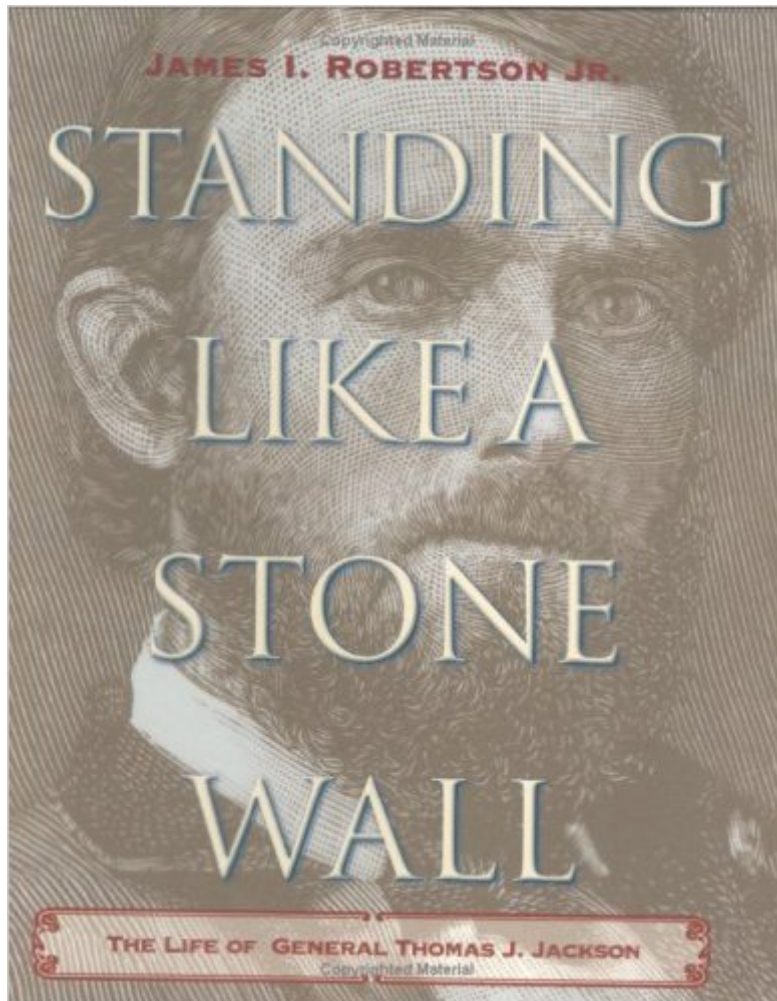


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Standing Like A Stone Wall: The Life Of General Thomas J. Jackson



Synopsis

"YOU MAY BE WHAT EVER YOU WILL RESOLVE TO BE." This was the credo that governed and defined the life of Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, perhaps the most extraordinary figure in American military history. From his childhood as an unloved, poorly educated orphan, it was Jackson's pure determination that impelled him from his humble origins. A shy man, with some particularly odd habits, Jackson was an outcast by many standards. But it was his single-mindedness of purpose that landed him a position at West Point where he struggled but ultimately prevailed. It was his unflappable courage combined with an emerging and unshakeable faith in God that led him to distinguish himself in the Mexican-American War. Then, after serving as a professor at the Virginia Military Institute, Jackson rose to true glory during the Civil War where, during the first major battle, he received what is perhaps the most famous nickname in military history. Beloved by his men whom he drove to the limits of endurance, feared and yet admired greatly by his enemies whom he constantly surprised with his brilliant tactics, Jackson was a general who, in the heat of battle, was seemingly blind to his own personal danger. Victory after victory, he allowed himself no personal triumph but would often be seen astride his faithful horse, Sorrel, his hand thrust toward the sky, deep in prayer of thanks to the God who had allowed his cause to prevail. James I. Robertson Jr., history professor at Virginia Tech and the recognized authority on the life of "Stonewall" Jackson, offers young readers a gripping biography of an extraordinary man.

Book Information

Age Range: 12 and up

Hardcover: 192 pages

Publisher: Atheneum; First Edition edition (May 1, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 068982419X

ISBN-13: 978-0689824197

Product Dimensions: 8.4 x 0.7 x 10.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,463,459 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #77 in Â Books > Teens >

Historical Fiction > Biographical > United States #266 in Â Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > Military #409 in Â Books > Teens > Biographies > Historical

Customer Reviews

This, according to a very enjoyable biography by James Robertson, is how Union mothers in the years of the Civil War tried to convince their unruly children to behave. It is one of many fascinating stories in the incredible life and military career of Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. I have always heard Jackson described as "Lee's right hand" and "the Confederacy's greatest general". I have never studied exactly how he came to gain this reputation, nor considered how much it was deserved. While I was reading this book, I came across a military history magazine with the cover story (I think this is how they phrased it) "How Strange WAS Stonewall Jackson?" After finishing this biography, I'd have to say "pretty darn strange". He was a man of mediocre intellect but exceptional drive. He had a religious faith of childlike simplicity to which he was entirely devoted, and which left him utterly convinced that he was called to military service. He behaved with reckless courage in many battles, in part because he seems to have found it inconceivable that God would let him be injured. He fought for the South, and believed slavery was part of God's plan, but he was a devoted teacher of religion and literacy to slaves in his home church. He drove his men on such fast forced marches that they took to calling themselves "foot cavalry", yet they loved him like a father. He was a stern disciplinarian with students at a Virginia Military Institute, yet a pushover with young children. The contradictions continue for most of the book. I struggled to decide how to rate this. I think the reader most apt to enjoy this would be one with an interest in history, but enough unfamiliarity with the details of the key Civil War battles that this would not seem redundant.

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