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Fran Striker, author of 3,000 Lone Ranger radio scripts, writer for ``The Green Hornet`` and ``Sgt. Preston of the Yukon`` radio series, author of 18 novels and an unknown number of television shows, may be on the verge of one more, posthumous, literary venture.

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His son, Fran Striker Jr., has dug out his father`s last novel, polished it up and written a final chapter based on the original outline. As soon as he finds a publisher, ``One More River,`` the last creation of the creator of the Lone Ranger, will finally see print.

In addition to that, Fran Striker Jr. wants to re-release his father`s eight Tom Quest novels because, as he says, ``young people now need some real heroes.``

The Masters of the Universe, Spider-Man and the other superheroes that infest Saturday morning television are all very well, he says, but they are not real, not like the Lone Ranger or Tom Quest, a youthful adventurer and explorer with a flair for scientific gadgets.

``Kids need heroes they can emulate,`` he said. ``How can you emulate Aquaman?``

For that matter, how can you emulate the late Fran Striker--writer, chemist, carpenter, saxophonist, photographer and maker of elaborate fireworks extravaganzas?

``He was amazing,`` says his son and biographer, a 48-year-old computer programmer from Runnemede, N.J. ``At the height of the popularity of the Lone Ranger radio series, he was writing three scripts a week, plus two Green Hornet scripts a week, and his novels.

``He also was writing the plots and dialogue for all of the Lone Ranger comic strips, and every time the Lone Ranger made a public appearance--even if only to open a shopping center--he scripted the appearance.``

The elder Striker became a professional writer in 1915 at the age of 12 when he sold a short story to a newspaper in his hometown of Buffalo, N.Y. He was paid \$1, a small fortune for a 12-year-old at a time when you could buy a hot dog for a nickel.

He studied chemistry at the University of Buffalo, but never worked in the field. The lure of the typewriter was too strong.

In 1928, after a fling at producing stage shows, he took a job with a Buffalo radio station, where he had previously earned some money playing his saxophone. His titles at the station included announcer, musician, studio manager, writer, actor and program director.

It was at this time that he began writing radio dramas, including a western series called ``Covered Wagon Days.'' In the years before the Lone Ranger rode into his life, Striker wrote 41 series of radio dramas ranging from science fiction to what would now be called sitcoms.

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Then along came George W. Trendle.

Trendle had taken over station WXYZ in Detroit and had severed the station's relationship with the CBS network. His idea was that a local station could produce local programming and find local sponsorship without being tied to a network. He had heard of Striker's work and, on Dec. 28, 1932, he sent a letter reading, in part:

``Will you please write up three or four Wild West thrillers, including all the hokum of masked rider, rustler, killer Pete, heroine on the train tracks, fight on top of the boxcars, Indian bad men, two-gun bank robbers, etc.''

Striker, according to his son, dug out a script he had previously written for ``Covered Wagon Days,'' a script that began:

``In the small communities of the West, gambling and gunfighting were everyday affairs, and a man never left his house without being prepared to shoot in defense of his life. Throughout the entire West,

in those turbulent days, were circulated stories of a masked rider, a modern Robin Hood, seen by few, known by none. Few men dared to defy this man, and those that did . . . lost.”

From this, the character named the Lone Ranger evolved. After a few scripts, Striker decided that his hero needed somebody to converse with to move the plots along. Thus, Tonto was born.

The first show aired on Jan. 31, 1933.

The Detroit station paid \$4 for each script, and Striker was also selling the same scripts to stations in Buffalo and Omaha for similar amounts. A year or so later, Trendle hired Striker as a staff writer and bought the rights to the Lone Ranger from him for \$10.

(In the late 1950s, Fran Striker Jr. says, Trendle sold the rights to the Lone Ranger to Lone Ranger Television Inc., a subsidiary of the Wrather Corp., for \$3 million.)

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“He would wake up about 10 p.m. and go into the room he used as an office, and he would write until 4 or 5 in the morning. If he wandered out of his office while we four kids were still awake, we knew that it was no use trying to talk with him. He just wasn’t with us. His mind was full of plots and gunfights and bank robbers.”

During the 1950s, Striker wrote or edited all of the Lone Ranger television scripts and the Lone Ranger film “serials,” in addition to writing his Tom Quest books and his adult western, “One More River.”

He was killed in an automobile accident in 1962 at the age of 58.

“I had thought of writing Dad’s story for many years, but never got around to it,” Fran Striker Jr. said. “Then, as 1983 approached, the 50th anniversary of the Lone Ranger, I decided to go ahead and do it.” By that time, he said, his own three children had reached adulthood, and he had more time to devote to writing.

The result was “His Typewriter Grew Spurs,” a 143-page biography put together from old scripts, letters, notes, conversations and memories.

Striker published the paperback “His Typewriter Grew Spurs” himself and sold it “by word of mouth. I sold enough copies to cover the publishing costs, and that is all I was interested in.”

But he will seek to have “One More River” published commercially. The same goes for the Tom Quest books.

In the meantime, he keeps busy answering fan mail from Lone Ranger buffs seeking information, trying to answer that old question:

“Who was that masked man?”

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