

A Brief History of American Culture

By Robert M. Crunden

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"The discussion of each period is wide-ranging, analyzing movements and spotlighting major figures in politics and philosophy, law and literature, economics and education, jazz and journalism, science and civil rights. A readable, insightful overview of the underlying patterns that give shape to U.S. cultural history. Nonacademic readers will find Crunden's selective bibliographical essay helpful". -- Booklist

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Editorial Review

From Booklist
Over the past 20 years, University of Texas at Austin history professor Crunden has taught and lectured around the world, most notably in Finland, Germany, Australia, and India. Seeking to help students in other countries understand the U.S., he has come to perceive in American culture "a peculiar mixture of Christianity, capitalism, and democracy" (in order of chronology as well as importance). Crunden's *Brief History* covers five historical phases: local culture (1630-1815), sectional culture (1815-1901), "the Northern Nation" (1865-1917), national culture (1901-1941), and cosmopolitan culture (1941-present). The discussion of each period is wide-ranging, analyzing movements and spotlighting major figures in politics and philosophy, law and literature, economics and education, jazz and journalism, science and civil rights. A readable, insightful overview of the underlying patterns that give shape to U.S. cultural history. Nonacademic readers will find Crunden's selective bibliographical essay helpful *Mary Carroll*

From Kirkus Reviews
Reworking a book first published abroad, Crunden (American Civilization/Univ. of Texas at Austin) provides readers in these United States with a useful overview of their cultural history. The narrative presents American creative endeavor as gradually increasing in scale and growing more integrated into the world. Crunden (American Salons, 1992, etc.) begins with ``local culture," looking in turn at Puritan Boston, Enlightened Philadelphia, and the Virginia of the Founding Fathers. Discussing the subsequent era of North, South, and West, he shifts his emphasis from culture's religious and political dimensions toward the fine arts. Especially strong pages treat Washington Irving and John James Audubon. Somewhat scanting the Civil War, Crunden moves quickly to a discussion of the national culture that found progressives and pragmatists tempering capitalist excesses. Mini- biographies--e.g., of William and Henry James, of Alice Hamilton- - convey much information. Paradoxically, the emergence of international modernism crowns Crunden's narrative of the specifically American. Charles Ives and Frank Lloyd Wright, we find, were following European leads by formalizing indigenous national styles. The author further gestures toward an apotheosis of the American with a final section on ``cosmopolitan culture." A profile of William F. Buckley Jr. nicely encapsulates the emergence of a ``conservative hegemony," while an examination of T. Coraghessan Boyle's fiction as exemplary post-60s literature works surprisingly well. Crunden represents contemporary academic thought by rehashing David Lehman's denunciations of Paul de Man and followers--this is a letdown in the wake of his superb account of transatlantic intellectual exchange around the time of the Second World War. But this history aspires to start, not finish, debates over coverage; its risky choices work to stimulate rather than to conceal. Leavening common information with uncommon insights and skillfully managing--without directly addressing--the difficulties of its mission, Crunden's work should provoke fine conversations on what Americans might want to say next. -- *Copyright ©1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Review
American religion, politics, and the arts from 1600 to the 1990s benefits from a panoramic survey which charts the rise and fall of movements, the influence of politics on popular developments, and the roots of democratic, Christian culture. -- *Midwest Book Review*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Brent Cook:

The knowledge that you get from A Brief History of American Culture is the more deep you rooting the information that hide into the words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to know but A Brief History of American Culture giving you joy feeling of reading. The writer conveys their point in specific way that can be understood by anyone who read the item because the author of this guide is well-known enough. This particular book also makes your own personal vocabulary increase well. So it is easy to understand then can go to you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We recommend you for having this A Brief History of American Culture instantly.

Charlie Bowers:

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Monica Ceja:

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Glenn Hancock:

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