

THE KARANKAWA INDIANS | *Fictions and Facts*

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON | HISTORY

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MY RESEARCH:

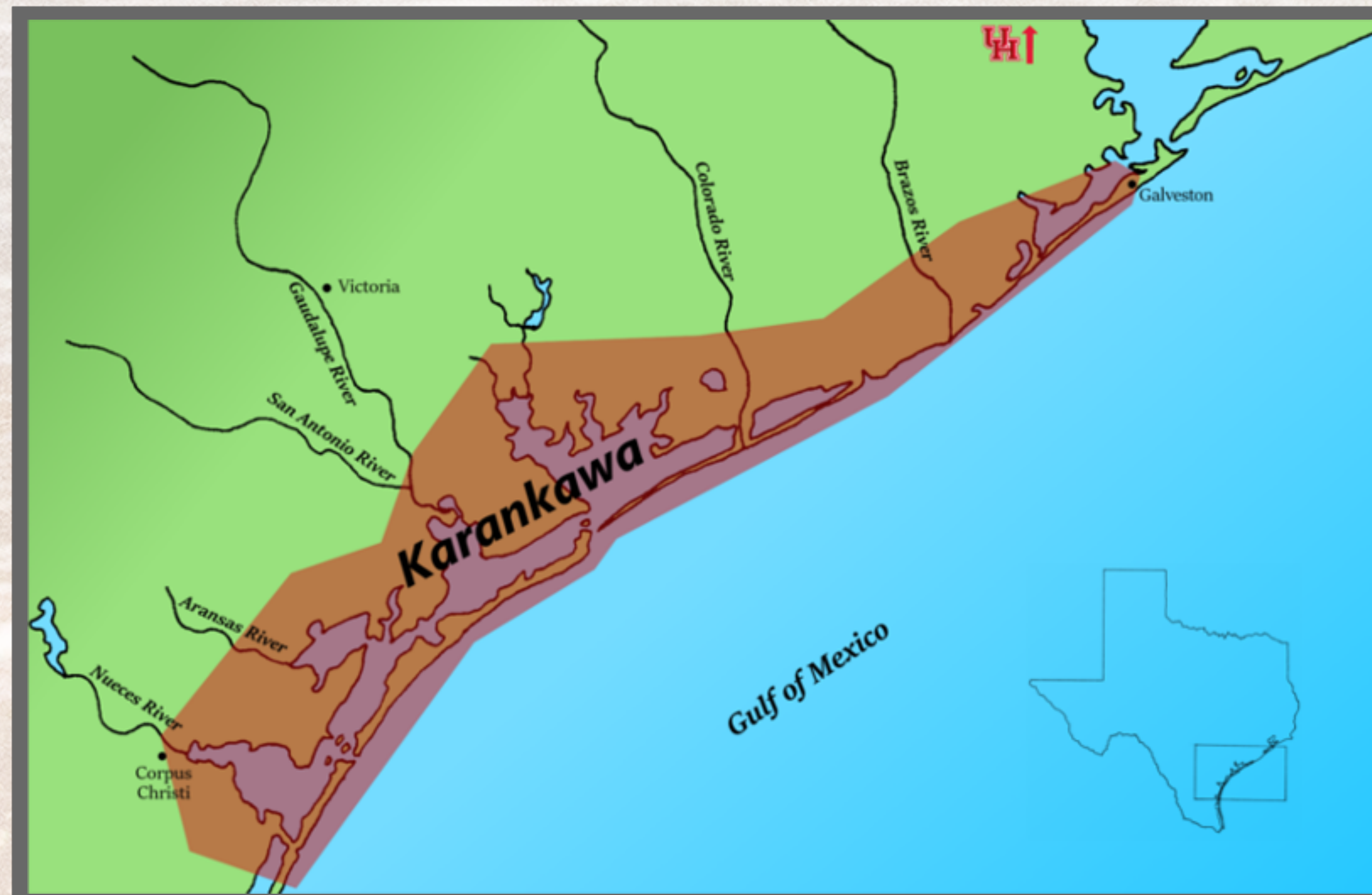
The history of the Karankawa is full of misconceptions and inaccuracies. With my research, I aim to dispel these myths and bring recognition and new insight to this now extinct tribe through a modern and interactive retelling of their history.

WHO WERE THE KARANKAWA?

Considered the most "savage" and fearsome of all the Texan Indian tribes, the Karankawa were a group of people indigenous to the Gulf Coast of Texas who spoke the same language and shared a similar culture. The Karankawa were not a single tribe, but were a conglomeration of many.

WHERE DID THE KARANKAWA LIVE?

The Karankawa inhabited the land to the south of Galveston, down to the southern end of Corpus Christi Bay. As hunters and gatherers, food availability greatly affected their range. Their location, be it on the mainland or barrier islands, depended on the season.



FACT OR FICTION?

Were the Karankawa cannibals?

The Spaniards, Texans, and later, Americans, all made wild claims of Indian cannibalism as a means to dehumanize those who lived on the land they wished to acquire. Despite this, the Karankawa were indeed exo-cannibalistic, meaning they cannibalized those outside their community. Some historians have questioned their anthropophagy, but the evidence that they ate other humans is, I believe, substantial.

Were they giants?

No, but they were taller than average for the time period. The typical height of a Karankawa male, through first hand measurement and osteology has been recorded to be roughly 5'7". They were not the giants myth has made them out to be, but when compared to Europeans, who had an average height of 5'4" in the 16th and 17th century, they were certainly tall.

ACCOMPLISHED OVER THE SUMMER:

- Created the website Karankawas.com to act as a resource for those studying the Karankawa.

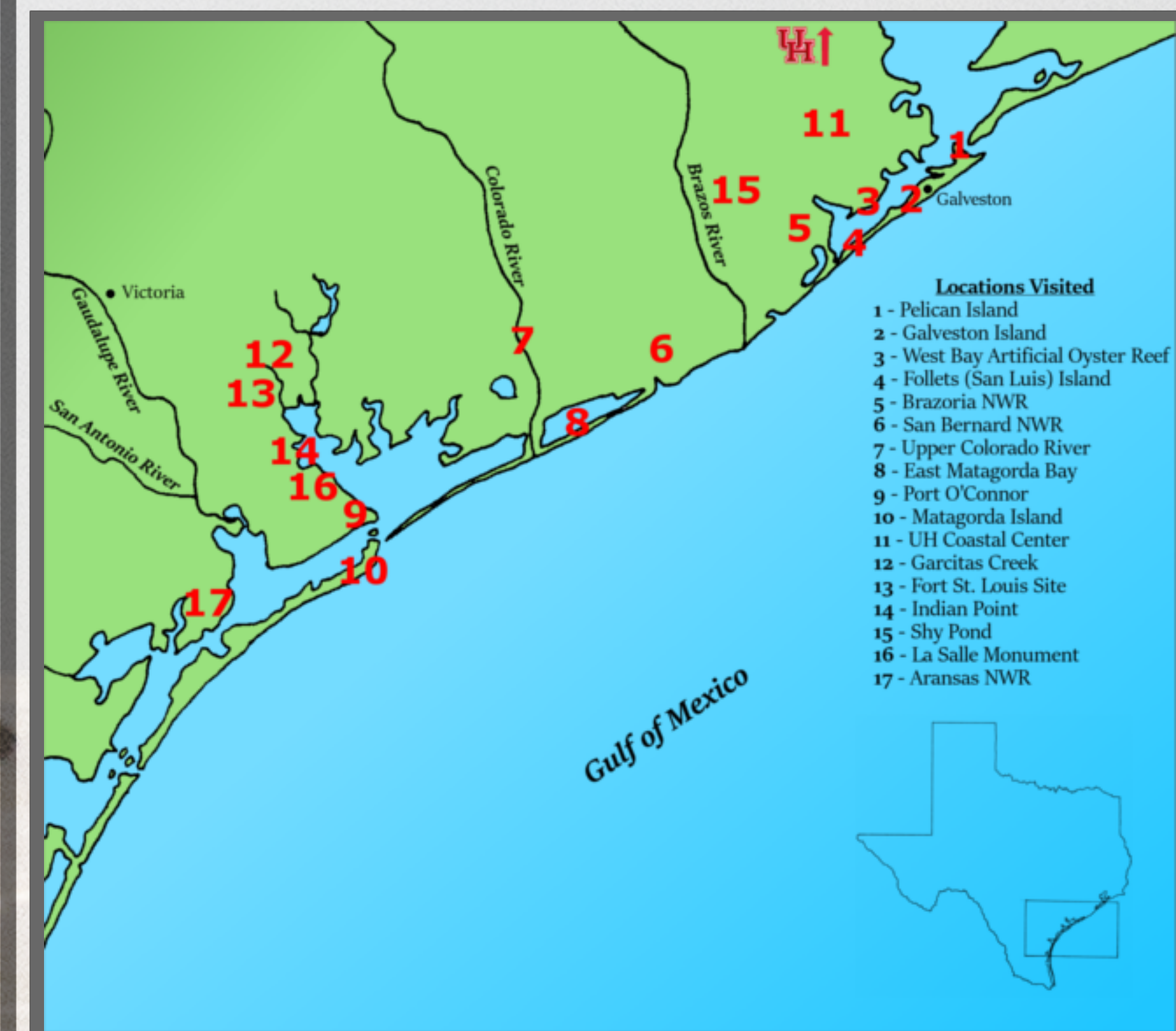
- Transcribed a complete version of the Karankawa language.

- Pieced together a timeline of European contact with the Karankawa.

- Compiled a FAQ list of common misconceptions about the Karankawa with historically accurate answers.

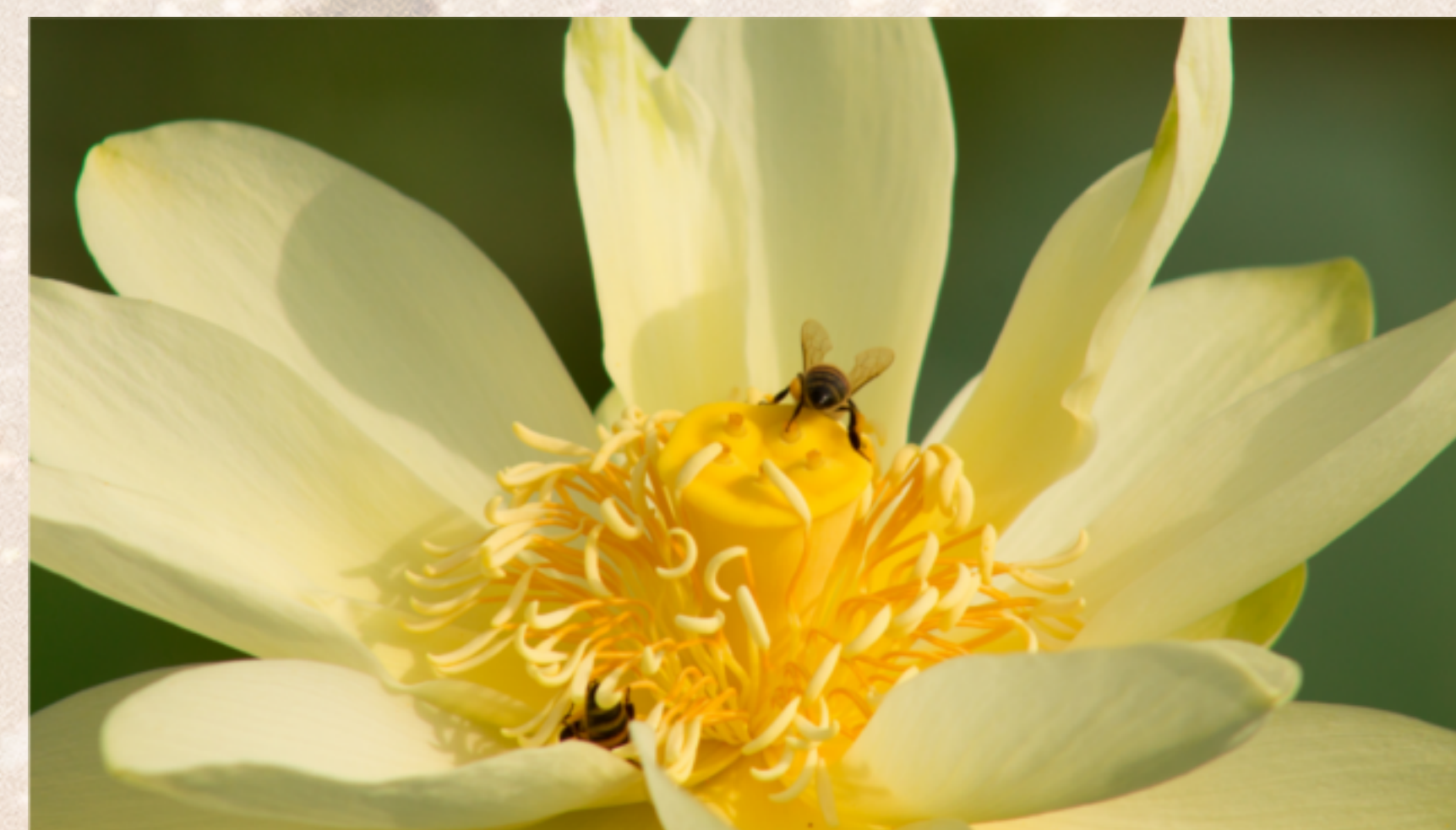
- Wrote a significant amount of my honors thesis spanning from first contact with Cabeza de Vaca, to the unfortunate fate of Sieur de La Salle.

WHERE I TRAVELED:



Over the ten weeks of summer, I traveled to seventeen different locations around the Gulf Coast to take photographs of the Karankawas environment and learn more about the land they once lived on.

PHOTOGRAPHY:



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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