

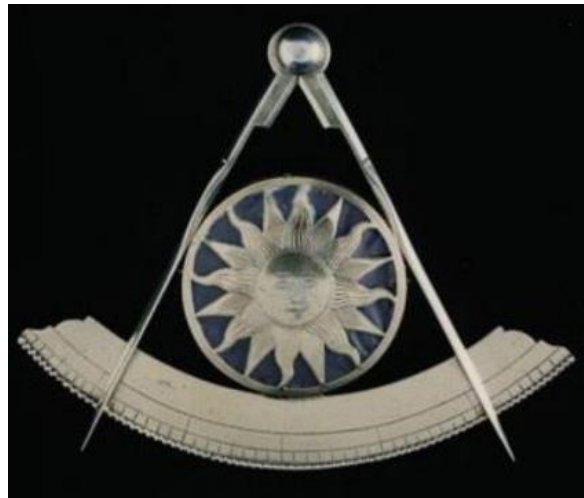
The Jewel: Square or Quadrant?

A. Douglas Smith, Jr.

Virginia Research Lodge No. 1777

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I have always been puzzled over the Grand Master's jewel which has been in use, insofar as I know, since before I was raised. The ritual was read to me, time and time again: "The Square to the Master, it being the proper implement of his office." Indeed, the nearest thing to a quadrant I ever heard was in the answer to the question: "What is a square?" Answer: "An angle of ninety degrees or the fourth part of a circle."



Grand Master's Jewel (Front View)



Grand Master's Jewel (Rear View)

I read again this engraving on the "Sun" at the center of our jewels:

"Original Jewel, made in 1778 to be worn by George Washington as first Grand Master of Masons in Virginia. He declined the office being in command of the Army. It was therefore first worn by Gov. John Blair who was the first Grand Master."

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A search was made of the minutes of Grand Lodge as abstracted in Dr. John Dove's *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Virginia from 1777 to 1823*. At the meeting of Grand Lodge in 1784: "Ordered that the Most Worshipful do cause to be provided a Seal and clothing for the use of Grand Lodge and that he be empowered to draw on the Grand Treasurer for the payment of the same." As I read further from Dove, it appears that Washington was never elected but only suggested in order to center authority on one acceptable to the Grand Lodge of England, Scotland, etc., who would, as soon as Grand Lodge was formed, surrender the rights of the foreign Grand Lodges to that being formed in Virginia and to its Grand Master.

'Tis true that John Blair was to be the first to wear Virginia's Grand Master Jewel, but it again appears that the earlier Grand Masters deputized outstanding members of the Craft to visit for them, and they also appointed the Deputy Grand Master in any event.

All of this leads me to what I believe to be indisputable evidence that we have been misrepresenting our jewel as worn by our Grand Masters, and must be the first to admit that I felt when I was in that position that I must "guard it with my life" and since I was flying so much and carrying the jewel with me, I should give it maximum care with the attitude Virginia can easily procure another Grand Master and with greater ease than they could ever reproduce so precious a piece of jewelry as that which had been represented to me as clothed with so much antiquity and sentiment. I had John Lundin prepare a fire resistant, stainless steel carrying case in which I kept it at all times it was not being worn.

The most telling evidence, other than the statement which will be included herewith, are the engravings of the pictures of the 18th and early nineteenth century Grand Masters, all having the beautifully done SUN, but always with the SQUARE, and in no instance with the quadrant!

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I have searched through Hugo Tatsch's *Freemasonry in the Thirteen Colonies* (1929); Brown's *Freemasonry in Virginia*; Allen Roberts's *G. Washington: Master Mason* (1976); and Dove's *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Virginia* (Volume 1, 1374); Brown's *George Washington: Freemason* (1952); and Floyd Sydnor's "Young Mason Briefly Reviews Highlights of the Grand Lodge of Virginia Now in 162nd Year," an article in the *Virginia Masonic Herald* (Sept. 1940, p.33). No place have I been able to find expenditures for such a jewel or authorization specifically therefore. There have been several places in which authorization had been made to provide clothing for the officers, etc. but only that. This is by way of introduction of what I believe to be reliable parole evidence, obtained by A. Douglas Smith, Jr. Prior to this I would report that I consulted Mackey's *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* (revised by Clegg, 1929), and found no reference to quadrant, but copious Masonic references to the SQUARE.

The Story of the Deputy Grand Master's Jewel

As Told by Worshipful Christian Henry Schneider to A. Douglas Smith, Jr.

For many years I had heard that the Deputy Grand Master's Jewel of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, A.F. & A.M., had only been recently found in the backyard of the home of one of Richmond's most active and beloved Masons, and it appears high time that the story be transcribed.

Accordingly, on this June 27, 1953, I called upon Worshipful Christian Henry Schneider at his home, 2808 Ellwood Avenue, Richmond, Virginia. Brother Schneider was the son of F. H. Schneider who had immigrated to America from Germany in 1852. Brother "Chris," as he was affectionately called, was born at 507 West Leigh Street nineteen years later, September 17, 1871. He was raised in April 1904 in St. John's Lodge No. 36. He served as its Worshipful Master in 1911.

It should be stated that this good Mason had, perhaps, instructed as many, if not more, members of the fraternity in the ritual than any of his contemporaries, and

until recently (at that time) was instructor of the Saturday Night Temple Class. I don't know when I didn't know him, and he seemed to have changed little over the years. Short in stature and of bald head, he was always strict in his teaching and gave the ritual with the accent on the oft misstated words. He was a bachelor.

When apprised of my mission, his face lighted up. It should be here stated that although an accident of more than fifty years before had left him walking with a limp and the use of a cane, as far back as I can remember his mind was and is (at that time) most alert. His affection for Masonry was of the first order.

He recalled that he had purchased the property he was then occupying about 1925, but hadn't moved in until "it was paid for" in the early thirties. It is a two-family house and it appeared that the family of Ambolds lived upstairs. She was, he said, the daughter of "Ike" Scott (not otherwise identified) who was the son of Most Worshipful Brother Robert G. Scott (No. 19) who served as Grand Master in 1828-29. He said that Mrs. Ambold often told him of a "Great Big" jewel that the Masons had given her grandfather.

Shortly thereafter Mr. Ambold died and the family moved out, and "within a comparatively short time thereafter," said Brother Chris, "I went out to the coal house one moonlit morning and I saw this thing sitting beside the coal house, shining in the moonlight. I brought it inside. It was pretty badly bent up, but I could tell that it was a Masonic jewel, but not until that night when I returned from work did I recognize that it was just like the one that the Grand Master used to wear before Joe Eggleston had it changed. I took it down to the Temple and Oscar Adams who was for many years very active in Masonry in Richmond and Grand Tiler said it was a Grand Lodge Jewel, and it was solid silver with gold over it."

Brother Chris continued: "I believe that there were at least three of those jewels, and a lot of the 'older boys' thought that what happened was that Grand Master Scott used to do a lot of visiting for the Grand Masters back when it wasn't so easy

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to get around, that, maybe one night he just wore the jewel home and then he died and it was found among his effects and passed on in the family."

When he was asked why he thought he had come upon it in such a strange manner, he suggested that maybe because he was a bachelor, and Mrs. Ambold was afraid that a gift of it to him might have been misunderstood, and yet she knew that he was bound to find it where it had been placed and that he would be sure that it was placed in the right hands.

We then spoke of the present jewel used by the Grand Master with the quadrant. Brother Chris insisted that when he first came into Masonry, and up to the time that J. W. Eggleston was Grand Master (1908-09) the Grand Master's jewel had always been the Square and Compasses and the Sun, but that Grand Master Eggleston "told me that he had had the quadrant and the inscription put on because the other jewel didn't conform to his idea of what a Grand Master's jewel should look like."

Brother Schneider expressed the opinion that Eggleston had gotten either Frank or Charlie Kohler, well-known Richmond jewelers of that day, to make the change and the inscription.

I asked if he thought the jewel he had found had been used by earlier Grand Masters. He said that he couldn't tell since that which was changed by the late Brother Eggleston was the only Grand Master's jewel he had known until he found the one now used by the Deputy Grand Master.

The following statement was made by and signed by me on the original handwritten copy made at the time of the interview and later typed so normal people could read it!

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On my Masonic honor, I have transcribed this interview with great care, since I believe that it will be of historic importance, and in the event of my research thereon may not be completed before my death, and I want it correct.

Signed: A. Douglas Smith, Jr., P.G.M.

My notes also show that Dr. James N. Hillman, then Grand Secretary, and I checked the 1909-10 *Proceedings* and the only reference for regalia, collars, jewels, etc. showed they were bought from Jahnke Co. of Philadelphia (since the old regalia had been used since the Yorktown centennial).

It is my considered opinion that the Grand Master should be memorialized to appoint a committee to make a study of this matter for reference with recommendation to the Grand Lodge.

ADDENDUM

Even if nothing further is accomplished in the matter of correcting what apparently is not an historical fact, I feel that the Transactions of this Lodge would be the appropriate resting place for the truth. So Be It!

Incidentally, Dr. Dove, apparently, served two terms as Junior Grand Warden, but never as Grand Master. This titling also deserves a paper.

Miserable dictu, many of our Grand Secretaries have fabricated some interesting, if not true, history of Freemasonry in Virginia. Perhaps this is a professional disease, although, let it be said, I haven't found the present incumbent guilty of such!