



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 William Cowper Brann. Then, answer questions about it.

William Cowper Brann 1855–1898

His thousands of admirers called him a saint. His adversaries—and there were many—called him the Devil's apostle. But Waco publisher and journalist William Cowper Brann preferred to be known by the name of the weekly journal he published, the *Iconoclast*.

As arrogant as he was brilliant, Brann was among the most famous journalists in America in the late nineteenth century.

At its peak, the *Iconoclast* boasted a circulation of a hundred thousand readers. Raw, biting humor and corrosive satire were its trademarks.

The *Iconoclast* crusaded tirelessly against what Brann called “humbugs and humbuggery.” He was an unrepentant racist to be sure—like many Texas journalists of the day—but neighboring Baylor University drew his most scathing attacks.

For example, Brann once called Baylor “that great storm-center of misinformation.”

A group of Baylor students once kidnapped their nemesis, demanded that he retract his statements about the school, and ordered him to leave town, but Brann bucked their command and kept writing.

On April 1, 1898, a Waco businessman shot Brann in the back on a downtown street. The injured editor drew his own revolver, whirled around, and gunned down his assailant. Brann's own wound proved fatal; he died that evening.

William Cowper Brann is buried in Waco's historic Oakwood Cemetery. His granite monument is pock-marked by a bullet.

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

1. What was William Cowper Brann known for?
2. How did Brann die?

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 Brann's satire was so upsetting to students at Baylor University?