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Riding the Goat

Secrecy, Masculinity, and Fraternal High Jinks in the United States, 1845–1930

William D. Moore

The idea that candidates undergoing initiation into American fraternal groups were forced to ride goats was ubiquitous in the decades surrounding the beginning of the twentieth century. In this period, Americans presented the lodge goat in literary, visual, and three-dimensional manifestations. This interdisciplinary article charts the development and use of this fraternal symbol between 1845 and 1930. It argues that the goat, originally wielded by the enemies of fraternalism to represent the dangers associated with secret behavior, came to be embraced and celebrated by fraternalists and that the animal's meaning shifted as concepts of American masculinity were transformed.

IN THE EARLY twentieth century, members of an Odd Fellows lodge in New Kensington, Pennsylvania, purchased a mechanical goat from DeMoulin Bros. & Co. of Greenville, Illinois (fig. 1).¹ Stirrups hanging below the fur-upholstered animal torso of this device suggest that the goat was designed to be ridden. However, three wheels with eccentrically placed hubs and a spring beneath the seat ensure that any rider would wobble and jounce. Measuring 51 1/2 inches tall by 38 inches from wheel to wheel and 60 inches from the tip of the faux animal's nose to the handle extending to the rear, the mechanism is on a scale more appropriate for adults than for children.² The handle at the rear implies that the vehicle was not self-propelled

but relied instead upon the secondary involvement of an individual other than the rider.

The Odd Fellows provenance of this early twentieth-century simulacrum of an animal provides a clue to its cultural significance.³ In the era that this object was manufactured, many Americans understood that goats played a crucial role in fraternal societies' rites.⁴ Commenting on this belief, in 1913, a correspondent to *The New Age*, the official magazine of the Supreme Council of the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, claimed, "Probably no preconception of the Masonic initiation is more deeply founded in the

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¹ John D. Hamilton, "The Lodge Goat," *Northern Light* 29, no. 1 (February 1998): 13.

² "Hudson House Galleries, Inc.," *Maine Antiques Digest*, July 1996, 31-E.

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³ This study was inspired by the work of Jules David Prown and Clifford Geertz, among many others. For explications of the Prownian analysis of material culture, see Kenneth Haltman, "Introduction," in *American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture*, ed. Jules David Prown and Kenneth Haltman (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2000), 1–10. See also Jules David Prown, "The Truth of Material Culture: History or Fiction?" in Prown and Haltman, *American Artifacts*, 11–27. For Prown's foundational statement of his method, see "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," in *Material Life in America, 1600–1860*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 17–37. For creating semiotic interpretations of culture, see Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic, 1973), 3–30.

⁴ In 1902, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* promoted the second edition of its *Eagle Almanac* with advertisements featuring a cartoon of a fraternalist riding a goat accompanied by the text, "If exercise is what you need—why not ride a goat? Every fraternal lodge has one. There are thousands of lodges in New York City and goat rides are nightly occurrences"; see *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 15, 1902, 5.



Fig. 1. Mechanical goat, manufactured by DeMoulin Bros. & Co., Greenville, IL, first quarter of the twentieth century; H. 51 1/2", L. 60". (National Heritage Museum, Lexington, MA.)

mind of the candidate than that, at some period of the novitiate, he will be placed astride a large and wooly goat."⁵ Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the image of fraternal men riding goats appeared repeatedly in American culture in a broad range of mediums and genres.

During this period, fraternal organizations were omnipresent; vast numbers of American men joined organizations such as the Freemasons, the Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias, the Modern Woodmen of America, the United Order of American Mechanics, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and hundreds of other more obscure groups. In an article in the *North American Review* from 1897, the writer H. S. Harwood reported that fraternal groups claimed five and a half million members, while the total adult population of the United States was approximately nineteen million.⁶ At about the same time, Albert C. Stevens, the compiler of the invaluable *Cyclopedia of Fraternities*,

⁵ Aegyptus, "Our Friend, the Goat," *New Age* 18, no. 4 (April 1913): 378.

⁶ W. S. Harwood, "Secret Societies in America," *North American Review* 164 (May 1897): 619–23.

estimated that 40 percent of the adult male population held membership in a fraternal order.⁷ Fraternalism was so appealing to the American public that individuals formed organizations to meet the needs and desires of men of most ethnic, economic, and political characteristics. While often referred to as "secret societies," these groups maintained visibility in the public sphere by participating in civic parades, displaying symbols on the exterior of their meeting places, and wearing lapel pins and other emblematic jewelry.

Although the demographics of these groups varied significantly, as sociologist Noel P. Gist noted as early as 1940, they shared cultural commonalities, including regalia, handshakes, and grandiloquent and imposing titles for officers, as well as progressively more complex initiation ceremonies. These characteristics distinguished fraternal societies from other voluntary organizations.⁸ In recent years, historians and sociologists, including Mark C. Carnes, Lynn Dumenil, Mary Ann Clawson, and Jason Kaufman, have made inroads into explicating the significance of these groups during America's industrial era, while material culture specialists, including Barbara Franco and John Hamilton, have examined the objects created for their use.⁹ Academic literature concerning fraternal organizations is expanding, but scholars have yet to rigorously address the pervasive and compelling presence of goat imagery within American secret societies.¹⁰

While some fraternal organizations promoted temperance, fiscal responsibility through insurance policies, charitable giving, or other worthwhile endeavors, the initiation of new members comprised

⁷ Albert C. Stevens, *Cyclopedia of Fraternities* (New York: E. B. Treat, 1907), xvi.

⁸ Noel P. Gist, *Secret Societies: A Cultural Study of Fraternalism in the United States* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1940).

⁹ Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender and Fraternalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); Lynn Dumenil, *Freemasonry and American Culture, 1880–1930* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); Jason Kaufman, *For the Common Good? American Civic Life and the Golden Age of Fraternity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); John Hamilton, *Material Culture of the American Freemasons* (Lexington, MA: Museum of Our National Heritage, 1994); Barbara Franco, ed., *Fraternally Yours: A Decade of Collecting* (Lexington, MA: Museum of Our National Heritage, 1986); Barbara Franco, "The Ritualization of Male Friendship and Virtue in Nineteenth-Century Fraternal Organizations," in *The Material Culture of Gender: The Gender of Material Culture*, ed. Katharine Martinez and Kenneth L. Ames (Winterthur, DE: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1997), 281–97.

¹⁰ Fraternal goats are mentioned briefly in Mark A. Tabbert, *American Freemasons: Three Centuries of Building Communities* (New York and Lexington, MA: New York University Press and the National Heritage Museum, 2005), 150–51.

the central activity of most of these groups. Men were incorporated into the fraternal body and simultaneously introduced to the organization's tenets and ideology through the performance of secret rituals within specially demarcated spaces.¹¹ Solemn fraternal ceremonies drew upon biblical and classical narratives to inculcate members with supposedly timeless systems of morality and ethics. For instance, Freemasonry was based upon an allegorical understanding of Solomon's temple, while the Knights of Pythias drew upon the story of Damon and Pythias to teach friendship and to model interpersonal relations.¹²

According to fraternal ideology, the actions undertaken within organizational asylums were known only to members. The lodges' practices within designated sanctuaries were meant to be kept secret from all other members of the public, including participants' wives, families, coworkers, and potential initiates. Secrecy, and the tension between esoteric knowledge shared by members and the exoteric knowledge of fraternal groups possessed by others of the surrounding community, provided the context for the growth of the idea of the lodge goat.

By examining visual, textual, and artifactual sources, this study presents a context for understanding and appreciating the importance of the New Kensington Odd Fellows' mechanical goat by charting the development and presentation of this fraternal form within American culture in the years between 1845 and 1930. It will argue that the goat, originally wielded by the enemies of fraternalism to represent the dangers associated with secret behavior, came to be embraced and celebrated by fraternalists. A Geertzian semiotic analysis of the lodge goat will indicate that the meaning of the symbol shifted as the role of fraternal organizations within society transformed and as concepts of American masculinity altered over time.

The image of the goat was utilized as a communicative trope in three primary modes and, as a

complex signifier, was applied in a range of historical contexts. Thus, the chronological boundaries separating these rhetorical tropes are inexact. Starting in the 1840s, the goat was used by fraternalism's enemies to bring shame or embarrassment upon secret societies and upon the Odd Fellows in particular. Following the Civil War, the lodge goat assumed a second, abstract form in which fraternal members employed its allusions to test or humbug outsiders, including wives and possible initiates. Finally, around the turn of the twentieth century, the goat, previously a purely literary or artistic device, assumed concrete three-dimensional form.

Witches and Goat Riding

The historical roots are unclear for the belief that fraternal initiates were forced to ride goats within lodge rooms. For more than a century, fraternal writers have asserted that the image of riding the goat was transferred to Freemasonry from earlier concepts of witches' Sabbaths or orgies.¹³ In 1922, for example, the *American Tyler-Keystone*, a Masonic magazine, claimed: "To the common mind, the Devil was represented by a he-goats [*sic*], and his best known marks were the horn, the beard and the cloven hoofs. Then came the witch stories of the Middle Ages, and the belief in the witch orgies, when it was said the Devil appeared riding on a goat. So the riding of the goat was transferred to the Freemasons, and the saying survives until this day, although most of us will admit that we scarcely deserve the synonym."¹⁴

The frontispiece from the second edition of Johann Praetorius's *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung* of 1669 illustrates the role that goats and goat riding played in the European iconography of witchcraft in the early modern era (fig. 2). A witch kissing the anus of a goat forms the central element of this composition, while in the upper left a second female figure is shown riding a goat. Fred Gettings, a widely published commentator on esoteric imagery, has

¹¹ For a discussion of the cultural dynamics of the Masonic ceremonial space, see William D. Moore, *Masonic Temples: Freemasonry, Ritual Architecture and Masculine Archetypes* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006). Although women's organizations such as the Order of the Eastern Star and the Pythian sisterhood were founded and prospered, American fraternalism was largely a phenomenon by and for men. Concerning Albert Stevens's *Cyclopedia of Fraternities*, Barbara Franco writes, "The organizations Stevens documented and described were primarily white, middle-class, and male"; see "Ritualization of Male Friendship," 282.

¹² John Van Valkenberg, *The Knights of Pythias Complete Manual and Text-book*, rev. ed. (Canton, OH: Memento Publishing, 1892), 60–64.

¹³ "Riding the Goat," *Masonic Newspaper* 1, no. 12 (December 14, 1878): 46. See also Aegyptus, "Our Friend, the Goat"; "The Masonic Goat," *Masonic Tidings* 51, no. 11 (November 1936): 21; "Riding the Goat," *American Tyler* 16, no. 15 (February 1, 1902): 366; and "Riding the Goat," *Masonic Standard* 6, no. 37 (September 14, 1901): 9. More recently this lineage was asserted in Hamilton, "Lodge Goat," 12.

¹⁴ "The Goat," *American Tyler-Keystone* 36, no. 6 (June 1922): 84. See also William L. Boyden, "The Goat in Freemasonry," *New Age* 33, no. 4 (April 1925): 207–9, 224.



Fig. 2. Frontispiece from Johannes Praetorius, *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: J. Scheibe, 1669). (University of Chicago Library, Special Collections Research Center.)

suggested that the goat in the upper right of the image has fornicated with the woman below him since her skirts are shown in disarray around her waist.¹⁵ This image of a witches' Sabbath is representative of a larger body of images of witches' ceremonies from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in which goats and goat riding are as-

¹⁵ Fred Gettings, *Secret Symbolism in Occult Art* (New York: Harmony Books, 1987), 96.

sociated with sexual license and perversity.¹⁶ Albrecht Durer's engraving of a naked goat-riding

¹⁶ For a discussion of German witchcraft iconography including goats, see Jane P. Davidson, "Great Black Goats and Evil Little Women: The Image of the Witch in Sixteenth-Century German Art," in *Witchcraft and Demonology in Art and Literature*, vol. 12, ed. Brian P. Levack (New York: Garland, 1992), 45–61. For a discussion of the context of this frontispiece, see Lyndal Roper, "Witchcraft and the Western Imagination," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, no. 16 (2006): 117–41.

hag from about 1500 comprises an alternative image in this iconographic genre.¹⁷

Although fraternal goat riding of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries resonates with these precedents, significant differences exist. While early modern images of witches riding goats frequently show women astride horned mounts, in the fraternal context of the later period those who occupy the saddle are almost invariably men.¹⁸ Also, while witches willingly ride goats in these engravings, fraternal goat riders frequently are portrayed blindfolded, implying that they have been tricked—or, more properly, hoodwinked—into participation. Moreover, while the images of goats at satanic Sabbaths of the northern Renaissance regularly and openly referred to carnality and bestiality, sexual overtones are not articulated, either verbally or visually, in relation to the lodge goat in America between 1845 and 1930.¹⁹ Although post-Freudian observers of the early twenty-first century may perceive sexual significance in men mounting goats, explicit or implied references to fornication are lacking in the documentary record.

The Genesis of Fraternal Goats in America

The historical link between fraternal goat riding and witchcraft also is troublesome. The mechanism by which the concept was transferred from seventeenth-century Europe to nineteenth-century America, if it exists, has not been adequately explicated. Although Thomas A. Foster recently has identified references to sodomy and homoeroticism in an American anti-Masonic satire of the mid-eighteenth century, he does not factor goats into his analysis or indicate that they appear in his sources.²⁰ Similarly, hooved and horned ungulates

are not featured in the multitude of anti-Masonic writings published in the United States during the 1820s and 1830s. The evangelical and political enemies of early nineteenth-century Freemasonry accused the fraternity of numerous transgressions, but carnality in the form of riding goats did not appear on their lists of indictments.²¹

The anti-Masonic movement of the early nineteenth century had a deleterious effect on fraternal organizations in the United States. Because they were accused of promoting aristocratic and unchristian ideals, Masonic lodges all across the country simply stopped meeting. Pressure from evangelicals during these years similarly induced the members of Phi Beta Kappa to transform their organization from a ritual brotherhood into a scholarly society.²²

The Odd Fellows, however, who, like the Masons, practiced secret initiation ceremonies, prospered during the 1830s and gained public approval, stature, and membership in the 1840s.²³ By 1845, 686 Odd Fellows lodges contained a total membership of 61,853 members and exhibited exponential annual growth.²⁴ The organization's success motivated a number of evangelical and radically democratic individuals to publish pamphlets in the second half of the decade decrying what they described as the organization's sins, errors, and ceremonies.

Anti-Odd Fellow publications of the 1840s contain the earliest references to the lodge goat yet located. The anonymous *Odd Fellowship Exposed*, published in Exeter, New Hampshire, in 1845, for example, describes a horrific, if probably inaccurate, initiation process in which the poor candidate's ceremonial guides repeatedly utter the menacing phrase "Secresy [*sic*] or death." The text of this pamphlet deserves attention because it provides insight into how the idea of the lodge goat developed over time. The pamphlet's author wrote: "Suddenly a loud voice exclaimed, '*Prepare the Goat!*' and a large black and white goat was led forward. This caused me but little fear, as I had often heard that it was part of the ceremony. I was immediately

¹⁷ Patricia Emison, "Truth and Bizzaria in an Engraving of *Lo Stregozzo*," *Art Bulletin* 81, no. 4 (December 1999): 625–26.

¹⁸ A burlesque of the ritual of the Rebekahs, a female auxiliary of the Odd Fellows, published in 1891 is a noteworthy exception to this pattern; see Adelaide Schmidt Wayland, *The Goat Let Loose; or, Rebekah Lodge Secrets Revealed* (Washington, KS: W. H. Besack, 1891).

¹⁹ Although sexual overtones are absent from fraternal goats in the years between 1845 and 1930, this is not true of the early twenty-first century. In February 2006, the members of a college fraternity at Western Kentucky University were charged with animal cruelty when a live goat was found being improperly housed in a closet in their house. Media reports indicate that fraternity pledges were told that having sex with the goat was required for membership; see Corey Paul, "Goat Incident Shocks Campus: AGRs Suspended after Thursday's Incident at House," *College Heights Herald* (Bowling Green, KY), February 21, 2006.

²⁰ Thomas A. Foster, "Antimasonic Satire, Sodomy, and Eighteenth-Century Masculinity in the *Boston Evening Post*," *William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (January 2003): 171–84.

²¹ For the best current analysis of early nineteenth-century American anti-Masonry, see Steven C. Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730–1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 277–319.

²² William Thomson Hastings, *Phi Beta Kappa as a Secret Society* (Washington, DC: United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, 1965).

²³ Theo. A. Ross, *Odd Fellowship: Its History and Manual* (New York: M. W. Hazen, 1888), 23–95. See also J. Frank Grant, "History of the Sovereign Grand Lodge," in *The History of Odd Fellowship: The Three Link Fraternity*, ed. H. L. Stillson (Boston: Fraternity Publishing Co., 1897), 75–118.

²⁴ Ross, *Odd Fellowship*, 660.



Fig. 3. From *A True Key to Odd Fellowship* (New York: 1847). (New York Public Library.)

mounted upon him, and told to hold by his horns, but no sooner had my conductors released their hold upon me, than I found myself thrown upon the floor, the goat having precipitated me over his head; at this a general laugh issued from those in the room.”²⁵ Although this is the earliest located text concerning fraternal goats, this pamphlet suggests that in 1845 some individuals shared a common belief that riding a goat comprised an element of the Odd Fellows initiation.

In 1847, a new edition of this text was published in New York under the title *A True Key to Odd Fellowship*. This illustrated version featured a full-page engraving of a man peacefully riding a goat (fig. 3) on the page opposite the passage quoted above.²⁶ Although emphasizing the importance of the goat, however, this image also indicates that the publisher

²⁵ *Odd Fellowship Exposed* (Exeter, NH: Printed for the publisher, 1845), 6.

²⁶ *A True Key to Odd Fellowship* (New York, 1847).

did not have access to a proper illustration. Presenting a contented barefooted man in biblical robes carrying a double-handled vessel, rather than a terrified and humiliated nineteenth-century fraternalist, this engraving probably was appropriated from the publisher’s stock of religious printing blocks.

James Madison’s *An Exposition of the Forms and Usages Observed in the Various Lodges of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows*, published in 1848, once again asserted that the initiate expected to “have to ride the gauntlet, on a genuine goat, according to the prevalent notion of Masonic and Odd Fellows initiations.”²⁷ Rather than being compelled to ride on a goat during his initiation, however, Madison reported he was “mounted on the back of a stout man” and carried in a procession that included a man astride a large automaton in the shape of a bee. An engraving published to accompany the text is labeled “Riding the Goat” although it includes the mechanical insect and is devoid of a goat (fig. 4). This bizarre scene is but one component of an extended surreal phantasm purporting to be an account of the Odd Fellows initiation. The pamphlet’s illogical narrative shape may be the result of an author filling a perceived market for antifraternel literature by fashioning a text to accompany a set of grotesque French engravings unrelated to American secret societies. The significant fact here, however, is that by 1848 the idea of the goat was so firmly attached to Odd Fellows and Masons initiations that it was incorporated into this otherwise idiosyncratic document.

The lodge goat assumed its mature visual form with the publication in 1857 of John Kirk’s *Exposition of Odd-Fellowship*.²⁸ An engraving, signed J. F. Howard, of a candidate riding a goat comprises the central feature of this pamphlet’s cover and similarly appears on the title page (fig. 5). As a fraternal candidate, this gentleman has been hoodwinked and lured into mounting a goat. With one hand he grasps one of the animal’s horns, as described in the 1845 text, while with the other hand he clings to an ear. Once again, a discontinuity appears between the pamphlets’ words and its illustrations. The text is a relatively straightforward account of a sober and solemn Victorian fraternal ceremony, replete with biblical references, ethical

²⁷ James Madison, *An Exposition of the Forms and Usages Observed in the Various Lodges of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows* (New York: Printed and published for the author, 1848), 26.

²⁸ John Kirk, *Kirk’s Exposition of Odd-Fellowship including the Secret Signs, Grips, Passwords and Charges of the Five Degrees, as Practised by the Order in the United States* (New York: Published by the author, 1857).



Fig. 4. "Riding the Goat" from James Madison, *An Exposition of the Forms and Usages Observed in the Various Lodges of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows* (New York: Printed and published for the author, 1848). (National Heritage Museum, Lexington, MA.)

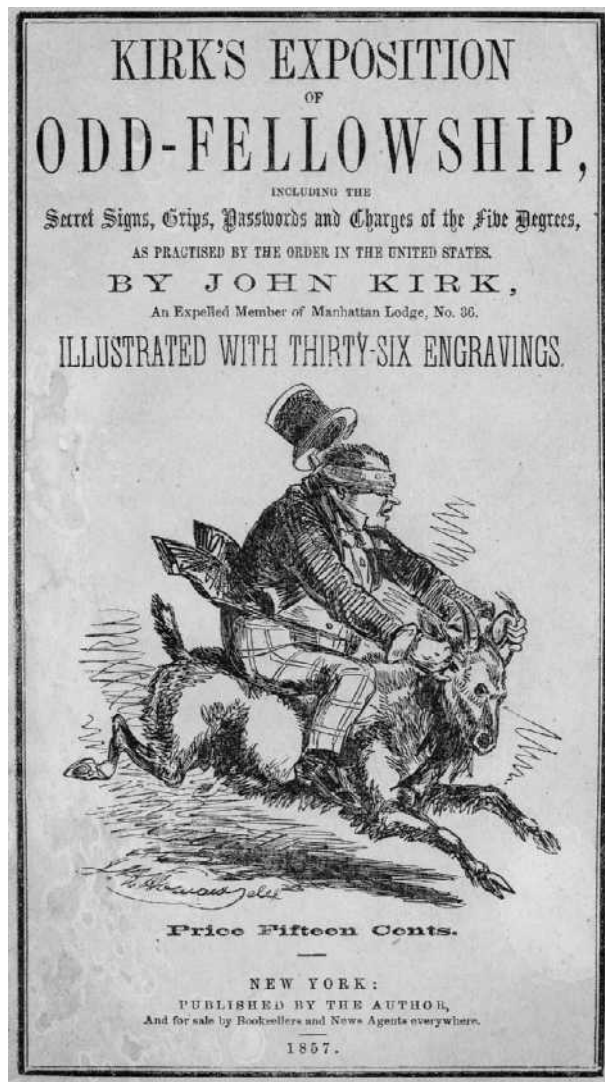


Fig. 5. Title page of John Kirk, *Kirk's Exposition of Odd-Fellowship including the Secret Signs, Grips, Passwords and Charges of the Five Degrees, as Practised by the Order in the United States* (New York: published by the author, 1857). (National Heritage Museum, Lexington, MA.)

platitudes, and sentimental poetry, but with no mention of goats.

Contemporary critiques of Odd Fellowship assist in understanding the significance of the goat within this first phalanx of publications. Disparagers of Odd Fellowship in the 1840s believed that the organization's secrecy hid falsehood. In an 1846 tract, E. Willis quoted the French historian Constantin-François de Volney on this point, writing, "Every association which has mystery for its basis, or an oath of secrecy, is a league of robbers against society."²⁹ Similarly, an author expounding

²⁹ E. Willis, *Renunciation of Odd Fellowship* (Boston: W. S. Damrell, 1846), 8.

in 1845 for an audience composed of members of the Methodist church wrote that "it seems to be very improper for a Christian to take a dark course, covered with secrecy, which he is sacredly bound to hide from his fellow-men."³⁰ In this vein, critics of the Odd Fellows emphasized that members of the fraternity wore masks, or "false-faces," during initiation ceremonies.³¹ A lithographic representation of an Odd Fellows initiation, distributed by Willis in the same year that he published the tract quoted above, underscores the threat of secrecy within fraternal organizations by depicting the members of the lodge as wearing horrible masks with monstrously distorted noses (fig. 6). Confronted with secrecy and masks, critics of secret societies worried about what was concealed beneath these devices.

As historians including Karen Haltunen and John Kasson have indicated, the concern with what lay hidden behind dissimulation was central to American urban middle-class culture in the middle of the nineteenth century.³² Rapid transformations in American society left many urbanites with anxieties concerning their ability to detect fraud and imposture. James W. Cook in his recent book, *The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum*, has argued that America's concern with secrets made what he calls "artful deception" a significant mode of amusement during these years.³³ In this context, the goat became a symbol of animality, of a lack of restraint, behind the respectable middle-class facade of the Odd Fellows. At its most innocent, the image of a gentleman on a goat had a ridiculous burlesque quality. Middle-class respectability, as dictated by etiquette books and other prescriptive literature, was based upon self-governance and appropriate behavior in all situations. The goat, within the context of the lodge room, represented a force that threatened to strip the fraternal initiate of his ability to maintain composure. Significantly, in the Howard engraving from *Kirk's Exposition*, the initiate's top hat, an evocative symbol of bourgeois status, is slipping from his pate. Within the evangelical Christian context of antebellum America, resonances of witchcraft, demons, and sexual abandon made the imagery

³⁰ An Old Watchman, *Remarks on Odd Fellowship* (New York, 1845), 7.

³¹ Madison, *Exposition of the Forms and Usages*, 6.

³² Karen Haltunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982); John Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1990).

³³ James W. Cook, *The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).



Fig. 6. "An Initiatory Scene in an Odd-Fellow's Lodge," published by E. Willis, 1846; H. 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", W. 17". (American Antiquarian Society.)

more damning. In the middle of the nineteenth century, then, the goat embodied the concept that the general public was unsure and suspicious of what was taking place within the hidden realm of the ceremonial lodge room. Although initially introduced in relation to the Odd Fellows, the goat came to be associated with all secret societies. Critics of fraternal organizations used goats to call into question the underpinnings of groups that relied upon oaths of confidentiality to shield activities.

Fraternal Goats after the Civil War

By the final decades of the nineteenth century, the meaning of the lodge goat had transformed. Rather than being used by antifraternalists to condemn or shame fraternal organizations, members of ritual-based groups began to celebrate the goat and em-

brace it as their own. The horned beast came to symbolize shared knowledge. As the perfectionist, millennial zeal of the antebellum period was replaced by the economic excesses of the gilded age, fraternalists adopted the goat to celebrate that outsiders had imperfect knowledge of what occurred behind their sanctuaries' closed doors.

An anonymous poem entitled "She Wanted to be a Mason," which appeared in 1881 in the *Masonic Chronicle*, published in Columbus, Ohio, expressed the fraternalists' joy in maintaining the secrecy of the lodge room. This poem written from the perspective of an apprehensive wife communicates concern about occurrences at her husband's lodge meeting. In part, it reads:

The Lodge was at work on the Master's Degree
The light was ablaze on the letter G
High soared the pillars J. and B.
The officers sat like Solomon at ease

The brimstone burned amid horrid cries
 The goat roamed wildly through the room
 The candidate begged them to let him go home
 And the devil himself stood in the East
 As broad as an Alderman at a feast.³⁴

By combining Masonic symbols that were familiar to outsiders, including the letter G and the Solomonic pillars of Jachin and Boaz, with allusions to the worst possible degradation and evil that might have been concealed behind secrecy, such as brimstone and Satan himself, the author of this humorous poem offers a scenario meant to challenge outsiders to question the nature of the activities being pursued within protected spaces. The imagery of the goat and the possibility of untoward activities within secret rooms had not changed, but from its previous significance its meaning had been altered by context. Rather than being published by religious zealots attacking the fraternal experience, this poem appeared in a newspaper published by and for lodge members; the goat had become a joke shared by initiates.

An unattributed comic fraternal poem entitled "When Father Rode the Goat" similarly combined commonly recognized features of fraternalism, such as secret handshakes and passwords, with the image of the goat to create humor from ceremonial secrecy. This piece of doggerel reports the visible results of joining a lodge, as it supposedly appeared to a child. The second and third stanzas, out of five, of this piece read:

He joined the lodge a week ago—
 Got in at four a.m.
 And sixteen brethren brought him home
 Though he says he brought them
 His wrist was strained and one big rip
 Had rent his Sunday coat—
 There must have been a lively time
 When father rode the goat.
 He's resting on the couch today
 And practicing his signs
 The hailing signs, working grip,
 And other monkey-shines
 He mutters pass-words 'neath his breath
 And other things he'll quote;
 They surely had an evening's work
 When father rode the goat.³⁵

³⁴ "She Wanted to be a Mason," *Masonic Chronicle* 1, no. 3 (December 1881): 40. Many goat poems and jokes, along with other examples of fraternal humor, are collected in James Pettibone, *The Lodge Goat: Goat Rides, Butts, and Goat Hairs* (Cincinnati: C. B. Pettibone, 1902).

³⁵ Included in Pettibone, *Lodge Goat*, 45–46. A slight variant of this poem appeared as "When Father Rode the Goat," *Brooklyn Eagle*, November 10, 1901, 10. For other poems about riding a goat

The humor inherent in the idea of a goat inside the confines of a lodge room also was expressed visually. Cassius Marcellus Coolidge (1844–1934) produced a painting of a goat within a lodge room within his oeuvre of paintings commenting upon male pastimes in fin de siècle America (fig. 7). In his compositions, which were broadly reproduced on calendars by Brown & Bigelow, Coolidge depicted anthropomorphic dogs pursuing human pastimes, including going to baseball games, driving automobiles, and, most notably, smoking tobacco and gambling at cards.³⁶ The artist's collies, mastiffs, Great Danes, St. Bernards, and terriers mirrored the material life and social mores of the industrial middle class. Because Coolidge's images were used to market products to the men's market they focused on activities that were of the masculine sphere.³⁷

In Coolidge's image entitled "Riding the Goat," a variety of dogs have gathered within a fraternal lodge room to initiate what appears to be a St. Bernard by having him ride a goat while blindfolded. Three officers, denoted as such by their ceremonial collars and their location in monumental chairs behind a desk, look on while a spaniel holds a rope, which in Masonic argot is called a "cabletow," secured around the candidate's neck. Behind the main figures, the lodge secretary, another St. Bernard, is recording the fact that the candidate has joined the organization. Some of the canines sport circular hats, which are employed by the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry to denote elevated institutional status. Many of the dogs are smoking, consuming tobacco both through pipes and as cigars.

The humor in this composition is derived, as it is in many of Coolidge's work, from the canine actors pursuing human activities. The dogs provide the punch line in this visual anecdote. The goat is

during a fraternal initiation, see "How He Became a Freemason," *Masonic Chronicle* 12, no. 10 (July 1893): 149; C. A. Brewton, "The Grotto Goat," *Long I Courier News* 4, no. 2 (February 1925): 27; Wm. A. Stiles, "'Owed' to the Go-at!" *Crescent* 2, no. 4 (June 1911): 45; Mrs. W. L. Cooper, "The Masonic Goat," *Crescent* 3, no. 8 (September 1912). A variant of "How He Became a Freemason" also appears in the *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 16, 1893, 9. For a humorous prose piece on a similar theme, see "How His Pa Was 'Nishiated,'" *Masonic Chronicle* 2, no. 3 (December 1882): 36–37.

³⁶ Carla Davidson, "A Man's Life," *American Heritage* 24, no. 2 (February 1973): 56–59.

³⁷ Dan Barry, "Artist's Fame Is Fleeting, but Dog Poker Is Forever," *New York Times*, June 14, 2002; James McManus, "Play It Close to the Muzzle and Hands on the Table," *New York Times*, December 3, 2005; Moira F. Harris, "It's a Dogs' World According to Coolidge," *Antiques & Collecting Magazine* 102, no. 1 (March 1997): 26–31.



Fig. 7. Cassius Marcellus Coolidge, "Riding the Goat," ca. 1900. Lithograph, published by Brown & Bigelow; H. 10", W. 15". (Author's collection.)

simply a commonplace of the lodge room, comparable to the ceremonial paraphernalia or the monumental chairs. Significantly, the goat is fully under the control of the lodge members. Although the St. Bernard is blindfolded, he retains his composure.

In 1887, the New York lithographic firm of Currier and Ives similarly published a pair of prints featuring the lodge goat in their compelling yet abhorrent Darktown series.³⁸ Entitled "Initiation Ceremonies of the Darktown Lodge," these prints presented a racialized burlesque of fraternal activities. The first of these images, subtitled "The Grand Boss Charging the Candidate," is an interior scene identified as a lodge room by esoteric symbols painted upon a wall (fig. 8). An African American

man, portrayed in a derogatory and stereotypical fashion, sits astride a goat while being dragged toward the lodge's presiding officer, who sports a ceremonial helmet adorned with a feather. In his left hand, the "Grand Boss" holds a skull that emits fire and smoke from its eye sockets; he brandishes a ceremonial sword in his right. Fraternalism's propensity to label individuals as knights is mocked by a figure on the left wearing a suit of armor.

The second image in the pair is subtitled "The Candidate Charging the Grand Boss" and portrays mayhem within the ritual space as the goat breaks free (fig. 9). In this lithograph the Grand Boss is shown being butted by the goat while the candidate flies through the air. The sword of office, symbolizing authority and control, lies temporarily abandoned on the floor.

Published in the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s, as the United States was descending into the nadir of the nation's history of postbellum race relations, the more than one hundred different lithographic images in the Darktown series portrayed African

³⁸ *Currier & Ives: A Catalogue Raisonné*, compiled by Gale Research Company, vol. 1 (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1984), 346. The lithographs in question are assigned numbers 3326 and 3327, respectively. See also Bryan F. Le Beau, "African Americans in Currier and Ives's America: The Darktown Series," *Journal of American Culture* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 79.

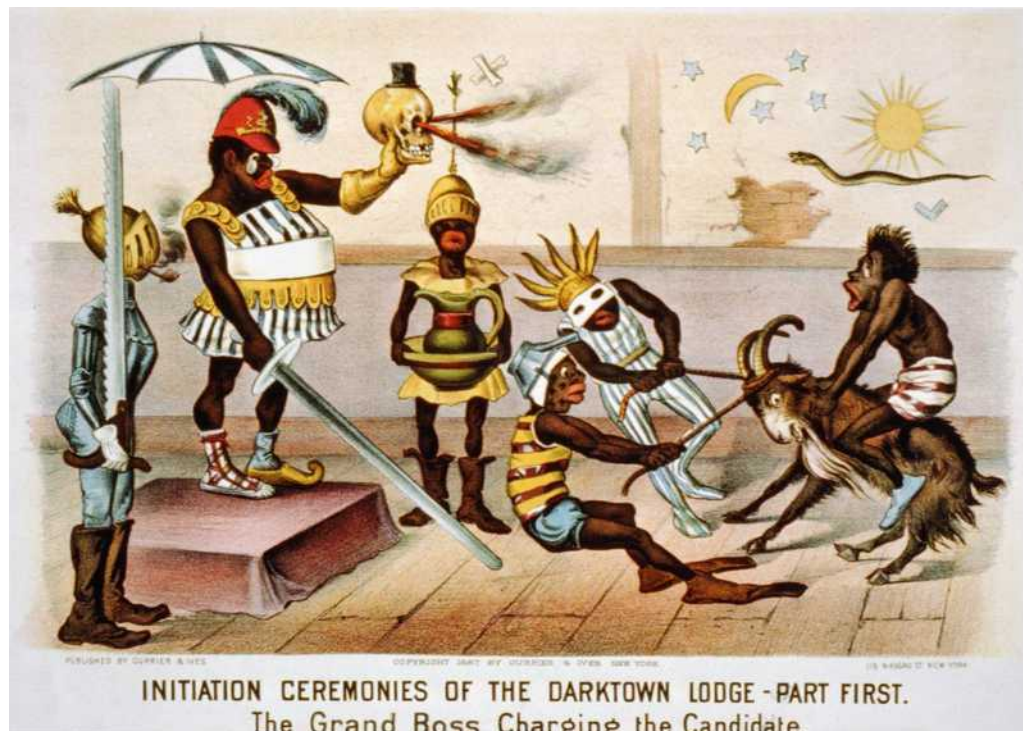


Fig. 8. Currier and Ives, "Initiation Ceremonies of the Darktown Lodge—Part First: The Grand Boss Charging the Candidate," 1887; H. 10.6", W. 14.2". (Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZC2-2655.)



Fig. 9. Currier and Ives, "Initiation Ceremonies of the Darktown Lodge—Part Second: The Candidate Charging the Grand Boss," 1887; H. 10.6", W. 14.2". (Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZC2-2656.)

Americans attempting to engage in social, political, and institutional forms that defined middle-class American life and failing to succeed. Often executed by the artist Thomas Worth, the Darktown lithographs did well for the firm; one image in particular reportedly sold seventy-three thousand copies.³⁹ Prints in the series usually were produced in pairs. The first image portrayed African Americans engaged in activities structured by tight social or behavioral codes, such as lawn parties, fox hunts, yacht races, or political debates; the second lithograph typically illustrated the same scene having descended into chaos.⁴⁰ In many cases, the disorder resulted from forces unleashed that should have been restrained. The lawn party, for example, is disrupted by a marauding bull, while the political debate culminates in fisticuffs. The "Initiation Ceremonies of the Darktown Lodge" thus is typical in that the goat breaks free from its leash and disrupts what should have been a staid and awe-inspiring ritual.

These Currier and Ives lithographs featuring the lodge goat are part of a broader agenda within post-Reconstruction American culture that portrayed African Americans as incapable of respectable middle-class behavior and thus unsuited for citizenship. Throughout Currier & Ives' Darktown series, African Americans are represented as being ridiculous, incompetent, and incapable of self-restraint.⁴¹ For conservative white supremacists of the late Victorian period, the chaos that surrounded these images of African-Americans symbolized the postbellum social order instituted by the emancipation proclamation and the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution. These pairs of "before" and "after" prints can be interpreted as representing America before the Civil War, when the bonds of slavery maintained order, and the subsequent, apparently decadent, state of the Union that resulted from granting suffrage to freedmen.

Moreover, the Darktown images fall into an older American tradition of comic concern with the constraint of African Americans, particularly with black men. Historian Eric Lott has argued that antebellum blackface minstrel shows centered

upon the symbolic corporeal containment of the black male body, expressing interrelated fears of insurrection and intermixture.⁴² As complex cultural forms created by and for working-class white males through the appropriation and reshaping of African American cultural materials, minstrel shows frequently communicated contradictory responses to African American male sexuality. Minstrel show performers and their audiences simultaneously celebrated and disparaged what was portrayed as a primitive, incontinent, libidinous masculinity. Based upon interpretations of song lyrics and comic monologues and through the close visual analysis of minstrel images incorporating extended banjo necks, poles, and coattails, Lott asserts, "White men's investment in a rampagous black phallus appears to have defined the minstrel show."⁴³ In this Freudian reading, the horned and shaggy beast erupting from between the candidate's legs in the Currier and Ives lithographs begs to be understood as carnality. These cartoons, then, warned that American society was threatened by the sexuality of the bodies that emancipation had liberated.

Beyond commenting generally on American society and politics, however, the producers of the two "Darktown Lodge" lithographs also addressed fraternalism specifically. These works may be condemnations of Prince Hall Freemasonry, the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and other fraternal orders formed by black Americans as a result of the endemic racism that barred men of African descent from participating in fraternities that espoused egalitarian brotherhood. Caucasian lodge members viewed these groups as having clandestinely and improperly appropriated the confidential ceremonies that provided institutional legitimacy.⁴⁴ The lithographs may be read then as positing that the ridiculous and incompetent figures portrayed in the lithograph craved the middle-class status associated with belonging to one of America's hundreds of fraternal organizations.

⁴² Eric Lott, "'The Seeming Counterfeit': Racial Politics and Early Blackface Minstrelsy," *American Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (June 1991): 223–54.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁴⁴ On Prince Hall Freemasonry, see William A. Muraskin, *Middle Class Blacks in a White Society: Prince Hall Freemasonry in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). On the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, see Charles H. Brooks, *The Official History and Manual of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows in America* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971). On the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, see Alan Axelrod, ed., *The International Encyclopedia of Secret Societies and Fraternal Orders* (New York: Facts on File, 1997), 76.

³⁹ Bryan F. Le Beau, *Currier & Ives: America Imagined* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2001), 231. On Worth, see Harry T. Peters, *Currier & Ives: Printmakers to the American People* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, 1942), 22–24.

⁴⁰ Le Beau, "African Americans," 75–79.

⁴¹ The Darktown lithographs perpetuated images of African Americans codified in antebellum minstrel shows; see Robert C. Toll, *Blackening Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 67–71, 183–87.

As gullible innocents, unaware of the true workings of initiation ceremonies, they believed the reports that a goat was involved and were fooled into attempting to reproduce a ritual they had never experienced and had learned about only through hearsay. Thus, in these lithographs, the goat, while symbolizing the threat to civilization manifested by uncontrolled African American sexuality, also continued to represent the institutional power inherent in secret societies.

As businessmen of the period, Currier and Ives are celebrated for having a keen grasp of the American market for pictures. Harry Peters, whose collection of lithographs is now maintained by the Museum of the City of New York, called the firm "mirrors of the national taste, weather vanes of popular opinion, reflectors of American attitudes."⁴⁵ These entrepreneurs understood that the larger national market contained a fraternal component and catered to fraternalists with the publication of subjects such as "Washington as a Mason" (1868), "The Masonic Chart" (1876), "Odd Fellows Chart" (1877), and "Grand United Order of Odd Fellows Chart" (1881).⁴⁶ The target audience for the Darktown Lodge series, within the larger category of white supremacists who feared racial amalgamation, was probably fraternalists who found humor both in the concept of outsiders believing in the myth of the goat and in the idea of fraternal initiation gone wrong. That the C. W. Briggs Company, of Philadelphia, produced lantern slide transparencies of the Darktown Lodge lithographs in its "Comic Subjects" series indicates that these prints were popular and found currency with contemporary audiences.⁴⁷

A cartoon entitled "This Lodge Is Closed" by the twentieth-century illustrator Lui Trugo reinforces the idea that the image of a goat disrupting a lodge room appealed to fraternalists (fig. 10).⁴⁸ Presenting a joke similar to that of the Currier

and Ives lithographs but substituting Caucasian children for racist representations of African Americans, this work was published by the Masonic Grand Lodge of New York in the July 1927 issue of the *New York Masonic Outlook*.⁴⁹ In this image, which is reminiscent of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn pretending to be adults in a romantic adventure in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* (1885), the children's ineptitude is signaled by the eccentric lettering on their sign reading "Lodge 2," while their desire for the status conferred by fraternal regalia is indicated by their headgear, including both pyramidal caps and a presiding officer's formal top hat.⁵⁰

In the Coolidge image, having been anthropomorphized into white middle-class males, the dogs easily control a docile goat. However, in both the Currier and Ives lithographs and the Trugo cartoon, individuals denied full status by society (African Americans and children) cannot keep the beast in check. The lodge goat is portrayed as breaking free from individuals who inappropriately attempt to claim fraternal status. These images argue that neither African Americans nor children can wield the authority of middle-class men; they cannot control the goat. Fraternalists thus made riding the goat emblematic of civilized individuals containing chaos, of the status quo maintaining order.

Images of goats appear in a variety of materials produced for the fraternal market in the years between the Civil War and the Great Depression. The Mechanical Novelty Works of New Britain, Connecticut, for instance, produced two different lines of mechanical banks playing upon the theme of the fraternal goat and employing a patent that George Eddy secured for the firm in 1880.⁵¹ On the machine that the Connecticut firm identified as being the "First Degree," a goat butted an African American figure who then deposited a coin in the bank. The company's "Second Degree" bank had the coin placed in the bank by a white fraternalist

⁴⁵ Quoted in Le Beau, *Currier and Ives*, 2.

⁴⁶ William D. Moore with John D. Hamilton, "Washington as the Master of His Lodge: History and Symbolism of a Masonic Icon," in *George Washington American Symbol*, ed. Barbara Mitnick (New York: Hudson Hills, 1999), 70–71; Franco, *Fraternally Yours*, 20–21.

⁴⁷ Lantern slides of the Darktown Lodge lithographs, composed of collodion on glass and manufactured by the C. W. Briggs Co., are in the collection of the George Eastman House, Rochester, NY, accession numbers 86:0725:0023 and 86:0725:0024. For the C. W. Briggs Co., see "Honored as Inventor of Animated Pictures," *New York Times*, March 11, 1938, 15; see also "C. W. Briggs, Dean of Photographers," *New York Times*, July 11, 1942, 13.

⁴⁸ Trugo also produced illustrations for books published by New York City's Art Studio Press; see "Books and Authors," *New York Times*, March 31, 1929.

⁴⁹ Lui Trugo, "This Lodge Is Closed," *New York Masonic Outlook* 3, no. 11 (July 1927): 344.

⁵⁰ In chaps. 33–40 of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Tom and Huck enact a romantic role-playing fantasy of being prisoners, while poor Jim, because of his status as a runaway, suffers through actually hiding in a dark cabin; see Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 247–302. For a verbal presentation of the trope of children using a goat to play at establishing a secret society, see "Initiated in Masonry: The Bad Boy Gives His Father the Royal Bumper Degree," *Brooklyn Eagle*, January 21, 1883, 2.

⁵¹ U.S. Patent 232,699, filed by George Eddy July 3, 1880, and issued September 28, 1880.

Masonic Outlook



“THIS LODGE IS CLOSED”

By Lui Trugo

Fig. 10. Lui Trugo, “This Lodge Is Closed,” *New York Masonic Outlook*, July 1927. (Chancellor Robert R. Livingston Masonic Library of Grand Lodge, New York.)

astride a bucking goat.⁵² These automatons echo period lithographs in conveying the idea that Anglo-American lodge members could control the goat, while marginalized Americans are at the mercy of this untamed force.

Companies also appealed to the fraternal market by producing souvenirs, watch fobs, cuff links, and other masculine items decorated with goats and goat heads. For example, the firm of Thomas Maddock’s Sons, of Trenton, New Jersey, which produced commemorative ceramics for fraternal organizations in the early twentieth century,

manufactured pitchers decorated with an image of a man riding a goat while “taking the first degree” (fig. 11).⁵³ When Marshall Lodge, No. 845, Free and Accepted Masons, of New York City was constituted in 1905, all participants in the celebratory banquet received as a souvenir a gold-plated mantel ornament in the shape of a goat described by the *Masonic Standard* as “saddled and ready for the initiatory exercises.”⁵⁴ The Supply Department of the Modern Woodmen of America offered one thousand souvenir goat buttons for \$12.50 in

⁵² Ina Hayward Bellows, *Old Mechanical Banks* (Chicago: Lightner, 1940), 82–85; Al Davidson, *Penny Lane: A History of Antique Mechanical Toy Banks* (Mokelumne Hill, CA: Long’s Americana, 1987), 104, 122, 259; Corine Wegner and Karal Ann Marling, *Money in the Bank: The Katherine Kierland Herberger Collection* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2006), 22–23, 41–42.

⁵³ Hamilton, *Material Culture*, 235–36. On Thomas Maddock’s Sons, including an example of a commemorative plate decorated with a goat and rider, see Charles L. Venable, Ellen P. Denker, Katherine C. Grier, and Stephen Harrison, *China and Glass in America, 1880–1980: From Tabletop to TV Tray* (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 2000), 125, 431.

⁵⁴ “Marshall Lodge Constituted,” *Masonic Standard*, May 13, 1905.



Fig. 11. Ceramic pitcher decorated with fraternal candidate riding a bucking goat, manufactured by Thomas Maddocks Sons & Co., Trenton, NJ, first quarter of the twentieth century; H. 12". (National Heritage Museum, Lexington, MA.)

1918 to organizations with less expansive budgets (fig. 12).⁵⁵

The Brooklyn Masonic Veterans, an organization composed of residents of New York's Borough of Brooklyn who had been Freemasons for at least twenty-one years, used the goat motif repeatedly on its printed materials in the 1890s and 1900s. The invitations to this group's annual feasts in these years customarily featured cartoons by C. F. Beatty that affectionately portrayed goats as central to the revelries. The images that graced the announcements of the fifth annual feast held in December of 1893 and the seventh annual feast of December 1895 are particularly evocative.⁵⁶ The drawing from

⁵⁵ Supply Department, Modern Woodmen of America, *Catalog 1918* (Rock Island, IL: Modern Woodmen of America, 1918), 53.

⁵⁶ "Fifth Annual Feast of the Brooklyn Masonic Veterans, December 9th, 1893"; "Seventh Annual Feast of the Brooklyn Masonic Veterans, Saturday, December 14, 1895"; see also "11th Annual Feast, Brooklyn Masonic Veterans, December 9th, 99, Brooklyn, N.Y."; "Ninth Annual Dinner, December 11th, 1897"; "14th Annual Feast, December 13, 1902. Brooklyn Masonic Veterans." All are located in the subject file labeled "Brooklyn Masonic Veterans," Livingston Masonic Library, New York.

SOUVENIR BUTTONS

We have been searching a long time for a cheap and attractive official souvenir button. We now carry it in stock. The button is after the official design, in the Society's official colors, red, white, and green, on a log background. The finish is an artistic enamel; pin fastening.



No. 572B.

In lots of 50, \$1.00.

Special Souvenir Buttons



No. 1021.



No. 1022.

These are special design buttons for Woodmen picnics and other occasions. They are attractive, and are designed more than anything else to advertise picnics or social events by Log-rolling associations or Camps.

Price per 100.....	\$ 5.00
Price per 250.....	7.50
Price per 500.....	8.50
Price per 750.....	11.00
Price per 1,000.....	12.50

Fig. 12. Souvenir buttons featuring the lodge goat offered for sale in the catalog, Supply Department, Modern Woodmen of America, 1918. (Author's collection.)

1893 depicts a goat disrupting a Masonic banquet by walking on the table, smashing dishes, knocking over a wine bottle, and spraying a man with a bottle of seltzer (fig. 13). Men, wearing formal attire augmented by Masonic aprons, surround the table and gaze in horror and disbelief at the beast that is labeled the "Grand Master of the Situation." By disrupting a formal occasion and unleashing chaos and disorder within it, the goat assumes the role of the "Lord of Misrule," who simultaneously inverts and reifies social structure in traditional carnivalesque calendar ceremonies, such as Mardi Gras or Christmas.⁵⁷ The bottle of wine lying on the table near the goat hints at the process by which the restraints of civilization have been relaxed.

The relationship between alcohol and the goat implied by the 1893 feast invitation is confirmed in Beatty's illustration for the 1895 gala (fig. 14).

⁵⁷ For a broad overview of carnival dynamics, see Edward Muir, "Carnival and the Lower Body," in his *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 85–146. For discussions of status inversion in American Christmas observances, see Penne L. Restad, *Christmas in America: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3–16.



Fig. 13. Invitation to the Fifth Annual Feast of the Brooklyn Masonic Veterans, December 9th, 1893. Illustration by C. F. Beatty. (Chancellor Robert R. Livingston Masonic Library of Grand Lodge, New York.)

Beatty composed this work as a triptych, with the three sections labeled "Preparation," "Celebration," and "Exhilaration" [*sic*]. The first vignette is a domestic scene illustrating a man receiving assistance from a female figure, presumably his wife, in don-

ning formal attire. The central artwork, "Celebration," depicts a homosocial group of men at a banquet table laden with wine bottles and clouded with cigar smoke. A goat smoking a cigar presides over the table, seated in a chair in the immediate



Fig. 14. Invitation to the Seventh Annual Feast of the Brooklyn Masonic Veterans, December 14, 1895. Illustration by C. F. Beatty. (Chancellor Robert R. Livingston Masonic Library of Grand Lodge, New York.)

foreground. The final image of the three, entitled “Exhilaration” [*sic*], presents a man in formal wear sporting a top hat and riding a prancing goat in a public thoroughfare. From his saddle, the figure salutes a clown who waves a handkerchief at him from a second-story window. The clown, once again

a figure of inversion, is a jester and the Lord of Misrule.

Designed as an internal communication among members of the Brooklyn Masonic Veterans, this tripartite image speaks of the freedom that masculine companionship offered from socially enforced

middle-class rectitude. By assisting him with his garments, the man's wife swaddles him in the clothing of respectability. Within a realm protected by fraternal secrecy, as symbolized by the goat, the same figure indulges in vices including alcohol and tobacco. Having imbibed these liberating concoctions, the fraternalist moves beyond the bonds of acceptable decorum, represented by the figure of the clown, and enters a state of exhilaration.⁵⁸ In these cartoons, Beatty celebrates a profligate rejection of sobriety, civilization, and self-restraint made possible by a fraternal confidentiality alluded to by the goat's presence in the homosocial space.⁵⁹ Beatty's images hint at a transformation in American masculinity occurring in American society, which will be explored more fully later in this essay.

Some fraternal organizations acquired live goats that they used to tease the general public. In 1901, the *New York Times*, for example, reported that the health inspector of Plainfield, New Jersey, had cited Samuel Robinson, a member of Perseverance Lodge of the Knights of Pythias, for improperly housing a goat in his home. The animal in question had been cared for at Robinson's house since a street parade and subsequent entertainment had been held at the lodge's rooms.⁶⁰ Similarly, the *New England Craftsman* reported in 1907 that Washington, D.C.'s Columbia Commandery, No. 2, of the Masonic Knights Templar, owned a white goat named Columbia. Frank E. Gibson, a member of the group, escorted Columbia around to events and collected souvenir pins, which he attached to the goat's blanket.⁶¹ The fraternal press of the time is full of anecdotes, which can be half believed, of

lodges moving out of rented quarters and parading a goat through the streets to their new home. The punch line of these stories is invariably the quandary of the uninformed going home wondering about the activities of the organization.⁶²

Not surprisingly, the burgeoning film industry of the early twentieth century, seeking material to use to entertain the public, found inspiration in the idea of the fraternal goat. In 1916, the innovative animator Earl Hurd, working for the J. R. Bray Studio, employed a goat for comic effect in the film *Bobby Bumps Starts a Lodge*, which was released through Paramount Pictures. This cartoon, which is slightly over five minutes in length, shows Bobby Bumps, a white boy modeled upon Buster Brown, and a black boy pulling pranks on each other as they play at being lodge members.⁶³ In this film, which presents the African American character in a racist manner, the comedy focuses, not on individuals riding the goat but, rather, on the animal butting the blindfolded protagonists from the rear echoing the mechanical bank discussed above.

Hollywood again presented the fraternal goat to the general public in a 1927 comic short entitled *Should a Mason Tell?* This film, featuring the silent film comedian Taylor Holmes and actress Leah Baird, was based upon Albert Payson Terhune's short story "Once a Mason," published in *Blue Book* magazine in August 1917.⁶⁴ Terhune, a prolific author best known for his tales of preternaturally

⁵⁸ The third image of Beatty's triptych, depicting the lodge brother feeling the effects of alcohol in a public street after a fraternal event, resonates with William Hogarth's engraving *Night* (1738), which portrays a Freemason stumbling home following a lodge meeting at a tavern. The Hogarth print shows a second-story window that, rather than framing a waving clown, contains a chamber pot being drained upon the inebriate; see William L. Fox, ed., *Valley of the Craftsmen: A Pictorial History; Scottish Rite Freemasonry in America's Southern Jurisdiction, 1801–2001* (Washington, DC: Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, 2001), 19.

⁵⁹ One humorous strain that regularly appeared concerning fraternalism in this period is the idea that lodge meetings were actually only excuses that allowed married men to leave the house after dinner to pursue other unspecified activities. The fraternal bonds of secrecy ensured that nonmembers never ascertained who actually attended meetings. For a source that specifically links this idea to the figure of the lodge goat, see "The Humors of Masonry," *Brooklyn Eagle*, February 7, 1880, 2.

⁶⁰ "Dispute Over a Mascot," *New York Times*, November 14, 1901, 2.

⁶¹ *New England Craftsman* 2, no. 11 (August 1907): 424.

⁶² See, e.g., "A Real Goat," *New England Craftsman* 1, no. 11 (August 1906): 412. See also "Athens, Ga.," *Freemason's Journal* 9, no. 15 (March 11, 1893): 2; "A Goat in a Masonic Lodge," *Masonic Chronicle* 1, no. 6 (March 1882): 82; "Escape of the Goat," *Keystone* 38, no. 1959 (February 25, 1905): 5; "The Candidate and the 'Billy,'" *Freemason's Journal* 4, no. 1 (June 7, 1887): 3; "A Woman that wanted just to Peep into that Private Closet," *Mirror and Keystone* 5, no. 3 (January 16, 1856): 27–28. For a related story concerning using a live goat to dupe a credulous witness, see "This Lodge Had a Goat," *Masonic Standard* 21, no. 46 (November 11, 1916): 7; *Freemason's Journal* 9, no. 12 (February 18, 1893): 4. For a Canadian example of this phenomenon, see "City and Provincial," *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, April 6, 1880, 1. A variation of this trope in which female guests in a newly appointed fraternal suite of rooms are shown a goat within a small anteroom appears in "Odd Fellows' Anniversary: Olive Leaf Lodge, Greenpoint, Open Their New Rooms," *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 27, 1876, 4.

⁶³ See Henry T. Sampson, *That's Enough Folks: Black Images in Animated Cartoons, 1900–1960* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1998), 158. *Bobby Bumps Starts a Lodge* is available online in both RealMedia and MPEG formats through the Library of Congress's "American Memory" Web site as part of its collection entitled "Early Motion Pictures, 1897–1920."

⁶⁴ Albert Payson Terhune, "Once a Mason," *Blue Book Magazine*, August 1917, 615–23. I would like to thank Wayne Lewis, Department of Mathematics, Texas Tech University, for providing me with a copy of "Once a Mason" when all other avenues had failed.

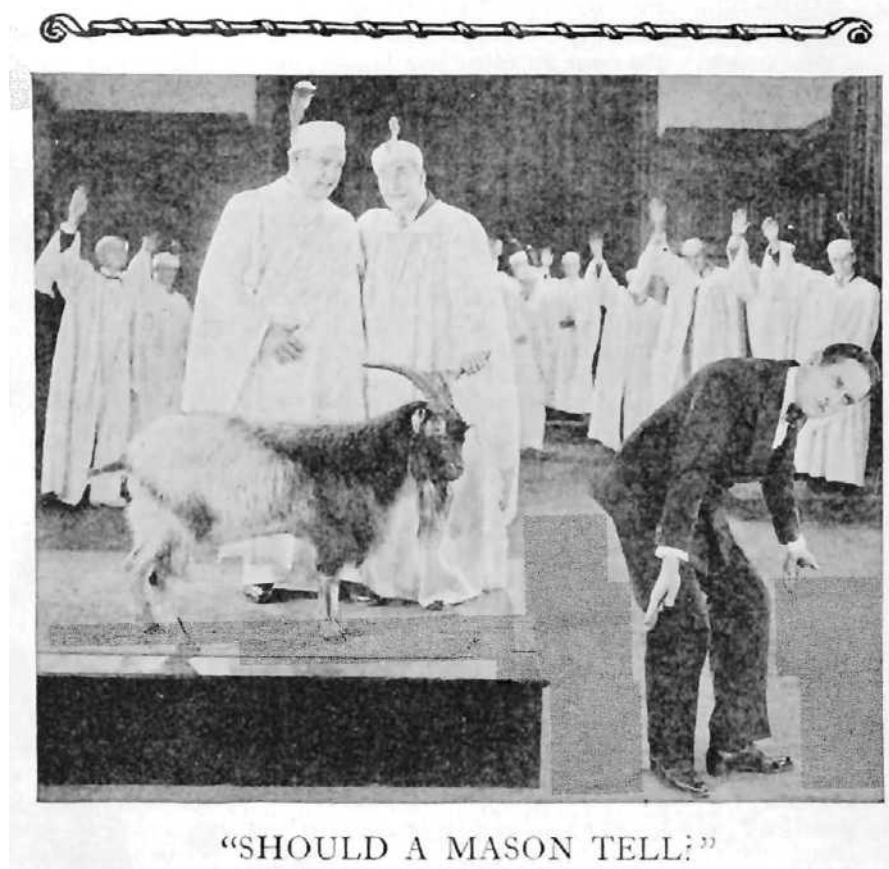


Fig. 15. Still from *Should a Mason Tell?* featuring Taylor Holmes, *New York Masonic Outlook*, September 1927. (Chancellor Robert R. Livingston Masonic Library of Grand Lodge, New York.)

noble dogs, was conversant with fraternal culture as a member of New York City's St. Cecile Lodge, No. 568, Free and Accepted Masons, a group famous for serving the performing arts community, with members including, among others, Harry Houdini, Al Jolson, D. W. Griffith, Louis B. Mayer, Paul Whiteman, and instrumentalists from John Philip Sousa's band.⁶⁵ Like the Terhune story, *Should a Mason Tell?* centers on the lies a man tells his wife about his initiation to avoid revealing secrets to her. A goat figures prominently in the plot, as illustrated by a still from the film published in the *New York Masonic Outlook* (fig. 15).⁶⁶ *Should a Mason Tell?* was shown at a meeting of Pleasantville Lodge No. 886, Free and Accepted Masons, in Pleasantville, New York, in October 1930, indicat-

ing that fraternalists embraced and appreciated this comedy.⁶⁷

The mocking use of the goat in these films, lithographs, and other artifacts was a strategy that fraternalists used to emphasize the latitude provided them by their custom of secrecy. In this mode, the goat represented the fact that knowledge of activities within the lodge room was shared by members of the organizations but, ultimately, was denied to outsiders. The goat served as a shield that fraternalists employed to hide actual practices while simultaneously ridiculing and frustrating the uninitiated's curiosity.⁶⁸ Just as adults conspire to use the idea and image of Santa Claus to keep children guessing about the true nature of the Christmas gift

⁶⁵ Alfred Payson Terhune biographical file, Livingston Masonic Library, New York; Herbert T. Singer and Ossian Lang, *New York Freemasonry: A Bicentennial History, 1781-1981* (New York: Grand Lodge, F. & A.M., of the State of New York, 1981), 238-39.

⁶⁶ "Should a Mason Tell?" *New York Masonic Outlook* 4, no. 1 (September 1927): 20.

⁶⁷ "Pleasantville Lodge Celebrates," *Westchester Craftsman*, November 15, 1930, 514.

⁶⁸ For an extended comedic handling of the public's inability to determine what takes place during an initiation ceremony, see "Briggs' Collar Bone Broken: During the Initiation Ceremonies of De Witt Clinton Council, R. A.," *Brooklyn Eagle*, November 13, 1896, 1.

exchange and to obscure the capitalist aspects of the holiday, lodge members used the lodge goat to celebrate their shared knowledge and to muddy the waters concerning fraternal ritual.⁶⁹

Goat Riding in the Twentieth Century

The Pennsylvania Odd Fellows' mechanical goat represents the third mode of thinking about this symbol and can be linked historically to twentieth-century changes in family structure and gender relations. Industrialization, urbanization, and the rise of corporate capitalism profoundly reshaped American society at the end of the nineteenth century, and constructions of gender shifted in response to these forces. American men found that old ideas of masculinity based upon self-restraint and Victorian ideals of character were unsuited to the emergent urban, industrial order. Doctors began to diagnose American men as suffering from "neurasthenia," a new disease brought on by the modern problems of business pressure, excessive intellectual work, and nervous strain.⁷⁰

In this context of shifting gender identities, some men also came to feel emasculated by the new "feminist" construction of the "New Woman." Wages brought home by newly working wives threatened the authority of their husbands. Sexual behavior shifted and family size shrank throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. The nature of families shifted to become less authoritarian and more democratic.⁷¹

Men found themselves facing new conditions. As Sinclair Lewis demonstrated so eloquently in *Babbitt*, in this context many American men sought

new thrills and experiences formerly forbidden by Victorian middle-class morality. Lewis's title character was a quintessentially twentieth-century male figure; he was a salesman and civic booster reveling in organizations yet rebelling against the constraints of nineteenth-century morality. While drinking illegal alcohol, telling funny stories, and smoking cigars at a state convention of realtors, Babbitt asserts to his compatriots in the hyperbolic, yet informal, style characteristic of his generation of joiners, "I don't know how it strikes you hellions, but personally I like this busting loose for a change, and kicking over a couple of mountains and climbing up on the North Pole and waving the aurora borealis around."⁷²

Behavior that previously had signaled restraint and gentility came to denote overcivilization and effeminacy. Men used new derogatory terms like "stuffed shirt" and "sissy" to modify the behavior of their peers.⁷³ Appropriate masculine behavior was also influenced by an increase in the number of unmarried men, since new economic conditions motivated bachelors to delay marriage. Attributes such as boisterousness, ribaldry, and troublemaking that had been limited to adolescence became part of a new masculinity, along with sports and competition.⁷⁴

Starting about 1900, fraternal organizations prospered that were formed expressly as "playgrounds" for men like Babbitt. The Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, which restricted its membership to men who were active Freemasons, is the most notable.⁷⁵ Other groups, however, including the Imperial Order of Muscovites, the Dramatic Order of Knights of Khorassan, and the Mystic Order of Veiled Prophets of the Enchanted Realm, fulfilled similar functions.⁷⁶ These associations rejected staid, solemn rituals that no longer fascinated American men and instead specialized in horseplay and stunts intended to deflate stuffed shirts. In quoting a Shriner publication, the journalist Charles W. Ferguson reported that in their prescribed undertakings "pomposity is punctured,

⁶⁹ On the development of Santa Claus in relation to the nineteenth-century development of American capitalism, see Restad, *Christmas in America*, 43–56.

⁷⁰ A large literature has developed concerning early twentieth-century masculinity. Noteworthy works within it include John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2001); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Tom Pendergrast, *Creating the Modern Man: American Magazines and Consumer Culture* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000); Michael S. Kimmel, "The Contemporary 'Crisis' of Masculinity in Historical Perspective," in *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies*, ed. Harry Brod (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 121–53.

⁷¹ See Lynn Dumenil, *The Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1995), 99–144; Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 93–155; Christina Simmons, "Modern Sexuality and the Myth of Victorian Repression," in *Gender and American History since 1890*, ed. Barbara Melesh (New York: Routledge, 1993), 17–42.

⁷² Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt* (1922; repr., with an introduction by Jon Wickersham, New York: Bantam Books, 1998), 177.

⁷³ Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 17.

⁷⁴ Howard P. Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor: Creating an American Subculture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 226–31.

⁷⁵ For a discussion of the Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine as a midwife to a new masculinity based on personality, see Moore, *Masonic Temples*, 93–117; see also Fred Van Deventer, *Parade to Glory* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1964).

⁷⁶ Axelrod, *International Encyclopedia*, 152, 177; Tabbert, *American Freemasons*, 127–31.

pride is laughed to scorn, and dignity is bedeviled.”⁷⁷ Shriners often ornamented their publications with cartoon images of goats, sometimes even wearing fezzes.⁷⁸

In defining a new masculinity at the beginning of the twentieth century, fraternalists introduced mechanical goats to humiliate members in burlesque satires of fraternal initiation.⁷⁹ Members embraced the shameful image fashioned by evangelical reformers three generations earlier and used it for their own purposes. Officers in this period found that middle-class men were not driven away from lodges as a result of riding the goat; instead, they were attracted. An advertising circular for a mechanical goat published in 1900 by Louis E. Stilz & Bro. of Philadelphia claimed American men hungered for such amusement and that the purchase of their device led to lodge prosperity and membership growth. “With one of our goats,” the copy editor explained, “each member becomes interested and will look for new timber on which to use it. After he rides it once, he wants to have the fun of seeing some other fellow ride it.”⁸⁰

In 1894, the Modern Woodmen of America, an organization founded in 1883 by Joseph Cullen Root to offer insurance benefits to white males in the American Midwest, introduced to their initiation ritual a section which they called the “Fraternal Degree.”⁸¹ This new ceremony included hoodwinking the candidate, placing him on a me-

chanical goat, and riding him around the “hall three or four times, care being taken not to be too rough.”⁸² As a result of these innovations, their official history reported, “there was an immediate increase in interest in the work of the Camps and a corresponding impetus to growth resulted.”⁸³

The goat that Stilz & Bro. offered, like the DeMoulin Bros. and Co. example, employed eccentric wheels to create an ungainly bucking motion. The configuration of axle, wheels, and flanges that generated the movement of the former example was protected by a patent awarded to Luther Myers of Maumee, Ohio, on November 29, 1892. In his patent document, which described a cart rather than a goat, Myers explained, “The vehicle affords great amusement when one or more persons are seated within the box and are being drawn forward by reason of the undulatory or swaying motion given to the box and consequently to the occupants.” Although Myers’s patent represented a cart, the inventor elucidated his vision of broader applications by stating, “While I have shown a box for containing the occupant, I may mount an image or a body in configuration of an animal or burden-bearing subject, if desired.”⁸⁴

The advertising flyer for the Stilz & Bro.’s mechanism explained that when used “the rider presents a most ungainly and awkward appearance, experiencing great difficulty in retaining his seat, and may be suddenly and gracefully dismounted, either forward or backward without fear of injury.” To achieve these results, the firm provided these instructions: “To Seat Rider. Have attendants pull candidate’s legs apart, thrust animal’s head between them, and slowly bear down on handle. Then you send him teetering, galloping, flying, trotting, bucking around the room, until between tears and laughter, you are forced to desist. . . . To Unseat Rider. Have assistants take hold of bit rings. Remove tail and handle and tilt machine slowly backward and shake candidate off on wool sack.”⁸⁵ This vehicle also came equipped with a water reserve at the bottom rear of the stuffed body so that the unfortunate blindfolded rider could be wetted to add to his humiliation after being rattled off his mount.

DeMoulin Bros. & Co. of Greenville, Illinois, which manufactured the New Kensington goat, was

⁷⁷ Charles W. Ferguson, *Fifty Million Brothers: A Panorama of American Lodges and Clubs* (New York: Farrar & Rhinehart, 1937), 244.

⁷⁸ For examples, see “Mecca Gleanings,” *Meccan* 1, no. 9 (July 1917): 43; “To Be Read by Candidates Only,” *Meccan* 1, no. 3 (March 1917): 19; Kismet Temple Meeting notice for May 31, 1910, Kismet Temple file, Livingston Masonic Library, New York; “A Real Opening Spring Session,” *Long I Courier Masonic News* 6, no. 3 (March 1927): 5.

⁷⁹ For a more rustic fraternal riding goat with a provenance possibly linking it to the Modern Woodmen of America, see Milwaukee Art Museum, *Common Ground/Uncommon Vision: The Michael and Julie Hall Collection of American Folk Art in the Milwaukee Art Museum* (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Art Museum, 1993), 218–19. A stuffed-goat saddle manufactured by DeMoulin Bros. and Co., with stirrups and horns but without wheels or a vehicular substructure, is illustrated in Hamilton, *Material Culture*, 86.

⁸⁰ Louis E. Stilz & Bro., “Day Mare, or Wild Ass of the Woods,” Uniforms file, collection 60, box 1, file 28, Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. On Stilz, see Hamilton, *Material Culture*, 286–87. A rationale for humiliating initiation stunts within college fraternities is offered in Lieut. Beale Cormack [pseud.], *Initiation Stunts* (Boston: Baker’s Plays, 1922), 11.

⁸¹ Modern Woodmen of America, *Modern Woodmen of America: A History*, vol. 1 (Rock Island, IL: Modern Woodmen of America, 1924), 88; see also Ferguson, *Fifty Million Brothers*, 136–46; and Axelrod, *International Encyclopedia*, 264.

⁸² Modern Woodmen of America, *Revised Ritual of the Modern Woodmen of America* (Rock Island, IL: Head Camp, 1894), 39.

⁸³ Modern Woodmen of America, *History*, 88.

⁸⁴ U.S. Patent 486,884, filed by Luther Myers July 5, 1892, and issued November 29, 1892.

⁸⁵ Louis E. Stilz & Bro., “Day Mare, or Wild Ass of the Woods.”

founded in 1892 and specialized in equipment for staging comic fraternal pranks.⁸⁶ In the years between 1900 and 1930, this company produced a range of variations on the mechanical goat, receiving patents in 1903, 1909, and 1923 for their improvements to what they described as “initiation devices.”⁸⁷ A 1923 DeMoulin catalog features a goat with many similarities to the one owned by the New Kensington Odd Fellows (fig. 16).⁸⁸ Another page from the same catalog illustrates a more complex model, entitled the “Ferris Wheel Coaster Goat,” that allowed members of the lodge to turn the candidate “right on his head” (fig. 17). This vehicle could be procured with a horse, mule, or camel body replacing the simulated goat and produced a variety of noises. The catalog copy asserts, “A ba-a attachment also makes this goat more goaty.”⁸⁹

The Pettibone Brothers Manufacturing Company, of Cincinnati, Ohio, one of the nation’s largest fraternal supply houses, also offered an extensive line of what they called “burlesque paraphernalia,” and acquired a positive reputation in the trade that rivaled that of the DeMoulin Brothers firm.⁹⁰ One of the firm’s catalogs from the early twentieth century offered no fewer than five distinct varieties of mechanical goats, including a Ferris wheel goat.⁹¹ This publication was also a source for fake guillotines, spanking machines, and drinking fountains that shocked a candidate when he dipped his metal cup into electrified water. “Laugh and grow fat,” the Pettibone Manufacturing Company advised lodge officers in the kind of advertising language that Lewis satirized in *Babbitt*. “A place where there is no sunshine, no pleasure, no jollity, offers a very

poor inducement to a man who likes occasionally to throw off the yoke of business cares; who wants a little innocent diversion—in short, who wants to enjoy himself.”

Although the DeMoulin Bros. & Co. and the Pettibone Manufacturing Company were the leaders in the field, sales of mechanical goats were not limited to these two firms. W. E. Floding of Atlanta, Georgia, was among the other suppliers of this genre of merchandise.⁹² A 1910 Floding catalog that offered goods for Odd Fellows lodges illustrates their version of the mechanical goat, but also indicates that they would supply lodges with papier-mâché goat masks (fig. 18).⁹³ The catalog published by the Supply Department of the Modern Woodmen of America in 1918 offers three distinct wheeled goats, probably manufactured by different firms, with prices ranging from \$20.75 to \$31.50.⁹⁴

Joseph P. Van Nest of Wooster, Ohio, also distributed mechanical goats. Van Nest wrote, published, and distributed burlesque initiations with titles such as “The Munchers of Hard Tack,” “Ritual of the Oriental Order of Humility,” “Cole’s Initiation Ritual,” and “Van Nest’s Moot Court Martial.”⁹⁵ According to Van Nest, these mock degrees were “for the purpose of creating amusement at anniversaries of secret societies and social gatherings of all kinds.” Along with the scripts for these theatricals, Van Nest also advertised that he sold papier-mâché goat heads, and that he was the sole agent for a device called “The Day Mare, or Wild Ass of the Desert,” a name that Stütz & Bro. employed for their goat. Van Nest’s advertising copy asserted that the device was designed to be used “when it is desired to make the work amusing to the members and impressive to the Candidate; and can also be used to splendid advantage in conferring the Munchers of Hard Tack Degrees and also for giving public entertainments with Van Nest’s Burlesque Rituals.”⁹⁶ The machine, which could be shipped by freight in a chest measuring

⁸⁶ For a time line of the DeMoulin Brothers firm, see <http://www.demoulin.com/company/history.htm>. See also Hamilton, *Material Culture*, 283. For more about fraternal supply companies, see William D. Moore, “Masonic Lodge Rooms and Their Furnishings, 1870–1930,” *Heredom* 2 (1993): 99–136.

⁸⁷ U.S. Patent 736,704, filed by Edmond DeMoulin and Ulysses S. DeMoulin February 24, 1902, and issued August 18, 1903; U.S. Patent 943,219, filed by Ulysses S. DeMoulin March 3, 1909, and issued December 14, 1909; U.S. Patent 1,455,113, filed by Ulysses S. DeMoulin October 30, 1922, and issued May 15, 1923.

⁸⁸ DeMoulin Bros. & Co., 1923 *Supplement to Catalog No. 315*: *Burlesque and Side Degree Specialties, Paraphernalia and Costumes* (Greenville, IL: DeMoulin Bros. & Co., 1923), 2. See also DeMoulin Bros. & Co., *Burlesque and Side Degree Specialties, Paraphernalia and Costumes: Catalog No. 190* (Greenville, IL: DeMoulin Bros. & Co., 1912); DeMoulin & Bro., *Burlesque and Side Degree Specialties and Paraphernalia Catalog No. 64* (Effingham, IL: Effingham Democrat, 1904).

⁸⁹ DeMoulin Bros. & Co., 1923 *Supplement to Catalog No. 315*, 4.

⁹⁰ Cormack, *Initiation Stunts*, 11.

⁹¹ Pettibone Bros. Mfg. Co., *Burlesque Paraphernalia* (Cincinnati: Pettibone Bros. Mfg. Co., 1902).

⁹² On Floding, see Hamilton, *Material Culture*, 283.

⁹³ W. E. Floding, *Everything for the Lodge I.O.O.F.: Catalogue No. 54* (Atlanta: W. E. Floding, 1910), 59.

⁹⁴ Modern Woodmen of America, *Catalog 1918*, 90.

⁹⁵ Joseph P. Van Nest, *Van Nest’s Burlesque Degree* (Wooster, OH: Joseph P. Van Nest, n.d.), 30–31; see also *Ritual of the Oriental Order of Humility*, latest rev. ed. (Wooster, OH: J. P. Van Nest Sons, n.d.). Although the *Ritual of the Oriental Order of Humility* contains no mention of a goat in the text, the back cover is illustrated with an engraving of a blindfolded candidate wearing a top hat and mounted on a goat. Rather than grasping the creature’s horns, the initiate holds its tail. The engraving is entitled “Candidate in Position.”

⁹⁶ Van Nest, *Van Nest’s Burlesque Degree*, 32.



A Low-Down Buck

(Patent Applied For)



B760

We thought we had about reached the limit when it came to inventing goats, but out of the realm of our imagination and ingenuity we have produced another specimen of the goat family. Though probably more applicable to his construction than to his conduct, yet we believe this animal is deserving of the title "A Low-Down Buck."

This goat is entirely different from any other we have ever invented—different not only in construction but in action as well. The action is not mechanical but is produced by the man at the handle, and he can sure make it rough for the candidate. As the weight is all on and directly over the large wheel, the goat is light on his feet and very easy to manipulate. The four small wheels keep the goat "right side up."

Only the large wheel runs on the floor. The small wheels might be compared to the four hoofs of a goat in action—they hit the floor, occasionally. When this goat is hustled into the hall, these four wheels produce a clatter that sounds like a gallopin' horse, and the candidate does not have to work his imagination overtime to believe that he is to be given a ride on a real live prancin' steed.

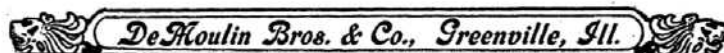
We haven't space here to tell about all the good (?) points of this goat and how he will perform, but we do say that your Lodge will find him to be a rip snorter. No matter what experience you might have had with other goats, you cannot afford to miss the big show with this low-down buck will produce.

Goat is packed in a chest with hinged cover, lock and key. Weight, packed, about 165 pounds.

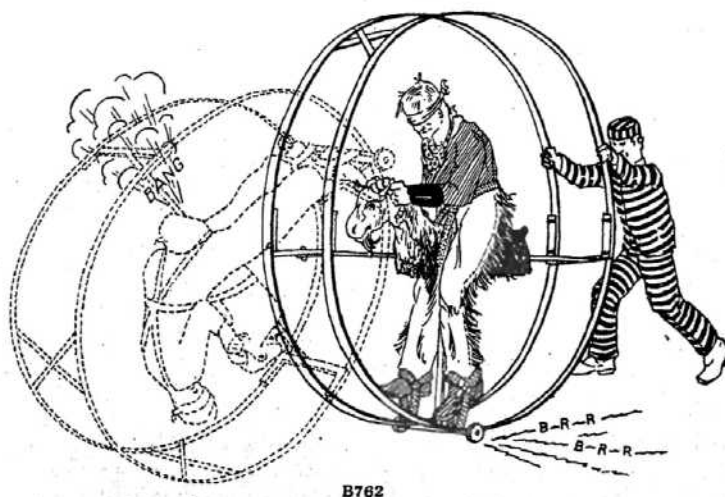
- B760—A Low-down Buck, with rubber tires and goat blat.....\$50.00
 Horse, Camel or Mule body instead of goat, extra..... 10.00
 B761—Rough Hider or Cowboy Outfit, consisting of hat, shirt, trousers with fringe
 on outside seams, belt and handkerchief, complete 7.50
 Convict Costume, see Page 22.

2

Fig. 16. "A Low-Down Buck," from DeMoulin Bros. & Co., 1923 *Supplement to Catalog No. 315 Burlesque and Side Degree Specialties Paraphernalia and Costumes* (Greenville, IL: DeMoulin Bros. & Co., 1923). (Chancellor Robert R. Livingston Masonic Library of Grand Lodge, New York.)



Ferris Wheel Coaster Goat



This is the Ferris Wheel Goat with several new features added which make it a much more exciting stunt. See the two small wheels. These enable the attendant to coast the ferris wheel on the floor with the candidate right-side-up. About the time the candidate has relaxed and has kidded himself into believing that he is to enjoy a smooth ride—over he goes right on his head. The firing of a blank cartridge adds to the consternation. A ba-a-a attachment also makes this goat more goaty.

- B762**—Goat, including clatter attachment on small wheels, cartridge firing attachment under body, goat blat and 50 blank cartridges (weight packed, about 190 pounds)\$55.00
 Extra Blank Cartridges (not mailable), per box of 5045
 Horse, Mule or Camel body instead of Goat; extra 10.00
 Rubber Tires on above goat, extra 15.00

"Worth the Money Every Night"

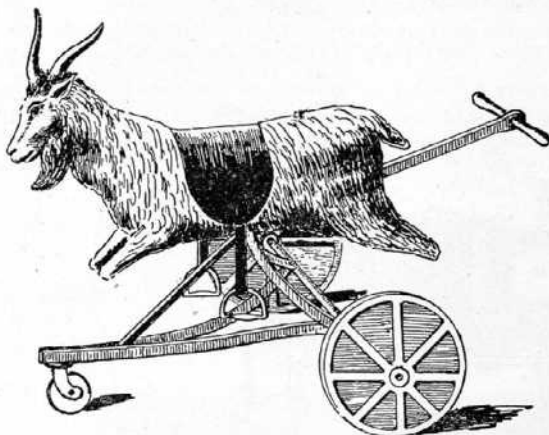
"About six years ago we obtained from you some side degree paraphernalia which we used until last Fall when bad luck overcame us. Our building and paraphernalia were destroyed by fire. After our fire we struggled along without anything for a period of three months. Our members lost interest and stayed at home. But finally, after three months, our side-degree paraphernalia arrived from DeMoulin Bros & Co., and our attendance increased one-half. Old members paid up and new members are coming into our Order. Our fun is great, and I must say for DeMoulin's Side-Degree paraphernalia it is worth the money every meeting night when there are three or four new members to take in."—W. J. Whitlock, Coffeen, Ill.

"All of the paraphernalia received from your House has given entire satisfaction. We have increased our attendance wonderfully from our own Camp, and also are having many visitors from other Camps through-out the city."—Fred J. Kohlman, Kansas City, Mo.

Fig. 17. "Ferris Wheel Coaster Goat," from DeMoulin Bros. & Co., 1923 *Supplement to Catalog No. 315 Burlesque and Side Degree Specialties Paraphernalia and Costumes* (Greenville, IL: DeMoulin Bros., & Co., 1923). (Chancellor Robert R. Livingston Masonic Library of Grand Lodge, New York.)

W. E. FLODING. EVERYTHING FOR THE LODGE. ATLANTA, GA.

59

THE ROUGH RIDER.

No. 879.

No. 879.—Goat mounted on a strong, solid frame, with three wheels thus preventing it from falling over or from taking a header; the hind wheels are made of wood and double, and both wheels work on an eccentric, the goat is furnished with a saddle and stirrups; this is one of the best goats on the market. One of these goats will add enthusiasm to our work. Each\$15.00

TRICK CHAIR.

No. 885.—A well made article with cartridge attachment that never fails to explode—one of these chairs used in the initiation of candidates will add life to the Lodge. See cut. Each.....\$13.75

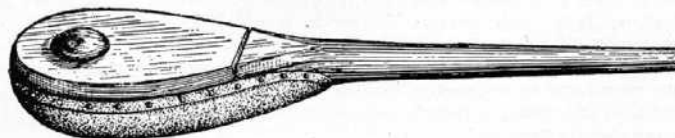
GOAT HEAD.

No. 886.—Goat Head\$2.00

GIVING THE TOSSING DEGREE.

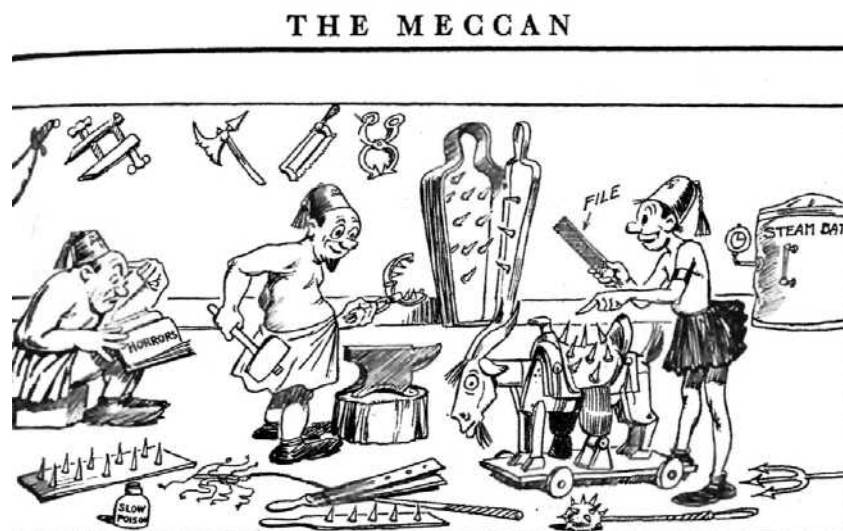
Nos. 881 to 884.

No. 881.—Tossing canvas, well made, strongly bound with rope and suitable handles, 6x8 ft., not reinforced \$8.50
 No. 882.—Tossing canvas, made of extra heavy sail canvas, strongly bound, with rope and suitable handles, reinforced with straps across, leather handles, size 8x8 feet\$12.50
 No. 883.—Tossing canvas, strongly bound with rope and suitable handles, 8x8 feet, reinforced with leather straps across\$15.50
 No. 884.—Tossing canvas, heavy duck or canvas bound with rope, made with leather handles, on all four sides, and reinforced with leather straps both ways, size 10x10 feet, net.....\$22.50

HAND SPANKER.

No. 880.—Hand Spanker, with cartridge attachment. This is the very best "spanker" on the market, so constructed that there is no danger in using it, and it never fails to explode. Net price with 50 blank cartridges\$3.75
 Extra cartridges, per 100.....1.00

Fig. 18. "The Rough Rider," from W. E. Floding, *Everything for the Lodge I.O.O.F. Catalogue No. 54* (Atlanta: W. E. Floding, 1910), 59. (National Heritage Museum, Lexington, MA.)



Oh, Candidate!

This is your page.

Fig. 19. "Oh, Candidate!" from *Meccan* 2, no. 5 (May 1918): 9. (Chancellor Robert R. Livingston Masonic Library of Grand Lodge, New York.)

48 inches long by 14 inches wide and 22 inches high, weighed 50 pounds and sold for \$35.00.⁹⁷

Numerous law suits brought by litigants in the first decade of the twentieth century claimed damages based upon injuries caused by the devices. In 1902, for example, Samuel W. Mitchell sued the Sovereign Camp of the Woodmen of the World for \$25,000. During this trial, the mechanical goat of a Woodmen's Lodge in South Carolina was carried into the courtroom and demonstrated for the judge.⁹⁸ A similar case was brought in 1906 by Charles McAtee against the Modern Woodmen's lodge in Arrowsmith, Missouri. McAtee sought \$2,000 as compensation for injuries incurred when he was blindfolded and bucked by a mechanical goat. He claimed that the incident culminated with the goat "walking on his face."⁹⁹ In 1901, *The Freemason and Fez* reported, in a case probably involving a Ferris wheel goat, that Mark Gillson, a post office clerk, was confined to his bed for several days after he was "spun about strapped to a revolving

wheel" during initiation into the Modern Woodmen in Waverly, Iowa.¹⁰⁰ The 1915 edition of the Modern Woodmen's ritual, possibly in response to this injury, asserted, "The use of the Ferris-wheel goat is strictly forbidden." The revised ritual also specified that the applicant was not to be hoodwinked while wheeled around on the goat.¹⁰¹

By 1918, the mechanical goat itself had become exaggerated into a comic figure. An image of a goat on wheels with a spiked saddle appeared that year in a membership magazine issued by New York's Mecca Temple of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (fig. 19).¹⁰² This cartoon is noteworthy because the Shriners were no longer joking about riding an actual goat; the goat simulacrum had itself attained humorous proportions. Moreover, the idea of riding a goat was no longer appalling enough to elicit a chuckle. The

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ See "Lodge Goat Is Shown in Court," *Freemason and Fez* 10, nos. 5–6 (May and June 1902): 42; *Mitchell v. Leech*, 69 S.C. 413; 48 S.E. 290 (1904). See also "Secret Societies and the Law," *New England Craftsman* 2, no. 12 (September 1907): 452–55.

⁹⁹ "Goat Walked on His Face," *Masonic Standard* 11, no. 9 (March 3, 1906): 11. See also *Jumper v. Sovereign Camp Woodmen of the World*, 127 F. 635 (1904).

¹⁰⁰ "Victim of Fool Lodge Play," *Freemason and Fez* 9, no. 6 (June 1901): 46. For accounts of other men being injured while being initiated into either the Modern Woodmen of America or the Woodmen of the World, see "Hurt in Initiation," *New York Times*, June 28, 1900, 2; "Secret Society Must Pay," *New York Times*, November 2, 1902, 1; "A Secret Society Victim," *New York Times*, December 14, 1896, 1.

¹⁰¹ Modern Woodmen of America, *Official Ritual (Fourth Revision) of the Modern Woodmen of America 1915* (Rock Island, IL: Modern Woodmen of America, 1915), 29.

¹⁰² "Oh, Candidate!" *Meccan* 2, no. 5 (May 1918): 9.

unidentified artist elevated the stakes of the joke by outfitting the wheeled goat's saddle with spikes sharpened with a file.

The mechanical goat was developed in the same years that rodeo, featuring cowboys on bucking broncos, was being formalized as a popular entertainment form.¹⁰³ The new masculinity enacted by the fraternalist on the goat and the cowboy on the horse did not revolve around gentility and self-restraint. Rather, it focused upon physical toughness, demeanor, and humor. These tests did not involve whether a man had self-control and could restrain himself within polite society but, rather, how long the rider could stay on his mount under adverse circumstances and whether he could laugh at himself after being thrown.

Changing Meanings

The mechanical goat manufactured by DeMoulin Bros. & Co. and owned by the Odd Fellows of New Kensington, Pennsylvania, can be situated historically within a changing discourse concerning fraternalism, secrecy, and masculinity. During the years between 1845 and 1930, Americans employed the concept of the lodge goat in three modes. Initially, it was a literary tool used by the enemies of fraternalism

to criticize the use of secrecy to bind men together into exclusive organizations within the United States. Following the Civil War, the goat was transformed into a sign employed by the fraternal community to remark on the strength of their organizations and to comment on the latitude that their vows of secrecy provided them in dealing with the general public. In this form, the goat was both a verbal and a visual fiction. Finally, starting about 1900, the goat assumed three dimensions and was utilized in high jinks that entertained some joiners while humiliating and injuring others as American men forged new paradigms of masculinity.

This shift in the semiotic meaning of the goat can be linked to transformations in American masculinity delineated by scholars of gender. Broadly speaking, in the middle of the nineteenth century, middle-class men were conscious of outward appearances, and their identity was based upon concepts of character and rectitude. Within middle-class society, riding on a goat was unthinkable and perceived as unseemly and undignified. By the first decades of the twentieth century, American masculinity had reshaped itself so that identity was based on personality, and a value was placed upon the ability to compete roughly and boisterously. Fraternal organizations became forums in which men experimented with evading the strictures of Victorian deportment. Within this context, the lodge's mechanical goat provided amusement and gave men the opportunity to rejoice in activities that their fathers and grandfathers would have shunned.

¹⁰³ Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 100–103.