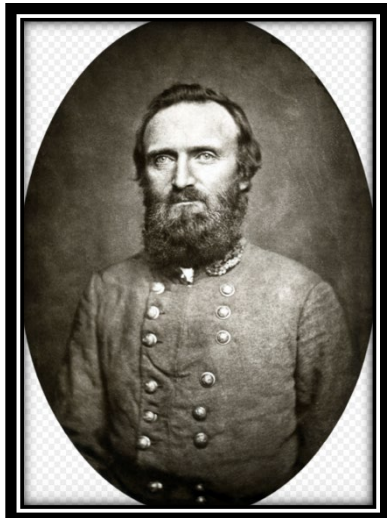


CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS: LESSON 5: BIO**THOMAS “STONEWALL” JACKSON**

Photographer: Nathaniel Routzahn (1822 - 1908), Winchester, Virginia - Valentine Richmond History Center, Cook Collection. Public Domain. Source: Wikipedia

Stonewall Jackson was born as Thomas Jonathan Jackson in Virginia in 1824. His early life was difficult, and his parents died when he was young. After living with various family members, he spent his teenage years living on a farm and tending to livestock.

As a teenager he really wanted to get an education. He would **barter** his skills to learn new information. For example, at night, after his farm work was done, he wanted to read but didn't have light to read by. During that time, **pine knots** could be burned for light. He agreed to teach one of the enslaved people on the farm how to read if he could provide him with pine knots. Despite it being illegal to teach enslaved people how to read, Jackson kept his promise. Eventually, the enslaved person escaped to freedom.

Jackson was accepted into West Point Academy when he turned 18 years old. He started at the bottom of the class but quickly moved up the ranks because of his hard work ethic and perseverance. After graduation, he fought in the Mexican-American War. At the end of the war, he lived in Lexington, Virginia, and began teaching at Virginia Military Institute.

Jackson came from a slaveholding family, and he personally owned at least six slaves.¹ He was a very religious man, and he viewed slavery as God's will because the Bible referenced slavery in previous societies. As historian James Robertson explains, "In [Jackson's] mind the Creator had sanctioned slavery, and man had no moral right to challenge its existence." He also believed that Christians should morally uplift enslaved people. He created a "colored Sunday school" and taught slaves how to read and write, even though it was against Virginia law.²

When the Civil War began, Jackson initially hoped Virginia would not **secede**. When Virginia joined the Confederacy, he joined the Confederate Army. He initially only trained soldiers how to enter battle, but he was soon promoted to General.

¹ "Stonewall Jackson House," Virginia Military Institute, <https://www.vmi.edu/museums-and-archives/stonewall-jackson-house/history/jackson-faq>.

² Retrieved from <https://heavy.com/news/2017/08/stonewall-jackson-slavery-slaves-did-own-monument-family-black-sunday-school-descendants-jack-warren-christian/>

He earned his nickname “Stonewall” during an early battle after another general observed Jackson and his troops standing their ground in the face of Union attacks and commented, “Look at Jackson standing there like a Stonewall.”

He continued to gain recognition after defending Virginia against Union soldiers. In one battle, his army of 15,000 men blocked a Union advancement even though the Union army had thousands more soldiers. After this accomplishment, he began working with General Robert E. Lee. Together they won many battles against the Union.

Jackson’s death came at the hand of fellow Confederate soldiers. While advancing during battle, a Confederate brigade mistook him and his soldiers for enemies and fired at them. He was wounded by flying bullets. They had to amputate his arm. While his condition started to improve, he soon caught pneumonia and died on May 10, 1863, eight days after being shot.