

Emphasis – What was the actual meaning of Jackson’s iconic nickname?

Sometimes two sentences take on different meanings depending on what is emphasized. For example, read the sentences below and emphasize the words in bold font.

1. I never said **she** stole my money.
2. I never said she **stole** my money.

In the first sentence, it seems as if money was stolen, but the perpetrator was not “she.”

In the second sentence, it seems as if money might have been given away or lent to “she,” but it was not stolen.

Even though the sentences are the same, the meaning changes as different words are emphasized. Similarly, historians aren’t sure exactly what Bernard Bee meant when he uttered something like, “there stands Jackson like a stone wall.” Some believe he was inspired by Jackson’s presence, and some believe he uttered those words because of Jackson’s inaction. Whatever the case, from that moment on, Confederate General Thomas J. Jackson was known as Stonewall Jackson.

In the chart below, make up two fictional accounts of what Bernard Bee might have said after uttering “there stands Jackson like a stone wall.” You’ll need to make up accounts for both sentences that emphasize different words.

There stands Jackson like a stone wall!	There stands Jackson like a stone wall !

Answers:

There stands Jackson like a stone wall!	There stands Jackson like a stone wall!
Answers will vary, but in this version, students should write something about how Jackson's figure, strong like a stone wall, inspired Bee and his soldiers to continue fighting.	Answers will vary, but in this version, students should write something that indicates that Bernard Bee was irritated with Stonewall Jackson and implored him to stop "standing there" and move his soldiers into action.