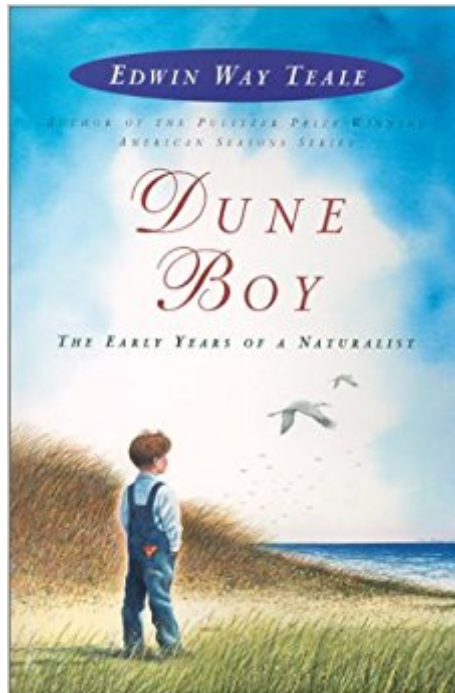




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# Dune Boy: The Early Years Of A Naturalist



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## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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In this nostalgic account of the late Edwin Way Teale's boyhood at Lone Oak Farm on the borderland of the picturesque dunes, he gives us an authentic picture of the way we were, the way we would like to have been . --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a story of his GrandMother and Grandfather farm in Northern Indiana, I bought the Land and farm in the 70's

My father grew up in the same area on th shores of the lake, and his family home is now the visitor's center at the Sand Dunes Park. So this narrative has been a life-long companion, and this is probably my 7th copy.Its one of those books any nature lover should own and treasure, in the same class as Muir's work, but a more simple voice. I just love the descriptions in this wonderful book!

I loved this book, especially because I was raised within a couple miles of this boy's grandparents' home. His is a unique perspective and I related to his story in many ways. It is a good read for anyone regardless of where they grew up.

Originally this review appeared in "The Hoosier Science Teacher" As I read Edwin Teale's nostalgic memoir of the dune country near Michigan City I flashed back to my own childhood. I first visited the dunes when I was nine years old on a family vacation while camping near the lakeshore. For me this was the most fascinating and beautiful place in the world. The sand dunes, jack pine forests, and roaring waves on Lake Michigan were right out of a storybook. Edwin Way Teale is considered one of the leading scientists, naturalists, and writers of the mid-twentieth century. He was born in Joliet, Illinois, but his visits to dune country to stay at his grandparent's farm, Lone Oak, make him one of our greatest Hoosier writers. Many G.I.s during World War II read *Dune Boy* from fox holes in Europe and Japan. This book is a joy to read and full of the wonders of nature as seen through the senses of a young boy. *Dune Boy* is a series of short stories telling of young Edwin growing up on a magnificent farm with his two grandparents whom he lovingly refers to as Gram and Gramps. The Ways are wonderfully eccentric characters who lovingly tell stories and share the joy of nature with their grandson. As Edwin Teale says, "his grandparents understood the world of dreams, fantastic plans, and the make believe of a small child". The book opens with young Edwin in his overalls lying on the roof of the farmhouse at Lone Oak while surveying the ninety acres of woods, wetlands, and blue hills surrounding his grandparent's property. There are chapters filled with innocent humor. My favorite is when young Edwin is challenged by Gramps to catch as many mice as he can in the granary for a nickel a dozen. Having read books about the great north and tales of trappers, Edwin begins to skin and dry the mice into "mouse pelts" that he hopes to sell. On a visit to town with Gramps he takes his pelts to various furriers where the adults are dazzled by his miniature bounty. They send him from store to store so everyone can see his amazing collection. Every chapter is a new adventure in the natural history of the dunes and lake country. Edwin studies snakes, gathers wild foods with his grandparents, and even builds a small airplane he names the Dragonette. It seems every new summer or holiday there is endless adventure for a young boy growing up by exploring the dunes and forests of northern Indiana. After finishing *Dune Boy* my first thought was that this is the kind of book I wish my elementary teacher would have read to me. This is the rare book that is an exciting adventure for both adults and children. Teale's prose is poetic and reminds me of the masters of non-fiction nature writing. This is a book in the tradition of Thoreau, Muir, or more recently, Edward Abbey. *Dune Boy* teaches us the power of nature and the importance of

preserving wild places. By the end of this book Teale, now forty years removed from Lone Oak, revisits the area and observes the many changes made by human progress. Anyone could use this book in his/her classroom to teach students about the beauty and complexity of the natural world that is all around us. Teale gives us a reason to care about the Great Lakes and the fascinating ecosystems that are disappearing every year right before our eyes. Everyone who is a "Hoosier" should read this book with pride and enjoy once more the adventure of being nine years old.

The late Edwin Way Teale's "Dune Boy," originally published in 1943, entertained a hundred thousand American troops overseas during WWII and with his enamoring portraits of life at the turn of the last century in the Indiana Dunes; A special ribbon of land hugging the Hoosier Coast that most of those servicemen had probably never heard of prior, but a seemingly magical place where Teale and so many other writers, poets and artists were inspired (Nelson Algren; Meyer Levin; Elma Lobaugh; Majorie Hill Allee; Arnold Mulder; Julia Cooley Altrocchi; Earl Reed; Helga Sandburg; Thomas Rogers; Steve Tesich; the poets, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg and the artists Frank Dudley, John Templeton, and the 'Furnessville Ten' alumni of the School of the Chicago Art Institute and also LeRoy Neiman who had painted an amazing 8' x 56' mural "A Day at the Indiana Dunes in 1965.) Ironically Teale's setting of his childhood memories was a rural country only sixty miles down the Lake Michigan coastline from Chicago, but a charming farm community with a tiny English village, eccentric neighbors and vagabonds who camped and resided amongst the knobby sand dunes, dark virgin forests, marshes all abounding in wildlife and fauna. A time when slow moving milk and strawberry trains made local stops to pick up their harvests for the city markets and a time when young boys adventured with mail order cameras and witnessed the first airplanes take flight. Teale had touched the hearts of so many American servicemen overseas because he reminded them of the homes they longed to return to when so far away at war. Teale's maternal grandparent's farm 'Lone Oak' has long disappeared off any local maps and alas many of the local sand dunes were destroyed by the coming of even more steel mills and other industrial plants which have polluted the shore ever since. However, some of the people Teale portrayed and immortalized in 'Dune Boy,' their headstones can be found in the quaint Furnessville cemetery, which is today surrounded by the surviving 1863 Lewry House; the 1880 Furness Mansion; the 1886 Schoolhouse Shop, and the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore; A bountiful national preserve, home to the modern science of ecology, and habitats to wildlife and plant species not found anywhere else in the American Midwest. A charm that inspired Teale to become the prolific author and American Naturalist of his time remains in these Indiana Dunes. Teale's "Dune Boy" is a testament, which can

inspire today's and future generations to save what remains of the great sand dunes of Indiana. It is one of our family Classics and a recommended reading for anyone who has a passion to Save the Dunes or who comes to visit our Indiana home. I recommend reading 'Dune Boy' with 'Ann's Surprising Summer' by Marjorie Hill Allee, (published earlier in 1923) but concerning the Great Depression years and the portrait of a collegiate woman and that of her family camped in the dunes, and that fiction read with Thomas Rogers "At The Shores" (published in 1980) set between the World Wars, which continues the adventures of young adolescents in the Indiana Dunes. The recent publication "Moonlight in Duneland" an oversize tome by the historians, Ronald D. Cohen and Stephen McShane, illustrates the travel posters of the early 20th century that promoted the Indiana Dunes and can add depth to the above reads.

Anyone who lives in "The Region" section of Indiana would enjoy this book. So much has changed since the book was written, but the landscape, weather, and wildlife were there before the author and will be there long after the reader. It's a sweet reminder of how beautiful the world is.

This book was so good it inspired jealousy. I wished every night as a child that I would wake up the next morning as Edwin, in that wonderful Indiana home of his Grandfathers! He writes with a visual-ness that truly puts you in the book with him. He sets the period very well, and the book is a pleasure to read and re-read.

This book gives a glimpse into the world of farm life in Northwest Indiana before the turn of the century. A child's view of the life on his grandparents' farm and the delights it offered a "city" boy on his summer vacations. Of special interest to local persons as it mentions people who lived in the area.

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