

'Whistle-stops' popular in 1896

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Part of the ex-president's attraction was sentimental, since he was the grandson of William Henry Harrison and had earned the rank of "general" by organizing and leading the Indiana 70th Volunteers in the Civil War.

Taking note of the enormous crowd waiting to hear him in Bloomington, Harrison said: "My friends — I may be able to address

a few hundreds of you, but my voice cannot possibly reach the limits of this tremendous audience."

The *Telephone* printed the ex-president's speech in its entirety, which was not unusual, since the political policy of the newspaper in those days was strictly Republican in nature. By our standards today, the *Telephone's* coverage was unsophisticated in the sense

that the reporter included every last detail of the event, even to the extent of listing the names of all the train crewmen. Said the newspaper: "Engineer (Thomas) Hardin had the locomotive beautifully decorated with flags and bunting; a picture of Harrison was just below the headlight; on one side of the cab was a picture of McKinley and on the other side a picture of Hobart."

Whether Harrison's campaign swing through Indiana was prompted by paying his dues to the party or out of personal conviction, he waxed eloquent during his speech in Bloomington: Most biographers of the man have noted that he was well-educated and articulate. The political side of his nature prompted him to customize his speech to the extent of noting that Bloomington was a univer-

sity town and one with "common schools" that contributed to the general literacy and intelligence of the community.

In its account, the *Telephone* also noted proudly that upon re-entering the train after his speech, the general/ex-president/politican said to a friend: "That was the most orderly and appreciative audience I have spoken to today."