ForeWord Reviews

Footnote Washington
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Gardner's brisk, wry voice packs a plethora of information gathered by Rash into an all too brief amount of time. As Rash's recollection of anecdotes and historical facts spring humorously to life, the traditional view of history as taught in grammar school is forever eclipsed by insights into national heroes which forcibly remind us of their humanity and personal foibles.

Rash firmly grounds his stories with an anecdote regarding the site of the cornerstone of the Capitol building. Firmly, pun intended, because no one knows where the silver cornerstone lies and even metal detectors haven't been able to locate it. The cornerstones for the White House and the Smithsonian are also "missing." Another anecdote involves a statue dedicated to a famous Civil War general whose identity may have been under dispute, but who always, always rode a "fiery stallion" into battle. The magnificent bronze showed him seated on a mare. The sculptor reportedly snuck back in the middle of the night and welded the proper attachments to the horse.

Other anecdotes reminisce about the politics involved in the decision to place the capitol on the Potomac; the fact that the statue of Freedom on top of the rotunda looks like an "Indian princess" (a Southern legislator objected to her wearing a soft cap much like the Roman slaves wore when they won freedom because it might send a message of revolt to American slaves); a marble bath is responsible for the death of a senator; and a teenage girl spent hours sketching Abraham Lincoln in the White House, and she later designed the Lincoln Memorial (except for the head which was sculpted by a man who deliberately did not carve a left ear to reflect the incompleteness of Lincoln's life).

This audiobook is a fascinating history of Washington D.C. Americana.