

Fred Lowther

Letter to editor of WP

November 5, 2021 at 10:55 a.m. EDT

At 3:40 a.m. on Thursday, three days after the Nov. 1 Metro article about the digital elimination of the “Lee’s Boyhood Home” marker from the brochures for sale of that historic house [[“Lee’s childhood home is up for sale”](#)], an Alexandria City truck pulled up and several men hammered down the sign.

Did city leaders decide to remove the sign, or did the owner of the house (or the real estate agent) ask the city to do so because it might be chilling the sale? Doing it at 3:40 a.m. suggests that the sign’s demise was not based on public discourse.

Like many historians, I have mixed views about Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. I saw the “Lee’s Boyhood Home” sign as neither a plus nor a minus for my neighboring property. But the notion that historical markers can just be taken down in the middle of the night offends me and should offend anyone who thinks that our history, good or bad, is still our history. The obvious question is “What’s next?” And will the next eradication of a historical marker occur after discussion, or will it just (as the Post banner says) die in darkness?

Fred Lowther, *Alexandria*