



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 James Franck Dobie. Then, answer questions about it.

James Frank Dobie 1888–1964

Called the “Storyteller of the Southwest,” James Frank Dobie was born in 1888 on his family’s cattle ranch in Live Oak County. During his long life, he would live astride two worlds: a rugged life on a Texas cattle ranch and the state’s modern centers of scholarly learning.

Dobie came to Austin in 1914 to teach at The University of Texas at Austin. In time he pioneered an influential course on the literature of the Southwest. By the late 1920s, Dobie discovered his mission: to record and publicize the disappearing folklore of Texas and the greater Southwest. Dobie became secretary of the Texas Folklore Society, a position he held for twenty-one years.

Dobie was a new kind of folklorist—a progressive activist. He called for UT to admit African American students in the 1940s, long before the administration favored integration. Dobie’s vocal politics led to his leaving the university in 1947, but he continued writing until his death in 1964, publishing over twenty books and countless articles.

The inscription on Dobie’s headstone in the Texas State Cemetery reads: “I have come to value liberated minds as the supreme good of life on earth.” J. Frank Dobie was not content to simply preserve Southwestern heritage within libraries and museums. He gave life to that heritage and informed generations of Texans about their rich history.

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

1. What “two worlds” did J. Frank Dobie inhabit?
2. Why was Dobie called a “progressive activist”?

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. **Making Inferences.** According to the episode, why do you think Dobie left UT Austin in 1947?