



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 Mollie Evelyn Moore Davis. Then, answer questions about it.

Mollie Evelyn Moore Davis 1844–1909

Born in 1844, Mollie Evelyn Moore Davis was one of the most important Texas writers of the nineteenth century.

Davis's family moved to Texas from Alabama when she was eleven. Just five years later, the *Tyler Reporter* published one of her poems.

In the 1870s, Davis began writing for national audiences about postbellum Texas and Louisiana. Her short fiction appeared in such magazines as *Harper's* and *The Atlantic*. She also wrote children's stories, plays, and novels.

While Davis's Louisiana tales enjoyed great popularity, critics praise her Texas fiction for its vivid and detailed depiction of life in the state.

Her 1896 novel *Under the Man-Fig* portrays events along the Texas Gulf Coast during and after the Civil War. Four years later, Davis published *The Wire-Cutters*, a novel set during the Texas fence-cutting wars of the 1880s, when ranchers began restricting access to large sections of the previously open range. *The Wire-Cutters* is now recognized as one of the first "westerns" in American literary history.

Davis lived principally in New Orleans from 1879 to her death in 1909. But she maintained a lifelong fascination with her former home state. Texas history, she once wrote, "is a story of knightly romance which calls the poet, even as, in earlier days, the Land of Tehas called across its borders the dreamers of dreams."

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Mollie Evelyn Moore Davis. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. Mollie Evelyn Moore Davis's novel *The Wire-Cutters* is known as the first of what type of literature?
2. What types of fiction did Davis write?

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.** What invention led to the "fence-cutting wars" that inspired Mollie Evelyn Moore Davis's novel *The Wire-Cutters*?