

Description of the American Mail Stagecoach

Plate 40 from FORTY ETCHINGS: FROM SKETCHES MADE WITH THE CAMERA LUCIDA, IN NORTH AMERICA IN 1827 AND 1828 by Captain Basil Hall. From the author's description: "The American Mail Stage in which we journeyed over so many wild as well as civilized regions, deserves a place at our hands. And if the sight of this Sketch does not recal [sic] to persons who have travelled in America the idea of aching bones, they must be more or less than mortal! The springs, it will be observed, are of hide, like those of the French Diligence - and every thing about it is made of the strongest materials. There is only one door, by which the nine passengers enter the vehicle, three for each seat, the center sufferers placing themselves on a movable bench, with a broad leather band to support their backs. Instead of panels, these Stages are fitted with leather curtains. The baggage is piled behind, or is thrust into the boot in front. They carry no outside passengers - and indeed it would try the nerves as well as the dexterity of the most expert harlequin that ever preserved his balance, not to be speedily pitched to the ground from the top of an American coach, on almost any road that I had the good fortune to travel over in that country.