

CREED OF THE LONE RANGER

Tuesday's *Perspective* dealt with one of my boyhood super-heroes, the Lone Ranger. He was a fictional masked former Texas Ranger who fought outlaws in the American Old West, along with a Native American friend named Tonto.



He first appeared in 1933 in a radio show conceived either by WXYZ (Detroit) radio station owner George W. Trendle or by Fran Striker, the show's writer. The last new show was broadcast on radio on Sept. 3, 1954. The television series aired for eight seasons, from 1949 to 1957.

The Lone Ranger was so named because he was the only survivor of a group of six Texas Rangers who were ambushed pursuing a band of outlaws. To conceal his identity, he wore a mask, and continued fighting for justice, even after the gang responsible for the killings was captured.

The character was originally believed to be inspired by Texas Ranger Capt. John R. Hughes, to whom the book *The Lone Star Ranger* by Zane Grey was dedicated in 1915.

The Lone Ranger was a morality play set in the Old West. As generally depicted – both in the radio and television series – the Lone Ranger conducted himself by a strict moral code based on that put in place by Striker at the inception of the character. Lead actors in the TV series, Clayton Moore and Jay Silverheels, a Mohawk from the Six Nations Indian Reserve in Ontario, Canada, both took their positions as role models to children very seriously and tried their best to live by this creed. It read:

I believe:

- *That to have a friend, a man must be one.*
- *That all men are created equal and that everyone has within himself the power to make this a better world.*
- *That God put the firewood there, but that every man must gather and light it himself.*
- *In being prepared physically, mentally, and morally to fight when necessary for what is right.*
- *That a man should make the most of what equipment he has.*
- *That "this government of the people, by the people, and for the people" shall live always.*
- *That men should live by the rule of what is best for the greatest number.*
- *That sooner or later ... somewhere ... somehow ... we must settle with the world and make payment for what we have taken.*
- *That all things change but truth, and that truth alone, lives on forever.*
- *In my Creator, my country, my fellow man.*

(more)

Those principles line up with the pronouncement by an announcer at the beginning of each episode – the words still ringing in the ears of my mind:

In the early days of the western United States, a masked man and an Indian rode the plains, searching for truth and justice. Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear, when from out of the past come the thundering hoofbeats of the great horse Silver! The Lone Ranger rides again!

Well, Silver's hoofbeats don't reverberate across broadcast airwaves anymore, and the Lone Ranger is buried in our past. But our lives in 2015 should also be a search for truth and justice.

And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free (John 8:32 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter