This is an electronic copy of a book review which was originally published as: Sifton, D. (2009). [Review of the book The Britannica guide to the 100 most influential Americans: The people who shaped the United States]. Library Journal, 134(9), 97-98.

Library Journal is available online at: http://libraryjournal.com
BIOGRAPHY


This is reference leader Britannica's latest entry in its growing series of one-volume guides on diverse topics. Previous titles include The Islamic World, The 100 Most Influential Scientists, and Ideas That Made the Modern World. Like the fabric of the nation itself, the entries in this book are made up of a varied collection of determined men and women from all walks of life, many of whom
came to call America home long after their births. Expected luminaries like George Washington, Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Mark Twain, and Martin Luther King Jr. are all here, as are other less expected but no less deserving figures such as Ray Kroc of McDonald’s fame, Walt Disney, Dr. Seuss, James Dewey Watson, and Michael Jordan. Entries are arranged chronologically and heavily weighted toward the 20th century. In simple, accessible prose, each chronicles the figure’s life and key contributions and ranges in length from a single page to several.

BOTTOM LINE Although focusing on influential Americans, Baron’s 20th Century: 100 Influential People excludes over two centuries of notables. Similarly, Weber’s Thumbnail Sketches: 29 Important Americans lacks the breadth typically found here as well as in other Britannica guides. A list of additional readings would have strengthened the book’s role as an entry point for further research. The highly portable paperback format makes this an easily accessible title that would do well in public library collections.—Daniel Sifton, Cariboo Regional Dist. Lib., Williams Lake, B.C.