

# The Last Conquistadors and the Arrival of the French

## Voices of Texas History *Advanced*

Name:

Date:

Period:

### Primary Source Set I: De Soto's and Moscoso's Expedition

Hernando de Soto's expedition was documented by "the Gentleman of Elvas," who was most likely a Spaniard named Alvaro Fernandez. Fernandez wrote about the journey, the land they explored, and the American Indians they encountered from Florida to Texas and back.

**Excerpt 1 Context:** De Soto, and other conquistadors, often took American Indians captive along their expeditions as guides through the land. The first two excerpts are about one of the guides, who was often simply called "the youth." He guided them through the Carolinas.

<p><i>"[De Soto] menaced the youth, motioning that he would throw him to the dogs for having lied to him in saying that it was four days' journey, whereas they had travelled nine... The youth declared that he knew not where he was. Fortunately for him, at the time, there was not another whom Juan Ortiz understood, or he would have been cast to the dogs."</i></p>	<p><b>According to the excerpt, how would you characterize De Soto's treatment of the guide they called "the youth?"</b></p>
<p><i>"[The youth] wished to become a Christian, and asked to be baptized, which was done, he receiving the name Pedro; and [De Soto] commanded the chain to be struck off that he had carried until then."</i></p>	<p><b>What did the young guide request in this passage, and what was the result?</b></p>

**Excerpt 2 Context:** After Moscoso took over the expedition, he and his men entered Texas in a region inhabited by the Caddo. A violent conflict broke out between some Naguatec Caddo and the Spaniards. The Spaniards outnumbered the Caddo, defeated the small group, and even took one man captive, cutting off his nose and arm to send to the Caddo leader. The following day, the leader of the Naguatec arrived with a message as recorded by Alvaro Fernandez. An excerpt of the message is on the following page.

*"I believe that you and yours must be immortal; that you are the master of the things of nature; since you subject them all, and they obey you, even the very hearts of men. Witnessing the slaughter and destruction of my men in battle, which came of my ignorance and the counsel of a brother of mine who fell in the action, from my heart did I repent the error that I committed."*

**What do you think the Naguatec Caddo leader is trying to say, in your own words? Why do you think he was saying this?**

## Primary Source Set II: La Salle's Expedition

By the time the French explorer La Salle arrived in Texas, the Spanish had been exploring the region for nearly 150 years. The arrival of this new group of Europeans brought with it new goals, and new interactions with the Indigenous people. The excerpt below was written by a priest named Father Anastasius Douay who traveled with La Salle. He wrote here about the *Kironas* people somewhere in East Texas.

"Here we were agreeably surprised to find a party of Indians come out to meet us with ears of corn in their hands and a polished, honest air. They embraced us, inviting us most pressingly to go and visit their villages. The Sieur de la Salle, seeing their sincerity, agreed."

"Among other things, these Indians told us that they knew whites toward the west, a cruel wicked nation, who de-peopled the country around them. (These were the Spaniards.)"

1. How would you characterize the initial meeting between La Salle and this tribe of American Indians?
2. How did the American Indians describe the Spanish in general? What do you think they meant when they said the Spanish "de-peopled" the country?

"We told them that we were at war with that people. When the news of this spread through the village, called that of the Kironas, all vied with each other in welcoming us, pressing us to stay and go to war with the Spaniards of Mexico."

"We put them off with fair words, and made a strict alliance with them, promising to return with more numerous troops. Then after many feasts and presents, they carried us over the river in periaguas [dug-out canoes]."

3. How did La Salle describe France's relationship with Spain? How did the American Indians react to this?

4. What is an alliance, and why do you think the French formed one with these American Indians?

5. **Writing Activity:** According to the accounts in the excerpts above, how would you characterize the treatment of the American Indians by the Spanish compared to that of the French? Provide examples from the texts to support your answer.