

The Longrifles of Western Pennsylvania: Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties



The American longrifle, also known as the Kentucky rifle, was the finest rifle in the world for over a century. As this illustrated book aims to show, the gunmakers of Western Pennsylvania were second to none in their skill and artistry. From the first settling of the land west of the Alleghenies, local gunsmiths produced the rifles that enabled the frontier family to survive in the wilderness. Richard F. Rosenberger and Charles Kaufmann write about the guns and gunsmiths of Allegheny and Westmoreland counties from the mid-18th century to about 1870, with an emphasis on the golden age - 1785-1815. They present a brief history of the longrifle, an introduction to its manufacture and use in Western Pennsylvania in the 18th and 19th centuries, biographies of all major gunmakers, and detailed descriptions of known guns. They include 58 longrifles and pistols, each one photographed in three views. Several are shown in full colour. Close-ups reveal the exceptionally fine detail on some of the rifles. The American longrifle evolved slowly from its European ancestor, beginning about 1725. In order to survive on the frontier, settlers required a weapon of greater accuracy, lighter weight, increased efficiency in the use of powder and ball, and longer range. Over time, these requirements stimulated the development of a new rifle, which became the finest firearm of its day. The longrifle may have been a necessity, but it was often a work of art as well, with a finely carved and inlaid stock, and an intricately designed patch box. This book should establish Western Pennsylvania as an important site in the manufacture of the American longrifle. It will be of interest to collectors and people interested in the history of the area.

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