

**REMINISCENCES OF  
FESTUS C. CURRIER:  
BORN AT HOLLISTON,  
MASS., OCTOBER 6, 1825**

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# REMINISCENCES.

## CHAPTER I.

### STAGE COACHES IN 1830.—PRESIDENT JACKSON'S VISIT TO BOSTON.—MAINE LAND SPECULATION.

The request of personal friends that I write up some reminiscences of political affairs and men prominent in the same, and of other matters of note occurring since my early manhood, is considered with much hesitation, realizing lack of ability for such an effort—and not having kept a diary of events through this long time, I must rely on memory for the needed materials. This seemed to me sufficient reason why I should not attempt it, but as they seem to think I can write up something of interest from my life experience, I will do what I can in this line.

My first recollections go back to about 1830, or near that time, when as a very small boy I distinctly remember the interest and delight I took in seeing the stage coaches with their fine looking horses as they went by my home, with the driver on the box with his long whip in hand. I looked on him as a pretty big man, none then, in my conception, any bigger. It was the only attraction in my native village for us boys, and we took it all in and scanned it very closely, and I remember with what awe and wonder I beheld the Great New York and Boston Line of

coaches that for a short time went through our village, an express line going at a rapid rate, most of the time with six horses to a coach; they were of the largest size and could carry a considerable number of passengers and baggage. They used to get along through our place about sunrise from New York, and I could hear them coming quite a while before they came in sight, so I was out to see them. These great teams heavily laden going along at such rapid rate made considerable noise and generally attracted the attention of the people.

This was thought in those days to be a pretty big thing, and it was, as nothing greater, up to that time, in the way of transportation had ever been seen. The next event I remember was in 1833, when I had the opportunity to see that renowned warrior and statesman, Andrew Jackson, president of the United States, when he came to Boston. My father, an ardent Jackson man, who, no doubt, thought him the greatest man of his day, took this opportunity to see him, and also seemed to think he had a couple of boys who wanted to see him, so, with my older brother, I went to Boston, a distance of twenty-five miles from our home, in his wagon. (No railroads entered Boston at that time.) Starting before sunrise on a fine clear morning in the month of June, we were about four hours on the way. The road was filled with teams and coaches full of people, en route for the same place we had in view.

On Boston Common, as we entered, the crowd was immense and wild with enthusiasm and excitement. When the barouche containing the president came in sight at the entrance on Boylston



street a shout went up that might have been heard miles away, aided by the thunders of artillery fired near by, making the whole scene most terrific. Such a reception was never given any man on Boston Common before or since—at least, I do not believe there ever was. I have in my time seen many such occasions in Boston, but never one that came up to this.

When the president's carriage came near where we stood, my father led us quite near—only a few feet away—so that a close view was obtained. Tall, erect, spare, a sharp, penetrating eye, gray hair, standing up like bristles, a commanding presence—his very appearance seemed to describe the manner of man he was.

The people went wild over the scene and were only restrained by the guard of soldiers around the carriage from blocking its passage. When an old soldier was presented, the president cordially shook his hand. Notwithstanding my youth, being eight years old, this scene has never been effaced from my memory, and for this great opportunity to view this, to my mind the most remarkable man ever produced in this country, I shall ever feel grateful to my father.

Boston has never failed to accord to every president coming within her limits due respect and cordial reception, always generous and lavish in every particular; and so throughout Massachusetts and all New England, Jackson was everywhere received with great enthusiasm and affection. The special reason of this ardent feeling was the fact that he had just brought South Carolina to terms in her nullification business, which to his political oppo-

nents, did much to soften the animosities created by his course relating to the re-charter of the United States bank, as here and in all New England the failure to do this was looked upon as a terrible thing for the country. But in this matter time has rendered judgment in his favor.

Members of his cabinet were with him—Martin Van Buren, Levi Woodbury, father of the late Charles Levi Woodbury of Boston, and others; but I have no recollection of having noticed any of them. On the following day he went by invitation of the authorities of Harvard college to Cambridge, accompanied by his ministers, escorted by the "military," the governor and staff, United States and state officers. He was offered the opportunity to ride horseback, which he accepted. This was a notable feature and attracted much attention, as he was a superb horseman. Also it was said that Mr. Van Buren joined him in riding the same way. I did not see this part, but remember the talk made about it from those who were present and heard it read from the papers, which gave full details of what occurred.

In coming into New England he traveled by special coaches, his cabinet with him. There was no railroad in this part of the country, so he was obliged to come in that rather slow way. But he had, by this mode of travel, a good opportunity to meet the plain people in the villages and towns, on the farm and in public places, being everywhere received with great enthusiasm and veneration from all classes of people. I remember well the talk made at my home about this great event, and no occurrence relating to it failed of notice.

He had just entered upon his second term of office, after a very exciting contest. His course concerning the bank had created a tremendous opposition to him and the election was to be his downfall or his vindication. The campaign of 1832 was, no doubt, the most personal and vindictive contest ever fought in this country, and created very much ill-feeling and animosity as between parties and among the people in general. It was a long time before its effects died out. Probably no man anywhere before the people for public office was ever so maligned and abused as Jackson; but he triumphed and received a strong endorsement from the people. This fact did very much to increase his popularity, gave his friends much gratification and lent a glorification for him on his journey, exceeding in intensity that of any other of the great men or heroes of his time or since—no doubt, due in some degree to the violence of his enemies in the public press and otherwise.

His second administration, like his first, was one of turmoil and political antagonism, which continued throughout to his successor. The fight with the bank, which he had refused a re-charter, affected business seriously, and produced much political excitement throughout the country. But the Jackson or Democratic party, through Jackson's great influence, was enabled to elect his successor, Mr. Van Buren, who carried out the Jackson policy, and in consequence met with great and violent opposition everywhere. His administration was turbulent from beginning to end. The very hard times of this period so impressed it on my mind that it is not forgotten. Nothing within my