



Incidental Architect: William Thornton and the Cultural Life of Early Washington, D.C., 1794-1828

By Gordon S. Brown

Ohio University Press, United States, 2009. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 251 x 175 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. While the majority of scholarship on early Washington focuses on its political and physical development, in *Incidental Architect* Gordon S. Brown describes the intellectual and social scene of the late 1700s through the lives of a prominent couple whose cultural aspirations served as both model and mirror for the city u2019s own. When William and Anna Maria Thornton arrived in Washington, D.C., in 1794, the new nation u2019s capital was little more than a raw village. The Edinburgh-educated Thornton and his accomplished wife brought with them the values of the Scottish Enlightenment, an enthusiasm for the arts, and a polished urbanity that was lacking in the little city emerging from the swamps along the Potomac. Thornton u2019s talents were manifold: He is perhaps best known as the original architect of the Capitol building, but he also served as a city commissioner and as director of the Patent Office, where his own experimentation in steam navigation embroiled him in a long-running dispute with inventor Robert Fulton. In spite of their general preoccupation with politics and real estate development, Washington u2019s citizens...

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