

What is a Research Lodge? The members are Master Masons from various lodges. We elect a Worshipful Master and all other officers every year just like a regular lodge. We hold a charter granted by the Grand Lodge of Virginia, but we are not allowed to initiate, pass, or raise Masons. We only meet four times a year, usually on a Saturday. At every meeting, a member or guest speaker will present a research paper on Masonic history, philosophy, or symbolism, followed by a question and answer session to delve deeper into the subject of the paper. At times, we will have dueling papers, where two members will present different sides of a topic, such as the One Day Conferrals. Some lodges, like the Civil War Lodge of Research, will meet at special locations such as historic battlefields, and that location will be the subject of that day's paper.

You must be a Master Mason in good standing to attend a research lodge. If you choose to affiliate, you will be voted on and admitted that same day. You are then expected to prepare a paper of your own and present it in a timely fashion. There are now five research lodges at various locations throughout the state. Dues for each are usually \$20 a year and life membership only \$320. The original, Virginia Research Lodge No. 1777, meets at Babcock Masonic Temple in Highland Springs, Virginia. It was chartered in 1950 and Most Worshipful James Noah Hillman was the charter Worshipful Master through 1958. At one time most of the Grand Lodge Officers would be active members, and you would often find a Past Grand Master sitting in the East. Virginia Research also sponsors the Allen E. Roberts Memorial Library, with an impressive collection of Masonic literature available for free to Master Masons.

The website for Virginia Research Lodge is www.researchlodge.org, we list the locations and meeting dates for all five research lodges. There is a host of other information on the web site, such as all Grand Lodge websites, and all the Virginia lodge websites and Facebook pages. We are in the process of uploading all of our research papers for users to read and download. I hope this short talk will encourage you to attend and become active in a research lodge and improve yourself in Masonry.