



Letters from Elmer Keith: A Half Century of Advice on Guns, Ammo, Handloading, Hunting, and Other Pursuits

Timothy J. Mullin, Elmer Keith

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The acknowledged dean of American gun writers, Elmer Keith began his writing career in 1926, when his first piece appeared in *American Rifleman*, and continued until 1981, when he suffered a disabling stroke. During this 50-plus year period, Keith wrote hundreds of articles for a wide variety of publications, including *American Rifleman*, *Guns & Ammo* and *Outdoor Life*. From these articles and his books (**Sixguns, Big Game Rifles and Cartridges**), Keith developed a loyal following with whom he corresponded regularly. At one point it is estimated that he averaged 300-500 letters each month to readers, answering questions about hunting, matching appropriate cartridges and firearms to specific targets, handloading ammo and related topics.

Timothy J Mullin, a noted gun writer, corresponded with Keith and kept all the letters he received. Discovering that other recipients had also saved their letters, Mullin decided to collect as many as he could and compile them into a book. He ran advertisements in *Shotgun News* and placed a large sign at the Elmer Keith Museum in Salmon, Idaho, seeking letters from Keith. Soon, he started receiving copies from all over the country. Some letters dealt with hunting issues, others strictly guns and ammo (including the Magnum revolver cartridges Keith developed and for which he is best known: the .357, .41 and .44), but most were a mixed bag of practical advice, unfiltered commentary and insightful tales of life on the American frontier. Rounding out the compilation are never-before published photos of Elmer Keith, with his trademark cigar, 10-gallon hat and sixguns

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