

THE LONE RANGER, FREEMASONRY, and TEXAS RANGER ETHICS

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In this technological age of the 21st Century, it is difficult for young people to relate to the fewer communication and entertainment avenues of the early 20th Century. Back then, it was Radio which provided news, programming and entertainment. Before television made it possible to convey images, radio-listeners had to create their own mental picture to blend-in and enhance the messages that they heard. Successful radio programs had to use correct language, as well as clear and vivid depictions to keep listeners spellbound. In 1933, a Detroit, Michigan man named George W. Trendle, created a radio program broadcast over radio station WXYZ. He wanted it to appeal to youth, yet be interesting and exciting for adults, too. The setting of the Old West in America provided an interesting theme in which to portray the hardships of the pioneers. Those hardships were deepened by burdens imposed by bad luck, bad choices, and bad men. With any big problem, people look for 'something' or 'someone' to help lift that burden and help make things right. As you might suppose, the hero would rescue the situation and happiness would prevail.

The program, which began on radio, was eventually brought to television. That is where my first recollections of it began.

The character would exhibit genuine virtue, honor, valor, wisdom, compassion and respect for Law. The person in this leading role would be a true gentleman, who sets a good example of clean living and clean speech. He would walk uprightly and promote Justice without regard for personal gain. He would come to the rescue when needed, and he wouldn't be afraid to enlist the help of his faithful companion or a group of citizens to work in concert with him to bring order out of chaos. Restoring the community's peace and harmony was his overriding concern.

This character had a past history as a lawman - as a Texas Ranger. He was shot down in an ambush, along with five other Texas Rangers. As he lay near death, an American Indian named "Tonto" came across the scene and observed that one Ranger was still breathing, brought him water, and nursed him back to health. Around the Ranger's neck was a necklace bearing a symbol that Tonto had given a young white-boy years earlier. Tonto said, "You are kemo-sabe." (A Pottawatomie Indian word meaning "trusty scout" or "faithful friend.") The



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Ranger, vaguely remembers his childhood nickname. He remembers Tonto and their memories of youth. The Ranger, John Reid, sees his brother (a fellow Texas Ranger) Dan Reid among the five dead Rangers. Together, Tonto and the Ranger dig six graves to make it appear to the outlaws that there were no survivors. As the sole survivor, Tonto makes the astute pronouncement to his friend: "You the Lone Ranger, now."

Before burying his fellow Texas Rangers, the surviving Ranger cut a strip of black fabric from his brother Dan's vest and fashioned it into a mask to put across his face and conceal his identity. As "The Lone Ranger," he vowed: First, to bring to Justice the members of the Cavendish Gang who did the dastardly deed. And, Second, to help bring Law and Order to the rugged American Frontier as well as a level of stability to its citizenry. The Lone Ranger had his trusty horse, Silver, and Tonto had his beautiful paint horse, Scout.

I can almost hear the sounds of the 'Cavalry Charge' finale of Gioacchino Rossini's William Tell Overture, and the booming baritone voice of the announcer, who said, "A fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust, and a hearty 'Heigh-Yo, Silver!!' The Lone Ranger. 'Heigh-Yo, Silver, away!!' 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 West. Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear. The Lone Ranger rides again. "

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Like many people, I would classify "The Lone Ranger" as a true American hero....a larger-than-life personality, worthy of emulation. Growing up, I knew several men who, if wrapped-up-together, would embody most of The Lone Ranger's admirable traits. Upon reaching adulthood and soon thereafter joining Masonry, I can see many of those desirable virtues inculcated in the various Masonic degrees.

It is no co-incidence that Freemasonry helped influence the law enforcement agency, the Texas Rangers. It was Bro.: Stephen F. Austin, a Mason, who had the fervent wish to organize a group of hardy men to protect his new colony (which later became Texas). In 1823, Bro.: Austin referred to that group as Rangers, because of their duties compelling them to 'range' over the entire vast area. This select group gave rise to what is called now "Texas Rangers." Furthermore, many notable early Texas Rangers were Masons, including Jack Hays, John B. Jones, (who later became the presiding officer of Royal Arch Masonry in Texas) L.H. McNelly, James Gillett, and George W. Baylor (among many others). One of the most dynamic Texas Rangers of the 20th Century was Manuel Trazazas Gonzauillas. His career as a Texas Ranger was notable for his patrolling of the East Texas Oil Fields, near Kilgore, Texas. He was known by the nickname "Lone Wolf Gonzauillas," and he was the only Texas Ranger then of Spanish



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descent. He was also a Mason. Bro. Gonzauillas was involved in the control of gambling, boot-legging, bank robbery, riots, prostitution, narcotic trafficking, and general lawlessness from the Red River to the Rio Grande and from El Paso to the Sabine River during the 1920s and 1930s.

In September 2006, I was pleased to have Barry K. Caver, Captain of Texas Rangers - Company "E" tell me, "There was a time that most, if not all Texas Rangers, were Masons; however, I do not know their level of involvement."

The battle of "Good" winning over "Evil," and the struggle from 'adversity and despair' to 'triumph and joy' is a hallmark of real-life adventures that have been memorialized by both works of fiction and non-fiction. In pioneer days, horses were the principal means of transportation. Having a good horse often meant the difference between life and death for not only Texas Rangers, but for ordinary citizens as well.

Animals, as well as humans, sometimes experience adversity. The Lone Ranger and Tonto saved a big white horse from being gored to death by a buffalo. The Lone Ranger and Tonto nursed it back to health, and eventually set it free. The horse later followed them back to camp and The Lone Ranger adopted it. The horse became his trusty steed "Silver."

The Lone Ranger's bullets were made by a retired Texas Ranger in an old silver mine. The silver bullets were to remind the Ranger of how expensive it is to shoot at a man, and conversely, how valuable every person's life is. The Lone Ranger would always shoot to wound -never to kill.

As a Masonic Rosicrucian, I am reminded of the virtues of the element SILVER. It is not only a precious metal used in monetary exchanges as currency, it also has healing properties. I am reminded that pioneers moving west often put silver coins in their water barrels to keep them clean as a bactericide and algacide. Silver is also used today in pharmaceuticals.

The Lone Ranger put on the mask so he could not be identified. This served a two-fold purpose: So he could not be easily recognized by the outlaws who sought to kill him initially. Secondly, any good deeds he would perform later would be done purely for the love of country and the pursuit of justice. Anonymity gives a person a stronger backbone of self-discipline if it is apparent the donor will receive nothing in return. Many Masonic Halls in olden days would have wooden boxes placed in aisles, lobbies, hallways or in rooms adjacent to the Lodge room for members to donate Alms and other money to be directed to the poor. Any selfish person will make a donation if they can brag and boast about it, but it takes a truly selfless person who really cares to contribute in private.



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The Lone Ranger rode over a vast amount of territory, which included the Great Plains and several rivers, streams, distant mountains and the occasional canyon. When I was growing up in Kansas, I was amazed to learn that parts of the current States of KANSAS, COLORADO, NEW MEXICO, OKLAHOMA, and even a bit of WYOMING were once part of the Republic of Texas. In that context, it is easy to envision a former Texas Ranger riding the diverse types of terrain which were then ONE REGION. And, Kansas has a Pottawatomie Indian Reservation. Sometimes works of fiction are based on more reality than a person might imagine.

For The Lone Ranger and Tonto, friendships were solid and life-long. Masonry likewise inspires solid, lifelong friendships. Fr. Christian Rosenkreutz, the founder of the Rosicrucian Society had members go out in the world in pairs. He felt that by going out in the world two-by-two would provide more safety and security than a sole individual dealing with life's struggles alone. Furthermore, life's lessons are often better understood when you have someone by your side to help you see how it has affected them too. Courage doesn't develop instantly. Moral courage goes beyond personal courage or bravery. Moral courage must be cultivated and reinforced. Freemasonry instills an honorable Code of Conduct. Many early Texas Rangers being Masons themselves adopted a code of ethics or integrity that lives on today. The white lambskin apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. The 5-pointed Star-within-a-wheel design is the badge of a Texas Ranger, and the badges are generally made from old Mexican five-peso silver coins. Early Rangers sometimes lacked an "official" badge for various reasons: insufficient salary, no real need to display it to Indians or Mexicans, or no need of displaying such a tempting target on one's chest. However, the Masonic influence on the 5-pointed Lone Star has been evident from the beginning. In 1844, George K. Teulon, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of the Republic of Texas, addressing a gathering of Masons in Portland, Maine said, "*Texas is emphatically a Masonic Country. Our national emblem, the 'Lone Star' was chosen from the emblems selected by Freemasonry, to illustrate the moral virtues--- it is a five-pointed star, and alludes to the five points of fellowship.*" Badges are nice to have, but we all must strive to aspire to the duties and qualifications that our 'badge' represents.

Along with personal courage comes personal sacrifice. The Lone Ranger had his own blood spilled during the ambush in the pursuit of Justice. His brother (a fellow Ranger) died in the same pursuit of Justice. Having already taken an Oath as a Ranger, he vowed another promise: to continue acting in the interests of Justice.

All of us (as Master Masons) have taken an honorable obligation in the Lodge. And as Masonic Rosicrucians, we have made additional promises to seek further knowledge and continue our honorable and laudable work in the interests of the betterment of all mankind. By making our additional obligations, we have shown that we are willing to personally sacrifice a little more, in order that our Society makes a positive difference in this world.



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By remembering those thrilling days of yesteryear and learning from this grand old story of The Lone Ranger...may we all be inspired to "carry-on" and base our actions on the same degree of excellence in ethics. Retaining and displaying a high level of ethics is often difficult to do in today's world. Moral courage often comes via emulation of the honorable men who have gone before us. We may not hear the 'Cavalry Charge' from *The William Tell Overture*...but each of us needs to respond to the call to people in need. And, we should do so in a manner worthy of the next generation wanting to emulate us!!!!

Author's additional comments:

* The Lone Ranger's horse "Silver" was an American Albino horse, and the American Albino Horse Club (now called the White Horse Club) was formed in 1937 on the White Horse Ranch near Naper, Nebraska. Current contact information on them: Rt 1, Box 20, Naper, Nebraska 68755-2020 Phone (402)-832-5560 website: <http://www.whitehorseranchnebraska.com/registry.htm> Reference website: <http://cowboyfrank.net/fortvalley/breeds/AmericanAlbino.htm>

References / Sources / Recommended Readings:

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- + Texas Department of Public Safety
website: http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/director_staff/texas_rangers/
- + Personal Correspondence in the form of a postal letter, dated 11 September 2006 from Barry K. Caver, Captain, Texas Rangers - Company "E", 240 S. Loop 250 West, Midland, Texas 79703
- + Museum of Broadcast Communications website: <http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/L/html/L/loneranger/loneranger.htm>
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- + Texas Rangers Law Enforcement Hall of Fame and Museum, Waco, Texas
- + Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Texas
- + Handbook of Texas Online project of the University of Texas and the Texas State Historical Association website: http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/GG/fgo38_print.html

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