



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 Winifred Sanford. Then, answer questions about it.

Winifred Sanford 1890–1983

In the 1920s, writer Winifred Sanford's stories of the Texas oil boom captured the anxieties of a state on the verge of modernization.

Born in Minnesota, Sanford moved to Wichita Falls in 1920, as her husband sought his fortune in the new oilfields of North Texas.

At first, Sanford found the small town stifling. But she soon realized the oil boom made Texas more complex than it had first seemed. Swift change made for great stories.

Sanford published her first short story in 1925. She hit her stride with "Windfall," a 1928 story about a woman experiencing the discovery of oil on her family farm. In her fiction, Sanford measured what Texans gained and lost in such moments—in contrast to the frontier nostalgia that then dominated the state's literature. H. L. Mencken of *The American Mercury* took note and became Sanford's mentor.

Sanford's stories appeared in some of the most popular magazines of the day. Literary tastemaker Edward O'Brien included four of her works in *The Best Short Stories of 1926*.

Later in life, Sanford moved away from writing. She died in 1983, her work forgotten outside a handful of scholars. In 1988, however, those scholars' efforts led to the first published collection of Sanford's stories, which has helped to restore her place in the Texas literary canon.

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

1. Why did Winifred Sanford and her husband move to Texas?
2. How were Sanford's short stories different from the "frontier nostalgia" that was popular in Texas literature in the 1920s?

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.** What do you think the statement "swift change made for great stories" means?