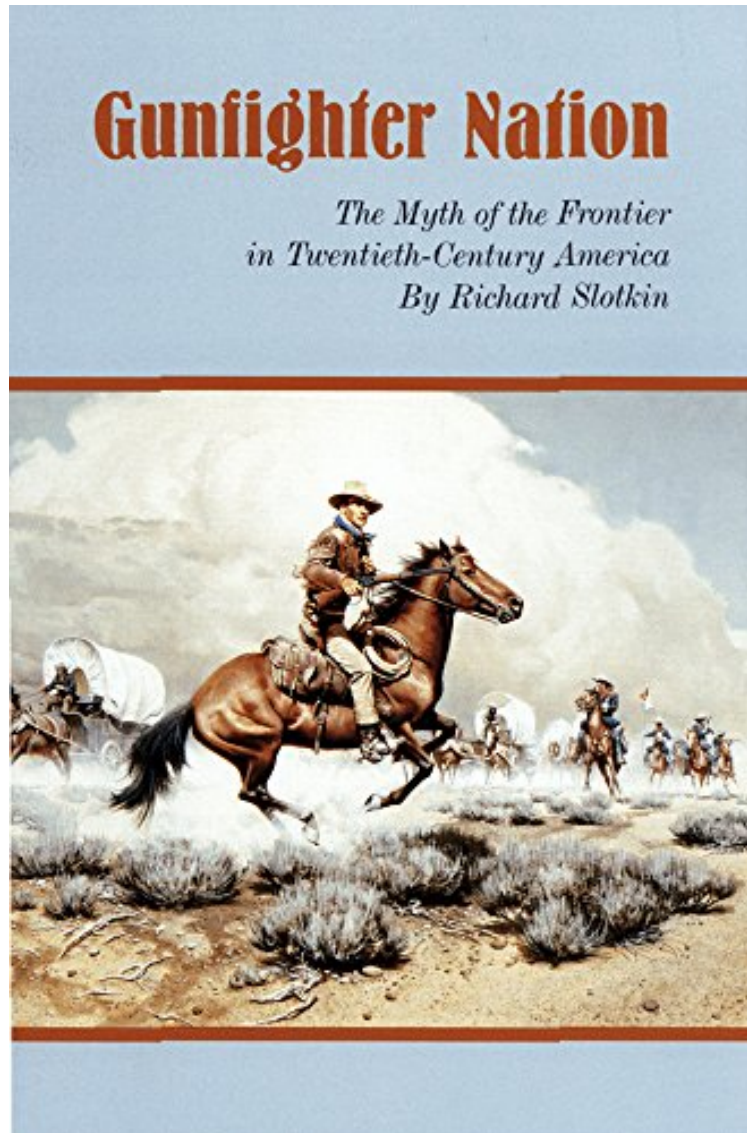


[Mobile ebook] Gunfighter Nation: Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America, The

Gunfighter Nation: Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America, The

Richard Slotkin

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Gunfighter Nation completes Richard Slotkin's trilogy, begun in *Regeneration Through Violence* and continued in *Fatal Environment*, on the myth of the American frontier. Slotkin examines an impressive array of sources - fiction, Hollywood westerns, and the writings of Hollywood figures and Washington leaders - to show how the racialist theory of Anglo-Saxon ascendance and superiority (embodied in Theodore Roosevelt's *The Winning of the West*), rather than Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis of the closing of the frontier, exerted the most influence in popular culture and government policy making in the twentieth century. He argues that Roosevelt's view of the frontier myth provided the justification for most of America's expansionist policies, from Roosevelt's own *Rough Riders* to Kennedy's counterinsurgency and Johnson's war in Vietnam.

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Gunfighter Nation concludes Richard Slotkin's three-volume study, which began in 1973 with the publication of *Regeneration Through Violence*, of the significance of the frontier in the American imagination. Looking primarily at pulp novels and films, Slotkin takes a painstakingly thorough look at the relationship between imagery of the West in industrial mass culture and U.S. foreign policy during the 20th century. Specifically, he looks at how the previous century's "frontier aristocrat" served as the model diplomat for America's agenda of economic imperialism from the Spanish American War to the "police action" in Vietnam. As the U.S. gained international stature, the archetype of the frontier aristocrat articulated the goals and ideals of the American populace. But Slotkin shows how, as time progressed, the increasing irrelevance of the frontier myth on foreign soil foiled the prowess of the U.S. war machine. At the book's conclusion, in which images of the My Lai Massacre are juxtaposed against the final shootout of Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch*, the contradiction between faith and experience becomes painfully evident. *Gunfighter Nation* delivers the satisfaction of a historian with the acquired wisdom to address directly the issues that inspired his lifelong work. --John M. Anderson
From *Publishers Weekly*
The myth of the Western frontier--which assumes that whites' conquest of Native Americans and the taming of the wilderness were preordained means to a progressive, civilized society--is embedded in our national psyche. U.S. troops called Vietnam "Indian country." President John Kennedy invoked "New Frontier" symbolism to seek support for counterinsurgency abroad. In an absorbing, valuable, scholarly study, Slotkin, director of American studies at Wesleyan University, traces the pervasiveness of frontier mythology in American consciousness from 1890 to the present. Theodore Roosevelt's "progressive" version of the frontier myth was used to justify conquest of the Philippines and the emergence of a new managerial class. Dime novels and detective stories adapted the myth to portray gallant heroes repressing strikers, immigrants and dissidents. Completing a trilogy begun with *Regeneration Through Violence* and *The Fatal Environment*, Slotkin unmasks frontier mythmaking in novels and Hollywood movies. The myth's emphasis on use of force over social solutions has had a destructive impact, he shows, on our handling of urban violence, racial conflict and the "drug war." Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From the Publisher
The concluding volume of Richard Slotkin's highly acclaimed trilogy draws on a wide range of sources to examine the pervasive influence of Wild West myths on American culture and politics.