An Invitation for Children to Explore Stonewall Jackson Cemetery in Lexington, Virginia

Prepared by Historic Lexington Foundation

This guide works best when you enter through the central cemetery gate on Main Street.
Stonewall Jackson Cemetery used to be called “Presbyterian Cemetery.” Many settlers in the 1700s were Scots-Irish Presbyterians. More than 3,000 people of different faiths are now buried here. The cemetery also includes veterans of the American Revolution, War of 1812, and Civil War.

All the stones mentioned below are between Main Street and Stonewall Jackson’s grave.

These sheets show stones of people, kinds of markers, and symbols that we thought would be interesting to children. We could only include a few here and hope that you’ll find more fascinating people, stones, and stories in this and other cemeteries.
Can you find …

A tympanum and caps stone?

A tablet (flat, upright) stone with a central arch and shoulders or caps on each side. An old marker style.

An obelisk?

A tall shaft tapered to a pyramid point.

A table tomb?

A flat ledger stone supported by legs.

These symbols?

• Anchor: strong faith and hope
• Ivy: friendship, love
• Lily: purity
• Tree trunk: life cut short
Andrew Moore (1752-1821) was a captain in the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War. He also served as a delegate to the Virginia convention that ratified the United States Constitution in 1788.

• When you find his stone, sketch it here.

Margaret Junkin Preston (1820-1897) was a well-known author; her articles and poetry appeared in the Southern Literary Messenger, Harper's Magazine, and many other publications between the 1850s and 1890s. People remember her as the "Poet of the Confederacy" because some of her best-loved poems focused on the war.

http://rrrockbridge.org/mjp/

When you find her stone, sketch it here.
John Letcher (1813–1884) was governor of Virginia during the Civil War (1860–1864). At first he did not want Virginia to secede from the Union, but once the decision was made Letcher supported the Confederacy. In 1864 U.S. General David Hunter’s troops burned down Letcher’s house, along with many other buildings in Lexington. When you find Governor Letcher’s grave, draw or describe it here.

James McDowell (1795–1851) was governor of Virginia 1843–1846 and established a free school system in all counties where voters wanted them. He and his wife, Susanna Preston McDowell, had nine children and lived at Col Alto, now part of the Hampton Inn in Lexington. When you find Governor McDowell’s grave, draw or describe it here.

Hint: It’s an obelisk in an iron fence.
Thomas Jonathan “Stonewall” Jackson (1824-1863) was an artillery instructor at Virginia Military Institute and commander of the Second Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia (Confederate Army) during the Civil War. He’s remembered as a brave soldier and brilliant leader.

Jackson’s troops accidentally shot him at the Battle of Chancellorsville, near Fredericksburg, Virginia. His arm was amputated and buried. Eight days later Jackson died of pneumonia and was buried in Lexington.

Jackson’s nickname came from his and his troops’ bravery at the First Battle of Manassas (Bull Run) in 1861. Confederate General Bernard Bee called out: “Look, men! There’s Jackson standing like a stone wall!”

When you’ve found his grave, look around the grass nearby. Do you see something unusual? Draw a picture of them here.
Can you find …

A cenotaph (marker for someone buried elsewhere)? Both Millers were missionaries in Iran; what does “DD” after his name mean?

A grave marker shaped like a bed? People often think of death as sleeping.

When you find this marker (at the base of a big bush), write down whose grave it was.

Davy Buck (1770-1855), an enslaved African American, served for 40 years as the sexton at Lexington Presbyterian Church. A sexton takes care of a church and graveyard, and is responsible for digging graves.

- What do you notice about where Mr. Buck was buried?

Beginning in the late 1800s, after the Civil War and Emancipation, Evergreen Cemetery became the resting place for many African Americans. Evergreen is behind stores and restaurants (Kroger, CVS, Arby’s) off of Nelson Street in Lexington.
What did you see?

The earliest grave

The most interesting epitaph (writing on the gravestone)

KEY

1. Andrew Moore  
2. Margaret Preston  
3. James McDowell  
4. John Letcher  
5. Isabelle Miller  
6. Amanda Dorman  
7. Davy Buck

Thanks for participating in this cemetery outing and for your interest in the history of Lexington and Rockbridge County!

“Our future hinges on a well-preserved past.” -- Historic Lexington Foundation

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