

Fultz Corner and Stagecoach Travel

Fultz corner was a strategic position, being the intersection between the "two great roads of Nova Scotia" - the Cobequid Road to Truro and the old road to Windsor, what is now called the Old Sackville Road. The Fultz family was quick to capitalize on the important position of their land, with William Fultz opening the Twelve Mile House Inn on the intersection as early as 1814.



The painting above is of Fultz Corner. To the left of the painting is the Twelve Mile House. It was a traditional stopping place for stagecoach routes. It was painted by artist Jean MacKaracher-Watson.


Because of the importance of the Sackville area to the stagecoach trade, the Fultz House Museum has been dedicated to educating the public about its era. In 1988, the Fultz House Museum was able to acquire a stagecoach replica from the Joseph Howe festival. Unfortunately, in 1998 vandals set fire to the stagecoach. Repairs were made, but in 2006 it had to be destroyed due to the rotten state of its carriage and wheels.

Rules for Riding the Stagecoach

- 1) It was not recommended for passengers to drink alcohol. However, passengers knew not to be greedy if they decided to indulge in a beverage and to share their refreshments.
- 2) Gentlemen were requested not to smoke tobacco if ladies were present on the trip, but chewing tobacco was allowed.
- 3) Men were requested to refrain from cursing or rough language when in the presence of women and children.
- 4) Buffalo robes were provided to keep passengers warm in cold weather. Anyone who would not share the robe was forced to ride in the cold with the driver.
- 5) Passengers were not to snore loudly or rest their head on a fellow passenger.
- 6) Firearms were allowed on the stagecoach for use in emergencies, but were not allowed to shoot at nearby wildlife, as the sound scared the horses.
- 7) In the event of runaway horses, passengers were encouraged not to panic and attempt to jump from the coach, as they could be seriously hurt.
- 8) Any men who participated in offensive conduct towards ladies would be thrown off of the coach, and it would be a long walk home!

The History of Stagecoach Travel in Nova Scotia

FARMER'S ALMANACK.
WESTERN LINE OF STAGE COACHES
(CONVEYING THE ROYAL MINERS)
FROM HALIFAX TO ANNAPOLIS



A Coach leaves Halifax for Windsor and Kentville, and Annapolis for Kentville, on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, each week. At 5 o'clock A.M. from 12th May to 12th Aug. at 0, from 12th Aug to 22^d Sept., at day light, from 22^d Sept. to 8th Feb.; and at 0, from 8th Feb. to 12th May.

A Coach also leaves Kentville for Annapolis, and another For Windsor and Halifax, at the hours above mentioned, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday in each week.

RATES OF FARE

From Halifax to Fultz's,	(12 miles)	20	5	0
" Hills's,	21 "	0	0	0
" Mount Uniacke,	27 "	0	12	0
" Newport Road, Terfry's,	35 "	0	15	0
" Windsor,	45 "	0	17	0
" Martin's Gasperaux,	60 "	1	5	0
" Kentville,	70 "	1	7	0
" Bridgetown,	115 "	2	7	0
" Annapolis,	130 "	2	10	0
" Windsor to Kentville,	26 "	0	12	0
" Kentville to Aylesford,	18 "	0	7	0
" to Bridgetown,	45 "	1	1	3
" to Annapolis,	60 "	1	7	0

From Annapolis to Halifax, according to the above scale.
Way Passengers, 6d. per mile.
Infants in arms, Free.
Between 5 and 14 years 1/2 Fare.
Each passenger, paying the full amount of fare, is allowed to carry 20 lbs. Wt. Of baggage; and all baggage of parcels above that weight are to be paid for at the discretion of the Agent.
"It is expected that during the winter months, the Coaches will only go twice a week, of which notice will be given in the papers."
Extract from The Farmer's Almanack, 1829

The above is the information found in a Farmers' Almanac from 1829 that shows the distance and cost to each of the stops on the stagecoach route from Halifax to Annapolis, Nova Scotia. It is on display at the Fultz House Museum.

FULTZ HOUSE MUSEUM

The Beginnings of Stagecoach Travel

First introduced in England during the 16th century and spread to North America by the late 1700s, stagecoaches were the most common form of transportation in the United States and Canada before the advent of the railroad in the mid-1800s. Stagecoaches were commonly defined as 4-wheeled vehicles drawn by two or more horses, with its cargo carried in the coach itself and the driver sitting on an exposed platform in the front. What separated stagecoaches from earlier carriages was their communal nature: similar to buses today, stagecoaches would have a fixed route with many stops (the distance between two stops known as a “stage”).

The introduction of railroads in the mid 1800s ended the use of stagecoaches for long distance transportation, but stagecoaches continued playing an important role in connecting smaller communities until the introduction of the automobile in the early 1900s.

Stagecoach History of Nova Scotia

Unlike in Britain where the practice had been common since the early 18th century, the use of stagecoaches did not become widespread in Nova Scotia until nearly a century later. In 1816, a Halifax man named Isaiah Smith formed the first stagecoach line in Nova Scotia: a route running from Halifax to Windsor that cost \$6 per person. Smith's operation was subsidized by the government of the colony, as administrators wished to improve the postal service from the growing capital to the rich agricultural region of the Annapolis Valley.

Between 1816 and 1848, more and more lines sprung up in Nova Scotia, including what would become the most popular route from Halifax to Truro and New Brunswick. However, this route could not run in the winter, due to the heavy snowfall in the Cobequid Mountains, so in the cold months of the year passengers were forced to find an alternate route. As stagecoaches were the fastest and safest mode of travel, however, any alternate journeys were long and expensive. Stagecoaches would remain the most efficient and popular source of transportation in the province until 1868, when the first railroad was opened and stagecoaches began to lose popularity against this faster, cheaper mode of transportation



The above wheel is an example of the kind of wheel that wheelwright Bennett Fultz may have crafted for the stagecoaches passing through Sackville. It can be found on display in the blacksmith shop at the Fultz House Museum.

A Communication Lifeline

Apart from its role as a transportation system, the stagecoach was also a vital part of the communication network that connected far-flung communities. As Halifax was a major port for the British navy, it was often the first city in North America to receive news from Europe.

In order to learn the European news before their competitors, in February 1849, a group of six rival New York newspapers banded together to form the Associated Press, with the goal of establishing a line to quickly gain news from Europe via the British ships entering the port of Halifax. At this time, the telegraph route from New York ended at the city of Saint John, New Brunswick, so plans had to be made to connect Saint John to Nova Scotia by ferry, and then establish a route carrying the news from Halifax. This was done by a “pony express” – a stagecoach line not dedicated to carrying passengers but rather carrying news and mail by the fastest speed their horses could muster. While this service was incredibly vital for the papers in the ruthless New York news business, it did not last the year: for the papers finally decided to invest in extending the telegraph line to Halifax itself, which was completed by November of 1849.

