



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 William "Willie" Morris. Then, answer questions about it.

William "Willie" Morris 1934–1999

Writer and editor Willie Morris was born in Mississippi and made his name in New York, but he left an indelible mark on Texas journalism.

In 1952, Morris enrolled at The University of Texas, where he worked as a reporter for the *Daily Texan*. Morris ultimately became editor-in-chief, writing blunt editorials about the lack of student representation in university decisions and the influence of lobbyists on the state legislature.

After graduating, Morris left Texas to study at Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship. But he returned to Austin several years later to resume his role as political gadfly, signing on as editor of the *Texas Observer*, a journal known for its commitment to progressive causes.

"Texas was where I reached maturity," Morris later recalled. Writing about "politics, the ambivalent and exposed world of the politician, . . . taught me about the complexity of human affairs, about the irrelevancy of most dogmatic formulas, about loyalty and courage and devotion to human causes."

Morris moved to New York City in 1963 to edit *Harper's* magazine and never lived in Texas again.

Morris's masterful memoir *North Toward Home*, published in 1967, recalls his time in Texas and paints a compelling picture of the state during the Eisenhower and Kennedy years. Today, the *Daily Texan* still recognizes the paper's best opinion writing with the annual Willie Morris Award for Editorial Excellence.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on William "Willie" Morris. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. In what field did Willie Morris leave his mark on Texas?
2. On what issues did Morris focus his editorials during his time at the *Daily Texan*?

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.** How do editorials relate to other forms of journalism?