

*Adventures on the American Frontier*

# BRAVE MEN OF EARLY TEXAS

Part One

Cabeza de Vaca Crosses America



A Royal Fireworks Production

Royal Fireworks Press  
Unionville, New York



**Other books in this series:**  
**La Salle's Dream of a New Settlement**  
**The Austins Come to Texas**  
**Heroes of the Lone Star Republic**



This book features QR codes that link to audio of the book being narrated so that readers can follow along.

---

Copyright © 2021, Royal Fireworks Online Learning, Inc.  
All Rights Reserved.

Royal Fireworks Press  
P.O. Box 399  
41 First Avenue  
Unionville, NY 10988-0399  
(845) 726-4444  
fax: (845) 726-3824  
email: mail@rfwp.com  
website: rfwp.com



ISBN: 978-0-89824-947-7

Printed and bound in Unionville, New York, on acid-free paper using vegetable-based inks at the Royal Fireworks facility.

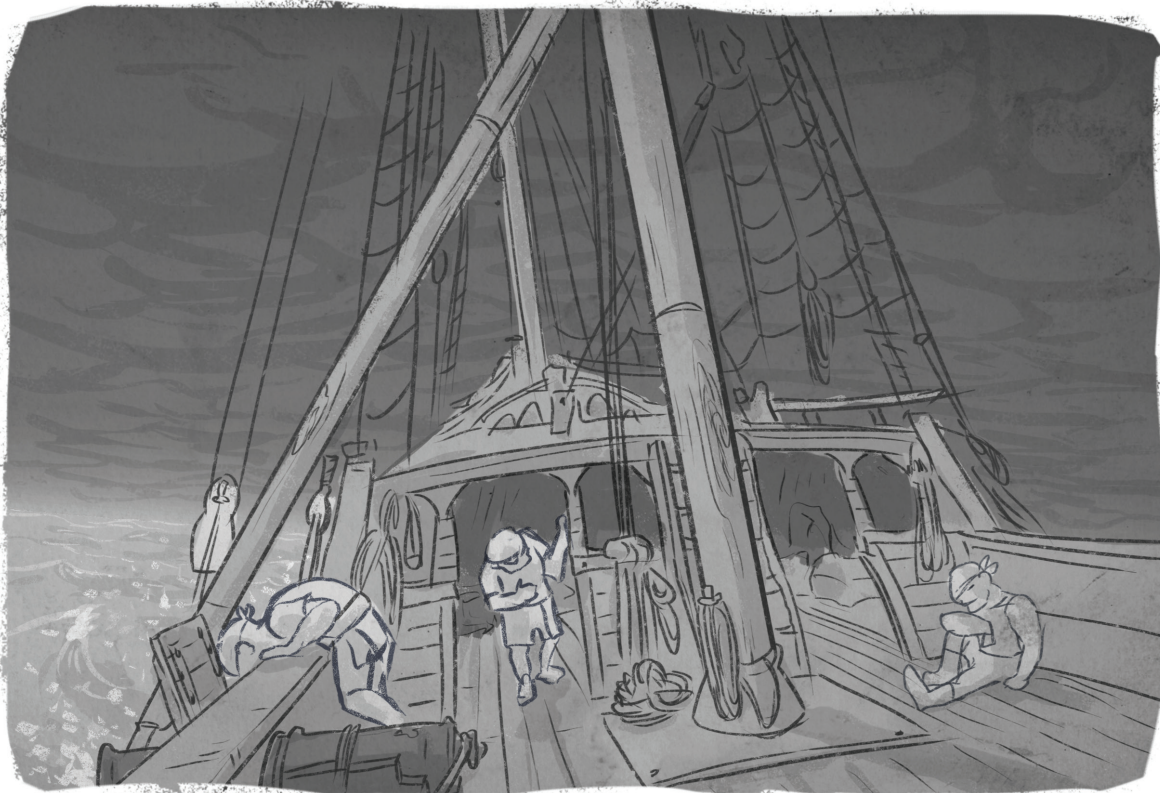
Publisher: Dr. T.M. Kemnitz  
Editor: Jennifer Ault  
Book and cover designer: Christopher Tice  
Audio and narration: Christopher Tice



2Aug21

Forty men lay crowded on the rough deck of a small ship just off the Texas coast on the night of November 5, 1528. The hours dragged by. With every wave that hit the ship, it groaned and creaked as if it would break apart. Clouds had swept in and covered the moon, but no man lifted his head to notice. Almost all of them were too sick to care. Some were even beyond hearing the groaning of the crude ship that they had built themselves near Mobile Bay in what is now Alabama.





The wind changed, and a great shudder shook the ship. Captain Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, commander of the ship, struggled to his knees, grasping the splintery toprail. He put his hand on the shoulder of the



helmsman, who was slumped over the tiller.

“Listen!” de Vaca shouted into the helmsman’s ear. “Hear that sound? That’s not just the wind. It’s the sound of waves breaking on a shore. We’ll be on the rocks before we know it!”

As the helmsman swung the tiller to head the ship out to sea, de Vaca looked out across the water. Dawn would soon be breaking, and he would be able to see the shore. Whether it was a rocky coastline or a sandy beach, he had no idea.

De Vaca looked at the dark forms of the men on the deck. All of them were weak from hunger and thirst; some were ill from the rolling of the ship as well.

“Man the oars!” De Vaca shouted, but only two men even lifted their heads. So he himself grabbed an oar to help move the ship away from land.

Suddenly, there was a great roaring sound. The oar was torn from de Vaca’s grip. He felt the ship rising under him. He shouted as he felt himself flying through



the air. Then everything went blank.

De Vaca awoke to find himself lying in the ship, but the ship was still, no longer tossing about on the waves. It had been lifted by a giant wave and set onto a sand bar. By some miracle, not one man had been thrown into the sea. Now they were crawling from the ship onto the beach, the first Europeans on Texas soil. De Vaca, too, climbed out and dropped to the sand. As he lay there panting, he gave thanks that his men had been delivered from the sea.