



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 Héctor P. García. Then, answer questions about it.

Héctor P. García 1914–1996

Physician and pioneering activist Héctor P. García was once described as "a man who in the space of one week delivers twenty babies, twenty speeches, and twenty thousand votes."

Born in Mexico in 1914, García grew up in Mercedes, Texas, in the lower Rio Grande Valley. He earned undergraduate and medical degrees from The University of Texas and served in the Army with distinction in World War II.

In 1946, García opened a medical practice in Corpus Christi, where he witnessed the struggles of veterans and migrant workers. His work inspired a lifetime commitment to social reform. García became known as the "doctor to the barrios," offering low- and no-cost treatment to impoverished patients.

In 1948, García founded the American GI Forum, organizing veterans to fight for educational and medical benefits, and later, against poll taxes and school segregation. A proud member of the Greatest Generation, García sought the inclusion of Mexican Americans into mainstream America.

In 1984, President Reagan awarded García the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award. García was the first Mexican American ever to receive the honor.

A statue on the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi campus now stands as a memorial to García's legacy. It bears his personal motto, which is also the motto of the American GI Forum: "Education is our Freedom, and Freedom Should be Everybody's Business."

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

1. What inspired Héctor P. García to work for social reform?
2. Why did Garcia found the American GI Forum?

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.** What do you think García meant when he said "Education is our Freedom, and Freedom Should be Everybody's Business"?