

INVENTORY AND REVIEW OF MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS RELATED TO CONFEDERATE ICONOGRAPHY

Virginia Military Institute

DRAFT January 9, 2021

Memorials and monuments take several forms at VMI: statuary, plaques, portraits, and dedicatory building names. There are over 400 such tributes found at VMI. The survey focuses on those tributes which explicitly or implicitly reflect iconography of the Confederacy. For the purposes of this document, the term iconography is understood to encompass visual imagery as well as other semiotic modalities, such as language.

The purpose of this survey is to succinctly document and provide an overview of those landscape features subject to review by the VMI Board of Visitors Commemorations and Memorials Naming and Review sub-committee.

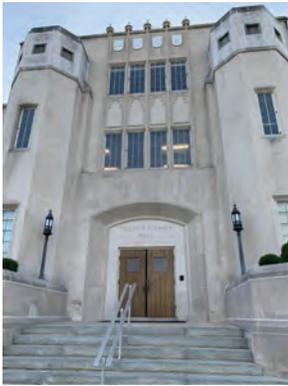
Several of those honored have multiple dedicatory resources associated with their names; they have been grouped accordingly. The survey includes the following categories: dedicatory building names, statues, paintings, plaques, and monuments. Each entry includes a brief biographical sketch of the honoree, association with the Confederacy, and original intent of the resource by the creator(s), if known.

Until 1900 the Institute consisted of a central barracks for academic activities and lodging, a hospital, a mess hall, and several faculty quarters. Rapid expansion of the physical plant after the turn of the 20th century, and a new master plan provided by Bertram Goodhue, provided several opportunities for monuments and dedicatory naming.

Throughout the 20th-century buildings were named in honor of people who had dedicated their lives to the academic mission of the Institute. Without exception all the main buildings in the central post were named in honor of faculty and senior administrators. In the late 20th-century and early 21st-century several athletic facilities along the periphery of the central post were named in honor of key financial patrons.

No dedicatory name, statue, plaque, or monument is known to have any legally binding obligation of permanency or reversion agreement with any honoree or donor.

HONOREE: Francis Henney Smith (1812-1890)



BUILDING:
Francis H. Smith Administration Building

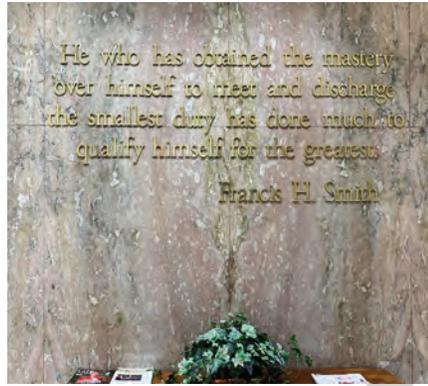
DESCRIPTION: Francis H. Smith Hall, completed in 1964, is the main administration building of the Institute. Named in honor of the first superintendent, it is the second building to carry the name. The first Smith Hall (1900-1920) was located at what is now the north west side of Old Barracks.



STATUE:
Superintendent Smith

ARTIST:
Ferruccio Legnaioli

DESCRIPTION: Heroic bronze statue and granite base. The statue was dedicated on June 10, 1931 near Jackson Memorial Hall. In 1979 the statue was moved to the front of Smith Hall. *The statue is a contributing resource to the VMI Historic District.*



MISCELLANEOUS:
Quote in Smith Hall Lobby

ARTIST: N/A

DESCRIPTION:
Quote attributed to Francis Smith:
“HE WHO HAS OBTAINED THE MASTERY OVER HIMSELF TO MEET AND DISCHARGE THE SMALLEST DUTY HAS DONE MUCH TO QUALIFY HIMSELF FOR THE GREATEST.”
Placed in the lobby in 2009.



PAINTING:
Francis H. Smith

ARTIST: Max Weyl

DESCRIPTION:
Oil on canvas portrait of Superintendent Smith at the time of his 1889 retirement.

Francis Henney Smith of Norfolk, Virginia, graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1833 and was commissioned Lieutenant, United States Army. He was assigned to the USMA Mathematics Department. Smith was a 27-year old Professor of Mathematics at Hampden-Sydney College when he was approached by John T. L. Preston to consider the superintendency of the new military college in Lexington. Smith, Preston, and first VMI BOV President Claudius Crozet molded the military college into a new model of higher education.

Francis Smith initially served as the Superintendent, Commandant, and Principal Professor in the nascent institute. He taught mathematics, mechanics, moral and political philosophy.

In 1851 Smith published a small but influential book titled **College Reform**. Here he presented the argument for improving higher education in the nation.

Smith noted that —

This is a practical age, the American people are emphatically a practical people, and while the public demand has been for the knowledge of those sciences by which labour may be profitably directed, the agriculturist, the manufacturer, the mechanic, and the merchant, must study Latin, Greek, and logic, or he must not think of coveting an academical degree.

In the 1850s Smith served as president of the Board of Visitors at his alma mater, USMA.

In 1859 Smith published **Scientific Education in Europe** encouraging the adoption of the “polytechnical model.” The volume was read with great interest by educators around the nation. In addition, Smith published a series of college-level mathematics text.

Smith commanded the cadets at the execution of John Brown in December 1859. He was the commanding officer of the execution, giving the order for the executioner to carry out the sentence.

In 1861 Governor John Letcher appointed Smith to the “Council of Three,” along with Matthew Fontaine Maury and Judge John J. Allen to advise the governor on preparing the Commonwealth for war.

Smith briefly served as Colonel of the 9th Virginia Heavy Artillery at Craney Island, Portsmouth, VA.

In September, 1861, the Commonwealth of Virginia ordered the resumption of the regular academic schedule at VMI effective January, 1862. Smith returned to Lexington and prepared for the reopening of the Institute. After the destruction of the Institute during Hunter's Raid (June 12, 1864) Smith established the temporary home for VMI in Richmond. After the war he set out to successfully re-build the Institute.

At the 50th anniversary celebration on November 11, 1889, Smith announced his retirement.

Smith owned nine enslaved persons. Taking a common position of his time, Smith did not think the two races could co-exist in an equal society. He

supported repatriation projects like the American Colonization Society to return former slaves to Liberia.

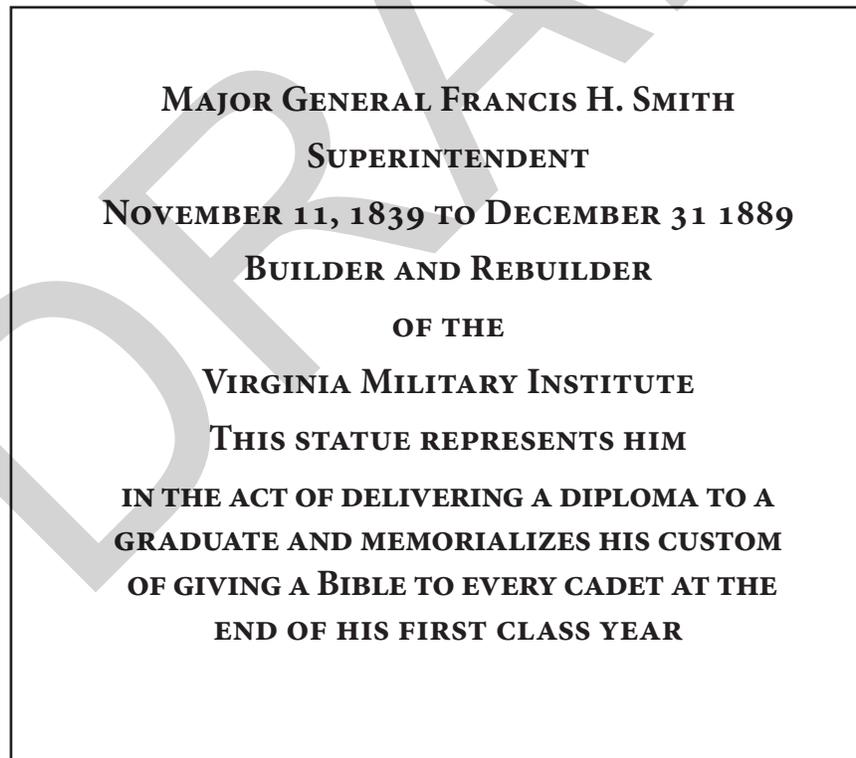
VMI first arranged with their famous alumnus sculptor Moses Ezekiel to provide an heroic bronze statue of the first superintendent in 1916. The aging artist died before more than a sketch of Smith dressed in his VMI professor's uniform holding a Bible and a diploma could be completed. It was 1928 before the project was restarted. The committee selected Richmond based sculptor Ferruccio Legnaioli.

Smith's statue was first located in the stone niche to the right of Jackson Memorial Hall where it was dedicated at graduation, June 10, 1931. The statue

was re-located to the front of Smith Hall and rededicated on October 19, 1979.

Original Intent: In the dedicatory tributes to Smith it is clear that the Institute and alumni sought to recognize the person who, more than any other, is credited with the development of the unique educational model of the Institute.

Except for a very brief period at the beginning of the Civil War, Smith continued in his capacity as chief administrator and professor of the Institute. There is no mention of his Civil War service on any of his memorials.



The inscription on the base of the F. H. Smith statue.

HONOREE: **Matthew Fontaine Maury (1806-1873)**



BUILDING:
Maury-Brooke Hall

DESCRIPTION:
Designed by William Metcalf of Metcalf and Associates, and dedicated in 1989, Maury-Brooke Hall houses the chemistry and biology curricula. For the first 20 years the structure was simply known as The Science Building. After a major renovation in 2005, the name Maury-Brooke Hall was transferred from the original building so named in 1909 (now Shell Hall).



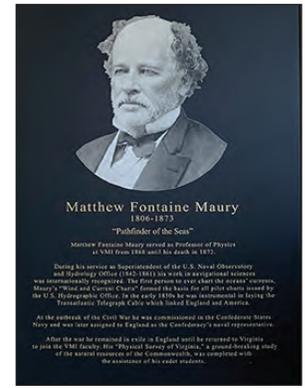
BUILDING:
Maury House

DESCRIPTION:
The Maury House is one of the two remaining original faculty quarters designed by Alexander J. Davis in 1852. The quarters were burned during Hunter's Raid on June 12, 1864. After extensive restoration, the quarters were assigned to Professor Matthew F. Maury who died in the second floor tower bedroom in 1873. In 1914 the structure, along with the Superintendent's Quarters, was moved to its current location as part of the master plan to enlarge and level the Parade Ground. *The Maury House is a contributing resource to the VMI Historic District.*



STATUE:
Matthew Maury

ARTIST: William Sievers
DESCRIPTION:
Heroic-scale plaster artist's model donated by the artist in 1928. Originally located in Preston Library, the statue was moved to Maury-Brooke Hall in 2013.



PLAQUE:
Dedicatory

ARTIST: N/A
DESCRIPTION:
Anodized aluminum plaques recognizing the building honorees of Maury-Brooke Hall.

Located to the right inside the entrance of Maury-Brooke Hall.

Matthew Fontaine Maury joined the VMI faculty in 1868 as Professor of Physics after an internationally acclaimed career as an oceanographer, astronomer, historian, meteorologist, cartographer, geologist, writer, and United States Navy officer. He is remembered as the "Pathfinder of the Seas," "Father of Modern Oceanography and Naval Meteorology" and "Scientist of the Seas." As a US Navy officer Maury was instrumental in the establishment of the US Naval Academy. In the 1850s he served as Superintendent of the US Naval Observatory in Washington, DC. There he charted the currents of the oceans, thus revolutionizing world travel and commerce. In the mid-1850s

Maury charted the route of the first transatlantic cable. He advocated for the creation of the US Weather Bureau and the Star Registry.

Maury published a series of widely used public school text books on world geography that continued to be used well into the 20th century.

Maury was not a slave owner, but he did not believe the races could live together freely. Nevertheless, he seemed to suggest a desire to end the institution. Maury proposed a scheme by which US enslaved persons might be relocated to the Amazon River basin for the purpose of developing commerce in that region, and allowing the South (in particular, Virginia) to divest itself of slavery. The project did not materialize.

He resigned his USN commission in 1861 and was quickly commissioned in the Confederate Navy, serving the entire war in England. After the war Maury resided in Mexico for a brief time at the request of Emperor Maximilian as the "Imperial Commissioner of Colonization." The Emperor sought to encourage former slave-owning Confederates to relocate to the "New Virginia Colony."

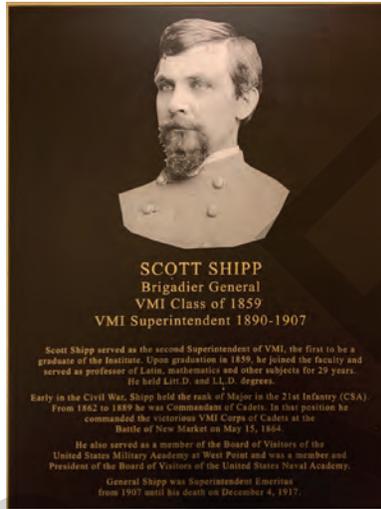
Original Intent: To recognize a faculty member with an international reputation in a significant manner commensurate to his service to VMI, the Commonwealth, and the world.

HONOREE: **Scott Shipp (1845-1917)**



BUILDING: Scott Shipp Hall

DESCRIPTION: Designed by the firm Carneal and Johnston and opened in 1918, Scott Shipp Hall provides dedicated space for the Humanities. Undergoing significant expansions and renovations in 1955 and 1958, it is now completing the most ambitious enlargement in its 100-year history. *Scott Shipp Hall is a contributing resource to the VMI Historic District.*



PLAQUE: Scott Shipp

ARTIST: N/A

DESCRIPTION: Anodized aluminum plaque recognizing the building honoree of Scott Shipp Hall.

Located to the right inside the main entrance of Scott Shipp Hall.



PAINTING: Scott Shipp

ARTIST: E. T. Andrews

DESCRIPTION: Although painted in 1904, this 6.5 foot by 9.5 foot oil on canvas portrait depicts the second superintendent of VMI wearing the uniform he wore during the Battle of New Market, May, 15, 1864.

One of the first non-Virginians to attend VMI, **Scott Shipp** matriculated from Missouri and graduated in 1859. He immediately joined the faculty as Professor of Latin and Mathematics.

Like many faculty at most colleges in Virginia, Shipp joined the Confederate Army at the outbreak of the Civil War. He briefly served as a major in the 21st Virginia Infantry and returned to VMI in 1862. As Commandant of Cadets, Shipp commanded the Corps at the Battle of New Market (May 15, 1864) during which he was wounded.

Scott Shipp served as Commandant from 1862 until 1889 when he was selected as the second Superintendent. He retired in 1907.

In the post-war years Shipp served in the Board of Visitors at the United States Military Academy and the United States Naval Academy.

He did not own slaves.

Original Intent: To commemorate the life-long service of Shipp as professor, administrator and superintendent. Shipp is one of six superintendents honored by the naming of a building.

HONOREE: **Thomas J. Jackson (1824-1863)**



BUILDING:
Jackson Memorial Hall

DESCRIPTION:
Architect Bertram Goodhue designed the present Jackson Memorial Hall (JMH) in 1916 to take the place of the 1896 building of the same name which adjoined The Barracks. In 1869 the VMI BOV authorized a project to create a suitable memorial to Jackson with a proposed completion date of 1872. Planning and fundraising progressed slowly. Economic depression and other priorities extended the completion date until 1896 when the structure was dedicated. The first Jackson Memorial Hall was the design of I. E. A. Rose, VMI 1883. *JM Hall is a contributing resource to the VMI Historic District.*



STATUE:
“Stonewall” Jackson

ARTIST:
Moses Ezekiel, VMI 1866

DESCRIPTION:
Heroic-scale bronze statue atop an Italian volcanic rock base. Dedicated on June 12, 1912, *the statue is a contributing resource to the VMI Historic District.*



MISCELLANEOUS:
Quote in Jackson Arch

ARTIST: N/A

DESCRIPTION:
Quote attributed to Stonewall Jackson:
“YOU MAY BE WHATEVER YOU RESOLVE TO BE”
Placed in the arch ca. 1955.



MONUMENT:
Jackson Arch

ARCHITECT:
I. E. A. Rose, VMI 1883

DESCRIPTION:
Created in 1896 to connect the extension of Old Barracks to the first Jackson Memorial Hall (to the left of the arch.) *This structure is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Landmarks and is a contributing resource to the VMI Historic District.*

Thomas Jonathan Jackson graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1846 and was commissioned as an artillery officer. He served in the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) with distinction. Acts of battlefield initiative and bravery brought him to the attention of his commanders on several occasions. It was in Mexico that Jackson first demonstrated the tactics and leadership which would bring him international acclaim during the Civil War.

Jackson was appointed VMI Professor of Natural Philosophy (Physics) and Artillery Tactics in 1851. Not well

prepared for his new position, he put into practice a favorite quote he had recently read in Rev. Joel Hawes’ **Lectures to Young Men, On the Foundation of Character** (1851, pg 74):

YOU MAY BE WHATEVER YOU RESOLVE TO BE

Jackson became a satisfactory, if not gifted, teacher. His command of artillery tactics, however, impressed the most ardent skeptic.

In 1861 Jackson did not resign his position at VMI to become an officer in the forces of Virginia and, later, the Confederacy. Like all VMI personnel,

including the Cadet Corps, that duty was an extension of his commission in the Virginia Militia. By the time of his death in 1863, General Jackson was internationally recognized for his tactical genius and military leadership.

While the 1860 US Census lists Thomas and his wife, Anna, as owning four enslaved persons, documentary evidence supports that they owned seven slaves between 1855 and 1863.

The first slave owned by Jackson was a man named Albert, who approached the Major suggesting an arrangement by which he would be allowed to

purchase his freedom. Jackson agreed. Among the places Albert worked was VMI.

Jackson's complex relationship with slavery is an ongoing research quest at the Jackson House. In recent years contact has been made with descendants of George Jackson, one of Jackson's slaves. Larry Spurgeon, senior researcher at the Jackson House concludes that Jackson

...remains an enigma. He was made of flesh, not stone, never claiming to be anything else. In raising him to a mythic status that he did not seek, his essential humanity has been obscured. In many ways he was a walking contradiction - a lethal warrior who hated war, an inept professor who became one of the most revered American military leaders, a man devoted to a religious class for enslaved people who accepted their enslaved status as the will of God, a simple man riddled with complexities.

Moses Ezekiel's sculpture "Stonewall Jackson" was dedicated at VMI on June 19, 1912. It is a copy of the statue commissioned by the United Daughters of the Confederacy for the State of West Virginia in 1905.

When approached to provide the statue for VMI, Ezekiel offered to donate his "fees" and only expected to be reimbursed for supplies. Virginia-born insurance and transportation magnate Thomas F. Ryan donated \$6,000 for the creation of the Italian volcanic stone base, also designed by Ezekiel.

Ezekiel depicts Jackson on the battlefield at Chancellorsville, May 2, 1863. He appears in a Confederate general's uniform.

As Jackson looked to his left and right just before ordering an attack on the Union XI Corps, he observed former VMI students and faculty colleagues and declared, "THE INSTITUTE WILL BE HEARD FROM TODAY."

On December 7, 2020, in accordance with a directive from the VMI BOV, the Jackson statue was removed from the VMI Post to the grounds of the Virginia Museum of the Civil War at New Market Battlefield State Historical Park, New Market, Virginia. In addition to the fact that the sculptor Moses Ezekiel, VMI 1866 participated in the May 15, 1864 battle as a cadet, the statue will be in the heart of the geographical region of Jackson's 1862 Valley Campaign which brought him to international acclaim.

Original Intent: Historical records reveal the desire to create a significant memorial to Jackson almost immediately following his 1863 death. By 1869 the VMI BOV officially directed that such a project be undertaken.

The purpose was to venerate the now internationally recognized Confederate general who had been, and was at the time of his death, a VMI professor and leading citizen of Lexington.

When the Ezekiel statue of Jackson was unveiled in 1912 the 60 page key-note address detailed Jackson's exploits of his Civil War record.

HONOREE: **William H. Richardson (1795-1876)**

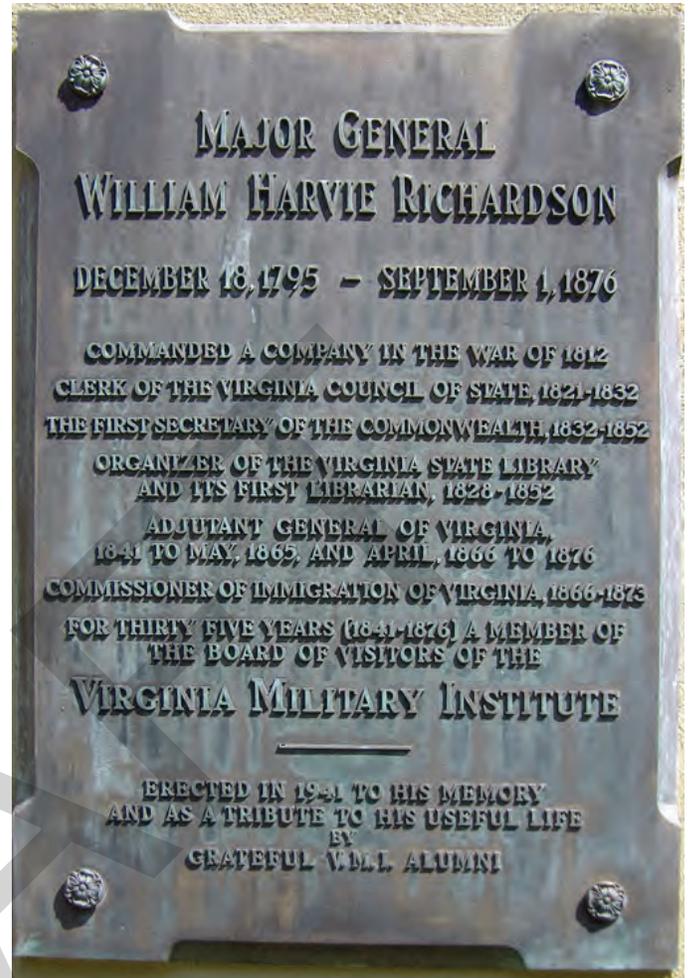


BUILDING: Richardson Hall

DESCRIPTION: Completed in 1935 as a chemistry laboratory, Richardson Hall has since served several functions. In 1997 the structure was adapted to house the tailor shop, military store, and laundry facilities. *Richardson Hall is a contributing resource to the VMI Historic District.*

PLAQUE: MG William H. Richardson

DESCRIPTION: 30 inch by 20 inch bronze plaque located in Memorial Gardens.



William Harvie Richardson was a champion of the VMI mission from its inception. Second only to Smith, Preston, and Crozet, it may be argued that William Richardson is the most important figure in the creation and early history of VMI.

A veteran of the War of 1812, he served the Commonwealth as the first State Librarian, Secretary of the Commonwealth, and Adjutant General of Virginia (1841-1865, 1870-1876). Richardson was a member of the VMI BOV from 1844 to 1876.

As State Librarian, Richardson arranged for VMI to receive duplicate books from the State Library, thus creating the first library at the Institute. GEN Richardson took a special pride in personally delivering the VMI diplomas to the Governor every year

for signing and presenting them to Superintendent Smith before graduation. In 1844, he delivered his son's diploma to Smith.

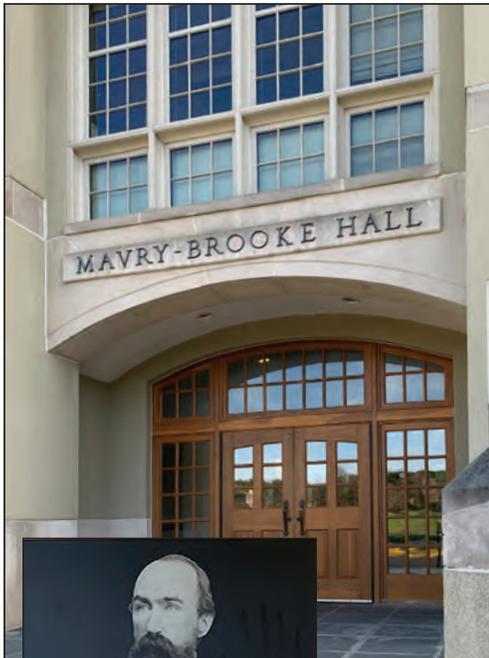
Richardson shepherded the appropriations bill through the General Assembly for the construction of the Barracks and other improvements in 1848. In fact, Richardson may have been the first to suggest that Gothic Revival should be considered for the design.

According to the 1860 census, Richardson owned nine slaves.

Upon his death in 1876 one-half of his estate was bequeathed to the Institute.

Original Intent: To acknowledge the key role played in the formative years of the Institute and the key role in the rebuilding of VMI in the post war years through his senior position in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

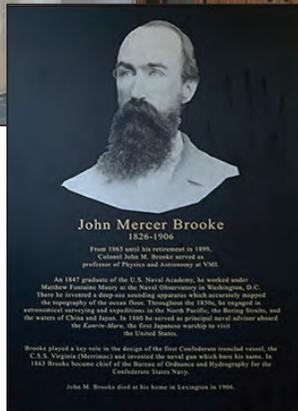
HONOREE: **John Mercer Brooke (1826-1906)**



BUILDING: Maury-Brooke Hall
DESCRIPTION: Designed by William Metcalf of Metcalf and Associates, and dedicated in 1989, Maury-Brooke Hall houses the chemistry and biology curricula. For the first 20 years the structure was simply known as The Science Building. After a major renovation in 2005, the name Maury-Brooke Hall was transferred from the original building so named in 1909 (now Shell Hall).



PLAQUE: John M. Brooke
 Created by admirers shortly after his death in 1906. Today located in Memorial Gardens.



PLAQUE Lobby, inside Maury-Brooke Hall



PAINTING: Battle of the CSS Virginia and the USS Monitor
 8' by 6' Oil on Canvas by George Walker, ca. 1910. Located in the lobby of Maury-Brooke Hall.

John Mercer Brooke arrived at VMI in October 1865, and began a career lasting 35 years until his death in 1906. One of the earliest graduates of the US Naval Academy, Brooke is considered one of the leading oceanographers of the 19th century. He invented a number of apparatuses for exploring the deep ocean floor, some of which are still in use today. His work helped chart the course of the first transatlantic cable. John M. Brooke was often recognized for his national and international contributions to science. As commander of the USS *Fenimore Cooper*, he charted much of the North Pacific Asian coastline. In 1859 he commanded the ship which brought the first Japanese diplomats to the US. Brooke worked closely with M. F. Maury on a number of projects in the 1850s.

Resigning his USN commission in 1861, Brooke became the head of the Confederate Bureau of Ordnance and Hydrography. Here he made a number of advances in naval ordnance including the Brooke Gun and designed the key features of the ironclad CSS Virginia (Merrimac). John Brooke began what must be one of the longest family academic legacies in American history. His son, George M., VMI 1896, was a very involved alumnus; grandson, George M., Jr, VMI 1936, taught at VMI for 38 years; great grandson George M., III, VMI 1967 carried on the tradition and great-great grandson Mercer, VMI 1994 continues to teach in the Physics Department.

Born in Florida to a military family, educated in the north and spending a career in the USN Brooke avoided a sectional view of the nation. His chief biographer suggests it was Brooke's allegiance to family heritage that required him to follow Virginia into the Confederacy. John Brooke did not own slaves. His position on slavery is not known. **Original Intent:** To recognize a faculty member with an international reputation in a significant manner commensurate to his service to VMI, the Commonwealth and the nation.

HONOREE: **John Thomas Lewis Preston (1811-1890)**



BUILDING: Preston Library

DESCRIPTION: On April 14, 1939 the VMI BOV voted to name the new main library in honor of founder J. T. L. Preston. Designed by the firm of Carneal & Johnston, the library was dedicated on November 11, 1939 during the centennial anniversary of the Institute.



MISCELLANEOUS: Parapet Wall Inscription

DESCRIPTION: Paragraph extracted from a paper written by Preston in 1836 exhorting the benefits of converting the old state arsenal into a new state supported military college.

John Thomas Lewis Preston

was born in Lexington on April 25, 1811. He attended Washington College (W&L), UVA and Yale. He was practicing law in his hometown when he became interested in the concept of adding the mission of college education to the function of the state arsenal located on the edge of town. Preston became the most articulate champion of the concept. He helped organize the new military college and became its second professor, serving as Professor of Languages, Modern and Classical.

During the 1830s Preston engaged in several debates over the questions of slavery and succession through his membership in the Franklin Society of Lexington. The deliberations of the society were not documented in detail, but it is known that he believed gradual emancipation provided the best way forward for the state and nation. A supporter the Liberia colonization efforts, Preston participated in the 1849

farewell ceremony at the Presbyterian Church for 33 Rockbridge County freed slaves emigrating to Liberia. His future wife, Margaret Junkin, wrote a special hymn for the event which stated voyage as a return to a home “where bondage cannot enter... free from all oppression.”

John Preston married Margaret in 1857. She was the daughter of the president of Washington College and a major 19th century literary figure known as the “Poetess of the South.” Margaret’s sister Elinor was the first wife of Thomas J. Jackson.

J. T. L. Preston helped administer and teach the “Colored Sunday School” at the Lexington Presbyterian Church along with his brother-in-law Thomas Jackson. According to the 1860 US Census, Preston owned two female and one male slave.

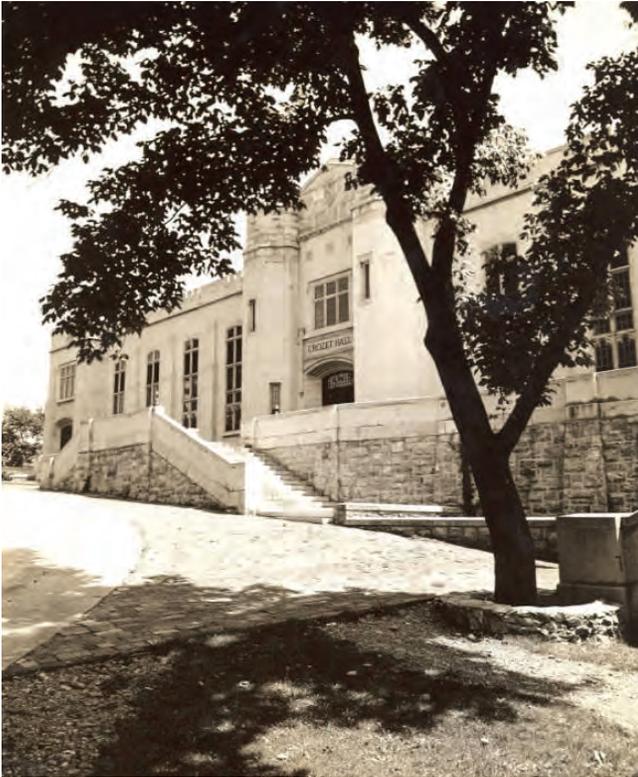
An ardent Unionist, but when Virginia seceded, Preston sided with his native state. During the summer of 1861,

he served as Lieutenant Colonel, 9th Virginia Infantry. For a brief period Preston served as Aide-de-Camp to General T. J. Jackson. He resumed his duties at VMI for the remainder of the war.

After the Civil War Preston returned to his teaching duties at VMI until his retirement in 1882. He continued to teach and administer the Colored Sunday School, which tripled in size during the post war era, until it disbanded in 1887.

Original Intent: To recognize the person credited with conceiving the idea of a state sponsored military college on the grounds of the state arsenal. Preston was the second VMI professor and acting superintendent in the absence of F. H. Smith, serving a total of 48 years. There is no mention of Confederate service in his recognition.

HONOREE: **Claudius Crozet (1789-1864)**



MONUMENT: Claudius Crozet is buried beneath a granite marker near the building that bears his name.

BUILDING: **Crozet Hall** was constructed in 1934 to house the corps dining facilities.

Claudius Crozet was born in France, educated at Ecole Polytechnic and fought as an officer with Napoleon. In 1816 he came to America to teach at the United States Military Academy. In the 1820s Crozet became the State Engineer for Virginia. His interest in education, engineering, and military service led to him being appointed the first president of the VMI Board of Visitors, where he served for eight years. Along with John Preston and Francis Smith, Crozet is recognized as one of the three founders of the Institute.

As one of the leading engineers of the 19th century, Crozet's contributions to the Commonwealth are significant. His primary impact was in the development of railroads. When he completed the Afton Mountain Tunnel through the Blue Ridge Mountains in 1858, it was the longest such structure in North America and

was considered one of the greatest engineering feats of its time.

Labor for the creation of the 4,200 foot tunnel came from Irish and enslaved Black labor. Historian Mary Lyons writes that "more than 300 enslaved laborers, along with over a thousand Irish immigrants, worked under Crozet's supervision to fulfill Virginia's long-term goal of linking the navigable rivers of the Chesapeake Bay watershed with the Ohio River and points west."

Crozet made several contributions to higher education prior to his involvement with VMI. He wrote several mathematics texts and was one of the first to use black boards in his classrooms.

Crozet sought a position in service to the Confederacy directly from Jefferson Davis, but was refused due to age. When Smith and Preston briefly entered field service at Craney

Island, Portsmouth, in 1861, Crozet was considered for interim VMI Superintendent, which he refused due to age. Accordingly, he did not serve in the Confederacy.

At the time of his death in 1864, Crozet owned two elderly Black women. In his will he stated: "As regards my servants, Phoebe and Josephine, I desire their situation to remain as at present as long as they live in the Confederacy; but if either or both express a desire of going out of it, after admonishing them of the probable consequences to themselves of taking such a step, they may be allowed to remove, to any place they may choose for their future home."

Original Intent: To honor a founder of the nation's first state sponsored military school, nationally recognized engineer and leader in engineering education.

PAINTING: Charge of the New Market Cadets



The *Charge of the New Market Cadets* depicts the VMI Cadet Corps as they advanced across Jacob Bushong's wheat field during the culminating moments of the Battle of New Market, May 15, 1864.

The 21' by 18' oil on canvas painting is the work of Benjamin W. Clinedinst, VMI 1880, a member of the National Academy of Art. At the time of its unveiling on June 24, 1914, the painting was reported to be the largest military mural in America. Originally, the painting was adhered to the rear stage wall of the 1896 Jackson Memorial Hall (JMH). The canvas was successfully removed from the old building and mounted in the 1916 JMH, where it remains today.

The cadets are depicted in their standard field duty uniform, that is to say, not Confederate uniform, per se.

The flag depicted in the painting is the Regimental Corps flag, which has been carried by the cadets since 1842.

The artist took great care in depicting the expressions on the cadet faces at the moment of the charge: fear, determination, concern, commitment.

The painting has been described as the consummate statement of the "Brother Rat Spirit"—the corps doing together what none could do separately. Cadet John Howard described that spirit as the corps moved out of an orchard and into a wheat field over a split rail fence:

It was an ordinary rail fence, probably about four feet high, but as I surmounted the topmost rail I felt at least ten feet up in the air and the special object of hostile aim. But in clearing this obstruction I was leaving all thought of individuality behind. It was the corps forward!

The battlefield depicted has become a surrogate for the thousands of battlefields on which VMI alumni have sacrificed through time; the service of the cadets depicted has become the standard expected of alumni similarly called to duty.

The Battle of New Market was not the only time that the Corps of Cadets were called out to the field, but it is the only time they were engaged in pitched battle. Indeed, it remains today the only time any American college student body has ever been engaged in battle under their own command.

When Superintendent Smith authorized allowing the corps to join Confederate General John Breckinridge on his march to meet the Union Army in May 1864, the corps was in service to the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Governor. Smith did not have time to request the Governor's approval to allow the cadets to join Breckinridge. Smith, alone, assumed responsibility for his decision to do so. While actually under the *command* of General Breckinridge, the corps remained under the *authority* of the Commonwealth, as they had been since 1839.

Clinedinst used his teenaged son as the model for several of the cadets who are in the moment of their wounding. When his own son volunteered to serve in WWI, Clinedinst returned to VMI intent on painting out his son's face being wounded on a battlefield. The VMI administration thwarted several attempts by the artist to change the painting, and it remains as it was originally painted in 1914. This effort conveys the timelessness of the human sacrifice depicted in Clinedinst's work.

Original Intent: To create a tribute to a singular moment in American collegiate history: the VMI Corps of Cadets accomplishing a goal beyond anyone's expectation.

What originated as a painting of a moment in time has, over the generations, become a symbol of VMI cadet courage, fidelity, sacrifice, and duty tested not just on the battlefield depicted, but on every battlefield to which VMI alumni have been called.



MEMORIAL STATUE: **Virginia Mourning Her Dead and the New Market Cadet Graves**



Virginia Mourning Her Dead was located in front of The Barracks in 1904, but moved to its current location in 1912. Six cadets who died in the Battle of New Market were buried in a crypt below the statue at that time. Six bronze tablets list the names of cadets and faculty who served at New Market.

In the wake of the Battle of New Market (May 15, 1864) Moses Ezekiel, the first Jew to attend VMI, discovered his best friend, Cadet Thomas G. Jefferson, mortally wounded. Ezekiel cared for Jefferson over the next two days. The young cadet died while being held in Ezekiel's arms as the Jewish cadet read to his Gentile friend from the New Testament "In my father's house, there are many mansions..."

After graduation from VMI in 1866, Ezekiel began his studies to become a sculptor. He would become the first American Jewish sculptor of international repute. Perhaps to heal mental wounds left from his war experience, one of the young sculptor's earliest pieces was *Virginia Mourning Her Dead*.

The same year Ezekiel graduated, the Institute sent a contingent of cadets to New Market to retrieve the bodies of the cadets who had died in the May 15, 1864 battle.

In 1893 VMI contacted their now world famous sculptor regarding a memorial to the cadets who had died at the Battle of New Market. Ezekiel immediately offered the work he had completed 25 years earlier.

My statue *Virginia Mourning Her*

Dead I have kept in plaster all these years... the chain mail clad female figure [Virtue, Virginia] is seated upon a piece of breastwork and her foot rests upon a broken cannon overgrown with ivy and she holds a reversed lance in her hand...

When *Virginia Mourning Her Dead* was moved to its current location, a burial vault housing the six cadet bodies was placed beneath the stone base of the statue.

During the renovation of Nichols Engineering Hall in the mid-2000s, granite markers were placed behind the statue for all ten New Market Cadet dead. Each stone provides basic biographical data and, if not at VMI, the location of the cadet's grave.

Cleveland State University Professor of Art History Samantha Baskind states the statue "mourned the dead from the day Ezekiel conceived it, not decades after the fact. The statue served as a salve to wash away the trauma of his experiences on the battlefield rather than celebrating a single individual with pernicious principles."

Original Intent:

To mark the graves of six "New Mar-

ket" cadets and provide cenotaphs for four others.

The granite markers do not include any Confederate iconography.

The statue was not commissioned in the traditional meaning of the word. The work filled a request from VMI to Ezekiel: create a memorial acknowledging the loss of VMI alumni during the Civil War. Born out of one sculptor's personal experience in war, the statue is about the greater, timeless concepts of service to and loss during one's service to country.

What began as one individual's effort to deal with the horrors of war has today become a memorial for the 600 VMI alumni who have died in service to the nation from 1846 to 2011.

