



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 Francisco Vázquez de Coronado. Then, answer questions about it.

Francisco Vázquez de Coronado 1510–1554

Francisco Vázquez de Coronado led the first Spanish expedition into the Great Plains.

Embarking in 1540, the expedition traveled to the New Mexican pueblos, searching for the golden cities of Cibola reported by fellow explorer Fray Marcos de Niza. However, as Coronado wrote, “Everything the friar had said was found to be the opposite.” Instead of finding another metropolis like Tenochtitlan, the Spaniards encountered only modest farming villages.

Native guides then regaled the explorers with tales of the city of Quivira further inland in modern-day Kansas. The Spaniards set off across the vast, flat grasslands of the Llano Estacado and into the Great Plains to find riches but again came away disappointed.

After more than two years away, Coronado returned to Mexico. He and his companions were the first Europeans to see massive herds of American bison, Palo Duro Canyon, and the land that is now the Texas Panhandle. As one historian put it, his expedition was “one of the most remarkable ... recorded in the annals of American history.” Coronado “added to the world as known to Europeans an [enormous] extent of country.”

Nevertheless, Coronado and others viewed the expedition as a failure. He resumed his position as councilman in Mexico City and died in 1554. Spaniards would return to New Mexico soon enough but would not complete their conquest of Texas for another century.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Francisco Vázquez de Coronado. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. What was the goal of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's expedition?
2. What sights was Coronado the first European to see?

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 might Coronado have considered his expedition a failure?