

COMMEMORATING A RURAL AFRICAN-AMERICAN FAMILY AT A NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK.

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Abstract: The Robinson House site is situated within the Manassas National Battlefield Park in northern Virginia. The original Robinson House was constructed in the 1840's and was occupied until 1936 by the same free African-American family. The National Park Service recognizes and interprets the Robinson House since it was part of the Civil War battlefield landscape during the first and second battles of Manassas. The original house went through a series of structural additions and alterations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The house stood until 1993 when arsonists burned it, causing 60% damage to the structure; only the east chimney and the stone foundations remain. Amid the many Civil War monuments at the battlefield park, the interpretation of a century of occupation by the Robinson family through the remaining foundations adds meaning and depth to the area's local history. The Robinson House remains symbolize an African-American family's way of life as well as their struggle to survive during the Reconstruction and the Jim Crow era. The foundations and site are a steadfast symbol of African-American cultural persistence that has prevailed for over one hundred years on a battlefield landscape.

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