



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 Larry L. King. Then, answer questions about it.

Larry L. King 1929–2012

Journalist, playwright, and raconteur Larry L. King spent most of his life in Washington, DC, but the vivid language and distinctive characters of his home state never ceased to inspire him.

King was born in the small west Texas town of Putnam. After a brief stint in college, he covered sports and politics for the Midland and Odessa papers. Then he moved to Washington, where he spent several years working for Texas politicians.

But King was foremost a writer. During his career, he published fourteen books and seven plays, as well as articles for magazines such as *Texas Monthly* and *Harper's*.

His work is marked by a barbed wit. He delighted in exposing the hypocrisy and self-righteousness of people whose worldview, as he put it, extended “little further than the end of their own noses,” like those who closed down the Chicken Ranch, a brothel near La Grange that had operated in open secret for decades.

That brothel became the subject of King’s best-known work, the 1978 musical *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. Although King expected the musical to close “quicker than a switchblade,” it ran on Broadway for four years.

King died in 2012. Texas, he once said, “provided me with the stuff of a career,” and his work endures as a vibrant chronicle of the state’s politics, culture, and personalities.

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

1. Though Larry L. King spent much of his life outside of Texas, what continued to inspire him throughout his career?
2. What forms of writing did King publish?

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.** King is described as having “delighted in exposing the hypocrisy and self-righteousness of people whose worldview...extended ‘little further than the end of their own noses.’” What does that mean? Explain.