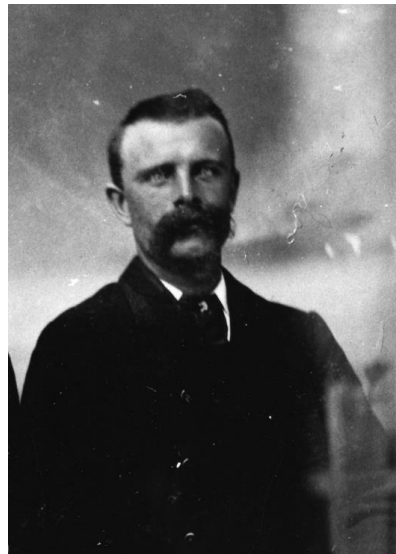


THE STAGECOACH ERA IN YARMOUTH



William Van Norden



The date is **July 11th, 1866**, the crowd on the sidewalk outside the Globe Hotel is beginning to grow. Town and Country folk alike have gathered for the big event. It's 10:20am and you can feel the excitement beginning to grow. Shopkeepers have closed their doors and are joining the awaiting crowds, a gentleman in the crowd takes out his pocket watch and announces, "It is now precisely 10:29am!" The crowd murmurs excitedly as the clatter of coach wheels and the pounding of shod hooves echoes through the air. The first stagecoach to come to Yarmouth is getting near. A first distant glimpse of the magnificent team, with the driver high in his seat, urging them on moves the spectators momentarily to awestruck silence, then, as history in the making clamours into full view, thunderous applause erupts from the crowd. The excitement is electric!

Rowland Van Norden has done it! This was the first run of his fledging stagecoach line. The journey began five and half hours earlier at Carland's store in Pubnico. Sleepy eyed passengers boarded the stagecoach at **5am**, beginning the **inaugural trip to Yarmouth**. They arrived in Tusket at **9am**, where the horses were changed after brief stops in Argyle and Pubnico.

Onlookers greeted the first four sleepy eyed passengers and excitedly asked them how they favoured this new form of transportation. Comments were very favourable for the most part. The wooden coach suspended by leather straps attached to the coach frame, offered a somewhat "air" cushioned ride.

The interior upholstered seats were definitely more comfortable than a wagon seat. Someone else commented that the side curtains could block the sun's rays as well as keep passengers dry on a rainy day. One larger passenger may have pointed out that the interior of the coach was a bit crowded for those persons of substantial size. All agreed that Van Norden provided excellent service and attended well to the needs and comforts of his passengers.

The coach had **two to four horses** and **served eight passengers** plus a driver. Inside the coach there was a foot warmer, a rug and a carpet bag. It traveled a dizzying speed of **six miles per hour**.

Passengers had about **five and one half hours** to spend in Yarmouth until the return departure time of 4pm. The journey home included a change of horses at 6pm in Tusket. Then they journeyed through Eel Brook and Argyle before arriving in Pubnico at 9pm. The passengers who made the round trip probably tired but proud to be the first ones to travel by

stagecoach in Yarmouth. Rowland Van Norden would be glad to fall into bed that, tired but pleased that the trip had gone well.

ROYAL MAIL!
DAILY STAGE Between YARMOUTH
and TUSKET, & Vice Versa!

THE subscriber having run a Daily Coach, (Sunday excepted), between Tusket and Yarmouth, for a year past, on his own private account, —during which time he received much encouragement and patronage, and for which he now gratefully thanks all who contributed towards his support. He would now inform his Patrons and the Public generally, that having this date taken the contract to carry Her Majesty's Royal Mails daily between Tusket and Yarmouth, (Sundays excepted), he will put an easy, comfortable covered COACH on the line, and will leave the Post Office, in Tusket, at 9 A. M., arrive in Yarmouth about 10, and leave there, from the Coach office at Chas. E. Clements', near Rogers' Stable, at 4 P. M. Every attention will be paid to the comfort and convenience of passengers, and to parcels and commissions, when regularly booked at the Post Office, in Tusket, and C. E. Clements', in Yarmouth.

From his Stables in Tusket may be obtained Horses and Carriages, for short or long excursions, as may be required, with or without a driver, and on moderate terms.

Tusket, July 5 61 ROWLAND VAN NORDEN.

Rowland, and after him, his son, William, continued to provide stagecoach service between Pubnico and Yarmouth. After running his stage line successfully for a while, Van Norden was granted a contract to carry daily the Royal Mail between Yarmouth and Tusket.

The last trip took place in 1897, by this time the railway had arrived and was running a service between Yarmouth and Pubnico. The era of stagecoach travel had come to an end thirty-one years after its first inaugural trip.



Rowland Van Norden