

Please put your name on your apron

By V.W. Bro. Marshall Kern, Grand Historian and Sarnia District Librarian & Historian

Please put your name on your Masonic apron. Most new aprons have a place under the flap to record your name, Lodge, and important dates. This is a story of an apron and regalia that didn't have a name on it.

R.W. Bro. Keith Hart has been properly called 'the Dean of Sarnia District DDGMs'. He served as the DDGM in 1968 - 1969, 55 years ago. He continues to serve Sarnia District by caring for used Grand Lodge Officer regalia. Regalia that is turned in to him can be cleaned or refurbished and presented to a new Grand Lodge Officer. This practice supports the continuity of our order, and respect for those of earlier generations who wore the regalia as they served our Fraternity.

In sorting through some of the cases containing regalia R.W. Bro. Hart found one that didn't make much sense. The name on the case reads 'Roy Doan'. V.W. Bro. Roy Doan (1894 – 1975) was a member of Inwood Lodge No. 503. V.W. Bro. Doan served as the Grand Junior Deacon in 1963 – 1964. Yet the regalia in the case is very clearly that of a District Deputy Grand Master.

If the regalia in the case is not that of V.W. Bro. Roy Doan, to whom did it belong?

Unfortunately there isn't a name marked on the DDGM regalia. Not on the apron, nor the collar, nor the cuffs (or gauntlets). The regalia does have the name of the manufacturer: "Ambrose Kent and Sons Limited, 156 Yonge St. Toronto".

A bit of history of this regalia manufacturer is available online. Ambrose Kent and Sons Limited was a jeweller and regalia maker from about 1895 to 1946. Several examples of their regalia work are in the collection of Guelph Museum.

The regalia provides another clue. The medallion on the collar shows "District No. 2 G.R.C.". District No. 2 existed from 1888 to 1923. Thirty-five DDGMs held office during these years. But we can reduce the number to less than 30 because Ambrose Kent and Sons wasn't making regalia in the earliest years of District No. 2.





The case holding the regalia provides a further clue. V.W. Bro. Roy Doan was a member of Inwood Lodge No. 503. Is it possible that the DDGM regalia comes from a member of Inwood Lodge No. 503?

Our records show that only one Mason from Inwood Lodge No. 503 was elected and served District No. 2 during the years it was so named. R.W. Bro. William Robert Dawson of Inwood Lodge No. 503 was DDGM of District No. 2 for the year 1921 – 1922. His District Secretary was appointed as Grand Steward for the succeeding year of 1922 – 1923. That was V.W. Bro. J. Vance, also of Inwood Lodge No. 503.

Can we connect the DDGM regalia of R.W. Bro. William Dawson, and the case owned by V.W. Bro. Roy Doan? To try to make that connection we must turn to some genealogy research.

It appears that R.W. Bro. William Robert Dawson (1868 – 1946) and wife Minnie Turner Cheyne had a son Lee Dawson (1899 -- 1972) who married Ada Doan (1904 – 1965). Ada Doan was the sister of V.W. Bro. Roy Doan.

With this family connection from generation to generation, we may surmise that the DDGM regalia of R.W. Bro. William Dawson was passed to his son Lee Dawson who gave it to his brother-in-law V.W. Bro. Roy Doan. When V.W. Bro. Roy Doan passed to the GL Above, the DDGM regalia was placed into the regalia case with the name 'Roy Doan' and given to R.W. Bro. Keith Hart.

Now the DDGM regalia worn a century ago by R.W. Bro. William Dawson will be preserved in the Sarnia District archives.

And you are reminded to please put your name on your apron!

Sources of information:

- Personal communication with R.W. Bro. Keith Hart
- Sarnia District Trestleboard 2022-23
- List of Elected Officers prepared by R.W. Bro. Tom Keith
- List of Appointed Officers prepared by R.W. Bro. Tom Keith
- History of Sarnia District and its predecessors by R.W. Bro. Michael Jenkyns
- Online Collections Database of Guelph Museums. Accessed January 2023
- Find-a-Grave website; records for William Dawson, Lee Dawson, Ada Dawson, Roy Doan. Accessed January 2023
- Obituary for Albert Roy Doan (1894 – 1975)