



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 René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle. Then, answer questions about it.

René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle 1643–1687

Born in 1643, French explorer René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, abandoned training as a priest for the summons of economic opportunity in North America.

La Salle settled near Montreal in 1666 and engaged in the fur trade. He soon organized and led expeditions throughout the upper Midwest. Guessing that the Mississippi River emptied into the Gulf of Mexico, he envisioned a vast commercial empire for France extending from the Great Lakes to the Gulf. In 1682, La Salle descended the lower Mississippi by canoe, claiming all the lands in the river's watershed for France. He named the region Louisiana for his king.

La Salle returned to France, and two years later, sailed with four ships and several hundred passengers to establish a colony near the mouth of the Mississippi. The ill-fated expedition overshot its target, landing at Matagorda Bay. La Salle established the meager Fort St. Louis in present-day Victoria County. His colony was soon decimated by disease, lack of supplies, and hostile relations with Indigenous peoples. La Salle was killed by one of his own men in 1687.

In the end, La Salle failed to realize his vision. But his efforts shaped North American history—opening the Mississippi Basin for European interests, providing France with a claim to Texas, and spurring the Spanish to establish their own claim to the Gulf region.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. What did René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle do on his first expeditions from Montreal?
2. What was the result of La Salle's expedition in 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. **Creating Connections.** La Salle's expedition is the reason that France is one of the "six flags over Texas." What are the other five flags, and what periods of Texas history do they represent?