

The Blackwater Canyon area was a pristine wilderness in 1853 when Porte Crayon, writer and illustrator for Harper's Monthly, visited and wrote about his adventures. But soon, the wilderness became a thriving industrial area.

Coketon, West Virginia, between the towns of Thomas and Davis, became the headquarters of the coal, coke, railroad, and timbering empire of Henry Gassaway Davis, West Virginia Senator and self-made millionaire. Davis's company controlled 135,000 acres, employed 1,600 men of 16 nationalities, operated two power plants, and worked over 1,000 coke ovens and 9 mines within one square mile of the central office.

Coketon had a particular role in the development of equal rights law in America. In 1898, J.R. Clifford, West Virginia's first black lawyer, won a landmark discrimination case in front of the West Virginia Supreme Court, filed on behalf of Carrie Williams, teacher at Coketon's "Negro School".

Today, much of the Blackwater Canyon area has returned to scenic wilderness with the passing of the coal and timber booms. But its legacy remains. Help preserve this fascinating history and support economic development in northern West Virginia. Support the planning and development of the Coketon Industrial History Museum and Interpretive Center.



The town of Thomas today

Ecotourism and Heritage Tourism - A Winning Combination



Canaan Valley, Dolly Sods, Blackwater Canyon, Otter Creek Wilderness!! These magnificent wild lands draw thousands of visitors to the West Virginia Highlands every year. The Coketon Industrial History Museum and Interpretive Center will enhance this tourism draw and create jobs in the gateway communities of Thomas and Davis.

Join Us to Make the Vision a Reality

Friends of Blackwater
www.saveblackwater.org 304-345-7663
501 Elizabeth Street, Room 3, Charleston, WV 25311

Coketon Interpretive History Project Coketon, West Virginia



The saga of the railroad, timber and coal industries in northern West Virginia will come alive at the Coketon Industrial History Museum and Interpretive Center. This heritage tourism magnet will bring thousands of new visitors to the scenic West Virginia Highlands.



Make this vision a reality.



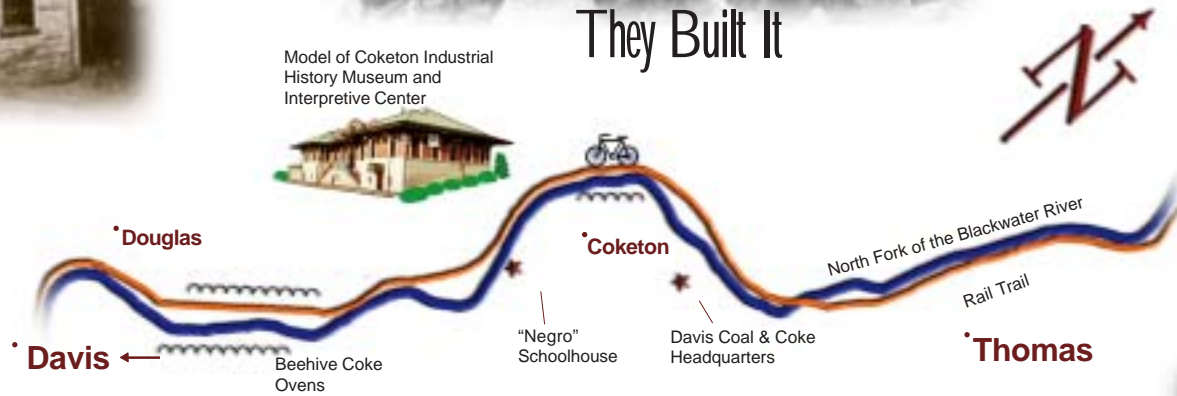
Carrie Williams
Coketon School Teacher

Her School



They Built It

Model of Coketon Industrial History Museum and Interpretive Center



His Wilderness



Porte Crayon
Writer and Illustrator

His Empire



Henry Gassaway Davis
West Virginia Industrialist



His Cause



J.R. Clifford
Lawyer and Newspaper Editor