Texas Explorer Rating Guide

Instructions: While reviewing each "Explorer Information" Sheet pay close attention to each explorer's leadership qualifications and rate them, from one(1) to five(5), one(1) being the lowest and five(5) being the highest, in each of the categories. Then once you have reviewing all explorers, add up your totals and decide which explorer, according to your grading system, was the greatest.

Explorer	Achievement of Original Goal	Intellect	Importance of Discovery	Leadership	Military Accomplishments	Total Points
Alvarez de Pineda Texas: 1519	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	
Cabeza de Vaca Texas: 1528-1536	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	
Francisco Vazquez de Coronado Texas: 1540-1542	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	
Luis de Moscoso Texas: 1542-1543	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	Score: Supporting Facts:	

Activity 2.2

CABEZA DE VACA

In Texas 1528-1536

FOLLOWING THE DISCOVERY of the New World, Spanish explorers actively investigated the unknown lands and sought to establish settlements. From the islands of the Caribbean and the West Indies the conquistadors sailed along the coastline of the Gulf of Mexico, stopping occasionally to take on supplies and to search for riches. Often a reception that ranged from unfriendly to hostile caused the Spanish to move on.

The name so well associated with those early explorers is Cabeza de Vaca. Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca served as treasurer of the Pánfilo de Narváez expedition that sailed in 1528 from Cuba, intending to settle at the mouth of the Rio Grande after two other attempted expeditions, by Alonso Alvarez de Piñeda and Nuño de Guzmán, had failed. While en route, Narváez, Cabeza de Vaca, and a party of three hundred men landed in Florida to search for gold, then missed connections with their ships and wandered around the interior from Tampa Bay to present-day northern Florida. There they constructed five crude boats and attempted to make their way along the Gulf Coast to Mexico.

The boats separated in a storm and became shipwrecked on the Texas coast at various locations now thought to be Galveston Island, the mouth of the San Bernard River, Cavallo Pass at Matagorda Bay, and St. Joseph Island at the Aransas Pass inlet into Aransas Bay. The survivors of the shipwreck faced great misery and deprivation. Many died of hunger, exposure, and illness, or at the hands of Indians. Enslaved by Indians, the strangers became the gatherers of wood and the performers of other menial camp tasks. They also helped their Indian hosts as traders and as healers.

Of the approximately three hundred who set off afoot at Tampa Bay, only four rejoined their Spanish comrades in Mexico eight years later. These four, Cabeza de Vaca, Andrés Dorantes, Alonso del Castillo, and Dorantes's slave Esteban the Moor, who was from Azamor on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, often went with their Indian captors in search of tunas, the fruit of the prickly pear. While on such a food-hunting trip in 1535, these four survivors of the Narváez expedition escaped.

Historians differ on the route to freedom these men took. After wandering around in present south central Texas perhaps as far south as San Patricio on the Nueces River and into central Texas as far north as San Marcos, they made their way to what is now San Antonio and then headed west by northwest. They noted the abundance of water, wood, and game in the Balcones Escarpment area. The Spaniards visited with Indian tribes along the way perhaps as far northwest as Big Spring before altering their course to the southwest to the Presidio region, then up the Rio Grande to where El Paso stands today. Southwestern Borderlands historian Herbert Eugene Bolton wrote that the Indians who greeted the Coronado expedition a few years later spoke of the Cabeza de Vaca group passing not far to the south on the Great Plains. Another account holds that the survivors crossed the Rio Grande to Reynosa, traipsed around in northern Mexico by way of Monclova, and then crossed the Rio Grande again above Del Rio before skirting the northern edge of the Big Bend region. From the El Paso region they journeyed through Chihuahua, crossed the Mexican deserts south of Arizona, and went to the Pacific Coast. This foursome strongly desired to find fellow Christians and to put their captive days behind them.

The four survivors arrived at Culiacán in the spring of 1536 after their eight-month hike. Along the way they encountered many Indian tribes, served as healers to the native inhabitants, and observed carefully their surroundings as they pressed on towards the setting sun.

The legacy of Cabeza de Vaca and his companions is the first observation by Europeans of the land, people, plants, and animals from Galveston through Texas and Mexico. They also heard references to great cities of wealth in the north country, although they did not actually see them. Their stories impressed the viceroy, Antonio de Mendoza, and influenced a major expedition led by Coronado, into the interior in search of a mythical city of wealth. Cabeza de Vaca returned to Spain and later led an expedition of his own in South America. Dorantes and Castillo remained in Mexico and married rich widows. Esteban, still a slave, accompanied a Franciscan priest on an expedition into northern Mexico and the present American Southwest.

2

Texas Coast 1519

ÁLVAREZ DE PINEDA, ALONSO (?-1520).

Alonso Álvarez de Pineda commanded a Spanish expedition that sailed along the Gulf of Mexico coastline from Florida to Cabo Rojo, Mexico, in 1519. He and his men were the first Europeans to explore and map the Gulf. Álvarez de Pineda's voyage of "more than 300 leagues" ended when he encountered Hernán Cortés, who perceived him as a rival and arrested the messengers he sent ashore near Cortés's base Vera Cruz on the Bay of Campeche. Álvarez de Pineda then withdrew back up the Mexican coast to the Río Pánuco, where he established a settlement of his own near the site of the future city of Tampico. Despite his pioneering exploration, however, Álvarez remains a shadowy figure. The only original source connecting his name with the reconnaissance ordered in 1519 by Francisco de Garay, Spanish governor of Jamaica, is Bernal Díaz del Castillo, historian of the Mexican conquest. Díaz was present when Cortés confronted Garay's four ships in late July or early August 1519 and relates that Álvarez de Pineda was in command of the vessels. Both Díaz and Cortés, who fails to mention the captain's name, reveal that Álvarez de Pineda already had been in contact with the natives on the Pánuco, and Díaz says that he was settling there.

No account of the voyage itself, by either Álvarez or Garay, has come to light. Garay's report to the Spanish crown, however, is summarized in a 1521 royal *cédula* granting him the territory, called Amichel, that Álvarez de Pineda had explored in his name. Although the document identifies neither Álvarez nor other participants in the voyage, it comprises the only extant description of the exploration. The four ships, carrying 270 men, sailed from Jamaica by late March 1519-about six weeks after Cortés had sailed from Cuba on the expedition that led to the conquest of Mexico. The stated purpose of Álvarez de Pineda's voyage was to explore the coast between Florida peninsula and the southern Gulf, in hope of finding a strait to the Pacific Ocean. After clearing the Yucatán Channel, which separates Cuba and the mainland, the ships continued north until the Florida panhandle was sighted, then turned east, expecting to find the passage that was supposed to separate the "island of Florida" from the mainland. The ships probably neared the end of the Florida peninsula before contrary wind and strong current forced them to turn about, then sailed west and south along the coast until they found Cortés's settlement of Villa Rica, the first European settlement on the North American mainland.

Álvarez de Pineda thus proved that Florida was not an island, as reported in 1513. On or about the feast day of Espíritu Santo (Pentecost), which fell on June 2 in 1519 by the Julian calendar, Álvarez registered the discharge of a mighty river and named it, for the religious occasion, Río del Espíritu Santo. This was the Mississippi, although various writers have attempted to show that it was some other. Garay's royal *cédula* describes the coast viewed by Álvarez de Pineda only in the most general terms. Although he undoubtedly examined the Texas coast and was, as is so often proclaimed, the first European to do so, there is no precise description that can be definitely linked to his trip.

After their encounter with Cortés, the *cédula* relates, the voyagers sailed six leagues up a "very large and fluent river," the banks of which were populated with forty native villages, and there spent forty days cleaning and repairing the ships. This river has been variously taken for the Rio Grande or the Mississippi. When the ships departed for Jamaica-to reach the home port in the late fall of 1519-it seems likely that Álvarez de Pineda and a sizable company remained as settlers. In early January 1520 a ship set sail from Jamaica with supplies for the Pánuco colony. Upon arrival, Camargo found the settlement besieged by Huastec Indians. Except for sixty colonists evacuated to Villa Rica by Camargo, Álvarez de Pineda and "all the horses and soldiers" were slain.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Donald E. Chipman, *Nuño de Guzmán and the Province of Pánuco in New Spain, 1518-1533* (Glendale, California: Clark, 1967). Robert S. Weddle, *Spanish Sea: The Gulf of Mexico in North American Discovery, 1500-1685* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1985).

3

THE CORONADO EXPEDITION In Texas 1540-1542 Activity 2.3

TALES OF THE SEVEN CITIES of Cíbola in northern New Spain had already excited the Spanish even before Cabeza de Vaca told his story. Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza at first offered the expedition's leadership to De Vaca, who declined the honor, then appointed Fray Marcos de Niza, a Franciscan priest, to head an advance party. Fray Marcos took with him Esteban the slave, survivor of the Cabeza de Vaca group, whom Mendoza had purchased from Andrés Dorantes, as a guide.

The band left Culiacán in early 1539 and moved northward. Fray Marcos sent Esteban on ahead with some Indians to observe and to report his findings. Messengers were to be sent back with a cross of sufficient size that would signify the richness of a discovery. When a messenger returned to Fray Marcos bearing a cross the size of a man, the Franciscan monk moved with haste to Cíbola.

In the meantime, Esteban had cowed local Indians along the route with his style of healing, womanizing, and boasting. He met his death at the hands of the Zuñi at the present Arizona–New Mexico state line. Apparently he came across some people who presumed by the trinkets in his possession that he was a spy for a neighboring enemy tribe.

Fray Marcos came to the death site of the bearded Moor of Azamor, stealthily peeked from a summit at Cíbola, saw the green valleys and many houses in the village, erected crosses to claim the land for Spain, and fled back to Mexico. His news encouraged Viceroy Mendoza to send forth a mighty expedition led by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado to claim the land for Spain.

In the spring of 1540, the Coronado expedition of soldiers, Indian workers, and livestock left Culiacán, journeyed through present northwestern Mexico, and arrived at a Zuñi settlement in Arizona that Fray Marcos called Cíbola. The Spanish subdued the Zuñis, explored to the north and east, and wintered at Tiguex on the Rio Grande near present-day Albuquerque. They moved to the Llano Estacado, or Staked Plains, in the spring of 1541. The Spanish acquired a guide whom they called "the Turk", who was probably a Pawnee Indian. The Turk had been captured and enslaved by Indians in New Mexico, and he looked secretly upon the Spanish as his ticket home. He offered to guide the Europeans to a fabulous place a distance away, known as Quivira, where riches abounded.

The greedy Spanish trudged along in amazement at this vast country of the Great Plains. They watched endless herds of buffalo, greeted various Indian tribes, and ate the wild fruit that grew there. Their journey seemingly became aimless because of the absence of distinctive land features to guide them in their flat High Plains country. It soon became apparent that the Turk had lied about knowing the way to Quivira, so the Spanish shackled him to the rear guard and listened to a new Indian guide.

After wandering around until they came across some sharp topographical breaks on the Cap Rock Escarpment, Coronado divided his force. He sent the army back to Tiguex while he led a contingent of thirty horsemen on to Quivira.

Historians differ on the conquistador's route from this point. He may have gone northward through the Tule and Palo Duro canyons on his way to the Arkansas River. Then again, in order to pass through the country where the types of vegetation his chronicler mentioned are abundant, he may have continued to the southeast for a distance, then cut back north. The more likely course, since Coronado's group traveled "by the needle" as they moved northward, probably beginning this phase of their trip from present-day Coleman County, was to cross the Red River near the mouth of the Salt Fork north of present-day Vernon and then proceed through western Oklahoma and Kansas to the Arkansas River.

Coronado reached his destination in the summer of 1541. The villages of Quivira were in south central Kansas near the great bend of the Arkansas River. The Spanish, extremely disappointed at their descovery of villages with grass-thatched roofs instead of cities of gold, explored a little beyond before deciding to return to Tiguex. Before they left Quivira, they repaid the Turk for his lies and misleading directions and for fomenting attacks on the Spanish by garroting him with a rope.

Coronado's quest for riches now vanished, the expedition turned southwestward to Tiguex for the winter of 1541–42. His force returned to Mexico in 1542 by retracing their earlier route. After two years on the trail and at considerable expenditure of the Crown's treasury and manpower, the Coronado expedition limped home. They left an excellent account of the land and its people, but also left the notion that the Great Plains and the Texas area were not worth the further attention of Spain. This notion prevailed for the next one and one-half centuries.

4)

THE DE SOTO–MOSCOSO EXPEDITION

In Texas 1542-1543

Activity 2.4

WHILE SPANISH SOLDIERS MARCHED to the Great Plains from the southwest, other agents of Spain approached Texas from the east. Spanish authorities sought precious metals in the interior as they made a long trek through the wilderness of present-day Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. Hernando de Soto, who had developed wealth and a reputation in Peru with Pizarro, led the explorers as they recorded their impressions of this vast land new to Europeans.

De Soto had received a commission from Emperor Charles V as governor of Cuba and *adelantado* of Florida. After attempting unsuccessfully to persuade Cabeza de Vaca to accompany his expedition, De Soto set out in April, 1538, with six hundred men on nine ships. They crossed the Atlantic Ocean, stopped briefly in Cuba, then went on to Tampa Bay. For the next three years this group experienced occasional military victories, misfortunes, hunger, and discoveries. They left a record of courage, improvisation, and frequent cruelty towards the native inhabitants, in addition to lengthy descriptions of the country they traversed. But they found no treasure in the form they sought.

From mid-1539 to early 1542 the expedition explored the present southeastern United States. The trek took its toll on the Europeans. Lost, reduced in force in men and animals by more than half, and short of supplies, the Spaniards' hardships increased in 1542 when their commander became terminally ill with fever. As he lay dying, De Soto named Luis de Moscoso as his successor.

Upon assuming command, Moscoso conferred with officers about the best course to leave from this spot where the Arkansas River flowed into the Mississippi River. The leadership collectively agreed to head west in order to reach Mexico and salvation by land. The De Soto–Moscoso expedition moved across southern Arkansas to Hot Springs and then across the Red River probably near present Texarkana. Where the Spaniards entered Texas and their route within Texas are in dispute. The written account mentions rivers, villages, the abundance or scarcity of food, disposition of Indians, and terrain.

In general the group of Spaniards with their Indian retinue traveled in a westwardly direction for 150 leagues (approximately 425 miles) from the Mississippi River. Presuming they did not stray too far from such a course, and supported by a modern understanding of the terrain as well as animal and plant life, we may reasonably assume the Moscoso party moved along the higher ground that divides the natural drainage between the Red and Sulphur rivers to the Bonham-Sherman area and on to Gainesville. Dipping to the southwest slightly, the Spanish went through the Eastern Cross Timbers, crossed the Grand Prairie, and entered the Western Cross Timbers. They probably made camp on the Brazos in the general region of Young County at a place they called Guasco.

The Spanish learned from Indian captives that other white men had been seen farther to the west. Moscoso did not know about the Coronado expedition and must have been most curious about this information. Perhaps Mexico was closer than he knew. If these travelers the Indians mentioned could be found, then he and his men could soon get back to civilization and leave this deprived area and their hardships behind. The Spanish experienced a scarcity of game and corn the farther west they went. They gave up on finding precious metal and now worried about survival in a hostile environment.

Scouting parties going out from Guasco in various directions found nothing of interest to the Spanish. Moscoso then led his men on a journey of ten days to the sunset on the advice of Guasco natives. The local inhabitants oftentimes went to the suggested location in pursuit of deer. The trip was through an area covered by trees. When they reached the river they named Daycao, which may be the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos River in northwestern Fisher County, the Spanish turned back to their headquarters in Guasco. They discovered that the farther west they went, the more inhospitable the country became. Already the summer was getting away. To spend a winter in such an area was not even considered.

Hastily, the Spaniards retraced their steps to the Mississippi River, built boats, and floated to the sea. They traveled along the Texas coast to Pánuco, where they arrived on July 2, 1543. This ill-fated expedition journeyed thousands of miles through the humid woodlands to the semiarid Great Plains but found no great riches in the forms expected. Their contribution to our heritage is our first recorded glimpse of the interior from Florida to Texas.