



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 Alonso S. Perales. Then, answer questions about it.

Alonso S. Perales 1898–1960

A South Texas lawyer with a keen sense of justice, Alonso Perales created one of the nation's largest and most enduring Mexican American civil rights organizations.

Born in Alice in 1898, Perales grew up an orphan. After working in agriculture and on railroads, he pursued education in San Antonio and Washington, DC, then served in the army during World War I. He returned to Texas committed to fighting discrimination as one of the state's earliest Mexican American lawyers.

In 1929 in Corpus Christi, Perales and his colleagues founded the League of United Latin American Citizens, or LULAC, an influential civil rights organization. Perales authored the group's founding documents and served as one of its presidents. Through LULAC, Perales sought to achieve political equality and economic self-sufficiency for Mexican Americans in the Southwest.

Perales's vision did not end there. He also served as a diplomat in Latin America and the West Indies, most notably as US consul to Nicaragua from 1937 to 1960. The hemispheric perspective he gained from these experiences informed his approach to civil rights in the United States.

Over a long career, Perales advocated for voting rights, immigration reform, and equality in public education, especially in his hometown of San Antonio. He died in 1960, but his efforts continued to bear fruit in the civil rights movements that flowered in the decades to come.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Alonso S. Perales. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. What did Alonso S. Perales hope to accomplish through LULAC?
2. What role did Perales serve in that gave him a broader perspective on civil rights?

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.** Perales died in 1960, but the episode notes that he laid the groundwork for many advances in civil rights that came later. What important legislation passed in the 1960s related to civil rights?