

## Travel Tradespeople

Wagons and carriages were the main way to transport people and to ship goods from town to town. Sometimes, these journeys could be long and hard on the wagon or carriage. Most coachmen and travellers were not skilled in any of the trades that were needed to repair a wagon or carriage, or to take care of the horses. Three travel tradespeople were: the blacksmith, the harness maker, and the farrier.

The blacksmith crafted an iron horseshoe, and since horse and oxen needed metal shoes to cover their hooves, a blacksmith was valued when needed. To make a horseshoe, the blacksmith would heat the iron in a forge, waiting for the metal to turn either white or yellow. The change in colours of the metal helped the blacksmith know when it was ready to be molded. Since the iron was so hot, it was easily shaped and cut into a horseshoe. After shaping the horseshoe, it was dipped in cool water to harden.

Harnesses and straps were attached to the animals and wagons so the coachmen could control the animal and wagon. To craft these harnesses and straps took a skilled leather worker known as a harness maker. Along with selling harnesses and straps, the tradesman would also sell saddles so people could ride their horse. During a journey, if any of this equipment was damaged, a harness maker would be called upon to repair it.

A farrier attached horseshoes, made by the blacksmith, to the hooves of the animals. Some blacksmiths were also skilled as a farrier. To begin the job of replacing the horseshoe, first it would be taken off of the animal's hoof, and then using metal tools, he would clean all the dirt from the bottom of the animal's hoof. The hoof was then filed smooth, helping the new horseshoe fit snugly. To attach the horseshoe to the hoof, the farrier would hammer it onto the animal's hoof. Small nails would hold the horseshoe in place, without hurting the animal. A farrier did not just replace animal's horseshoes, they were also trained to help and treat wounded or sick horses.



The above pictorial is of Fultz Corner in 1871. To the left of it is the large two-and-a-half-story inn of William Fultz. The Fultz family inn was known as the Twelve Mile House and was frequented by the travelling public. It was a recurrent breakfast stop for travellers who left Halifax. It was also a popular gathering spot for Halifax society. A frequent early patron of this landmark was the Earl of Dalhousie, who was the lieutenant governor of Nova Scotia from 1816 to 1820.

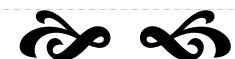
Many Fultz family members were skilled in the trades of the day to assist in any roadside dilemma, which proved resourceful for the many travellers who passed by and frequented the Twelve Mile House.



## Travelling in the Early Days



## FULTZ HOUSE MUSEUM



# Introducing Road Travel and Wagons

Some early European settlers in North America brought horse and oxen with them. Once here, the animals were then bred and soon populated the land. Settlers became dependent on the animals to transport their belongings and to clear their land and fields. It was a more common sight to see two oxen pulling a wagon because wagons were used more often for work rather than transporting people. Two horses would pull a carriage which was much lighter and had a comfortable seat because its sole purpose was to carry people.

The European settlers needed to search inland for more room to farm and build housing. Since the trails leading to these newly built villages were so small and sometimes steep, wagons and carriages could not make the trip, so a road was built. Trees were cut down and then split in half to be laid sideways to form a road. This type of road was very bumpy and horses would frequently injure their legs due to their hoof slipping between two logs.



## The Stagecoach Era

By the mid 1700's, stagecoaches were a common part of everyday travel. They were used to transport people from town to town, paying a set fee to wherever they wanted to go. The term "stagecoach" was used because the distance between stops was known as a "stage" of the journey.

To travel in a stagecoach resulted in a bumpy ride. Some passengers would ride upfront with the coachman, while others would sit inside the stagecoach. Others even crawled on top of the stagecoach for the journey!

Unlike most vehicles today, stagecoaches were very unstable and tipped over easily. To avoid crashing the stagecoach, passengers leaned from side to side to help balance out the stagecoach.

Some coachmen were careless drivers. They would push the horses to run as quick as possible, taking corners too quick just to get to the destination faster. It was because of incidents like these that stagecoaches crashed so often. The coachman's reason for getting to the destination quickly was because the sooner one passenger reached their destination, the sooner they could start a new journey and make more money.



## The Hazards of Winter Travel

Winter travel also brought many dangers. Any coachmen that drove a sleigh quickly would often lose control of their sleigh. Sleighs would also get stuck in large drifts of snow or overturn because the snow was too deep or high.

The worst nightmare for a traveller was to have to travel through a snowstorm. Snowstorms were so harsh that anyone out in one could freeze to death very quickly. Snowstorms would also cause travellers to get lost and then they would become stranded, with no idea of which way to go. When travellers were stranded, their safest bet was to huddle close together with their animal in hopes that the storm passed quickly.

Other dangers that occurred while travelling were: travelling over thin ice, a carriage crashing with an oncoming train, stagecoach's tipping over, trains intercepting each other, any weather that occurred such as wind or rain, poor trails and roads, and when a women's skirt was caught under a wheel.