

11-6-1963  
Politics  
Harrison visited on 'whistle-stop'

# Style of politicians has changed

A postscript to the political season in Bloomington would not be complete without looking back to the year of 1896, when ex-President Benjamin Harrison stopped by the city to campaign for William McKinley.

**THE TELEGRAM** announcing Harrison's arrival was brief, considering that the subject was political: "INDIANAPOLIS OCT. 19th, 1896. To the Hon. Wm. F. Browning, Bloomington, Ind.: Gen. Harrison will arrive in Bloomington about 3 o'clock, Oct. 21st and speak. Arrange for a big meeting. See letter. W.T. Duncan, Member National Committee."

It was the era of whistle-stop campaigning, and the ex-president had been pressed into service to stump the state of Indiana on behalf of his fellow Republican, McKinley. Bloomington was a stop on a two-day swing through Indiana that included 17 railroad cities and towns. The itinerary for Oct. 21 started at New Albany and progressed northward through Borden, Salem, Orleans, Mitchell, Bedford, Bloomington,

## Looking Back

By Rose McIlveen

Gosport and Greencastle — all on the Monon route.

Prompted to action by the telegram, a local committee headed by Browning was hastily formed to make the arrangements. According to the *Bloomington Telephone* the ad hoc committee was composed of William H. Showers, Robert G. Miller, A.K. Helton, Dill Faris, Prof. Ingler, N.E. Mathews, John Lanman and chairman Browning.

**THOUGH THE PLANNERS** had been instructed that Harrison would speak from the

back of the train, they had a special stand constructed by the railroad tracks at the intersection of Kirkwood Avenue and Morton Streets. No plaque marks the site today, but the *Telephone* stated there was no time for the ex-president to speak at the stand on the courthouse lawn, and the temporary stand faced south near the "Model flouring mill."

No doubt the committee also provided some posters to announce Harrison's Bloomington speaking engagement, but it is probable that his coming was also spread by word of mouth. Boasted the *Telephone*: "The reception to Gen. Harrison yesterday was the most successful demonstration ever held by a political party in Monroe County. Without any effort to 'work up' a crowd, the people seemed to gather with one accord to see and hear the most distinguished man of Indiana and one of the great men of the country."

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