



Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

## Meet the Originals

*Texas Originals* is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca. Then, answer questions about it.

### Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca 1490–1559

Spanish explorer Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca first set foot on land that would become Texas in 1528, when his crude raft ran aground near Galveston Island. The raft held survivors of an ill-fated Spanish expedition to settle Florida.

Cabeza de Vaca then embarked upon what one scholar described as "the most remarkable [journey] in the record of American exploration."

He lived for several years among Indigenous peoples of Texas, learning the tribes' languages and customs. In time, he reunited with three other survivors of the original expedition. The travelers gained a reputation as healers, and their fame spread as they slowly made their way to Mexico.

Cabeza de Vaca and his companions eventually arrived in Mexico City in 1536. They had traveled nearly 2,400 miles over eight years in Texas and the Mexican borderlands.

In 1542, he published an account of his adventures, the *Relación*, the first literary work with Texas as its subject. This remarkable book about the region's people, landscape, flora, and fauna is now considered a "cornerstone of the history of the Spanish Southwest."

Cabeza de Vaca later served as a colonial official in South America, where he argued that Spanish colonists should deal fairly with Native populations. Sadly, he was arrested for his unpopular views and returned to Spain, where he lived modestly for the rest of his days.

**Check for Understanding:** Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. How did Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca arrive in the land that would become Texas?
2. How many miles did Cabeza de Vaca cover during his journey, and how long did it take?

**Going Further:** Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Making Inferences.** Why were Cabeza de Vaca's views on native populations unpopular at the time?