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Exploring the Next Frontier: Vietnam, NASA, Star Trek and Utopia in 1960s and 70s American Myth and History (Routledge Advances in American History)

Matthew Wilhelm Kapell

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The 1960s and early 70s saw the evolution of Frontier Myths even as scholars were renouncing the interpretive value of myths themselves. Works like Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War* exemplified that rejection using his experiences during the Vietnam War to illustrate the problematic consequences of simple mythic idealism. Simultaneously, Americans were playing with expanded and revised versions of familiar Frontier Myths, though in a contemporary context, through NASA's lunar missions, *Star Trek*, and Gerard K. O'Neill's High Frontier.

This book examines the reasons behind the exclusion of Frontier Myths to the periphery of scholarly discourse, and endeavors to build a new model for understanding their enduring significance. This model connects NASA's failed attempts to recycle earlier myths, wholesale, to *Star Trek*'s revision of those myths and rejection of the idea of a frontier paradise, to O'Neill's desire to realize such a paradise in Earth's orbit. This new synthesis defies the negative connotations of Frontier Myths during the 1960s and 70s and attempts to resuscitate them for relevance in the modern academic context.

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