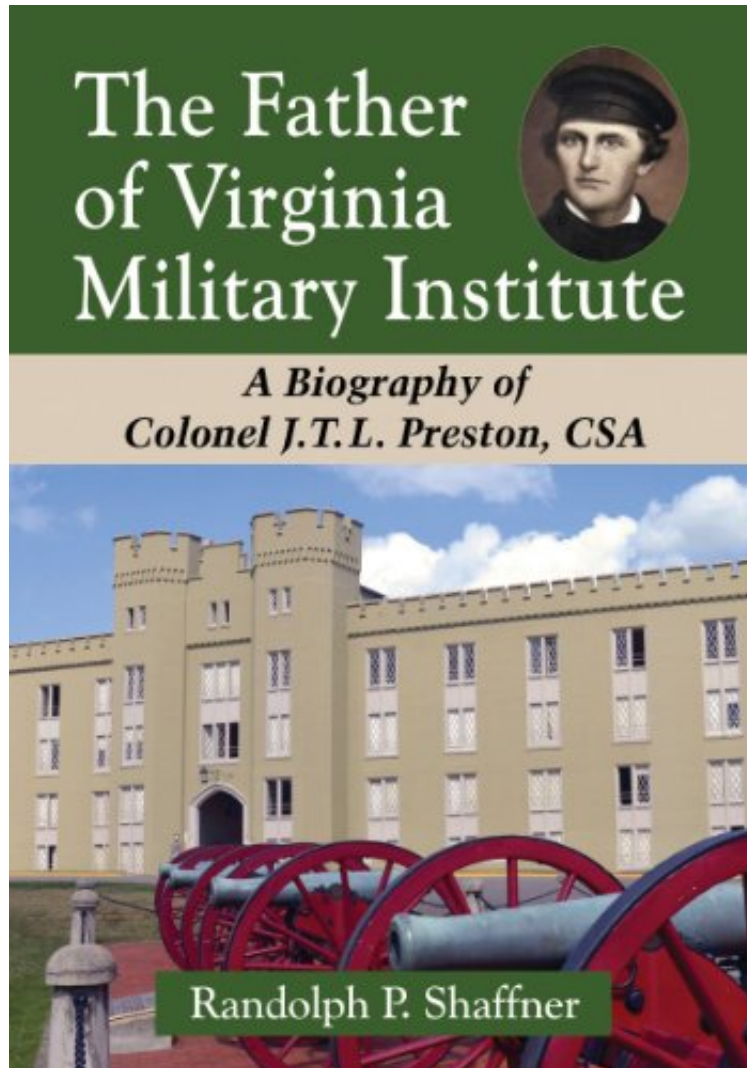


[Library ebook] The Father of Virginia Military Institute: A Biography of Colonel J.T.L. Preston, CSA

The Father of Virginia Military Institute: A Biography of Colonel J.T.L. Preston, CSA

Randolph P. Shaffner

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Randolph P. Shaffner : The Father of Virginia Military Institute: A Biography of Colonel J.T.L. Preston, CSA before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Father of Virginia Military Institute: A Biography of Colonel J.T.L. Preston, CSA:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A most interesting man and time.By Frayda SalkinThe Father of Virginia Military Institute is an easy to read accounting of an interesting and complex man, who managed to survive one of our country's most horrific periods. Colonel J.T.L. Preston's brilliance, humanity and vulnerabilities are felt

throughout the book, and it was made clear by the author how these qualities drove his life and what he managed to accomplish. This wonderful read includes much information on the Southern colonel's first and second wives, both of whom he dearly loved. His first wife a fellow Southerner and his second a Northerner living as Mrs. Preston in Virginia during the battle between the States, the battle between her two worlds. The book and the time are fascinating for anyone interested in American history, in general, and the Civil War, in particular. I enjoyed every page and was sorry when the book ended. Beautifully written and thoroughly researched, giving the reader a clear view of this 19th century man and his complicated existence as a father of a family and of an institute. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Richard Cheatham Excellent 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A fascinating history By JBMcAfee This is a fascinating and extremely readable book, deeply researched but never pedantic. It presents a thorough and persuasive defense of Col. Preston's unique role in the founding and preservation of V.M.I. and paints a vivid and often surprising picture not only of this one eccentric, determined reformer—schoolmate of Edgar Allan Poe and brother-in-law of Stonewall Jackson—and his family, but also of Virginia society before, during, and after the Civil War.

The Virginia Military Institute launched an educational revolution when it became the first school in the American South to combine classical and practical courses under an effective system of military discipline. It pioneered free schooling for the poor and exemption from tuition and board in exchange for two years of teaching. It has furnished fully qualified citizen-soldiers for both civilian and military life since before the Civil War. Who first conceived of VMI has been the subject of multiple claims since the school's founding in 1839. Attempting to answer that problem, this biography of Col. J.T.L. Preston unfolds the life of a teacher and soldier, husband and father, who defined the school as it exists today, served Stonewall Jackson as his first adjutant general, married the Poetess of the Confederacy and sired a family whose members bore the stamp of their father's character. Preston is revealed as a man of faith who suffered "anguish beyond remedy" under "the bloody, remorseless hand of war," which "tore from his heart what, to him, was more precious than liberty, home, or anything but heaven."

"A fascinating, well-researched and long overdue biography of the Virginia Military Institute's most unheralded founder and underappreciated champion of educational reform." --Dr. Bradford A. Wineman, Marine Corps University
About the Author
Randolph P. Shaffner is a retired professor of English and comparative literature and author of several books and articles on a variety of historical subjects. He is archivist for the Highlands Historical Society in the mountains of western North Carolina.