

Publisher believed in good news

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fire in his printing plant. "...the one hundred and thirty-five columns of advertising which were set up, were saved from destruction by the masterful directing of the volunteer firemen by Mr. Harris. To show the efficiency of the establishment, it may be mentioned that within one hour after the disaster, the type had been moved to another place, cleaned and the work resumed."

In keeping with his good news philosophy, Harris' newspapers had a non-partisan political stance and carried no editorials. Hence he offended no potential subscribers or advertisers.

Harris' various newspapers followed his original Ellettsville model. Bickett described the appearance of the Stinesville *Review*: a four-page sheet, costing 50 cents per year subscription. "The outside pages contained local news as well as advertisements from the rival local

county seats, Bloomington and Spencer. The inside pages were filled with 'boiler plate' matter." (The latter included feature stories, miscellaneous jokes, doings of women and sections on agriculture.

By 1905, Harris took a new direction — that of publishing a monthly magazine. It was directed at young people and was called *Our Boys and Girls*. It gave the publisher an opportunity to do some writing as well as promoting and editing, and Harris drew upon experiences with his own children as to subject matter.

To boost subscriptions, the publisher enlisted child subscribers to recruit others. The reward was a pony raised on the Harris farm near Ellettsville. After six ponies and a circulation of 35,000, the publisher concluded that it was still not a paying proposition. He sold the magazine to a Colonel Hunter of Chicago.

Next week: New directions for W.B. Harris.