

Álvar Núñez Cabeza De Vaca

Encyclopedia Article

Álvar Núñez Cabeza De Vaca

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Álvar Núñez Cabeza De Vaca

c. 1490-c. 1560

Spanish explorer in the region of what is now Texas, whose claims regarding legendary cities of gold influenced later exploration efforts by Hernando de Soto (c. 1500-1542) and Francisco de Coronado (c. 1510-1554). In 1528 Núñez landed near the site of modern-day Galveston, and spent eight years wandering among Native American tribes, during which time most of his men died. When found by fellow Spaniards in northern Mexico in 1536, he was full of wild tales concerning the Seven Cities of Cibola, about which he had heard but which he did not claim to have visited. Later, as governor of Rio de la Plata in South America (1541-1545), he created a route from Santos, Brazil, to Asunción, Paraguay. He recorded his North American journeys in *Naufraios* (1542), and his South American ones in *La Relación y Comentarios* (1555).