of the road. And then the bridge at Moyvoon two miles down was blown up and you had to go into fields again there and you'd come out somewhere to another blockage and you'd have to go through more fields. My mother and my brother went into Galway before he went (back). And they went by car that brought them in. It had seats with backs. Two behind and two up front. It wasn't a side car. He brought the two of them in and that's the way they had to go. It was a find summer's day. My brother stayed ten weeks at home and he was off again.

ONL: But you got word from Galway that the luggage was in the train station.

JK: That's right. The postman came in and left a card, "Trunk at Galway Station." It was the two girls from Spiddal that were with him on the boat. They had brothers there who had an old car and they went down to Cork, to Cobh, Queenstown they called it at that time, and collected the three trunks and left his in Galway station.

ONL: So your father and your brother ...

JK: And a neighbor, Willie Watts was his name, he was a married man at that time. They rowed a boat from the river



here, you know, where the boathouse is now, right into Galway in the (Corrib) river two miles down. My father used to go in there years ago when he was in regattas in the river. They went to Menlo or someplace like that. That was a great place for regattas and all kinds of sports.

ONL: How did they carry the thing from the station?

JK: Oh, there were plenty of horse cars at that time. They wouldn't have far to go from the station. Maybe they came into Wood Quay. Do you know Wood Quay?

ONL: I do.

JK: There was four people drowned there one time. They thought it was a road and they drove into the lake. And there was an old boat almost sunk. If they went into that they'd have some chance. It was only a few yards away. They were after leaving somebody that was insane up at Ballinasloe in that old home. They'd had a couple of drinks maybe in the Imperial or the Royal. And that's where they went into the lake. A Guard and his sister and the driver and some other one that was in it. The Guard had to go. It was a violent case.

At this point the interview took another tack. More about that later.

But wasn't that some feat to row to Galway, pick up a 200 pound steamer trunk, and row back all in one day? We think about it every time we start our outboard!