

# Still on the Trail of a Mystery...

By  
Aimee E. Newell

**B**ack in the August 2010 issue of *Knight Templar*, I wrote about a portrait in the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum and Library's collection that depicts an unidentified Knight Templar. In the article, I suggested that it might be Robert H. Chamberlain (1838-1910) of Worcester, Massachusetts, who served as Grand Commander from 1891 to 1892, but this was far from a secure attribution.

Several readers contacted me after the issue was published and made helpful suggestions. A California reader submitted his comments in a letter to the editor that appeared in the January 2011 issue. While he regretted that he could not help with identifying the man in the portrait, he did make an important plea, reminding us all to document the people in our photos – whether they are prints or digital. I can't applaud his point enough. Our collection is full of images from the 1800s and 1900s that show marvelous people doing fascinating things, but we don't know who they are or, in many cases, even where.

Another reader wrote to me and suggested that if the man in the portrait was a Grand Commander, his regalia would have been trimmed with gold instead of silver. Indeed, as the General Grand Encampment started to standardize Knight Templar regalia in 1856, they mandated that the Grand Officers should wear gold trimmings.

From Montana, I was directed to a photograph of Lewis Anderson Dilley, which appeared in the February 1968 issue of *Knight Templar*.



Unidentified Man in Knights Templar Regalia, 1893, Abraham Edmonds, New York. Collection of the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library, gift of Walter A. Kmiec, 80.58. Photograph by David Bohl.

Dilley wears his Templar regalia in the photo and bears a resemblance to the man in the portrait, but he wears a white sash rather than the black one worn in the portrait. As I explained in the article, the black sash was typical for New England Commanderies, so I don't think this Midwestern Knight Templar would have stood for his portrait in a black sash.

A member from Worcester County, here in Massachusetts, wrote me a very helpful email explaining that he checked the published history of Worcester County Commandery, but did not turn

up any possible identifications for the portrait. He also reiterated the questions that come from the man's regalia. For example, "if he was a Past Commander, wouldn't he be wearing a Past Commander's jewel?" The apron was unlike any this gentleman had ever seen.

The apron was a definite point of interest for me. As I mentioned in the article, it is quite unusual since it shows the cross and crown symbol rather than the far more common skull and crossbones. None of the regalia catalogs in our collection showed Knight Templar aprons with that design, so I thought that it was a conceit of the artist or a request of the subject. Then this past spring, as I was rehousing part of our apron collection in storage,

I came across a Knight Templar apron with this design! No skull and crossbones – just the cross and crown symbol.

Unfortunately, the apron does not have a label for its maker, but it does seem to date from the early 1900s. A label for its original owner, Eugene R. Stone, of Quincy, Massachusetts, is sewn to the back. Stone was born in 1871 and

served as Mayor of Quincy in 1912 and 1913. He was raised to Master Mason on February 7, 1901, and evidently also joined the Knights Templar. Stone was quite active in the local yacht club. He died on May 9, 1945.

The painting held an important place in the Museum's exhibition, *Inspired by Fashion: American Masonic Regalia*,



The painting on view in the gallery, with a Knights Templar uniform. Courtesy, Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library, Lexington, Massachusetts.

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which was on view through March 10, 2012. The portrait was the centerpiece of the section about the inspiration of military uniforms on Masonic regalia. It was flanked by a WWI army uniform and a Knight Templar uniform, complete with chapeau, gauntlets, sash, and the apron with the cross and crown motif. Perhaps a museum visitor has seen the painting on exhibit and will help us solve this continuing mystery!

For more information about the exhibition, *Inspired by Fashion: American Masonic Regalia*, visit our website, [www.nationalheritagemuseum.org](http://www.nationalheritagemuseum.org), or call 781-861-6559. If you think you can identify the man in the portrait or have questions about our collection, please contact Dr. Aimee E. Newell at [anewell@monh.org](mailto:anewell@monh.org) or 781-457-4144.

Aimee E. Newell, Ph.D., is the Director of Collections at the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library, in Lexington, Massachusetts. If you have objects that you would like to donate to the Museum, please contact her at [anewell@monh.org](mailto:anewell@monh.org) or 781-457-4144. To learn more about the *Inspired by Fashion* exhibition and the Museum, visit our website, [www.nationalheritagemuseum.org](http://www.nationalheritagemuseum.org).

