



The Ferguson Rifle

Louis L'Amour

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It began with gold that had once belonged to Montezuma. Stolen and cached in a church in Mexico, it was recovered by two army officers who fled north for the French settlements. Along the way one stabbed the other to death. The remaining officer was eventually killed by Plains Indians, but he buried the treasure just before he died.

Now Ronan Chantry, a handful of trappers, and an Irish girl whose father was killed after telling her a few vague landmarks are searching for the lost treasure. But they are not alone. The girl's uncle, Rafen Falvey, wants it, too. Like Chantry, he is well educated, bold, and determined. Under different circumstances the two men might have been friends. But in all likelihood it wouldn't have made any difference. When it comes to gold, even friendship doesn't keep men from killing each other.

The Ferguson Rifle Details

Date : Published (first published March 1973)

ISBN :

Author : Louis L'Amour

Format : Kindle Edition 242 pages

Genre : Westerns, Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction

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From Reader Review The Ferguson Rifle for online ebook

Oleta Blaylock says

Well this was a different story from the previous books I have read by this author. Ronan Chantry has come west after the loss of his wife and son in a fire. Ronan was raised in the woods of Carolina and eventually moved to Boston. He studied hard and became a teacher and scholar. The mountains never left him and when tragedy happened he gave up the cities and universities. Chantry runs into a group of men heading into the western mountains to do some trapping and he joins them on their quest. It isn't long before they are entangled in a search for treasure taking a young woman with them to help him with the search and to protect her.

There are fights with Indians, the group of evil men that are following the young lady and the elements of a fall in the Rocky Mountains. There are gun battles and a fist fight and puzzle to how to find the treasure. There are descriptions of beautiful mountain meadow and craggy mountains. Lots of buffalo, antelope and deer. So much beautiful country and all the colors and textures and smells of that high country. I don't think that anyone has ever made me long for those places like Louis L'Amour can. I love these books and I haven't read a poorly written one yet.

Heather says

I didn't enjoy this book as much as *Where the Long Grass Blows* which I read earlier this year. I found it very slow in places, parts of the plot were unbelievable and there was a lot of repetition and aimless wandering. *The Ferguson Rifle* lacked the excitement of other books by this author (except for the fist fight at the end) and Chantry, being a well-educated, city man, lacked the masculine toughness that is usually found in L'Amour's male protagonists.

Jason King says

Not one of L'Amour's best - wanders around pretty aimlessly until the final third of the novel, to the point that it feels like the author didn't exactly know what to do himself. While this may make the story more real, it makes the narrative pretty weak.

Jordan says

I actually read *The Ferguson Rifle* for the first time years ago* and loved it, but I recently won the audiobook from Goodreads via their FirstReads program. This lined up nicely with a road trip my wife and I had to take, and so the adventure began anew....

I don't usually do audiobooks, as I have little time for them. I don't have copious amounts of driving built into my day (if this ever changes, I likely will start consuming larger quantities), I can't listen at work, and frankly given the choice I would rather actually read the book myself. All that said, this was an excellent

production. The reader, Brian D'Arcy James, has a marvelous command of accents, be they British, Scottish or Irish, and this book allowed him to showcase them to great effect. My wife and I both loved it, so I am reasonably sure this book will please both Louis L'Amour fanatics and newcomers.

It is no real secret that given how many novels L'Amour wrote that were set in the old west, sometimes they tend to run together in your memory. This, however, is one of those especially excellent entries in his bibliography that stand out in your memory both from sheer uniqueness and from persistent quality. Unlike most of Louis L'Amour's bibliography, this book is not a "western" in the classical sense. It is set on America's frontier around the year 1800, meaning the northerly Great Plains—the Dakotas, Montana, that area. In another sense, however, this is very much a western. That was "the west" at the time being described, just as what we now think of as the "east coast" was at one point the western frontier of exploration. It is into this territory, newly bought from France through the Louisiana Purchase, that Ronan Chantry rides. His old life is dead, all he loves burned up in a tragic fire. Now all he has is his experience on the frontier as a boy, his education in Europe as a man, his horse, and the extraordinary rifle he was given as a boy. He rides with a company of trappers into a new land, nearly unexplored, in search of a new start. When he discovers the trail of a woman and boy alone, being ruthlessly hunted by unsavory men, Ronan feels called to help. But when there is a fabled fortune of gold in the offering, men are not likely to give up its pursuit easily....

I'm a known Louis L'Amour devotee, so I absolutely loved this. No one crafts an adventure like Louis L'Amour, and few writers I've found have his appreciation for the scope of human history and the persistent force of western movement, while still retaining an appreciation for the contributions of the individual to history's march. This is one of those books that, while reading, makes you yearn to look out across the unspoiled territory this country once was, to stand where his characters stand and see what they see. There's a beauty to it, and you can hear in L'Amour's writing a lilting note of mourning for what we have lost. He does not blame the pioneers and the farmers for what has happened, he understands history too well for that, and appreciates the inevitability of the march of "progress." That doesn't mean he (or his characters) have to like it. Ditto for the Indians, and you see that here as well. There are several sequences where the Indian is discussed, his character, his future, and his habits. Again, L'Amour understands why things happened as they did, but it still saddens him. Longtime Louis L'Amour readers will know what to expect in terms of characters and character development—there's not usually a whole lot of moral ambiguity to a L'Amour adventure, there are good guys and bad guys, and they know their roles. Is that a problem? Not so far as I'm concerned. We need stories like that just as much as we need the other kind, maybe more. And this day and age, that type of story is harder to find.

CONTENT: Mild language, some violence, little to no sexual content.

*I've read most of Louis L'Amour's books, but I can't always remember which ones. This is fine—I'm totally up for reading a lot of them again. Probably going to go questing to read the entire bibliography at some point.

Frederick Danysh says

Ronan Chantry searches for Montezuma's gold along with an Irish girl's father was killed after telling her about some landmarks to the treasure. But others want the gold.

D. E. says

An excellent writing by 'LL about a Long Rifle carried by a mountain man. The Long Rifle had been obtained from a sniper during the war with the British at Kings Mountain, TN. If you ever pass that way the state park allows entry to the cemetery so visitors can see the names of our forefathers. This is an excellent read for the genre.DEHS

Craig Turnbull says

"That's the trouble with crime: the company's bad."

Louis L'Amour may well be America's greatest Western/Frontier writer. It would seem his writing process consists of taking equal parts horses, steel-spined riders, ladies in distress, a solid bad guy, and of course guns, and mixing them together in a randomizer to make a sure hit.

The Ferguson Rifle was no different. Set in the early years of the 19th century, our hero Ronan Chantry (oh, you also have to throw in the randomizer a cool name for the hero, i.e. Hondo), has lost everything, and in mourning decides to run West to die. Along the way, and interrupting his not-so-well-thought-out plan, he comes across an Irish girl who's not only looking for treasure, but who is also not surprisingly, in distress. Tossing in the fact that Mr. steel-spined rider, Ronan, also happens to have a quick-loading Ferguson rifle, and is just looking for somebody to make trouble, you have the makings of a potentially perfect Western-ish book.

I didn't like Ronan as much as I liked other L'Amour characters (like the aforementioned superstar Honda), and that was probably because whenever Ronan was alone with his thoughts he was quite fond of telling himself how awesome he was.

But, that being said, it was a fun read...and the bad guy got it, so I'm happy with that.

Greg Strandberg says

Good book, with the narrative being the best part in my opinion. I like how the main character thinks back on his earlier days, thinks on the Indians around him, and even old philosophers that are long dead.

Chantry is a smart man, and I did not read the first book with him in it. I picked this one up at the library because I liked the cover. It's set in the earlier-1800's and makes for a good story. Sometimes I got lost between the characters and other times I found myself drifting. Usually those long paragraphs of narrative would pull me back.

I'm not a big fan of the books written in first person, but this one was alright. I look forward to reading more from the author.

Skjam! says

"My name is Ronan Chantry, and I am alone upon this land."

He is a scholar and a gentleman, but Ronan Chantry was raised in the wilderness, hunting, trapping and tracking. Now that his wife and son have died in a fire, and pursued by the reputation of killing a man in a duel, Chantry returns to the wilderness. He does not remain alone for long, joining a small band of men also going into the West to try their hand at fur trapping.

Their camp is nearly raided by allies of a treacherous Native American guide; but some time later the group makes friends with the Cheyenne, while trying to evade Spanish soldiers who have not yet gotten word that the Louisiana Purchase has gone through. Then Ronan stumbles across Lucinda Falvey, whose father was murdered for the secret of a lost treasure.

The murderer and his minions have pursued Lucinda into the Dakota Territory, and turns out to have connections to both Lucinda and Ronan's pasts. Chantry and his allies must evade the killers, find the treasure and get the woman to safety—perhaps an eccentric mountain man has the key to survival?

This is the first novel written in the Chantry family saga by all-time great Western writer Louis L'Amour. (But the last in internal chronology.) The title comes from Chantry's signature weapon, a firearm given to him by Major Ferguson himself. It's a customized prototype without the weakness in the lock mortise. Since the story is set about the time of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, a rapid-firing breechloader is a formidable advantage.

This is a fast-moving story with clear but often evocative use of language; not a lot of time is spent on characterization, with bad man Rafen Falvey getting the bulk of what depth there is. Chantry is not just smart and well-educated, but wilderness-savvy and skilled at all forms of combat he turns his hand to. His one weakness is prideful anger, which led him into the fatal duel, and into the knock-down drag-out fistfight that is the climax of the book. The use of coincidence to drive certain story elements does come close to breaking suspension of disbelief.

Recommended to Western fans, and those looking for a good manly adventure story.

Jeff Dickison says

This tale is not up to L'amours' usual good story. It is just too disjointed. It starts as a scholar flees west wanting to die after his family is killed in a fire. It winds up us a treasure hunt. In between is a lot of moralizing, which is L'amour at his worst. If I wanted to be preached to I would go to church (and I rarely, if ever, go to church). Only recommended to fanatical L'amour fans.

David says

I read this many years ago (likely upon its first release) and I enjoyed the re-read. I find a few things in the

story really, really far-fetched. First, the gift of the rifle to the young boy during the American Revolution. Some of the scholarly references were a bit much, I felt.

However, overall, this is meant to be taken as an action yarn. During the period of the mountain men, so a bit different than much of L'amours writing, but really, only a bit.

There is a cache of gold/lost treasure that plays an important part, a repetitive theme in L'amour's books. There are extra evil villains, and an old mountain man that one cannot decide whose side he may or may not be on... The woman's character is not really developed much, except that she acts fearless and impetuously at times. The other mountain men that our hero falls in with immediately receive him, and quickly come to like him.. as if he is Mr. Wonderful.

Moving on from there-- though, there is a rousing tale, plenty of direct action, a bit of a mystery... and all sort of tossed into this tale with a rifle that loads faster than most others of its day sort of in the center of the story.

L'Amour likes to write about odd guns -- his books often feature a colt revolving shotgun, which apparently had a very poor reputation in the West as a gun that frequently jammed. He mentions the LeMat pistol, a revolver with a an extra barrel for firing a small gauge shotgun shell,which could be effective at times, but was clumsy to operate and not exactly a common gun. In this case-- he writes about a rifle that had only like 100 produced and few used in the American Revolution-- and that likely had problems with quickly fouling, even if rapid to load and refire. L'amour is clear that the weapon did not have much place in the war, but all of the mountain men the hero meets are charmed by the rifle.

The story is a well-written western, set in the early west, and one I enjoyed this time around perhaps a bit less than thirty-five years ago or so when I first read it.. A good book, a bit above the average western, but far from L'amour's best.

Sophie says

This Louis Lamour title was not as absorbing as the last one I read. Maybe it's because the hero, after a tragedy in his life, is wandering aimlessly west. He's not exactly The Man With No Name, but he is sort of The Man With No Purpose Who Has A Really Cool Rifle. He falls in with some men along the trail, and then their group falls in with a young woman and her companion. The subsequent adventure flows from these other characters, rather than from anything the hero wants--which makes the story feel almost as aimless as the hero. As a result, I didn't find the treasure hunt particularly plausible and I wasn't too invested in how it came out. It wasn't a bad book, just not all that good.

John says

As is often the case with L'Amour, THE FERGUSON RIFLE starts out very strong but gets sillier and pulpier the more it unfolds. At its best, it feels like a mix between James Fenimore Cooper and Sergio Leone. But toward the end, L'Amour seems to have lost all ambition for the story: certain plot threads are abruptly dropped, far-fetched coincidences pile up like cordwood, and the whole thing ends in an epic fist-and-knife brawl that, while exciting, struck me as better suited for an EXPENDABLES movie.

Too bad, because all the elements are here for something really special. Had he not been so eager to move on to the next book, L'Amour could've made THE FERGUSON RIFLE a high point in his bibliography. Instead, it's the kind of book you enjoy and then simply forget about.

Scott says

My first Louis. Never looked back.

Greg says

Like most of Louis L'Amour's novels this was an enjoyable tale if you like his style and approach. However, what made this one a bit more remarkable for me was the history. L'Amour is known for blending fiction with some fact and real people, places, and events in his novels. This one was no exception, in that a real historical figure, Patrick Ferguson, made a brief appearance. The inventor of an early innovation in firearms technology, Ferguson might have played a key role in the American Revolution, except that he died prematurely. Indeed, some historians believe that had he lived and championed the technology he invented, and had the British military adopted it, it could have proven the difference in the outcome of the war. But that didn't happen.

A year or so ago, I had the opportunity to visit South Carolina, where I was able to learn more about Ferguson's life. Quite a remarkable man. That has happened often as I read L'Amour's novels...they have led me to read Plutarch (the Lives and the Moralia), numerous biographies, and to explore other historical and classical literature. For that alone, his novels have been important in my life.
