



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 José de Escandón. Then, answer questions about it.

José de Escandón 1700–1770

José de Escandón was one of the most renowned colonizers in Spanish North America. In the mid-eighteenth century, he pioneered the colony of Nuevo Santander, which reached from Corpus Christi Bay to Tampico, Mexico, nearly five hundred miles to the south.

Born in Spain in 1700, Escandón left for the Yucatán at fifteen seeking a military career. He advanced quickly, earning a reputation as a fair, forceful leader on Mexico's northern frontier. In 1746, Spanish officials invited him to explore and govern a new province along the Gulf coast.

Escandón enticed settlers from the Mexican interior at a time when the missions and presidios of Texas struggled to do so. By 1755, he had established more than twenty communities including Reynosa, Mier, and Laredo. The origins of South Texas ranching trace back to these thriving settlements on both sides of the Rio Grande.

Escandón's activities drew envy, and adversaries accused him of exploiting both Spanish settlers and the region's natives. Escandón died while under investigation, his legacy in doubt. But Spanish officials ultimately dismissed the charges and made his son the province's new governor.

Today in the Rio Grande Valley, Escandón stands as a founding figure, on par with better-known empresarios such as Martín De León and Stephen F. Austin. Statues and historical markers throughout the region describe Escandón as the "Father of South Texas."

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

1. What was José de Escandón's reputation as a leader?
2. What settlements started by Escandón were the origins of ranching in South Texas?

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. **Taking a Position.** Why do you think Escandón is not as well known as some other Texas empresarios?