

## **Master's Moments**

By

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*The opinions presented in this paper are strictly those of the author and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Master and Wardens of the A. Douglas Smith Jr., Lodge of Research #1949 or the official views of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Virginia.*



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“What Makes You a Master Mason?” is a provocative theme for today’s meeting. In the same vein, we might well ask, “What Makes Our Lodge a Research Lodge?”

The obvious answer, of course, is “Our Charter”.

The charter, along with the provisions of the Methodical Digest that establish research lodges in Virginia, is perhaps the first place we look when thinking about the purposes, functions and activities of our lodge. Indeed, we have done this. At our officers meeting earlier this year, we reviewed our purpose and considered how our programs advance our goals. And our Bulletin has published the vision statement of our Lodge as well as our stated purposes.

Later this morning as we consider the question “What Makes You a Master Mason” we will look at our values and standards of conduct as Master Masons — in addition to studying the Master Mason’s Obligation. Similarly in reflecting on our Lodge we should look beyond our charter and consider the attributes, features and qualities that characterize research lodges in general and our lodge in particular. Thinking about our membership can also give us insight and understanding about our Lodge.

Coil’s Masonic Encyclopedia, 1995 edition, edited by the late, great Alan Roberts, has this to say about Research Lodges:

**The first Research Lodge was Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076 of London, England, warranted Nov. 28, 1884.**

**The name, has, however, been more popular than has actual research, so that the title is often used by lodges that do very little research. Such a lodge requires a working membership of dedicated students and a location near one of the great Masonic libraries. The London body is limited to 40 active members...(etc.)**

Over the years, A. Douglas Smith Lodge has featured some pretty respectable original research papers at its meetings. You can judge the quality of these papers for yourself by reviewing them in our Proceedings available on our web site. Also, we have established a distinguished awards program to recognize and celebrate Masonic Research presented in our Lodge.

But, our membership is not limited to 27, or 40 or any given number. As I mentioned in my previous dissertation I believe A.D. Smith should encourage all Masons within our jurisdiction who seek more light to join and participate in our Lodge. Some will be motivated to try their own hand at exploring topics suitable for Masonic Research. Probably many more will not. With the added strength and influence provided by an expanded membership, we can explore how we can further Masonic education and research in additional ways. Perhaps we can commission research projects deemed of importance. We can reach beyond our fraternity to history, sociology and other academic disciplines for manpower in conducting quality research. Perhaps we can host symposia on topics of our choosing with noted speakers from in and around Northern Virginia and beyond. This is not unlike what we have done for today’s program.

Think about the possibilities.

Suffice it to say, I believe A. Douglas Smith Lodge has a distinguished past, an exciting present and a limitless future as we continue to pursue excellence in fulfilling our charge and our potential.

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