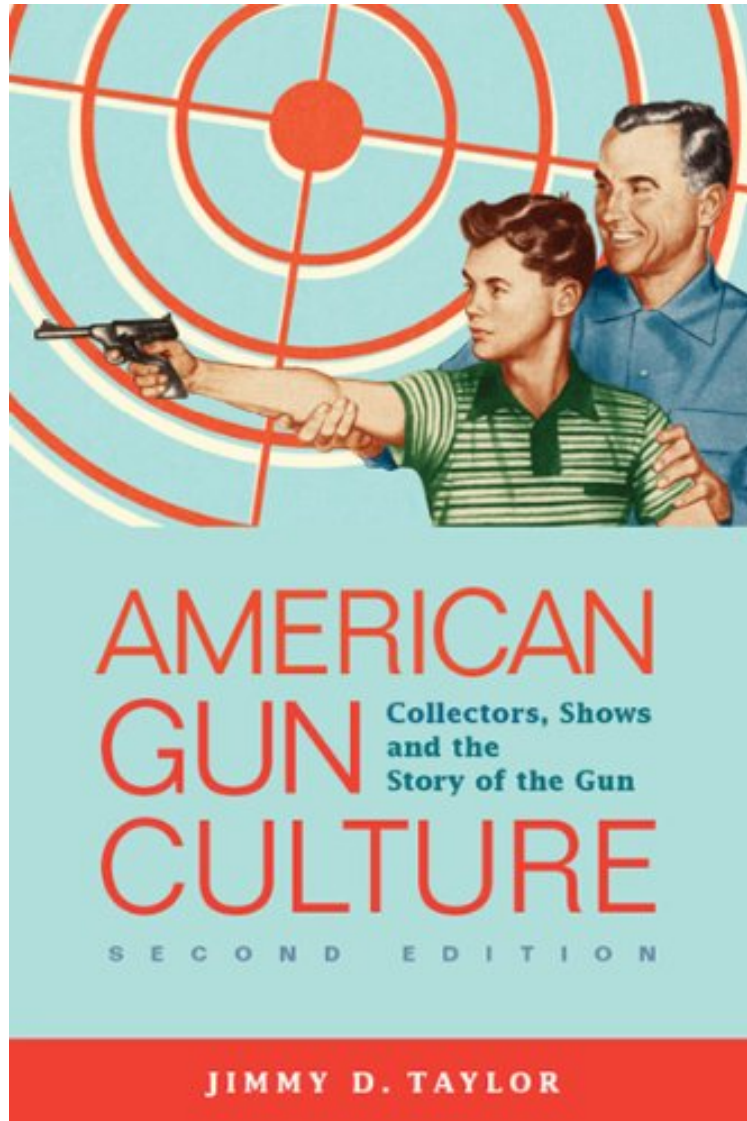


[Download] American Gun Culture: Collectors, Shows, and the Story of the Gun

American Gun Culture: Collectors, Shows, and the Story of the Gun

Jimmy D. Taylor

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Jimmy D. Taylor : American Gun Culture: Collectors, Shows, and the Story of the Gun before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Gun Culture: Collectors, Shows, and the Story of the Gun:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. ... for class taught by Jimmy Taylor and expected to dislike it. By CustomerHad to buy this book for class taught by Jimmy Taylor and expected to dislike it...but I was surprised to find that I found the book quite enjoyable. Very well written and easy to connect to, great read!6 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Data poor and riddled with Mr. Taylor's own prejudicesBy Brian K. MillerI grew up in a

household filled with firearms. My grandfather and grandmother were both fine shots who considered a good firearm to be no different than a good hammer or a well-seasoned frying pan. For my paternal grandparents a firearm was a tool like any other tool demanding a certain precision to function well and a certain level of skill to perform that function. My father has been an avid firearms enthusiast since he was a child. As a teenager he owned several firearms and learned how to reload in order to save money on ammo and be able to shoot more frequently. During his enlistment in the US Army he spent far more time traveling and competing with the pistol and rifle team than he did working at his primary MOS. He has bought, sold, traded away, and given as gifts more types of firearms than most people realize exist. By the time I graduated high school I was an excellent shot with both rifles and handguns and I owned two rifles of my own. When I married and moved to Japan, I wrote my Father and asked him to sell my rifles because I knew it was unlikely I would ever live in the United States again. Life often does not go according to plan. I am back in the United States and have been for about five years. I own about a dozen firearms, both rifles and handguns, I'm still a pretty good shot, I have a CCL issued by the State of Ohio so I carry a handgun everywhere I go, and I practice regularly, often two or three times a week. It is important to get my relationship with firearms out before I review Mr. Taylor's book because my perspective on this issue is far from unbiased. Not only am I a firearms aficionado, my college education is centered on anthropology and history, so I am also familiar with the social sciences from an academic standpoint. American firearms owners and collectors are as diverse a group as any population a scholar might choose to study. They come from all walks of life and all educational backgrounds. Some of them are very casual about their firearms, rather like my grandparents, others are so emotionally invested in firearms it approaches religious fervor. Naturally they fill the scale between these two extremes. This creates the first problem with Mr. Taylor's book: his sample is far too small. He conducted only 52 "semi-structured interviews", used a "snowball approach" to casual sampling at gun shows and other venues (as described on page 35), and attended a single cowboy shooting event (Desperadoville, pages 77-81). Despite the fact that there are an estimated two hundred million households with at least one firearm on the premises, he did not attempt a single mass survey or formal interview campaign. Instead, he substituted unverified and unverifiable statistics as well as a dozen or so social philosophers to expand his extremely limited data pool into a cross-regional, cross-cultural generalization of American firearms owners. He relied heavily on Emile Durkheim's, "Elementary Forms of the Religious Life" to justify both his sporadic data collection and his reliance on "ritual" to explain away everyday facets of firearms ownership. It is not the least bit surprising that most of the "quotes" he includes in the text are strongly sexist and rife with sexual innuendo, giving a very clear impression that American gun owners are bigoted white men who worship the "power" of their firearms. Many readers will come away from this book convinced American gun owners are a dying breed of deeply prejudiced relics of an earlier age because that is the picture this book convincingly paints. Despite the growing number of women who own firearms, compete in firearms matches, and collect firearms as a hobby, the only time women appear on these pages is to reinforce the idea that the "real" American gun owners consider them second class citizens lacking the proper testosterone to appreciate a good gun. I could easily present Mr. Taylor with a dozen women who not only own firearms, they are just as avid in their pursuit of firearms ownership as any relic of lost masculinity he presents on these pages. Consider this typical quote from page 85, "In terms of the center of guns being masculine and protected, here we have another example of women finding it difficult to simply empower themselves by taking up arms. Focusing on the language, we can see that the female informant who is wanting me to know that women are treated as equals at least at this particular venue didn't catch that she was telling me that "they" (the men) "let" the women and girls shoot there -- implying that men are still in the dominant position and women must have their permission to be there -- or anywhere." Having been to hundreds of gun shows in three states, talked with countless women who pursue firearms as a hobby, and being an avid follower myself of both Gabby Franco (Top Shot participant and former member of the Venezuelan Olympic shooting team) and Eva Shockey (world class trophy hunter with both firearms and bows), I have to wonder how many women he had to interview to collect that one quote and how much he had to distort her words to reinforce his theme of women as second class citizens in the world of firearms aficionados? Even assuming he quoted her accurately, her semantics are clearly NOT intended to imply she "needs" someone's "permission" to attend and compete in the Desperadoville event, just the opposite in fact. It is only by resorting to a poorly framed attack on her semantics that Mr. Taylor can reinforce his vision of a world of poor, oppressed women struggling to prove they are as good as the men. It seems to me the real bigot here is the Mr. Taylor himself as he fights desperately to find some kind of data to support his contention that American gun owners are merely old-fashioned misogynists whose sole interest in firearms is practicing masculine rituals and reinforcing masculine symbols. Oh, wait, I've walked right into his convoluted logic trap. Surely if he or one of his fans reads my review instead of considering that my perspective might be as valid as their own they will simply dismiss my words as a "special type of ritualistic behavior (which) centers on the management of suspect identities." And therein lies the single most annoying aspect of this book. From the first page of the "Preface" through the final page of his "Discussion and Implications", Mr. Taylor assumes two things: gun owners are uncivilized barbarians with no place in the modern world and anyone who disagrees with him is also less than human.

Taylor's neutral account of U.S. gun culture never loses sight of the fact that guns are all around us. With millions of guns and gun owners, it is imperative that policy and future research pertaining to guns consider the relative cultural and symbolic value that gun owners place on their guns. Taylor's candid, emotional and occasionally funny research explores the symbolic meaning of guns and the ways in which the meaning assigned to guns influences gun ownership and use. Some of his more interesting findings center around conversations with gun collectors and enthusiasts about a series of interaction rituals; rituals pertaining to being a gun owner, a gun user, and possibly even the gun as an object of near-worship. Gun owners also recognize a unique stigma, and respond through a complex series of stigma management techniques. And much, much more

About the Author Jim Taylor is an author, researcher, proud husband and father and Professor of Sociology and Criminology. A lifelong motorcycle rider, hack songwriter/musician, former skydiver and occasional bull rider, Jim's simple philosophy that carries over into his work is that life is about doing, sharing and experiencing new things. Dr. Taylor continues to research social problems and masculine sub-cultures.