



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 Tomás Rivera. Then, answer questions about it.

Tomás Rivera 1935–1984

Tomás Rivera's career as a writer and educator was shaped by the struggles of his family.

Rivera was born in 1935. His parents were farm laborers who followed the annual harvests from Texas to the Midwest. Rivera traveled and worked with his family throughout his education. Ultimately, he earned a PhD and became a university professor.

Rivera's 1971 novel . . . *y no se lo tragó la tierra*—or, in English translation, . . . *And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*—portrays the terrible conditions faced by Mexican American farm workers. Rivera later explained, "I wanted to document, somehow, the strength of those people that I had known . . . when the migrant worker was living without any kind of protection."

The novel received the first Premio Quinto Sol, an annual literary award given to the best work of fiction by a Chicano author.

As an educator, Rivera saw that he could advance the interests of first-generation college students more effectively as an administrator than as a professor. After serving on The University of Texas campuses in San Antonio and El Paso, he became the first Mexican American chancellor in the University of California system.

Rivera died in 1984. His achievements are commemorated at many sites in Texas, including in his hometown of Crystal City, where an elementary school was named in his honor.

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

1. What experiences shaped Tomás Rivera's career as a writer and educator?
2. What did Rivera try to show with his most critically acclaimed work, . . . *y no se lo tragó la tierra*?

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.** Rivera believed that he could more effectively advance the interests of first-generation college students as an administrator rather than as a professor. Why do you think he said this? Explain.