

**Edward P. Moser.** *The White House's Unruly Neighborhood: Crime, Scandal and Intrigue in the History of Lafayette Square.* Jefferson: McFarland, 202. 261 pp. \$39.95, paper, ISBN 978-1-4766-7486-5.

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Edward P. Moser, the operator of the Lafayette Square Tour of Scandal, Assassination & Intrigue, has written a book to flesh out his tour. *The White House's Unruly Neighborhood: Crime, Scandal, and Intrigue in the History of Lafayette Square* is an entertaining work of popular history that is likely to appeal to even long-time residents of Washington, DC. A surprisingly comprehensive list of references for each entry encourages further research.

The book is misnamed. Moser covers the entire downtown of the District, often using a building or statue to venture further afield. As one example, Moser begins with the statue of Albert Gallatin at the entrance of the Treasury Building on Pennsylvania Avenue before focusing on Gallatin's role in the Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania. It is a bit of stretch to link the Whiskey Rebellion to crime, scandal, or intrigue, although George Washington and Alexander Hamilton might disagree. Nevertheless, the chapter is a well-written introduction to the forgotten Swiss founding father of the United States. The chapter on the Camel Corps is another that ventures far from the District.

The chapter on places connected to Alexander Hamilton will appeal to fans of Lin-Manuel Miranda's play. Chapters that focus more tightly on crime cover Major Henry Rathbone, who sat with the

Lincolns in Ford's Theatre on a fateful April evening before going murderously insane, and the long-lost brothels on the present-day site of the Smithsonian Institution. The scandals include the entire life of Daniel Sickles, who shot to death the son of national anthem writer Francis Scott Key between bouts of adultery and swindling, as well as the dueling death of naval hero Stephen Decatur. The tragic life of socialite Kate Chase and the treasonous life of Confederate spy Rose O'Neal Greenhow are also covered.

Most of the subjects, such as suicidal Clover Adams of the Hay-Adams Hotel, are addressed elsewhere in full-length books, but Moser's work serves as a good introduction. There is also quite a bit of diversity, including the allegedly gay life of Baron von Steuben, but Frederick Douglass and his then-scandalous second marriage to a white woman is missing. Minor editing issues slightly mar the book: Greenhow is identified as "Greenough" in her chapter except in the references. This would be a good purchase for a history-minded visitor to Washington, DC, or a resident looking for the stories behind the buildings.

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