Sandhills Boy is the story of "a freckle-faced country boy, green as a gourd," growing up in the wild sandhills of West Texas and becoming author of many well-loved and critically-acclaimed Western novels: *The Time It Never Rained*, *The Good Old Boys*, *The Day the Cowboys Quit*, and some 50 others.

The son of a working cowboy and ranch foreman, Elmer Kelton learned at an early age that he had no talent for horses nor any of the cowboy's trade . . . but he did have a knack for story-telling. He graduated from the University if Texas and before becoming "the greatest of all Western writers" (by vote of the Western Writers of America, Inc,) was a soldier in Europe and a journalist in Texas.

Kelton writes with warm, nostalgic humor of his life in ranch and oil patch Texas during the Great Depression of his service in WW2 in France, Germany, and Czechoslovakia, and of the romantic circumstances which changed his life in the village of Ebensee, Austria. At a boat landing there, in October, 1945, he met a young woman, Anni Lipp, who became his wife and remained by his side for 60 years.

Filled with Kelton's sly humor and memorable anecdotes, *Sandhills Boy* is destined to be a classic in Western autobiography, a companion to Charlie Siringo's *A Texas Cowboy* and *We Pointed Them North* by Edward. C. "Teddy Blue" Abbott.
Reviews of the *Sandhills Boy: The Winding Trail of a Texas Writer* by Elmer Kelton

Dondallon

I am not a reader of novels and fiction, but I am very interested in how writers work, what makes them tick, how their lives have been lived. This is the memoir of Elmer Kelton, a great writer of novels, western novels, and also a writer for both newspapers and magazines for most of his life. He was a member of the Western Writers of America, and to top it off he was a Texan, raised in Crane, Texas, and a combat veteran of WWII. This book is like he has opened himself up to the reader, warts and all. His writing here reveals an honest, shy man, whose parents were of humble origins, and he broke from that tradition of ranching to go to the University of Texas and study writing. The book takes you through his youth, his shyness, his entry into the army and World War Two. His injury in Europe, and his meeting of a young Austrian girl, whom he fell in love with and eventually brought her back to Texas and married her (they were married over 50 yrs). His struggling through the University of Texas at Austin, and starting work at a newspaper, writing pulp stories at night on his typewriter and eventually working his way into various livestock magazines as his bread and butter, but still writing novels in his spare time, and becoming one of the most well known Western writers in America. The book is written in an easy to read, and engrossing manner, the more read, the less able I was to put the book down. Elmer died in 2009 but his legend lives on, and from reading this book it is like reading a letter left to his survivors, telling the story of his life and the times and places he lived and worked, the people he met, and the enjoyment and sadness in his life. Highly recommended.

Sorryyyy

I didn't grow up in west Texas, but I spent a couple months in San Angelo over 30 years ago, on temporary duty with the army at Goodfellow AF Base there. It was my first time in Texas, and what I remember most is the vastness of the plain that stretched away from GAFB, and how you could watch a storm approaching from miles away. It was kind of a topographical revelation to this Michigan kid. Kelton's description of his youth on a dry land ranch near Midland, TX, made me remember those days. Since Kelton wrote more than 60 books in his lifetime and I've read a few of them - I was not surprised at the sterling quality of this memoir. When he told of being a 17 year-old student at UT Austin in 1941 when the US entered WWII, and still to shy to talk to the girls who vastly outnumbered the "men" on campus, I was reminded of the Iowa farm memoirs of Curtis Harnack, who was in basically the same boat as a too-young student at tiny Grinnell College at the same time. Kelton easily makes his story a kind of everyman tale, telling how his father had very little patience with his teenage sons when they worked for him, expecting them to just "know" how to do things without his always having to explain. The truth is fathers always expect more of their sons than they do of other people's children, or even of paid employees. I remember it well. He also tells of how difficult it was for his father to express his true feelings - aside from anger and
impatience - regarding his sons. Been there too. Kelton's time in the army during the closing days of the war are also tellingly described - the cold and hunger, the fear and the loneliness. Much space is devoted to how he met his wife in Austria at the end of the war, how they fell in love and dealt with all the red tape of bringing her to America for a marriage that would last for over 60 years. There is plenty here about west Texas, about its harshness and its beauty, and especially about its people. It is filled with anecdotes about family members, ranch hands, cowboys, and various other characters that Kelton rubbed up against in his 83 years of living. Kelton died in August of this year, but his books about Texas and the West will be around for a long time. I hope this particular book will endure too. It's a good one. - Tim Bazzett, author of SOLDIER BOY: AT PLAY IN THE ASA Dawncrusher

I've read most, if not all, of Elmer Kelton's books, The Good Old Boys and Cloudy in the West among my favorites, so I was eager to read this story of his life, so far.
I especially enjoyed his growing up years in Texas. However the rest, his stint in the army, meeting the love of his life in Austria, and his life after the war was interesting. It's a quiet story, all without fanfare and glamour, must I suspect like the man himself.
He mentions steeples (used to fix fence). I'd always called them staples. It may be a regional or generational term.
Anyway, it's a good book. Eunice Boeve author of Ride a Shadowed Trail

Maveri

For anyone who is familiar with the Sandhills area of West Texas and the writings of Elmer Kelton, this book is a real treat. Most of his writings are Western historical fiction that are first class. But this book is the story of his life as the son of a Ranch Manager at the edge of the Chihuahuan Desert. We lived there for many years with our youngest son going to school there his last several years. Our other children visited there frequently and we roamed all of that country. Of the many places in Texas that we lived this is the most memorable area with a rich history of prehistoric Indians, the dry years and the less dry years. There were very few years that could be considered wet, although once we saw the Pecos River running over the bridge down near McCamey.

This book is an easy read and covers Elmers time in WWII, of his wife and children and of a good man gounded in real life. What a pleasure it was to read this fine book and to travel down memory lane. We lived on McElroy Street in Crane that was named for the McElroy Ranch that played a large part in this homespun book.

A wonderful treat for a homesick soul who now lives in Florida. Billie Freeman

Ballazan

All of Elmer Kelton's books are great works of Texas literature. He has become one of my favorite western writers if not the best, His stories are of characters who seem more real life than the ones embellished as super human kill them all and whoop them all with one hand shot off types. I sure miss him. #1 fan

**Related PDF to Sandhills Boy: The Winding Trail of a Texas Writer by Elmer Kelton**

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