



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 Jovita González. Then, answer questions about it.

Jovita González 1904–1983

Born in 1904 on her grandparents' ranch in Roma, Texas, pioneering folklorist and educator Jovita González felt a deep commitment to the people and culture of South Texas.

While attending The University of Texas in at Austin, González met J. Frank Dobie, who encouraged her to begin writing for folklore publications. She soon began traveling throughout Cameron, Starr, and Zapata counties, interviewing residents of the borderlands.

González carried a letter of introduction from San Antonio's archbishop and often knitted during her interviews, putting her subjects at ease. She captured the voices of ordinary Mexican Americans seeking to preserve their cultural traditions during a period of tumultuous change.

In 1930, the same year she received her master's degree in history, González became the first Mexican American president of the Texas Folklore Society.

González was also a teacher. With her husband, she authored several sets of Spanish textbooks and helped establish the Spanish language program in Corpus Christi's public schools.

Today, González's legacy includes two novels published after her death, *Dew on the Thorn* and *Caballero*. Discovered by scholars among her papers, these historical romances detail turbulent racial conflicts of the Texas-Mexico border. But they also highlight the focus of her life's work—documenting what she once described as “the beauty of faith, of lore, and of tradition, amidst the sufferings of life.”

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

1. What subject matter did Jovita González focus on in her folklore interviews?
2. Beyond collecting folklore, how did González contribute to the study of Spanish language and culture?

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. **Creating Connections.** González interviewed Mexican Americans to help preserve their “cultural traditions during a period of tumultuous change.” What was happening at that time that caused this change?