



# The Grapevine



N e w s l e t t e r

April 13, 1993

FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Vol 3:4

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATE NEWS .....	1
CALL FOR PAPERS .....	2
PUBLICATIONS .....	2
FOR YOUR INFORMATION .....	2
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ..	2
WORKSHOPS/CONFERENCES ..	2
CALENDAR OF MEETINGS .....	4
WHOSE PROPERTY RIGHT? ..	4
TOXIC WASTE CLEANUP .....	6
CORPORATE SUBSCRIBERS ...	9

## STATE NEWS

### Colorado

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation has awarded its highest honor, The President's Historic Preservation Award, to The Crow Canyon Archaeological Center. This marks the first time an archaeological project has received this honor. The awards jury cited the Center's innovative research and public educational mission. Its educational outreach programs enhance public awareness of Native American traditions through lectures, workshops, site research, and, through a cooperative agreement with BLM, treasures on federally administered properties are made available to the public.

### Connecticut

The latest issue of *Digging In: News from the Office of State Archaeology & the Connecticut Historical Commission* is entitled, "Laying Down the Law: A Guide to Legislative Citations in Archaeology." This list was compiled as a reference to assist those making decisions concerning cultural resource management in Connecticut. Each citation includes a Connecticut General Statute citation and a brief description of the law or agency involved. For information on this publication contact: David Poir-

ier, Staff Archaeologist, CT Historic Preservation Office, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, CT 06106, ☎ 203-566-3005.

### Maine

**The Maine Historic Interiors Conference and Exposition** will be held May 6-7, 1993, in Portland, Maine. The conference includes a Thursday evening reception and dinner, a full day of presentations on current trends in interior preservation and restoration, ongoing exposition of craftsmen and companies servicing the preservation community, and tours of significant local historic interiors. For further information contact: Maine Citizens for Historic Preservation, PO Box 1198, Portland, ME, ☎ 207-775-3652.

### Nevada

**Who Were the Ancient People of Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, Nevada?**, by Anon W. Raymond, summarizes the results of over a dozen archaeological reports on a joint effort of archaeologists and the members of the local Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribes. This booklet includes new information on early Stillwater Marsh inhabitants gained during a study of artifacts and burials recently exposed by flooding of the Stillwater Refuge. For information write Ronald M. Anglin, Refuge Manager, US Dept of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Stillwater Wildlife Refuge, PO Box 1236, 960-4 Auction Road, Fallon, NV 89407-1236.

### Ohio

The Ohio Preservation Alliance (OPA) Conference will be held May 14-15, 1993, in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. The theme of the conference is "The Future of Small Historic Towns: a Preservation Educational Conference." Four distinguished speakers will address the theme of the lecture series, and the

concerns of small towns. Speakers include: Dr. Elwyn Robison, Kent State University; Bernd Foerster, FAIA, Kansas State University; Craig Gossman, AIA, Michael Schuster Associates, Inc., Cincinnati, OH; and David Taylor, Taylor and Taylor Associates, Inc., Brookville, PA. For further information contact: OPA Conference, c/o Yolita E. Rausche Trustee, 169 Senlac Hills Drive, Chagrin Falls, OH 44022.



[Adapted from the Ohio Archaeological Council Newsletter, February, 1993.] The Ohio Historical Society presents a program series entitled "Mysteries of the Mounds: A Summer Festival in Celebration of the Past." The programs, which will be held on Saturdays (1-2 PM) at Moundbuilders and Flint Ridge State Memorials in Licking County, will consist of informative and entertaining slide programs and an Archaeology Day. The Summer Festival starts in June and includes topics such as the Newark Earthworks, Serpent Mound, and a variety of Hopewell village sites. Fees are \$2 per event or \$15 for the series. For a full schedule contact Bradley Lepper, ☎ 614-344-1920, or James Kingery, ☎ 614-344-1919.

### Pennsylvania

The Allegheny National Forest is seeking volunteers to participate in an effort to record prehistoric rock shelter sites from June 21 to July 2, 1993. For more information contact Richard P. Kandare, ☎ 814-723-5150.

### Rhode Island

[Adapted from Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission Newsletter.] After three years of work, the Historic Preservation Bond Issue was defeated last November. The bond issue would have provided \$3 million for restoration of 54 historic sites, and \$1.5 million

would have been added to the state-wide revolving loan fund. The Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission is working with the restoration project sponsors to try to find alternate funding from private foundations.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

**Final Call For Papers** - The 1994 Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology will be held at the Hotel Vancouver, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, January 5-9, 1994. The 1994 program will include organized and contributed paper symposia on a full range of topics in historical and underwater archaeology. All abstracts are to be submitted by May 1, 1993. Abstracts should be accompanied by an abstract submission fee of \$30.00 Cdn or \$25.00 US. For further information contact SHA 94, Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada V5A 1S6. FAX: (604) 291-5666.

## PUBLICATIONS

*Bibliography of Corps of Engineers Research Related to Cultural Site Protection and Preservation*, compiled by Richard Stallings and Dr. Paul R. Nickens, was recently released by the U.S. Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station (USAEWES) as part of its "Archaeological Sites Protection and Preservation Notebook: Technical Notes" series. This series is published as a means of disseminating information on strategies and technologies which have been employed in attempts to preserve archaeological resources in situ. It has an annotated bibliography of 217 entries of U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's laboratory reports relevant for archaeological site protection efforts. For further information contact: Dr. Paul R. Nickens, Notebook Editor, ☎ 601-634-2380, or the Environmental Impact Research Program Manager, Dr. Roger T. Saucier, ☎ 601-634-3233, USAEWES, 3909 Halls Ferry Road, Vicksburg, MS 39180-6199.

*The Buried Past: An Archaeological History of Philadelphia*, by John L.

Cotter, Daniel G. Roberts, and Michael Parrington. Based on more than thirty years of intensive archaeological investigations in the Greater Philadelphia area, this study contains the first record of many nationally important sites linking archaeological evidence to historical documentation. A Barra Foundation Book. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 550 pp., 441 illustrations, \$39.95 (cloth). To order copies contact: K. Moore, UPPress, 1300 Blockley, 418 Service Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19104, or ☎ 800-445-9880.

*Forgotten Places and Things: Archaeological Perspectives on American History*. Compiled and edited by Albert E. Ward (358 pp; 159 ill.), \$25.00. A commemorative volume of the 1980 Society for Historical Archaeology meeting in Albuquerque, which includes 40 original papers covering a wide range of topics. Available through the Center for Anthropological Studies, P.O. Box 14576, Albuquerque, NM 87191-4576.

*Landmark Yellow Pages, Second Edition: All the Names, Addresses, Facts, and Figures You Need in Preservation*, Pamela Dwight, General Editor. This volume is a useful resource, handy reference tool, and, at \$19.95, an invaluable addition to the library of anyone who is interested, active, or employed in the field of historic preservation. Available through The Preservation Press, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., Washington D.C., 20036, ☎ 202-673-4058 or 1-800-766-6847.

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

In 1992, The Archaeological Conservancy was awarded a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. When successfully matched the grant will increase the Conservancy's Preservation Fund by nearly \$1.5 million. This fund is designed for one purpose: to buy land containing endangered archaeological sites. Currently, the Conservancy is halfway to its goal. Anyone interested in contributing to the fund should contact: The Archaeological Conservancy, 415 Orchard Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87501, ☎ 505-982-3278.

## REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

[Adapted from *Federal Archaeology Report*, Spring 1993:22] A study team is searching for investigations of cultural properties around the nation's reservoirs that were destroyed as a result of shoreline erosion. Shoreline erosion, which is a continuing problem for many Federal and State agencies, is classified as either bankline recession, which involves a nearly vertical cutback with erosion occurring at its toe near the waterline, or the fluctuation zone of a reservoir where archaeological sites are impacted not only by drawdown and filling, but also by other natural and cultural activities that occur during exposure to the elements and visitors.

Since shoreline erosion will threaten several thousand sites in the Pacific Northwest in the upcoming years, an interagency study is underway to better understand impacts to resources in drawdown zones and to seek effective ways to protect endangered sites. These studies will produce an analytical model from which monitoring plans and site protection solutions will be developed. Anyone who has dealt with drawdown impacts and site protection measures in this reservoir zone are asked to contact Paul R. Nickens, CEWES-EN-R, 3909 Halls Ferry Road, Vicksburg, MS 39180-6199, ☎ 601-634-2380.

## WORKSHOPS/ CONFERENCES

The National Park Service is offering a new training opportunity entitled **Archaeology for Managers**. This course is a comprehensive introduction to archaeological program management that emphasizes improved decision-making skills. Held in collaboration with the *University of Nevada-Reno*, the course will be presented in cooperation with the *Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum and Historic Saint Mary's City*, at Solomons, Maryland. Participants will learn from the diverse archaeological and educational programs offered by State organizations preserving Maryland's cultural history. The sessions devoted to practical exercise and field

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR..

I read with considerable interest the article by Ms. Acuff on collection management, as well as your assessment of costs. The issue of curatorial care is of particular interest to our foundation and as long ago as 1988 we surveyed the field and produced a detailed analysis entitled, *The Preservation of Archaeological Field Records in the Southeast: Is There a Future for the Past?* A shorter version of this paper appeared in a collection edited by Patricia Criddlebaugh in 1990. If any of your readers are interested we will be happy to provide copies of the paper upon request.

Clearly there is cost associated with appropriate curation, just as there are costs associated with radiocarbon dating, employing a crew, or buying shovels. Unlike many costs, however, archaeologists tend not to understand curation and collection management -- a sad failing of graduate programs throughout the country. Put another way, few archaeologists have any *real* understanding of the issues (technical or ethical) involved in preservation and conservation. Failing to understand these issues too often results in seeing only the costs and not the broader issues such as responsibility to both present and future generations.

Just as importantly, those not familiar with preservation and conservation often are not as well equipped as they might be to maximize the collection care in a cost-effective manner. For example, I noticed that your article spoke of the "exorbitant" cost of using "acid-free" paper. Actually, acid-free itself is somewhat of a misnomer, since "archival quality" demands pH neutral, alkaline-buffered paper which meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences - Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984 (which is being revised).

As more and more publishers and the public become familiar with the "slow fire" of acidic paper, there is an increasing supply of papers meeting the ANSI standard. For example, all of the Hammermill xerographic bonds, such as Copyplus™, meet the ANSI standard for permanence. This particular paper costs between \$30 and \$40 a case (less than 1¢ a page) -- well within the limits of all archaeological budgets.

Looking at the big picture, our foundation has found that reasonably state-of-the-art conservation and preservation efforts add less than 2% to the cost of our projects. The key is establishing consistent standards and quality control, both of which work to hold costs well within reasonable limits. Obviously problems are created by curatorial facilities failing to establish reasonable standards, failing to educate users on the need for standards, and failing to insist that all firms abide by the standards -- but these are not related to preservation and conservation issues, only to the ineptness of curatorial facilities.

There are a number of very interesting spin-off topics and I hope that you will find the time to pursue at least a few.

Sincerely,

Michael Trinkley, Ph.D., Director  
Chicora Foundation, Inc.  
Columbia, SC

visits are complemented by a wide range of instructors who have extensive experience with regulatory, development, and land-managing agencies.

This course, which is offered May 17-21, 1993, is open to Federal, State, Tribal, and local program managers who have little or no background in archaeology, but must deal with archaeological resources as part of their jobs. For application information, contact: Leanne Stone, Program Coordinator, Division of Continuing Education, University of Nevada-Reno, Reno, NV 89557-0032, ☎ 702-784-4046.



**Anasazi Land and River Field Seminar.** Crow Canyon Archaeological Center is offering a "very unusual field trip." Participants will fly to Durango, CO, to begin a seven-day reconnaissance of major archaeological sites in sparsely populated areas of New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado. Beginning with a three-day raft trip on the San Juan River in southeastern Utah, with numerous stops to visit unusual well-preserved Anasazi cliff dwellings, the trip also includes day-trips to Monument Valley, Canyon de Chelly, and Mesa Verde National Park.

There are four seminars conducted between May and September, 1993. For further information contact:

Dr. Stuart Struever  
or

Dr. Stephen H. Lekson  
Crow Canyon Archaeological Center  
177 South Harrison Street, Suite 815  
Denver, Colorado 80210  
☎ 303-759-9212

## ✶ CORRECTION

The February issue of *The Grapevine* listed incorrect information for a new corporate subscriber, Pacific Power & Light Co. The correction information is:

Pacific Power & Light Co.  
920 SW 6th Ave, Rm 1000  
Portland, OR 97204  
☎ 503-464-6467  
Contact: Jerald Nielsen



## CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

**April 23, 1993 - The Kentucky Preservation Coalition** will hold its spring meeting at the Northern Kentucky Community Center in Covington, KY. The theme of the meeting is "Cultural Diversity and Historic Preservation." For further information, call 606-292-2163.

**May 3-4 - Archaeology of Cities Conference** will be held in Minneapolis, MN. For further information, contact: Mark Allen, Professional Development and Conference Services, University of Minnesota, 221 Nolte Center, 315 Pillsbury Drive, SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, ☎ 612-625-6358.

**May 20-22 - Ohio Historic Preservation Conference** will be held at the Omni Netherland Plaza Hotel (an Art Deco landmark) in Cincinnati, Ohio. Sessions included in the conference are "The Question of Stewardship" and "Beyond Buildings." For information, call 614-297-2497.

**May 12-15 - Vernacular Architecture Forum Annual Meeting** will be held in Natchez, MS. For further information, contact: Mary Sikes, Advanced Studies Office, Winterthur Museum and Gardens, Winterthur, DE 19735, ☎ 302-656-2513.

**May 24-June 11 - Teaching Institute in Lithic Analysis**, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK. This course can satisfy graduate or undergraduate credit, and can be used as a professional refresher course. Contact: George H. Odell, Anthropology Dept., University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK 74104.

**May 28-29 - Forensic Archaeology Seminar**, Mercyhurst College, Erie, Pennsylvania. Participants will examine state-of-the-art techniques employed in the search for and recovery of unlocated human remains. For registration information, contact: Dennis C. Dirkmaat, Dept. of Anthropology, Mercyhurst College, Glenwood Hills, Erie, PA 16546, ☎ 814-824-2105.

**July 26-31 - 15th International Conference for Caribbean Archaeology** will be held in San Juan, PR. For further information, contact: Miguel Rodriguez, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriquena, Apartado 4184, San Juan, PR 00902-4184, ☎ 809-724-1844, FAX 809-724-8393.

**September 18, 1993 - Monongahela Conference** will be held at California University of Pennsylvania, California, PA. The goal of this one-day conference is to provide a means to disseminate information on recent research on all aspects of Monongahela archaeology. Requests for further information should be directed to John Nass, Dept. of Social Sciences, California University of Pennsylvania, California, PA 15419-1394.

**January 5-9 - Annual Meeting of the Society for Historic and Underwater Archaeology**, Hotel Vancouver, Vancouver, BC, Canada. Contact: David V. Burley, Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6, Canada.

## WHOSE PROPERTY RIGHTS? PRIVATE LANDS AND FEDERAL CRM LAW

by Orloff G. Miller

How many times in your professional career have you had to patiently explain the value of what you are doing to an indignant client, who felt extorted by their own government into paying for your services? This uncomfortable scenario is a familiar fact of life in cultural resource management (CRM). Perhaps equally familiar is the bafflement of a landowner who has just discovered that the NRHP listing of their property restricts what they can now do to (or with) their own property. In each case, our mandate to perform and enforce CRM is perceived as an abridgement of the rights of private property ownership.

The land rights movement is a response to landowner frustration with government regulations on private land use. It may be premature to call the land rights movement a "movement" at all; it has not yet acquired sustained internal organization or external media attention. However, any given high-profile CRM dispute is likely to attract opposition focusing on land rights issues.

We in the CRM community are often so fascinated by our own vocation that we fail to notice the apathy or (worse yet) resentment our work sometimes engenders. In order to effectively present an alternative perspective on CRM, *The Grapevine* staff solicited a position statement from the law offices of Hazel & Thomas of Richmond, VA. The firm of Hazel & Thomas has experience advocating land rights issues, and whether we like or agree with what they have to say or not, they have provided a succinct summary of the land rights position towards CRM, included in its entirety below.

Some landowner disputes regarding historic preservation are naturally of a piece with traditional arguments against regulatory controls over land which have long been overtaken by the pervasiveness of such regulation. But historic preservation serves more limited and diffuse interests than the more general zoning power, and landowners' objections to preservation efforts are often grounded in their concern that they are held hostage to a narrow and elitist constituency interest. They find that their land is, often without much warning (and very often without much in the way of due process), impressed with a public aspect, because some private individual, group, or government agency has identified their land as worthy of preservation, usually at the landowners' entire expense. Many landowners would have no difficulty in providing for preservation, were they compensated for their enforced contributions, but while their opponents possess a sense of sacred mission, they usually have no money.

Moreover, preservation of land assets increasingly involves the preservation of substantial surrounding areas, "viewsheds" with potentially vast and unknowable boundaries. Preservation of these areas often means that most, if not all, economically (and socially) beneficial uses of the land are simply precluded in the impressed service of public ends of assertedly superior moral and political consequence.

Landowners are also greatly exasperated by the inability or unwillingness of government bureaucracies to mediate or resolve preservation disputes. Indeed, preservationists have raised to a high art their ability to interject themselves into regulatory or permitting activities, in order to create delay and confusion at all levels, as much as to produce a substantively correct result. To the landowner, historic preservation bureaucracies have been complicit in both legal and extralegal conduct intended to compel preservation at no public expense. Indeed, a strong argument can be made that the land rights movement is naught but the consequence of the overreaching of environmentalists and preservationists, and their captive bureaucracies. While there is simply no doubt that there are legitimate public ends to be achieved with respect to historic and cultural preservation, the land rights movement reflects a popular frustration with the failure of the preservation community to compromise, or to mitigate adverse impacts on individual interests, and with the arrogance and intransigence of preservationists and government agencies.

The above is offered as an example of the *perspective* of land rights advocacy. Whether we agree with that perspective or not, we in CRM have to face the fact that it exists. Rather than refute the charges, let's explore their origins.

The preservation community is characterized above as a "narrow and elitist constituency interest." In the past history of American historic preservation, this statement has been absolutely correct. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century *dilettanti* collected and restored antiquities as eclectic curiosities, while nineteenth-century natural scientists stockpiled huge orderly collections of *objets* for scholarly ends. It was not until the late nineteenth century, looking back on a hundred years of explosive industrialization and a massive influx of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants, that Americans noticed the *contrast* which defines the past. It is no coincidence that within a forty-year period, a variety of institutions promoting an often romanticized American heritage were organized, including the Daughters of the American Revolution, the First Families of Virginia, Colonial Williamsburg, and the Winterthur. Colonial Revival architecture developed during the same period. The emphasis seems to have been on teaching "American" virtues embodied in collections or architecture which were treated as icons. More often than not, these visible civics lessons descended from the top 5% of a narrowly-defined ancestral population. Our museums now overflow with wedding gowns and Chippendale furniture, while work clothes and milking stools are extremely rare.

The above (admittedly burlesque) characterization of the American preservation community is for the most part out of date. We now explicitly recognize a multi-voiced heritage embracing ethnicity, gender, class, race, and religion. But the *value* of historic preservation remains obscure to a large percentage of the population.

Another concern voiced in the Hazel & Thomas position statement is the often nebulous definition of the resource itself, particularly where integrity-of-context issues come into play. Here the CRM consultant is often caught between the need to efficiently constrain an investigation within the Area of

Potential Effect (APE), and an obligation to adequately document the integrity of the (often extensive) context within which a given resource may be evaluated. Lead federal agencies could help here by explicitly defining an APE, and offering consistent guidelines (in cooperation with SHPO offices) for assessing resource contexts.

The Hazel & Thomas statement suggests that CRM personnel willingly hold up the progress of development projects to achieve their own ends. This perception may be the result of inadequate advance planning to accommodate CRM studies prior to scheduling construction. Over twenty years after the signing of the National Historic Preservation Act, there remain many clients with no experience in planning around the lengthy process of obtaining construction clearance. This problem remains whether any resources are encountered within the project area or not.

In fairness, it should be acknowledged that rumors persist within the CRM community of various federal lead agencies and/or state review agencies which delay comment on a project, not because of chronic understaffing, but because of some personality issue between key players in the project. With no personal experience to draw from, we can offer no easy solutions to this rumored problem.

Finally, and perhaps most telling, the Hazel & Thomas statement notes that CRM law is structured to compel private preservation at no public (read "political") expense. Private landowners within an NRHP district or property are restricted in the additions or alterations they are allowed to undertake on their own land. Any extra costs incurred to maintain the resource integrity are paid by the landowner, with no mechanism in place to "mitigate the adverse effect" on the wallet or free will of the landowner.

There is a popular conception that fee simple ownership grants *carte blanche* for any chosen activity. Actually this has never been the case when that chosen activity is seen as antithetical to the public good. Worse yet (from the perspective of the landowner), in the past 180 years there has accumulated a large corpus of precedents whereby interests representing the "public good" can actively intervene and require specific activities on private land, rather than just define what is not allowed. For example, land condemnation under eminent domain was a new idea when the first canals and railroads were constructed in the early nineteenth century.

The trend towards greater government intervention in the rights of private land ownership is tied to some unresolved debates stretching a long ways back in American history, particularly the question of what powers the many (embodied by the government) wield over the individual. Recall the turgid arguments you were required to read in high school history classes between the Federalists and the Jeffersonians, and between the later Jeffersonians and the Jacksonians (remember States' Rights?). In each case, the rhetoric of the ascending party reflected a populist stance that The Individual Shall Not Be Meddled With By The Government. It is ironic that the Jacksonians espoused the most libertarian rhetoric while implementing a body of legal decisions which made

possible the explosive growth of eminent domain land condemnations.

In the past, public intervention in private property has been justified by referring to Progress, Economic Prosperity, or (in the language of the nineties), Infrastructural Maintenance. While not everyone bought that argument, even fewer people accept "preserving our nation's heritage" as adequate inducement to compromise what are perceived as their property rights.

Archaeologists and other preservationists are in a vulnerable position. With a stroke of the pen, Section 106 could be wiped from the books tomorrow. How many artifact collectors have you failed to convince, when explaining the value of proveniencing and museum curation? How many buildings have been lost, when cost was the bottom line and adaptive reuse was seen as romantic whimsy? If we are working so damned hard to protect an unappreciated heritage, where did our mandate come from?

Which brings us to the bottom line. Sure, we can broaden various tax incentives to "mitigate" the sacrifices required by landowners. But buying people off is a short term measure at best. We can only retain our mandate to perform CRM if the general public believes that what we do is worthwhile, and that goal requires education. In the long term, historic preservation can only succeed if it is seen as one of the responsibilities of good citizenship. In the extremely long term, perhaps one day owning land will be perceived as an act of custodianship, a duty performed for the good of the community and planet. In that far-off day, historic preservation and environmentalism will be an unconscious private responsibility. Meanwhile, take the time to visit grade schools, and teach your children.



### TOXIC WASTE CLEANUP AT AN HISTORIC INDUSTRIAL SITE

By Ruth Brinker  
Archaeologist  
Monongahela National Forest

If there is one natural resource that defines the history of one state, it is coal in West Virginia. Although the black fuel is abundant, the development of the State's coal reserves awaited an adequate transportation system. Improvements in railroads occurred soon after the Civil War and coincided with increased demands for energy attendant on the industrial revolution. Control of the coal, either at its source or in its transport, was an avenue to great wealth for a few. Numbered among those was Henry Gassaway Davis. Starting as a brakeman on the nascent B & O Railroad, he became a coal baron, philanthropist, State Senator, and was nominated for Vice President of the United States.

Prior to 1880, in the once beautiful Blackwater Canyon, there were a few, small, family-owned dog-hole type coal mines. At places where the coal seam was exposed on the steep canyon walls, people scooped it out leaving a linear depression or shallow tunnel as a dog would do. Coal obtained in this way was used for personal consumption with small amounts sold to neighbors. However, there was no way to get the coal to a commercial market.

Davis recognized coal's potential for financial success, and formed a partnership in 1883 with Stephen B. Elkins to purchase portions of the Canyon for the purpose of underground coal mining. Davis also was part owner of the West Virginia Central and Pittsburgh Railroad, and in 1884 a connecting rail line was completed into Thomas. Coal production increased with improved access to available markets.

Steel production was also on the rise, and it needed a hot clean fuel. Coke answered that need. In 1887 the Davis Company built a few beehive-type coke ovens to test the coking qualities of their coal. The test was a rousing success. This new industry led to a name change: the Davis Coal and Coke Company; and the town of Coketon was born.

Coke is a byproduct of coal obtained from burning coal in a very hot, but oxygen deprived, enclosure. Gases and impurities are burned off and one is left with nearly pure carbon. Coke ovens were constructed of brick especially made with one end smaller to fit the arch of the oven's dome. A round hole was left in the top to load the coal in and for the sulphurous gases and smoke to escape. A heavy metal door on one side allowed workers to remove the finished coke directly into train cars for shipment. Ovens were lined up close together, sometimes in double rows. They were enclosed with continuous vertical walls and packed down with dirt and rubble on top to accommodate a light-weight coal wagon, called a "Larry," used to load the ovens from above.

In 1887 and 1888, another rail line from Thomas through Coketon and on to Hendricks was built. This rail line clings to the steep walls of the Blackwater Canyon and crosses several mountain streams rushing to the river. Where the grade crossed these streams, cut stone culverts were built. The workmanship and artistry in the construction is striking, and the size of the "tunnels" is impressive.

In 1889, the company reorganized with investment capital of \$16,000. They enlarged tipples, hired immigrant laborers to construct 400 new company houses, and 500 coke ovens were in operation. Within five years, company holdings were valued at \$3 million. Davis's company began to buy out other companies along the rail line, until it owned 100,000 acres of prime coal land in six counties, and produced 10,000 tons of coke a day. By 1910, in the Coketon area alone, the company had 1,000 coke ovens, two power plants, electric yard trains, a water system, and a telephone company. Historic records speak of the impressive glow from the many coke ovens, but it is discomfiting to imagine the choking dust, smoke, and sulphurous fumes that must have emitted from that valley.



Coke is a pure, clean fuel that creates a lot of heat with little ash. It was used to produce steel, to run machines and power plants, and to fuel large ships. Eventually, the beehive process proved to be inefficient, and by the second decade of the 20th century, production of coke moved to the steel plants where gases produced by the burning process were captured and used. Coke production in West Virginia then declined rapidly, although coal production from Coketon-area mines continued through WW II. Sometime during this period, the outer walls of the coke ovens, which had been made of cut stone, were removed. As earth-moving technology improved, surface mining of coal at higher elevations in the Blackwater Canyon increased. Large amounts of spoil were dumped downslope, burying coke ovens and other historic properties. Much of this mining predated the 1977 reclamation laws.

This describes the condition of the Davis Coal and Coke Company, Western Maryland Railroad Industrial Site Complex (a.k.a. Coketon), when the United States Forest Service acquired 168 acres along 10 miles of the old railroad grade in the summer of 1991. The property is a long narrow strip from Thomas, through Coketon and Douglas, and on to Hendricks. Initial survey indicated dozens of coke ovens, several foundations, trestle abutments, old mine portals, tremendous spoil piles, the railroad grade itself, and three outstanding culverts on Forest Service property. More coke ovens, foundations, and spoil piles were observed on adjacent private property. Based on the survey, the site was determined eligible for the National Register.

Simultaneously, and unbeknownst to the Forest Service, the State Division of Environmental Protection (DEP) was planning a major cleanup of the river. One mine opening is currently emitting 700 gallons per minute of 2.8 pH water. Seeps and springs along the walls of the canyon filter through the spoils becoming acidic along the way. The Blackwater River is dead for many miles, stream rocks have turned orange from the acid, only slimy fluorescent green algae grows in the water, and few plants survive on the spoil piles. The power plant ruins are lead contaminated.

Coincidentally, DEP was not aware that the Forest Service had purchased the property, so they did not notify or consult with us. It all came together quite by accident. Jeff Davis, seasonal archaeological technician for the Forest Service was at the site on a Sunday (on his own time) to take photographs when he encountered an engineer from the DEP-contracted project design firm. OOPS!

The consultation process begun between DEP and the Forest Service soon involved the State Historic Preservation Office, the Advisory Council, and, because the funding for the cleanup came through their Abandoned Mine Land program, the Federal Office of Surface Mining. The private property owner was not interested in becoming party to anything that would interfere with cleanup of his property. Many meetings, on-site consultations, and telephone conferences ensued. We educated people regarding historic property responsibilities. We also compromised. For example, a hard-surface drainage channel will destroy the footers for a tippie, but the nearby coke ovens, probably the first test ovens, will be avoided. A Memorandum of Agreement was recently signed by all parties.

It contains standard requirements, including documentation of all site elements, and notification of accidental discoveries.

The Allegheny Trail also traverses the clean-up site. The Forest Service plans to develop an alternate route along the railroad grade, and to interpret the history of coal mining, coke production, and rail transportation in the area, as well as the technology of reclamation which, by then, will have been completed.

It seemed a satisfactory solution for all, but no. The town of Thomas dumps raw sewage from eight sewer lines directly into the Blackwater River. They will be required to construct a treatment plant, and do their part to clean up the river. The only piece of flat ground nearby and downslope from the town is on the railroad grade on Forest Service property. The town cannot afford anything other than a gravity feed system, because the citizenry are primarily retired or on welfare. We worked with the town to develop a property exchange in a place where only the railroad grade itself will be affected by the project. The old depot site and nearby coke ovens will be avoided. The site will benefit from this project in that a small modern culvert collapse and washout will be repaired, in keeping with the historic values of the site.

We thought that was surely the end of it all, but again the site has come under threat. For a number of years, the state has been planning an east/west divided expressway to connect interstates, improve travel time to the east coast, improve the economy, increase job opportunities, and bring in more tourists. The state recently made their decision on the selected route for the new road: it crosses the Blackwater Canyon at Coketon.

There appears to be a dark cloud hanging over this important historic site, and it is not smoke from the coke ovens.

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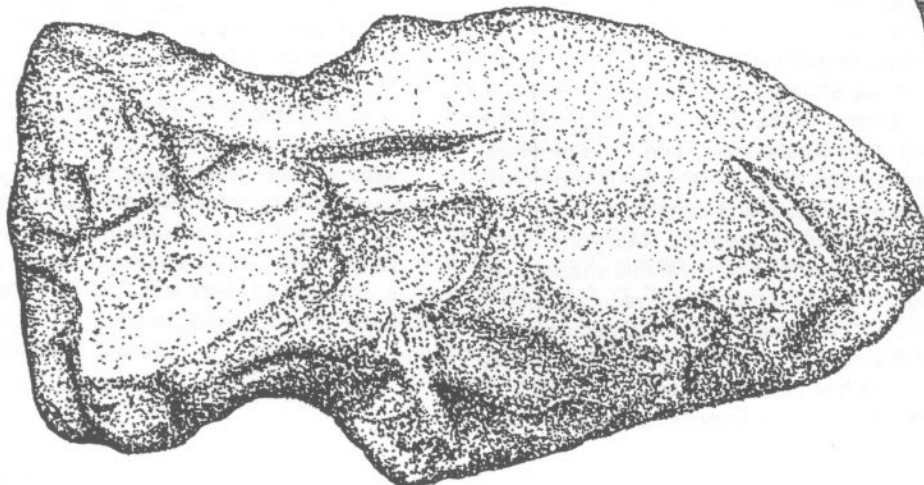
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