

A historic local cemetery holding the remains of over 3,700 African-Americans stands vandalized and in need of repairs, as its church struggles to find funding.

Located in Price Hill, Union Baptist Cemetery has been continuously used by a black church congregation since 1864, and is the oldest such cemetery in Hamilton County according to the Ohio Historical Society.

Among those buried there are [Powhatan Beaty](#), a Medal of Honor recipient who fought in the Civil War, [Jennie D. Porter](#), the first black recipient of a PhD from the University of Cincinnati and the founder of the local Harriet Beecher Stowe School, and [George W. Hayes](#), a former slave who served three terms in the Ohio state legislature.

The cemetery has seen better days, however, as the 15-acre site is now home to many overturned headstones as well as spray-painted graffiti.

Members of the Union Baptist Church cover basic maintenance costs such as grass mowing, but the church says they need \$150,000 to fully repair the cemetery.

In two years of crowdfunding, the church's [GoFundMe page](#) raised just \$3,425, but their fortunes changed recently with contributions from the city and county governments.

City Council [passed an ordinance](#) providing \$5,000 on November 14, and Hamilton County's Board of Commissioners [approved a grant](#) of \$10,000 on December 5.

For the remaining total of more than \$130,000, the church's last remaining hope for funding is a federal bill introduced by Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH).

The [U.S. African-American Burial Grounds Network Act](#), if passed, would establish a national database of historic black cemeteries and provide grants to local organizations seeking to preserve them.

Brown's office says he was inspired to sponsor the bill after seeing Union Baptist Cemetery featured on a local news station.

The bill has made no progress towards passing since its introduction in November, however, and [its counterpart in the House](#) (introduced in February by Rep. Alma Adams of NC-12), has made no progress since May.

The church, for its part, appears to be happy to have received what funding they have.

In an appearance before City Council, Union Baptist Church's pastor Dr. Orlando Yates said, "We're here to celebrate what is taking place [...] Beyond African-American history, it is American history, and there's much history in Union Baptist Cemetery."

The church could not be reached for further comment.