



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 Alonso Álvarez de Pineda. Then, answer questions about it.

Alonso Álvarez de Pineda 1494–1520

Spanish explorer Alonso Álvarez de Pineda was the first European to set eyes on the land that would become Texas. His 1519 expedition mapped the American Gulf Coast, creating the very first document of Texas history.

Scholars know little of Álvarez's background. He first appears in the record amid the intrigues of the Spanish conquest of North America. In 1519, as fellow conquistador Hernán Cortés began his fateful campaign against the Aztecs, Álvarez set sail from Jamaica, journeying north to Florida and then following the Gulf Coast west and south all the way to Veracruz.

Álvarez did not find what he sought—a passage to the Pacific. He did, however, prove to Spain that Florida and the Yucatan belonged to the same continent. He also mapped the Gulf Coast, making him the first European to document the mouth of the Mississippi River and the land that became Texas.

At the end of his journey, Álvarez settled in Mexico on the Pánuco River inland from Tampico. He then journeyed to Veracruz to inform Cortés of his activities. Fearing Álvarez's colonial ambitions in Mexico, Cortés turned him away.

Their rivalry would be short. In 1520, Huastec natives wiped out the settlement on the Pánuco, killing Álvarez. In some ways, he remains a "mystery man" of the Spanish conquest, but his contributions to the exploration of Texas stand.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Alonso Álvarez de Pineda. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. When does Alonso Álvarez de Pineda first appear in the historical record?
2. Álvarez did not find a passage to the Pacific but he did gain important knowledge for Spain. Name two things he learned.

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.** Why do you think the episode refers to Álvarez as a "mystery man"?