

"STONEWALL" JACKSON SHRINE

Where the Confederate General Died



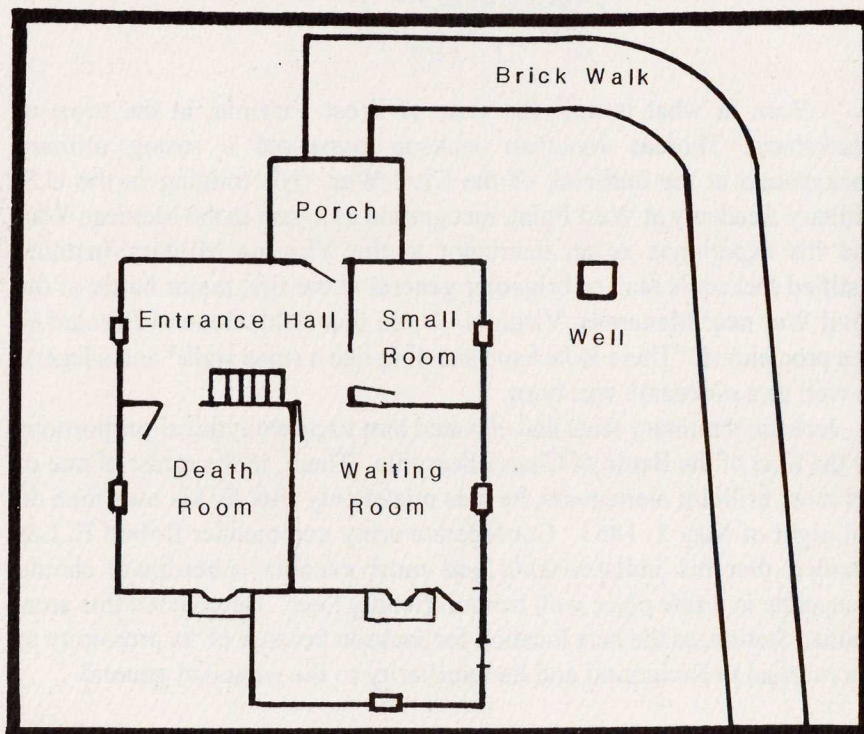
Born in what is now the state of West Virginia, in the town of Clarksburg, Thomas Jonathan Jackson possessed a strong military background at the outbreak of the Civil War. His training in the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, recognition as a hero in the Mexican War, and his experience as an instructor at the Virginia Military Institute justified Jackson's rank of brigadier general at the first major battle of the Civil War near Manassas, Virginia. Upon that field, General Barnard E. Bee proclaimed, "There is Jackson standing like a stone wall," and a legend as well as a nickname was born.

Jackson's military feats had elevated him to near-mythical proportions by the time of the Battle of Chancellorsville. There, in the midst of one of his most brilliant maneuvers, he was mistakenly shot by his own men on the night of May 2, 1863. Confederate army commander Robert E. Lee decided that his indispensable and most capable subordinate should recuperate in a safe place well behind friendly lines. He selected this area, Guinea Station, as the best location for Jackson because of its proximity to the railroad to Richmond and its familiarity to the wounded general.

The "Stonewall" Jackson Shrine is the plantation office building where General Jackson spent the final six days of his life. The office was one of several outbuildings on Thomas C. Chandler's 740-acre plantation, "Fairfield." This typical frame structure was used by the men of the family for recreation as well as for work. Chandler kept records in the office and one of his sons once practiced medicine there, but with three of the Chandler boys away serving in the Confederate army, the building no longer witnessed its ante-bellum level of activity.

The office stood bare, except for a few items in storage, when Jackson's ambulance arrived. Although offered the use of the Chandler house, Jackson's doctor and staff officers chose the quiet and private outbuilding as the best place for Jackson to rest after his long ambulance ride. If all went well, the general would soon board a train at Guinea Station and resume his trip to Richmond to take advantage of the medical expertise available there.

Today, the office is the only plantation structure remaining. The Chandler house burned at some point after the Civil War, and its shell was dismantled in the early 1900s. Once established as an historic "shrine," the office underwent restorations in the 1920s and the 1960s, and still retains about 45% of its original fabric. The National Park Service has augmented some of the items used during Jackson's stay with other pieces from the era, along with a few reproductions, to recreate the scene of those tragic last days of his life.



Waiting Room

Jackson's doctors and staff officers both worked and relaxed in this room during the general's stay. Five different physicians examined Jackson, and these men probably discussed their conclusions here over cups of coffee. Jackson's chief surgeon, Dr. Hunter McGuire, was the only physician present the entire six days. McGuire had performed surgery on Jackson at a field hospital near Chancellorsville, where he amputated the general's twice-wounded left arm and removed a ball from his right hand.

Jackson's chaplain, B. Tucker Lacy, had a brother who owned a house near the hospital, and took "Stonewall's" severed limb to his brother's family cemetery for burial. Lacy comforted the pious Jackson, holding devotions with him during his first two days at Guinea Station, but the chaplain soon returned to army headquarters. He requested that General Lee send another doctor to relieve the weary McGuire, who was trying to provide round-the-clock care. In speaking about Jackson's condition, Lee told Lacy, "He has lost his left arm, but I have lost my right arm."

Small Room

Mrs. Jackson and baby daughter Julia arrived at Guinea Station on May 7. No space remained in the office, this small room probably housing the baggage for Jackson and his entourage, so the general's wife and child found lodging in the Chandler home.

Mrs. Jackson spent most of her time, however, at her husband's bedside. The poignancy of her vigil contrasted with the happy nine-day reunion she had enjoyed with her husband barely a week before. Mary Anna had not seen her husband for more than a year prior to that, and she wrote that their latest tryst was all the more joyful because of "the additional charm and the attraction of the lovely child that God had given us."

To provide a keepsake of the happy occasion, Mrs. Jackson persuaded the general to sit for a photograph. (The engraving on the front of this brochure was made from that image.) While Jackson posed at his headquarters, eight miles north of Guinea Station, Mary Anna recalled that "he sat in the hall of the house where a strong wind blew in his face causing him to frown." The men who served under Jackson preferred this picture of their general to all others, but Mrs. Jackson never shared their opinion. It lent "a sternness to his countenance that was not natural," she wrote. Unbeknownst to any eyes viewing the newly developed image, it would be the last photograph of Jackson ever taken.

Entrance Hall

After a 27-mile ambulance ride, Jackson's aides carried "Stonewall" through this hallway to a room prepared for him by the Chandlers. Jackson endured the long journey remarkably well, and despite the ordeal, remembered his manners when apologizing to Mr. Chandler for being unable to shake hands with his host.

Jedediah Hotchkiss, Jackson's topographical engineer, had helped ease his commander's trip by preceding the ambulance with a crew of "pioneers" who removed obstructions from the country roads. While treading the wide boards of the Chandler office, Hotchkiss grieved the death of J.K. Boswell, a fellow staff officer killed by the same volley which felled Jackson.

Other losses from the Battle of Chancellorsville deeply touched Jackson and those dear to him. General E.F. Paxton, a neighbor and friend of the Jacksons in Lexington, Virginia, was killed at Chancellorsville on May 3rd while leading Jackson's old Stonewall Brigade. Just moments before the doctors first allowed Mrs. Jackson to see her wounded husband, she learned of Paxton's death. She had barely recovered from this shock when she was escorted to her husband's side to discover that he had taken a turn for the worse. Dr. McGuire had diagnosed pneumonia and Jackson's condition was critical.

Death Room

The Chandlers prepared this room using the same bed frame and one of the same blankets exhibited today. They also added the clock on the mantel with the hope that it would make the room look more homelike and cheerful, but furnishings could not dictate the mood of the room. Despite the efforts of pneumonia specialists, nothing seemed to bring relief to the general. Jackson observed, "I see from the number of physicians that you think my condition dangerous, but I thank God, if it is His will, that I am ready to go." On Sunday, May 10, 1863, the doctors lost all hope of Jackson's recovery, and the general was notified of his condition. But though Jackson grew physically weaker, he remained spiritually strong. "It is the Lord's Day; my wish is fulfilled," he said. "I have always desired to die on Sunday." Jackson realized that desire at 3:15 p.m. with Dr. McGuire carefully noting the general's last words:

"A few moments before he died he cried out in his delirium, 'Order A.P. Hill to prepare for action! pass the infantry to the front rapidly! tell Major Hawks'--then stopped, leaving the sentence unfinished. Presently a smile of ineffable sweetness spread itself over his pale face, and he said quietly, and with an expression, as if of relief, 'Let us cross over the river, and rest under the shade of the trees.'"