

Crippen House Salvage Making Progress

By Niall Fitzgerald

The 1653 Foundation - a not-for-profit foundation established to restore, maintain and enhance Huntington's parklands and public spaces, recently presented a check for \$32,000 towards the preservation of the original timbers of the Crippen House.

Although it is in a serious state of disrepair, the Peter Crippen House on Creek Road in Halesite has a tremendous amount to tell us about Huntington's history. Not only is the house perhaps one of the oldest surviving industrial buildings in the country, it was the home of an early African American community leader and his family, for nearly 140 years.

The house is believed to be the first mill building in Huntington, built in 1657 and decommissioned in 1672. It was then moved from Mill Lane to its present location where it was converted to a residence.

It was later purchased by Peter Crippen, who came to Huntington from Virginia in the 1830s. Crippen was one of the founders of Bethel AME Church, the first African American church in Huntington. His family continued to own the property until 2019. Occupied for four centuries, the property contains a multitude of clues to Huntington's past.

Plans are being developed to move the oldest section of the house to the property at the southwest corner of New York Avenue and Mill Dam Road. There the house will be restored and opened to visitors who will learn more about this chapter of our community's history.

The plan is to save the legacy timbers (circa 1658) and to utilize these relics as one of the catalysts for the creation of the Huntington African American Museum.



Caption to group photo

Pictured from (L to R), Kevin Thorbourne, Treasurer, Huntington African American Museum; Mark McAteer, Board Member 1653 Foundation; Barry Lites President, Huntington African American Museum; and Robert Bontempi,

Board Member 1653 Foundation.