

ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY MARCH 25



Harry Brawley, Charleston historian and the first executive director of the West Virginia Educational Broadcasting Authority, died on March 25, 1992.

CSO: SS.8.25, ELA.8.1

Investigate the Document: (WPBY Collection, AR-1918acc)

Document 1

1. Which of Harry Brawley's accomplishments do you find most noteworthy?
2. Where did Brawley serve as the First Executive Secretary?

Document 2

3. This selection from Harry Brawley's book, *Twenty Years on An Oasis in The Vast Wasteland*, is from his tenure at WCHS during the early-1960s; what does Brawley believe Kennedy accomplished during the "great debate?" Did his prophecy come true during the 1960 election?
4. What did Senator Kennedy do on the night of the primary election after winning in West Virginia?
5. Does this selection from Brawley's book lend any insight into Kennedy's or Brawley's personality? Do you find value in this source?

Think Critically: What is the importance of educational broadcasts? Using only the information provided on Brawley's life, describe how he was able to make a difference in West Virginia and the Kanawha Valley? What was he vital to establishing in the area?

Cover Story



HARRY M. BRAWLEY MAKING A DIFFERENCE

On Monday, April 5 at 8:30 p.m., West Virginia's three public television stations will broadcast an intimate portrait of Harry M. Brawley, a Charleston native who is considered by many to be the father of public broadcasting in the state.

Harry Brawley: Making a Difference is a 30-minute documentary that traces Brawley's life from early childhood through his career as an educator and broadcaster. It also profiles his work as a civic leader and an expert on Kanawha Valley history.

Brawley's story is told through the eyes of those who worked closely with him, not only in classroom instruction, but in his commercial and public broadcasting career.

Brawley was the first to introduce radio classroom instruction, and later television classroom instruction, for educational credit in West Virginia. He was the first Executive Secretary of the West Virginia Educational Broadcasting Authority and led the way to acquiring federal funding for the state's three public television stations and West Virginia Public Radio.

In addition to pioneering educational broadcasting in the state, Brawley was prominent in local government and was considered a historian for the city of Charleston.

Brawley died last spring at the age of 82.

On March 9 in Charleston, Brawley was recognized posthumously when his family received West Virginia Public Broadcasting's first Harry Brawley Award. In subsequent years the award will be presented to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to West Virginia Public Broadcasting.

Harry M. Brawley: Making A Difference was produced by WPBY-TV for West Virginia Public Broadcasting. The program was written, produced and directed by Charles Berkley; edited by Russ Barbour; and narrated by James B. McIntyre. James Hultin is executive producer.

Harry M. Brawley

Highlights and Accomplishments

- ◆ Married Betty Carson in 1935.
- ◆ Parents of three daughters; grandparents of seven children.
- ◆ Recognized as Charleston's resident historian.
- ◆ Long-time member of the Charleston City Council.
- ◆ West Virginia University graduate (Bachelor's and Master's Degrees).
- ◆ Taught at Morris Harvey College; both teacher and principal in Kanawha County Schools.
- ◆ Directed public affairs for WCHS Radio and Television.
- ◆ First Executive Secretary of the Educational Broadcasting Authority.
- ◆ Publisher of several historical articles and books including ***Twenty Years On An Oasis In The Vast Wasteland*** (1981).
- ◆ Long-time member of the Charleston Lions Club; Past District Governor.
- ◆ Walkway that connects the Town Center with Capitol Street is named after Harry Brawley.
- ◆ Former member, Village Chapel Presbyterian Church in Kanawha City; taught Sunday School for nearly 40 years.

The above information obtained from:

West Virginia History,
State Department of Archives and
History, Charleston, West Virginia,
1968.

WEST VIRGINIA
PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Twenty Years On An Oasis

In The

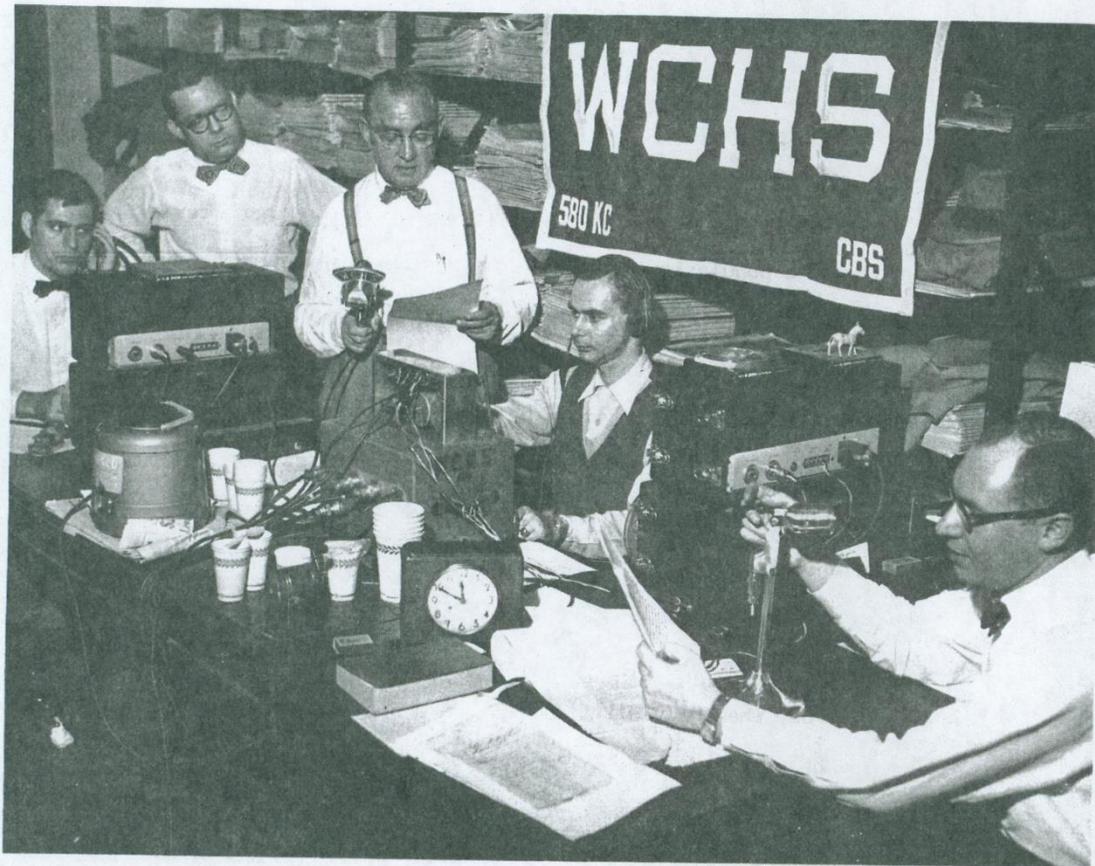
“VAST WASTELAND”



by

HARRY BRAWLEY

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The Eisenhower lead is growing as the WCHS Radio crew broadcasts the returns in the 1952 general election. Left to right: Frank Annand, Brawley, Ross Edwards, John Barker and Mort Cohn.

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Whenever Senator Kennedy arrived he was always accompanied by a stream of reporters of all kind who followed after him like kids trailing an ice cream cart. On one occasion he was supposed to go to the Charleston studios of WSAZ-TV but his managers got mixed up and brought him to WCHS-TV. Senator Kennedy entered the front door with a log jam of people in the foyer and on the porch behind him. The startled receptionist looked at Kennedy, checked her calendar and told him he wasn't expected. Then someone in his crew remembered it was WSAZ-TV, and the senator tried to turn around and leave the way he came in. That was impossible with the mass of humanity behind him. They were led through the building, down to the TV studio, and out the side door.

The "great debate" was a good program for the Democratic party, but it wasn't much of a debate. The question and answer format was used, and there was little difference between the two men so far as philosophy was concerned. However, they did succeed in giving the Republicans hell. Neither candidate "won" the debate, but Senator Kennedy polished his image as a young man to be contended with, if not in 1960, certainly later.

After the debate while everyone was standing around talking, one of the Kennedy group asked me if I thought the senator's Catholicism would hurt him in West Virginia. I told them it would not because about 60 percent of the people of West Virginia didn't belong to any church and probably wouldn't care what he was.

The rest is history except for one little detail. Senator

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Kennedy flew back to Charleston on primary election night when he learned he had won and he came to WCHS-TV to make his "thank you!" speech. He made a most moving and enthusiastic talk amid great cheers in the studio. When he was ready to leave he came to me and asked that I escort him around the station so he could say "goodbye" to everyone. Naturally I was delighted, and I was also surprised at his memory. He called everyone on the crew and in the control room by his first name without any prompting from me. He then asked that I take him to the back door in order that he might escape from the crowds. It was raining a downpour, and as we opened the back door and raised his umbrella we met William W. "Wally" Barron, the Democratic nominee for governor, coming in. I introduced them.

Of course, Kennedy was nominated and elected, and so was "Wally." In 1963 President Kennedy came to West Virginia to help us celebrate our state centennial. Five months later he was killed. Shortly after that fateful day in Dallas, I was with Governor Barron and we were discussing what President Kennedy had done for West Virginia. I asked, "Do you remember where you met President Kennedy?" He replied, "I surely do! You introduced us at the back door of WCHS-TV on election night in the rain!"

In 1964 during the primary season William Scranton and Nelson Rockefeller came through Charleston seeking delegate support for their prospective candidacies. I met Scranton only briefly and the News Department did the programming with him. However, I was able to arrange

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a "News Conference" with Governnor Rockefeller, and he was a forceful but delightful guest. I served as moderator and the panelists were our News Director Ed Rabel and Newsman Don Fannin. I don't know what happened to Don, but Ed is now with CBS-TV News.

In 1968 I was no longer with the station and someone else was "handling political."