



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 Albert Horton Foote, Jr.. Then, answer questions about it.

Albert Horton Foote, Jr. 1916–2009

The quiet cotton farming community of Wharton, Texas, is the touchstone for the career of playwright and screenwriter Horton Foote.

Born in 1916 and raised in Wharton, Foote first dreamed of becoming an actor. But he soon discovered his true genius lay in writing, not performing.

He began writing plays about everyday people living in small Texas towns like his boyhood home, and his work was praised for its authenticity. One critic compared him to William Faulkner, noting Foote's "ability to make his own corner of America stand for the whole."

In 1953, Foote's television drama *The Trip to Bountiful* aired on NBC to great acclaim. The story—about an elderly woman's determined journey back to the Texas town where she was born—was a Broadway hit, and later, a popular film.

Foote went on to win Academy Awards for his adaptation of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and for his original screenplay for the film *Tender Mercies*. In 1995, Foote received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

But no matter how wide an audience his work reached, Foote continued to write about the kind of people he knew from his childhood. "I believe very deeply in the human spirit," he once said. "I've known people that the world has thrown everything at. . . . And yet something about them retains a dignity. They face life and they don't ask quarters."

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Albert Horton Foote, Jr.. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. Name two awards that Albert Horton Foote, Jr. received for his writing.
2. How did Foote's experiences growing up shape him as a writer?

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, throughout his career, Foote "continued to write about the kind of people he knew from his childhood." What does that suggest about the strength of those early impressions? Explain.