



Resource #2: James Robinson House



Library of Congress collection, courtesy of Manassas National Battlefield Park, Virginia

Felix Gregory de Fontaine, Charleston Daily Courier, September 11, 1862.

"The Robinson House is used as a Yankee hospital. In a visit there this morning, I found 100 of them [Yankees] packed in the rooms as thick as sardines.... The wounds of the majority were undressed, the blood had dried upon their persons and garments, and altogether there the most horrible set of beings it has been my lot to encounter."

On July 21, 1861, as the First Battle of Manassas raged around the Robinson House, James Robinson sent his family to safety at a nearby home. Unable to join them, Robinson hid under a bridge, emerging

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after the battle to find 13 Confederate soldiers lying dead in his front yard.

Barely one year later, in late August 1862, the Robinson House served as a shelter for Union dead and wounded during the Second Battle of Manassas. Despite the ravaged landscape, James Robinson and his family found the spirit to overcome the war's destruction and to fashion for themselves an identity that was uniquely African and American.

For nearly a century, the Robinson House, located in what is now the Manassas National Battlefield Park in Manassas, Virginia, was home to the descendants of James Robinson.

Born a free African American in 1799, Robinson served a short indenture as a young man before working in a Virginia tavern where he earned the \$484.94 needed to purchase 170 acres of land near Bull Run. In 1842, he built a small log cabin, which was enlarged and renovated several times over the years.

Through hard work and perseverance, the Robinson family turned the surrounding land into a prosperous farm, making James Robinson the wealthiest African American in the Manassas area in the mid-19th century.

Source: THE ROBINSON HOUSE

<<http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/robinson/>>

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