

*J. Robinson House*

## A dastardly deed

**M**anassas National Battlefield lost a treasure, African-Americans a touchstone, when the Robinson House burned Monday night.

For 54 years, it stood proudly atop the rise where James "Gentleman Jim" Robinson and his heirs tended their farm — site of two famous Civil War battles. Now there may be nothing left to save except the foundation.

What makes it worse is that the fire appears to be a case of arson. The calamity, which ravaged a landmark seen by hundreds of thousands of Americans every year, demands the most vigorous investigation. Failing an arrest and conviction, area residents will be left merely to wish that this wicked act comes to haunt its perpetrators.

But even if justice is eventually done, we will never begin to understand why anyone would commit such an act of savagery.