



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 Jesse Holman Jones. Then, answer questions about it.

### Jesse Holman Jones 1874–1956

During the Great Depression and World War II, one of the most powerful men in the United States was a tall, silver-haired Texan named Jesse Holman Jones.

Born in 1874, Jones made his fortune in real estate and banking. He helped get the Houston Ship Channel built and brought the 1928 Democratic National Convention to the city. He became sole owner of the Houston Chronicle in 1926.

In 1933, President Roosevelt appointed Jones chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Under Jones's leadership, the agency loaned billions of dollars to build infrastructure and save banks, farms, homes, and businesses. It was all repaid with a profit. Jones and Roosevelt then used the RFC to build enormous factories that produced the planes, tanks, and ships essential to an Allied victory in World War II. Jones also served as Roosevelt's secretary of commerce. He was granted discretionary powers so broad that many called him "the fourth branch of government."

After World War II, Jones returned to Houston and focused on philanthropy. In 1937, he and his wife, Mary Gibbs Jones, established the Houston Endowment, which has since donated hundreds of millions of dollars to education, health care, human services, and the arts. News of Jones's death in 1956 provoked outpourings of praise for his tireless service to his city and the nation.

**Check for Understanding:** Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Jesse Holman Jones. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. What were Jesse Holman Jones's major accomplishments while working under President Roosevelt?
2. What did Jones do after World War II?

**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.** In the context of the episode, what does "discretionary" mean? How do you know?