

Stonewall Jackson House Pre-Visit Discussion

Note to Teachers

The school tours of the Stonewall Jackson House are designed to interpret the life of the famous Civil War general Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson, and to foster an understanding of middle-class life in a small Valley of Virginia community. Before their visit, students need to know what the Stonewall Jackson House is, why it exists, and why they are visiting this place. The pre-visit discussion is designed to give the students a sense of the place they are about to visit.

Discussion

The following questions are designed to help you lead an inquiry-based discussion of the nature of historic house museums and the character of the Stonewall Jackson House in particular.

- 1) The Stonewall Jackson House is called an “historic house museum.” What is an “historic house”? Why do you think we have these kinds of museums?
- 2) The Stonewall Jackson House was built in 1800 by the county jailer. How long ago was that? What kind of transportation did they have then? How did they heat their houses? How did they cook? How did they get their clothes and furniture?
- 3) Who was Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson? Why do we want to preserve this house in memory of him?
- 4) Thomas and Mary Anna Jackson moved into the house in 1859. By that time, many changes had been made to the house. Point out the changes between stages one, two, and three on the “Changing House” worksheet. What are some of the possible reasons for these changes?
- 5) How do we know what the house looked like when the Jacksons lived here?
- 6) How does studying the past help you to understand more about yourself and the way we live today?