

“A fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust and a hearty hi-yo silver! The Lone Ranger! With his faithful Indian companion Tonto, the daring and resourceful masked rider of the plains led the fight for law and order in the early western United States. Nowhere in the pages of history can one find a greater champion of justice. Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear! From out of the past come the thundering Hoofbeats of the great horse Silver ... the Lone Ranger rides again!

Few things are more iconic in American popular culture than announcer Fred Foy reciting those lines against the opening strains of the William Tell Overture. The Lone Ranger was a western adventure show that premiered in January of 1933 on radio station WXYZ in Detroit. The show, which was aimed primarily at children, had a strong adult following as well and continued for 2,956 episodes on WXYZ, the Mutual Network and the NBC Blue/ABC networks until September 3, 1954. Repeat broadcasts continued until May 25, 1956.

The show had been created by WXYZ owner George W. Trendle and writer Fran Striker, though who contributed what to the concept is up for debate. The character of the Lone Ranger was believed to have been inspired by Texas Ranger Captain John R. Hughes, to

whom Zane Grey had dedicated a novel in 1915. The show was a major hit, and inspired numerous books, comic books, movie serials, and eventually a truly memorable television series starring Clayton Moore and Jay Silverheels in 1949, lasting until 1957.

The basic story of the Lone Ranger is ingrained in American culture. The unnamed hero was the only survivor of a group of six Texas Rangers who were ambushed by Butch Cavendish and his gang in a canyon named Bryant's Gap. An Indian named Tonto later came upon the massacre, finding one ranger still alive. Tonto nurses the ranger back to health, who then swears to bring Cavendish to justice. To keep Cavendish off his guard, the ranger and Tonto make six graves in Bryant's Gap, and the ranger fashions a black domino mask from a ranger's vest to conceal his identity. He tamed the wild horse Silver for his mount, and after making sure Cavendish paid for his crimes, the Lone Ranger continued to fight for justice in the Old West. He was later joined by his young nephew Dan Reid.

On the original radio series, the Lone Ranger was portrayed by George Seaton, followed by Earle Graser. After Graser's untimely death in 1941, Brace Beemer, the show's former announcer, took over the role. Director James Jewell and announcer Fred Foy also played the

lead role for one broadcast each, as did an unknown actor using the name “Jack Deeds.” Tonto was played by John Todd throughout the series, being replaced on isolated broadcasts by Roland Parker (who was best known as Kato on The Green Hornet). Other supporting players were primarily regional actors from Detroit and WXYZ staff. Jay Michael (who also starred in Sgt. Preston of the Yukon), Bill Saunders (noted for voicing Butch Cavendish), Paul Hughes, Jane Fae, Rube and Liz Weiss, and future movie star John Hodiak. The part of Dan Reid was played by child actors Bob Martin, James Lipton, and Dick Beals.

For the Old Time Radio Researchers, this is your announcer, _____. Hi-yo Silver away!