



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 McMurry. Then, answer questions about it.

Larry McMurry 1936–2021

Author Larry McMurry's unsentimental writing subverted the mythology of the American West.

Born in 1936, McMurry grew up listening to storytellers on the porch of his family's ranch house in Archer City, Texas. He described his "path to authorship . . . [as] a long, stutter-step affair," entailing studies at Rice and Stanford and teaching jobs in Texas, Virginia, and Washington, DC.

In 1961, his first novel, *Horseman, Pass By*, earned critical acclaim for its unsparing depiction of life on a Texas cattle ranch. McMurry's subsequent books depicted small-town drama, larger-than-life characters, and landscapes that seemed to swallow readers whole, immersing them in the myth and reality of Texas.

Many of his books became films, including *The Last Picture Show* and *Terms of Endearment*. His coauthored screenplay for *Brokeback Mountain* earned him an Oscar in 2005. But it was *Lonesome Dove* that cemented McMurry's reputation as chronicler of an unromanticized West. The 1985 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about an epic but ill-fated cattle drive became a television phenomenon: an Emmy-winning miniseries with twenty-six million viewers.

McMurry added the National Humanities Medal and honors from the Texas Institute of Letters to his Oscars, Emmys, and Pulitzer. He was also a serious book collector, and, though he passed away in 2021, the bookstore he owned in his hometown of Archer City remains open, right off Main Street.

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

1. What was Larry McMurry's first novel?
2. What was McMurry's most famous novel, and what was it about?

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 "subverted" mean?