# MASONIC HUMOR

Vermont Lodge of Research

September 21, 2008

April 22, 2008

# What is Humor?

- The stimulation that brings Laughter is called Humor
- The Oxford Universal English Dictionary defines humor as "the faculty of perceiving what is ludicrous or amusing.“
- It is one of those heaven-sent gifts which releases strain and pent-up feelings; creates a sense of ease and pleasantry; breaks down barriers and establishes a "common denominator."

# General Rules for Humor

- Something Humorous does not necessarily amuse everyone.
- Each Society or Culture may have its own notion what is Humorous.
- Values and Morals also effect one's view of Humor.
- Therefore, Humor will depend on the individual and his ability to relate to the Joke or Story.

# Masonic Humor

- We are concerned primarily with Masonic Humor or, more correctly, Humor suitable for Masonic occasions.
- "Sexy" or “Dirty” jokes have no place in Freemasonry, nor do narratives which even border on the risqué.
- Politics, as a general rule, should also be avoided.
- Religious stories are dangerous unless handled with considerable discretion. Men of many religions meet on common ground in the rich fellowship of Freemasonry. One may unintentionally hurt the feelings of some Brother of a different religious persuasion. But don't interpret this as a taboo on good, clean thrust-and-parry between representatives of different denominations, which is the very soul of the spirit of Freemasonry.

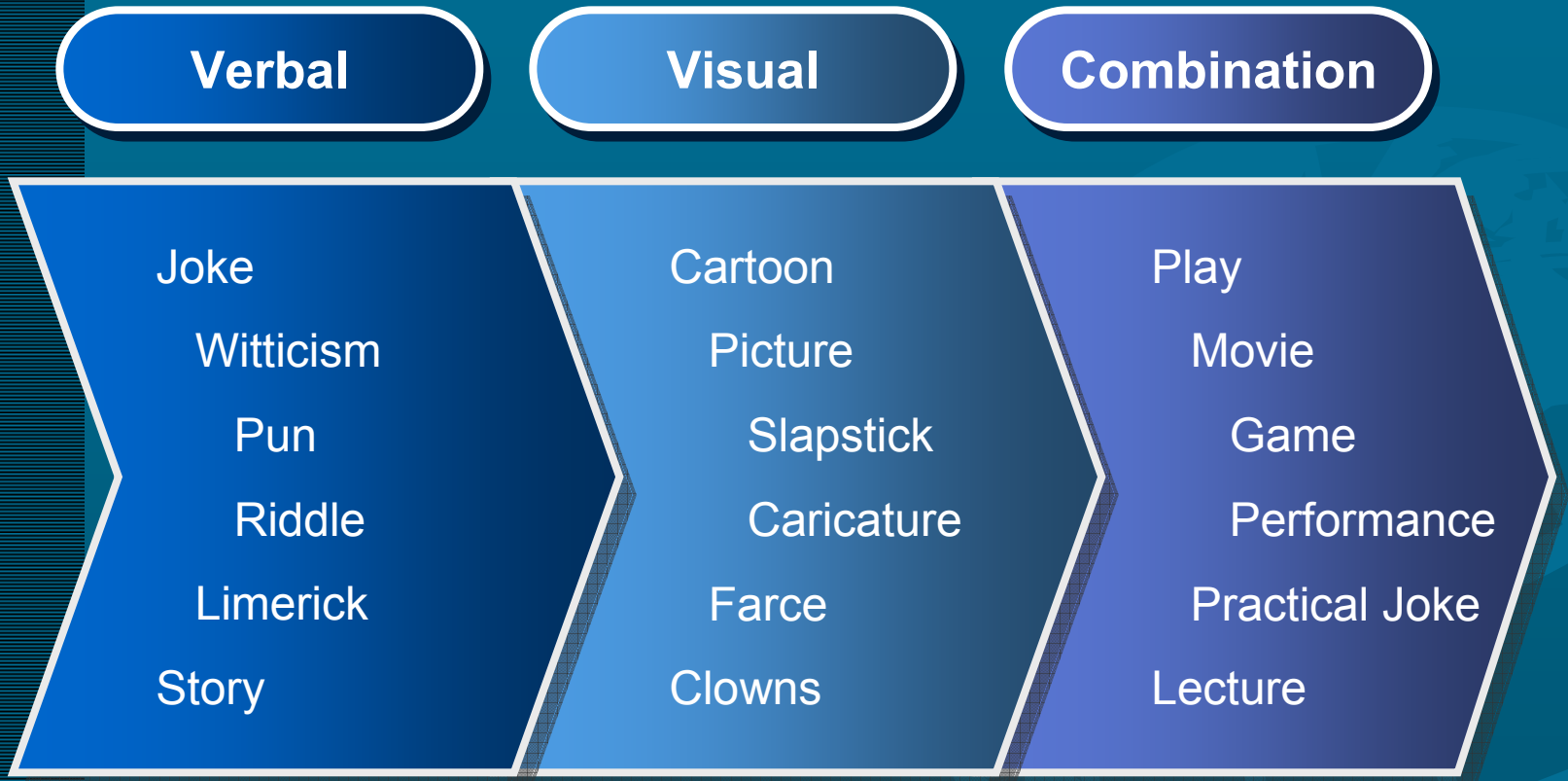
# Taking Humor In

**Appeals to Two of the Senses**

HEARING

SEEING

# Types of Humor

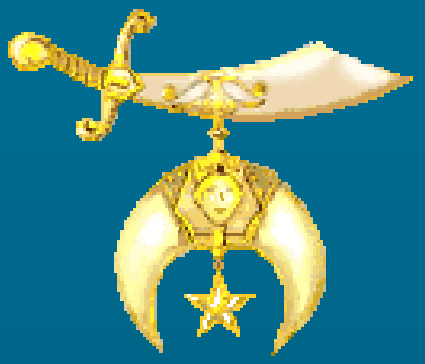


# Reasons for Humor

- Indifference
- Curiosity
- Ignorance
- Inside Knowledge
- Jealousy
- Admiration
- Suspicion
- Trust
- Fear
- Love

# Verbal Subjects of Humor

# Song



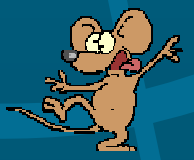
Shriners Convention

By Ray Stevens

Ray Stevens Greatest Hits

1987

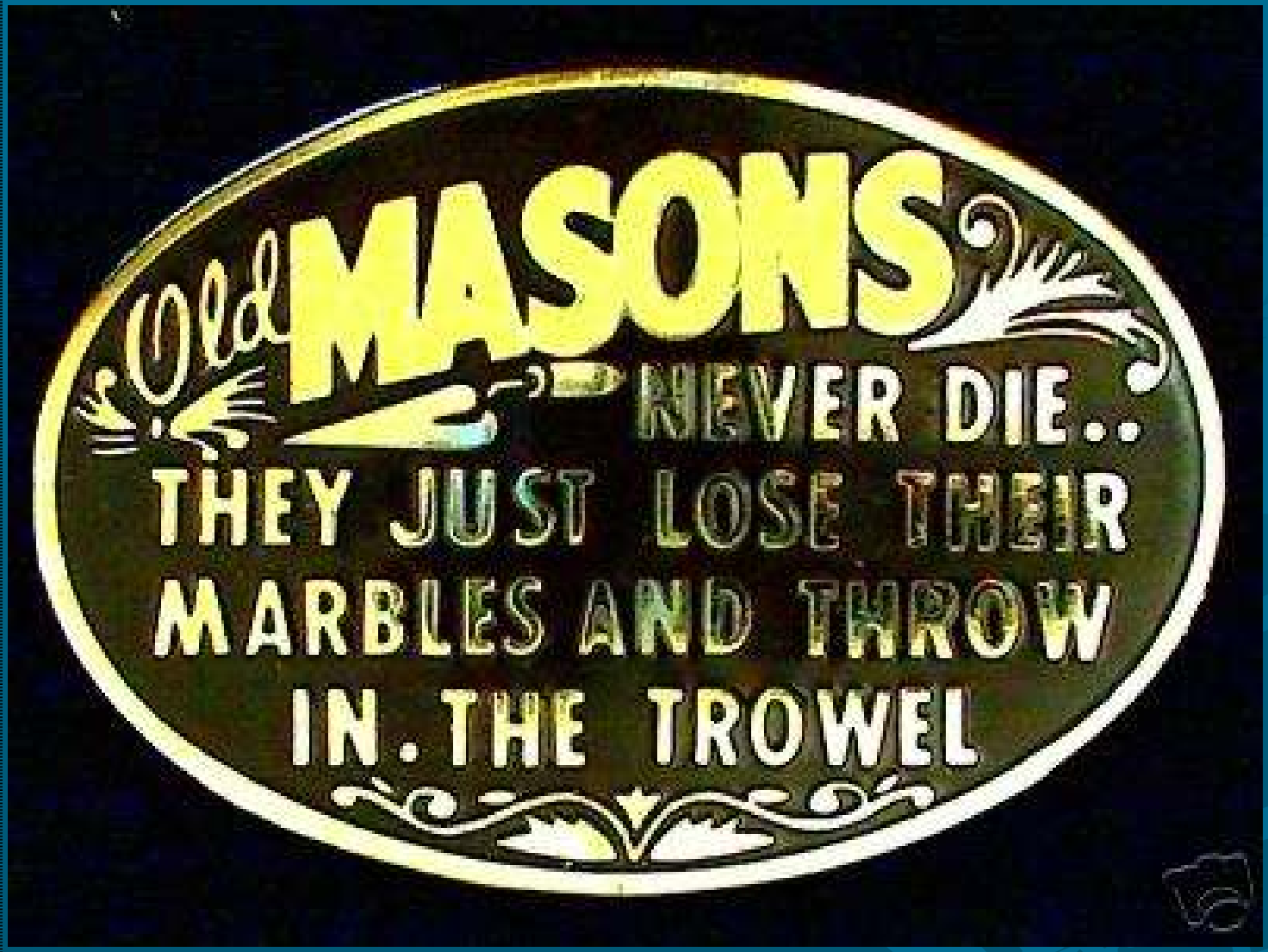
# Visual Subjects of Humor



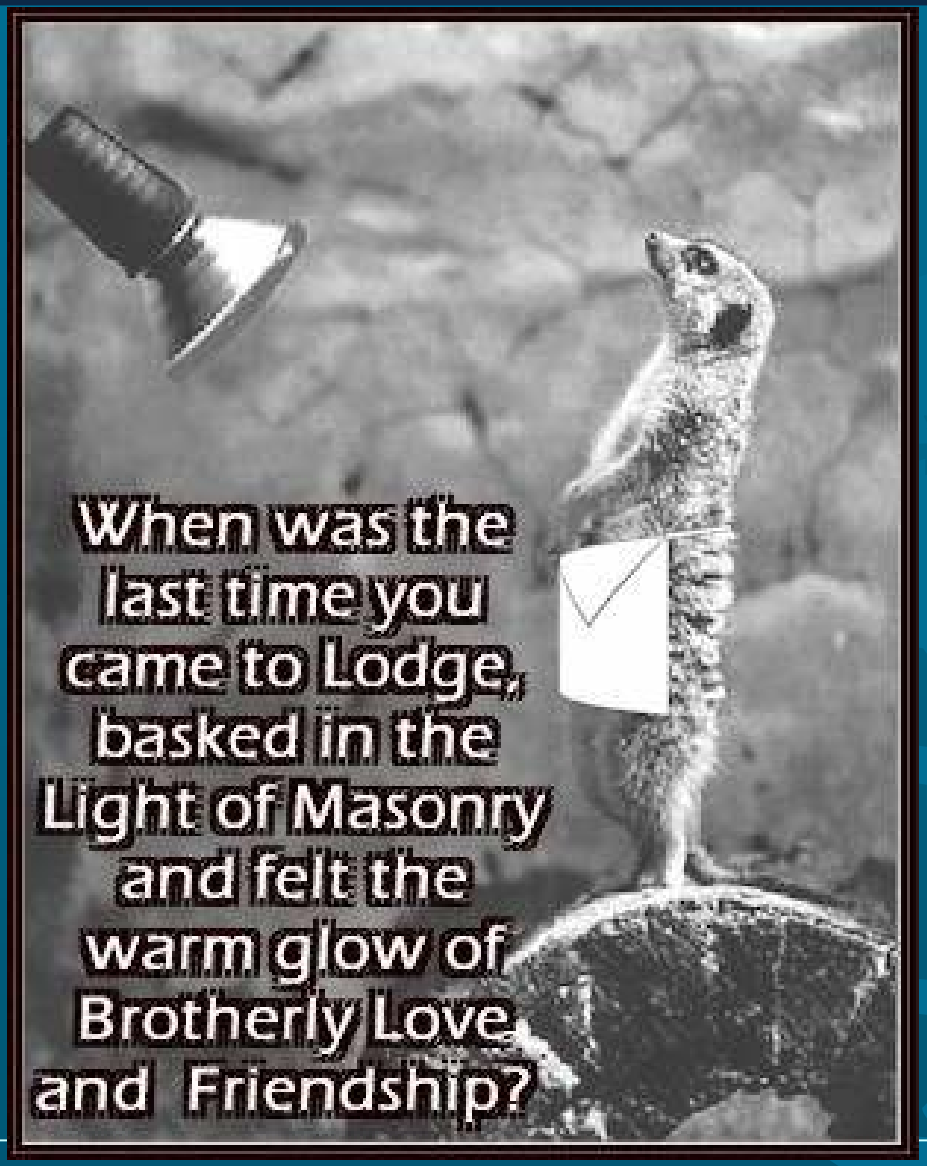
# Lodge Picture

Mount Vernon December 2006

# Belt Buckle


Old MASONS
NEVER DIE..
THEY JUST LOSE THEIR
MARBLES AND THROW
IN. THE TROWEL

# Animal


When was the last time you came to Lodge, basked in the Light of Masonry and felt the warm glow of Brotherly Love and Friendship?

# Secrets

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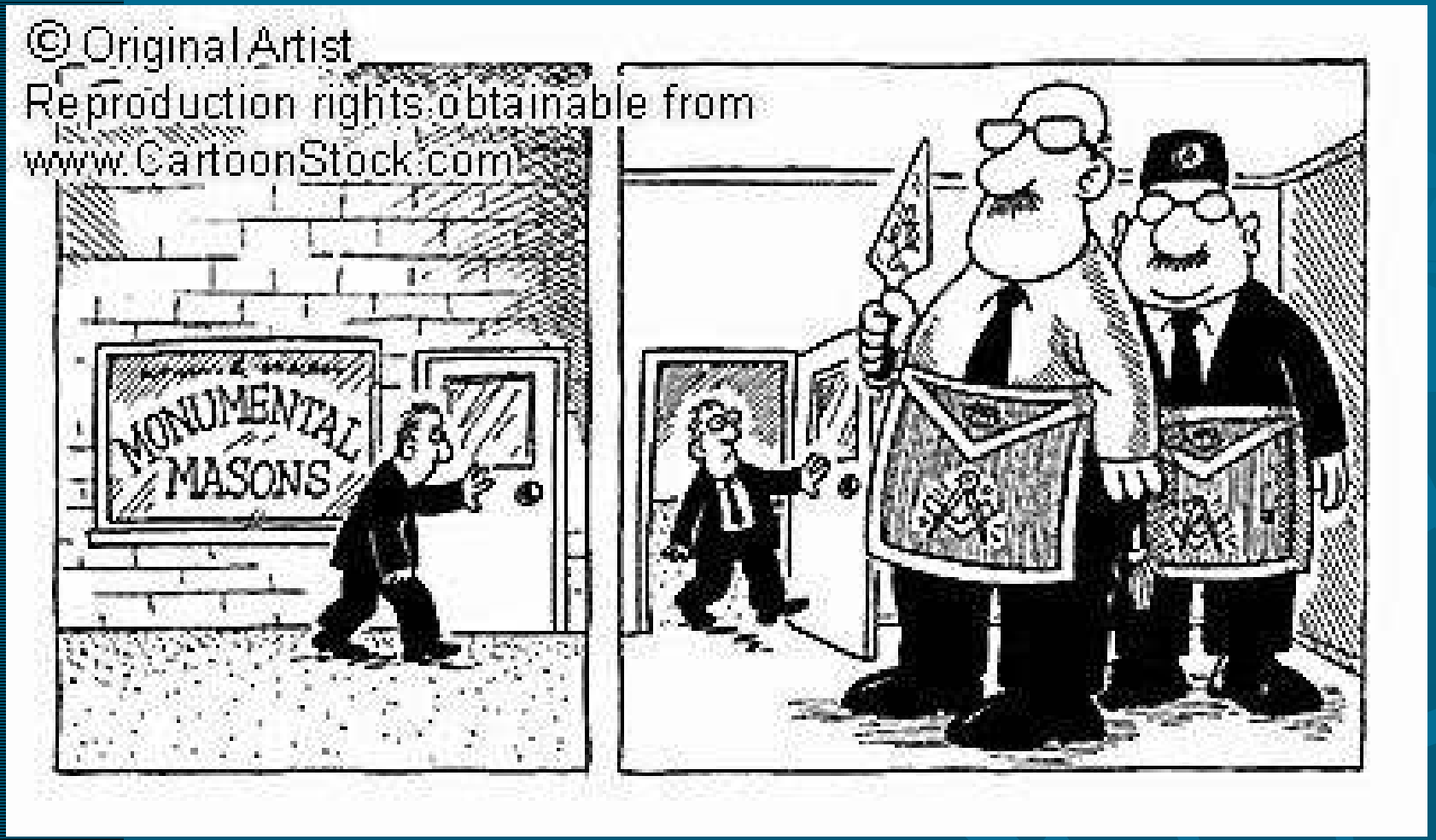
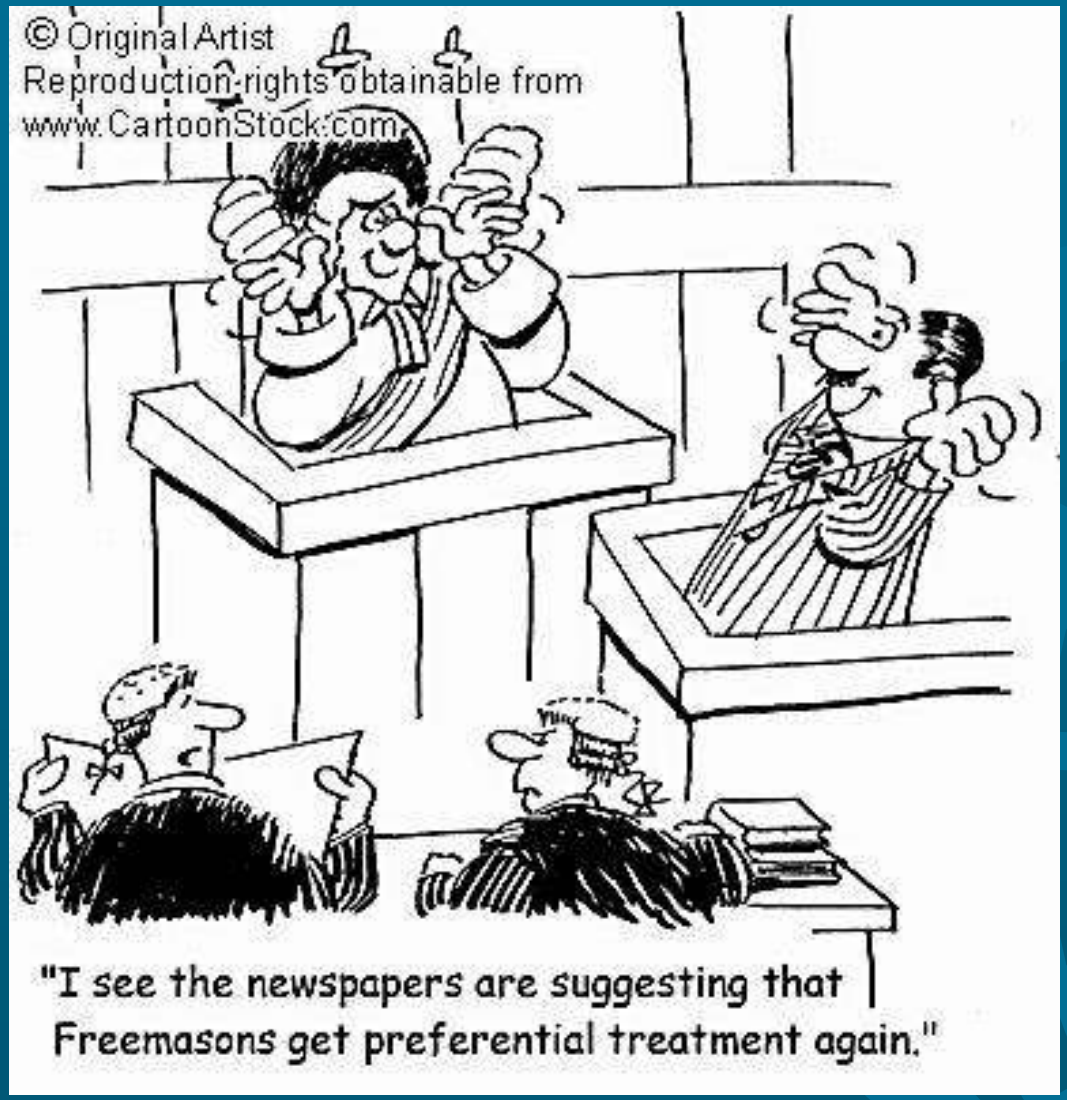
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
THAT'S THE SECRET SOCIETY MY DAD BELONGS TO

# Play on Words



# Favoritism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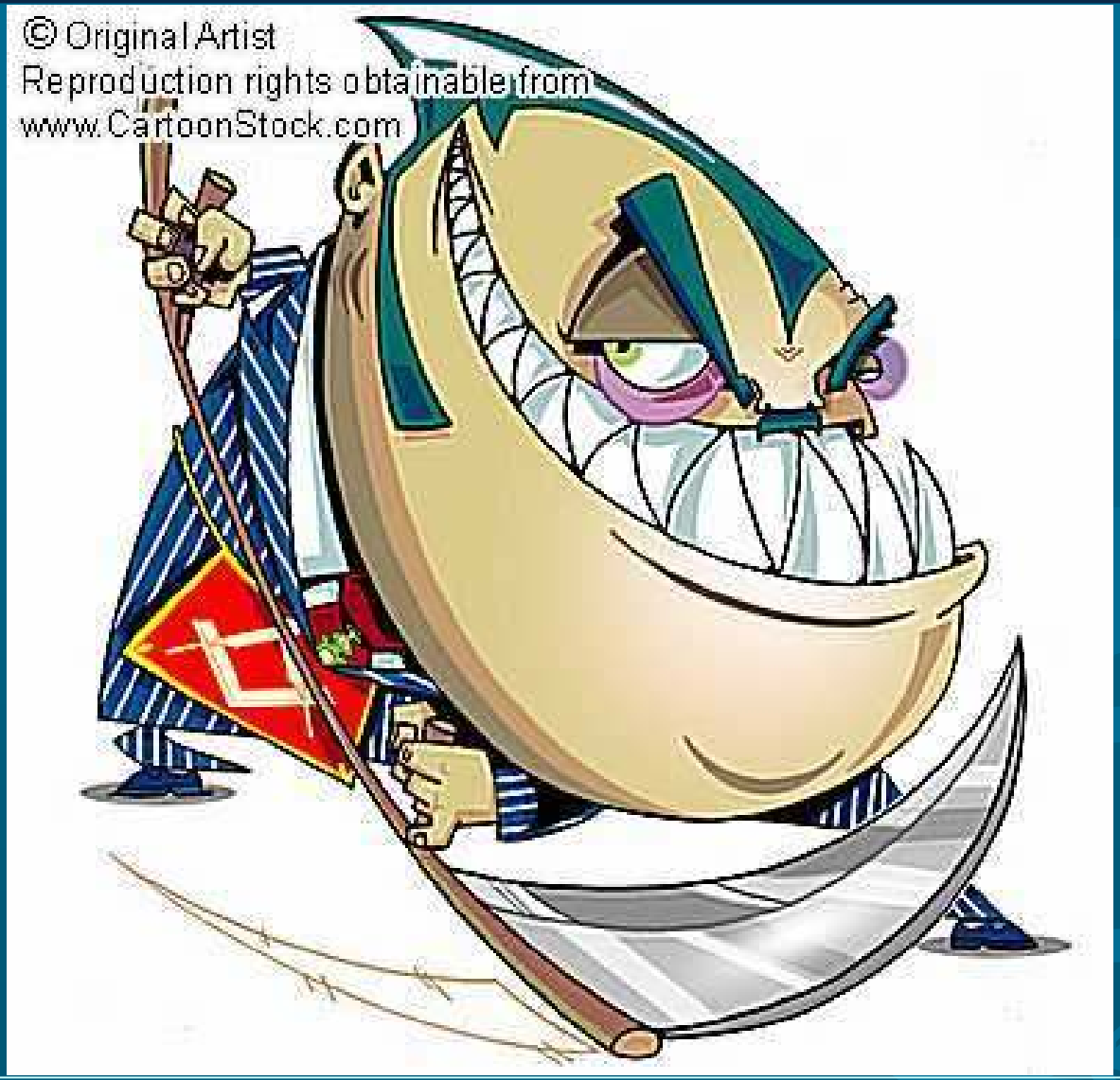
"I see the newspapers are suggesting that Freemasons get preferential treatment again."

# Misconceptions

# Sarcasm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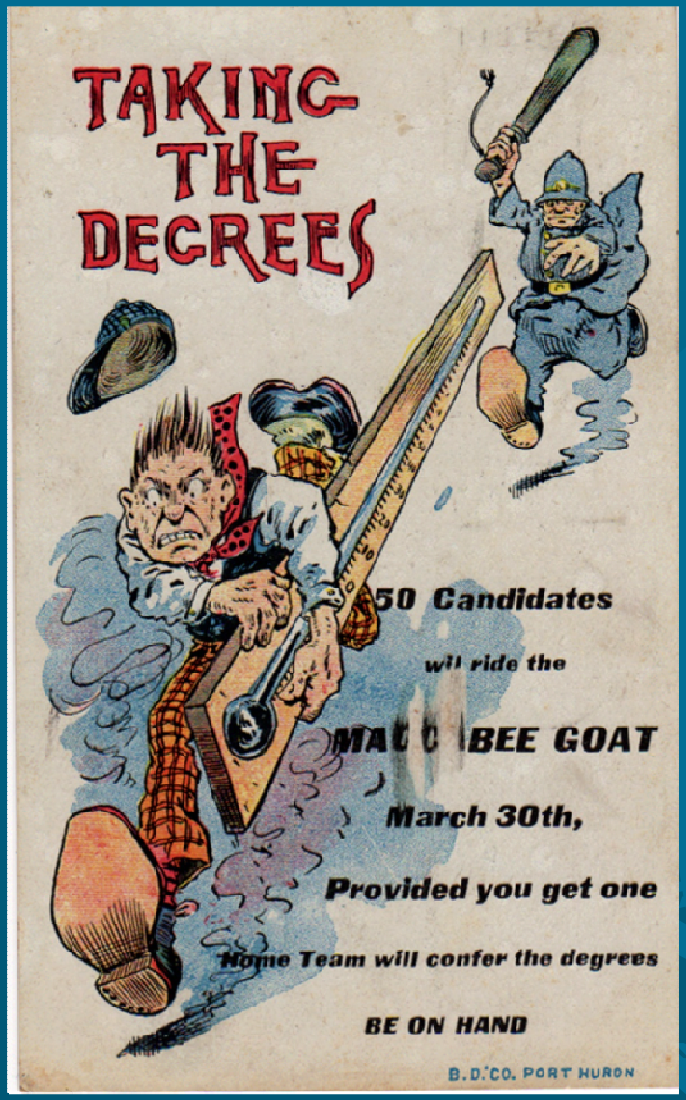
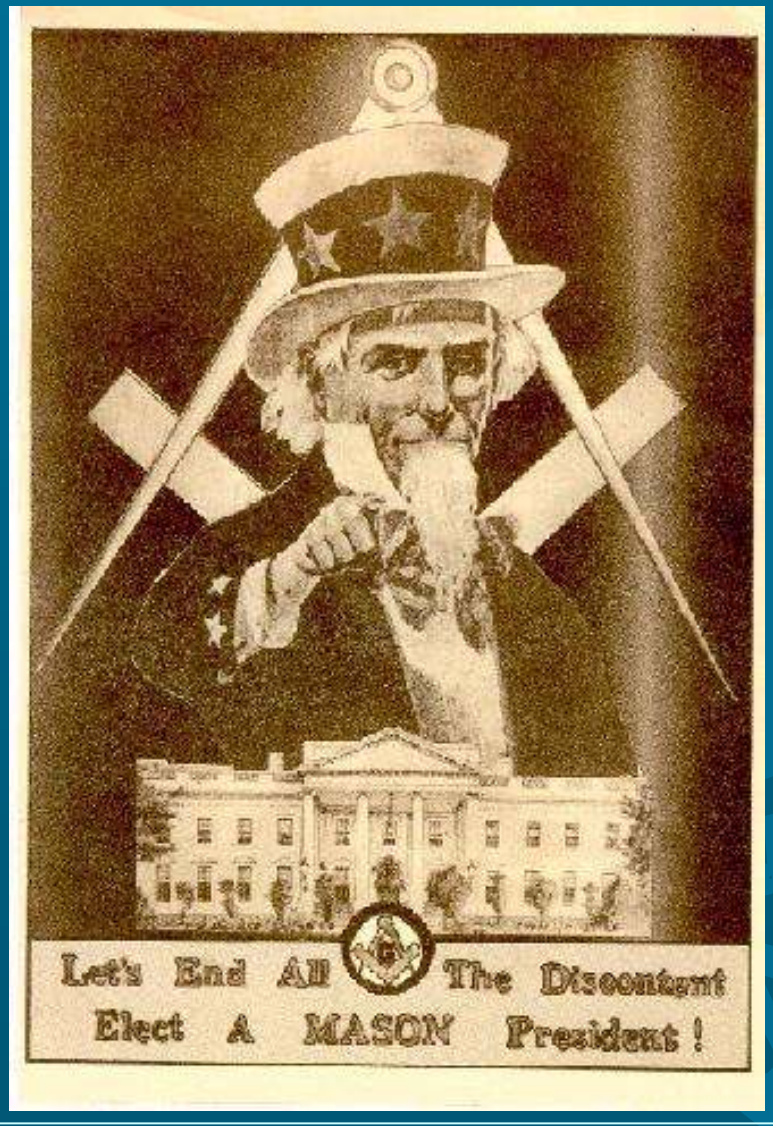
# Post Cards


TAKING THE DEGREES
50 Candidates
will ride the
BEE GOAT
March 30th,
Provided you get one
Home Team will confer the degrees
BE ON HAND
B.D.CO. PORT HURON

# Leather

MAY
EVERY
BROTHER
LEARN
TO LIVE
WITHIN
the
SQUARE
and
COMPASS

# Patriotic



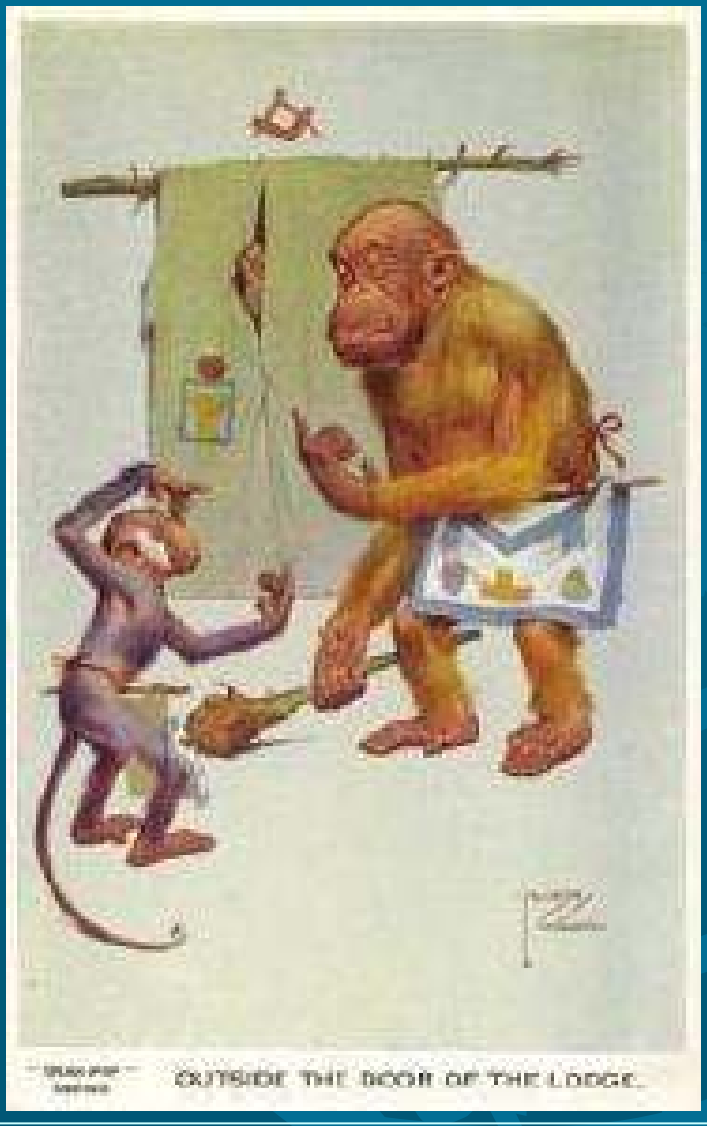
# Animals 1

3034
"GRAN-POP" SERIES
A "BROTHER" IN DISTRESS.

"GRAN-POP" SERIES
GRAN'POP DISCLOSES THE SECRETS OF MASONRY.

# Animals 2

GRAN'POP GOES THROUGH THE CHAIR



OUTSIDE THE DOOR OF THE LODGE

# Travelling

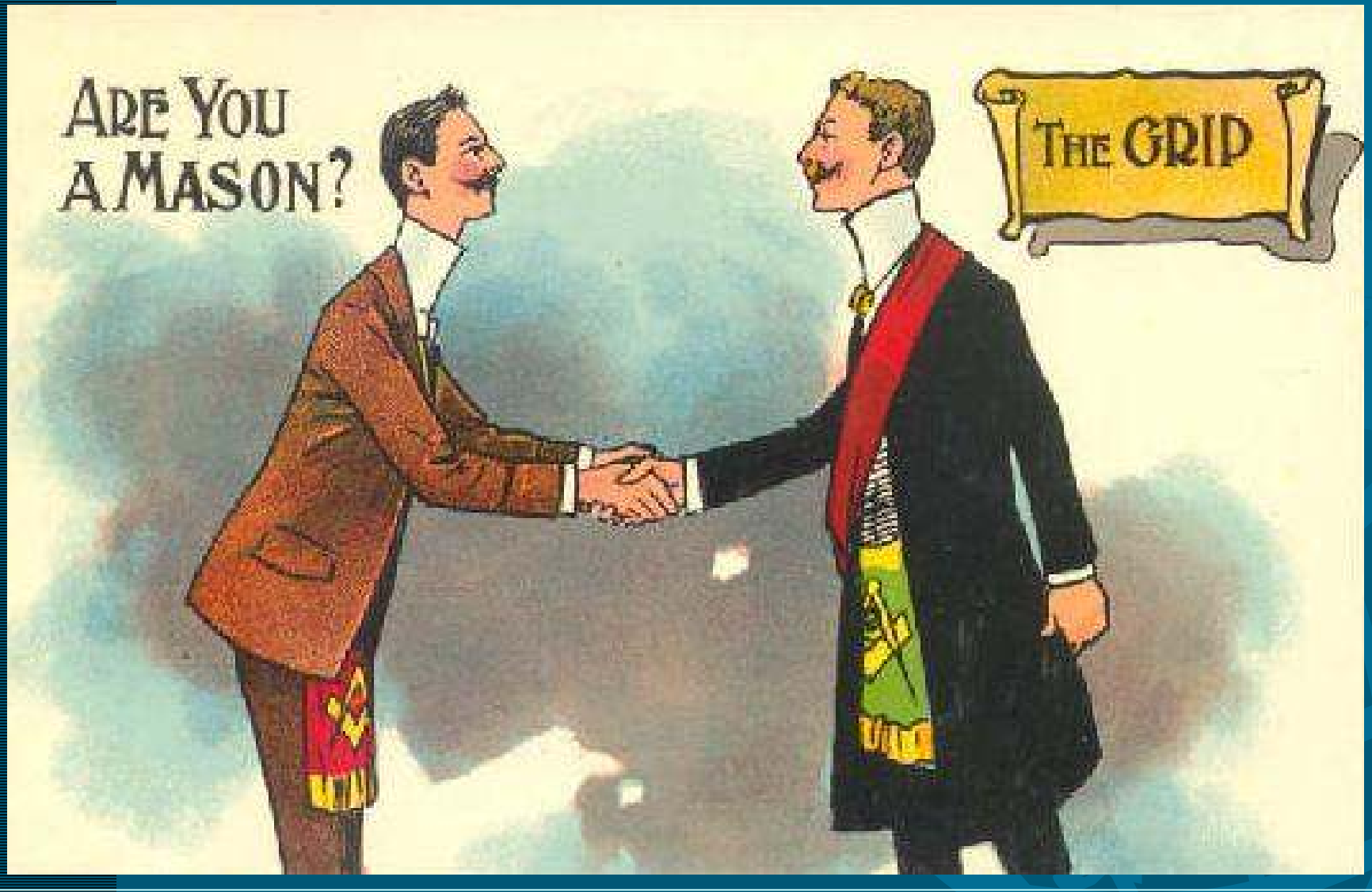
# Pin

# Member

# De-Parting on the Square

# Signs & Grips

# Grips

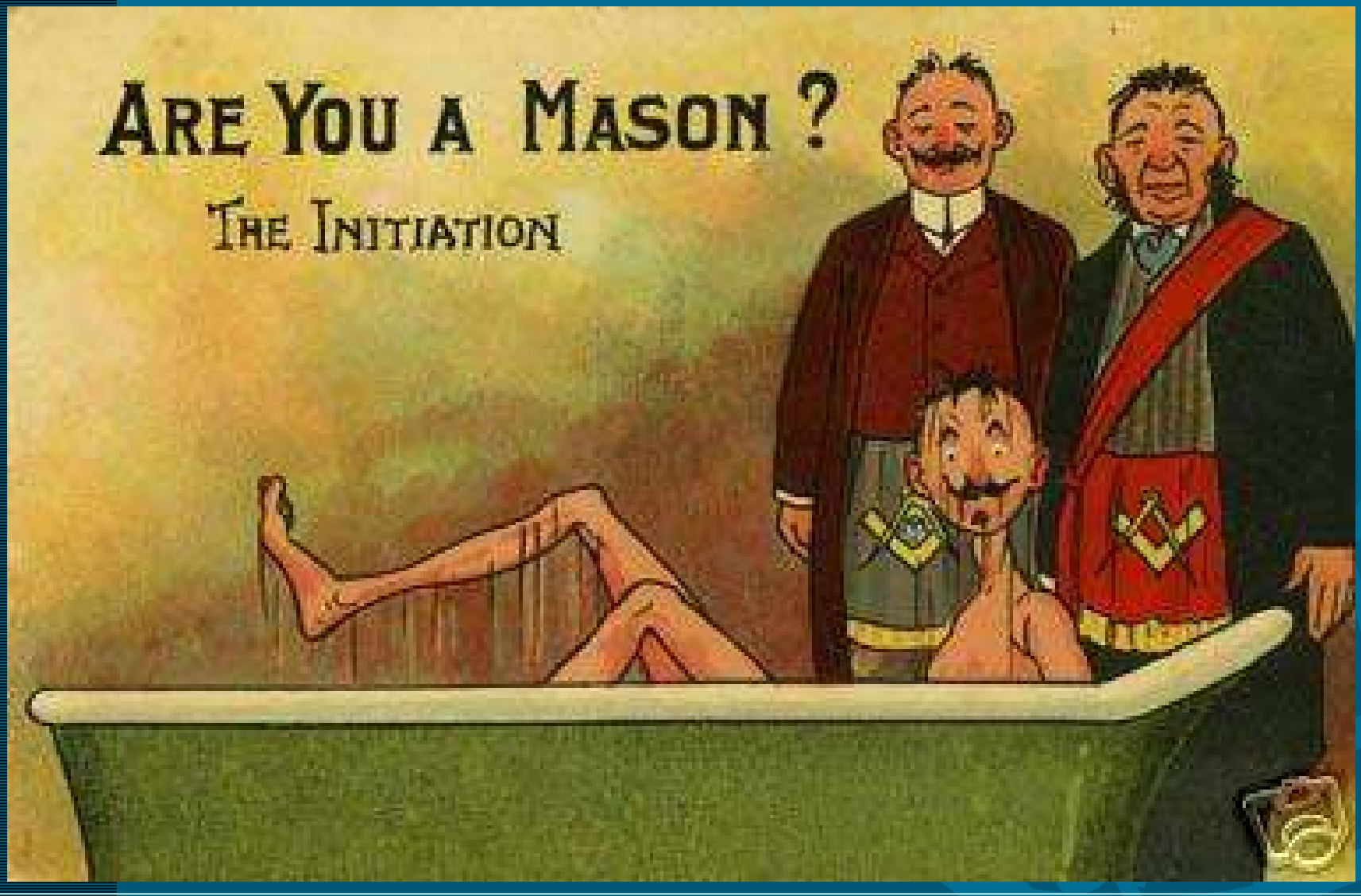


# Signs

# Password

# First Degree

# Initiation

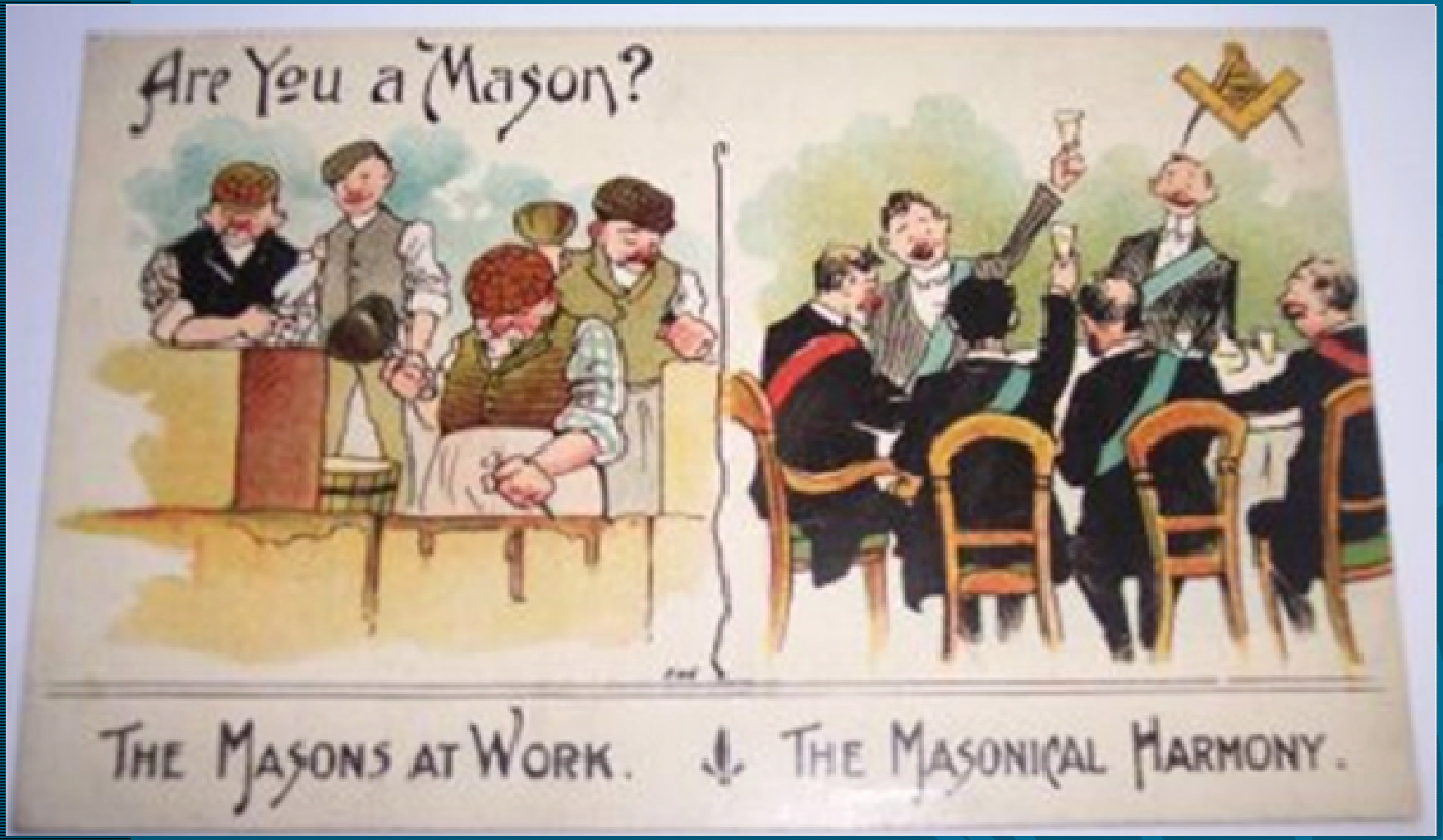


# Passing

# Raising

# Refreshment

# At Work

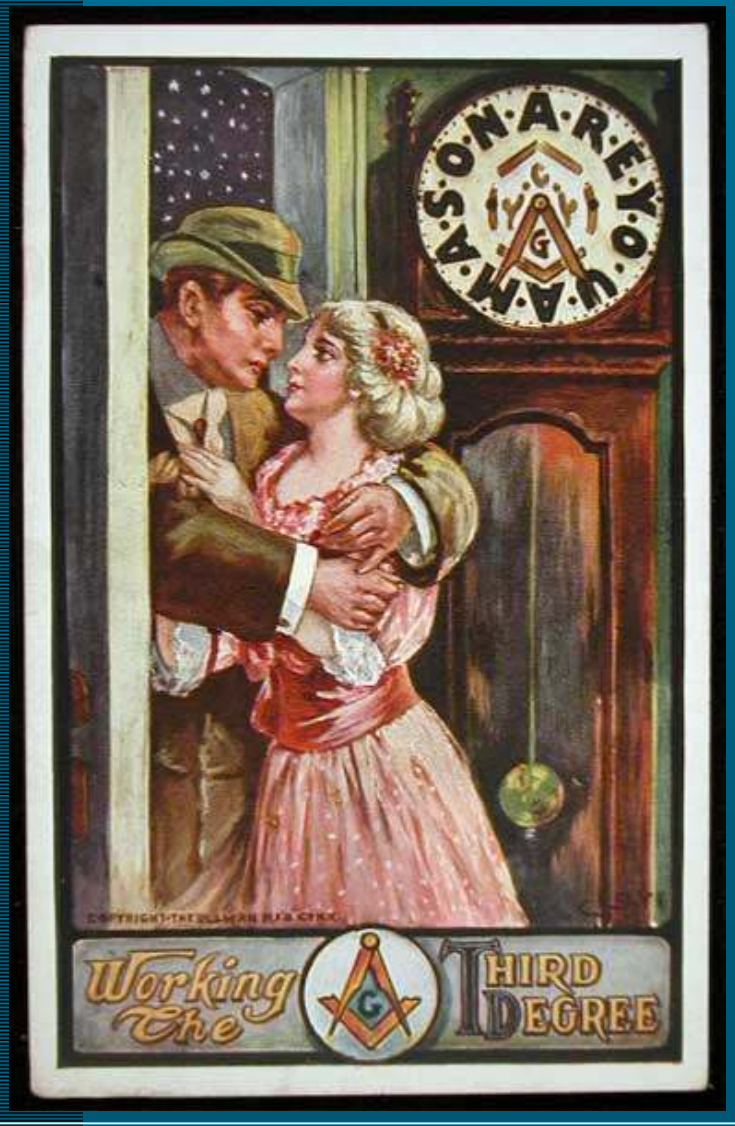


# Secret

A Mason giving the Password
in Grand Rapids, Mich.

c

# Secret



# Secret

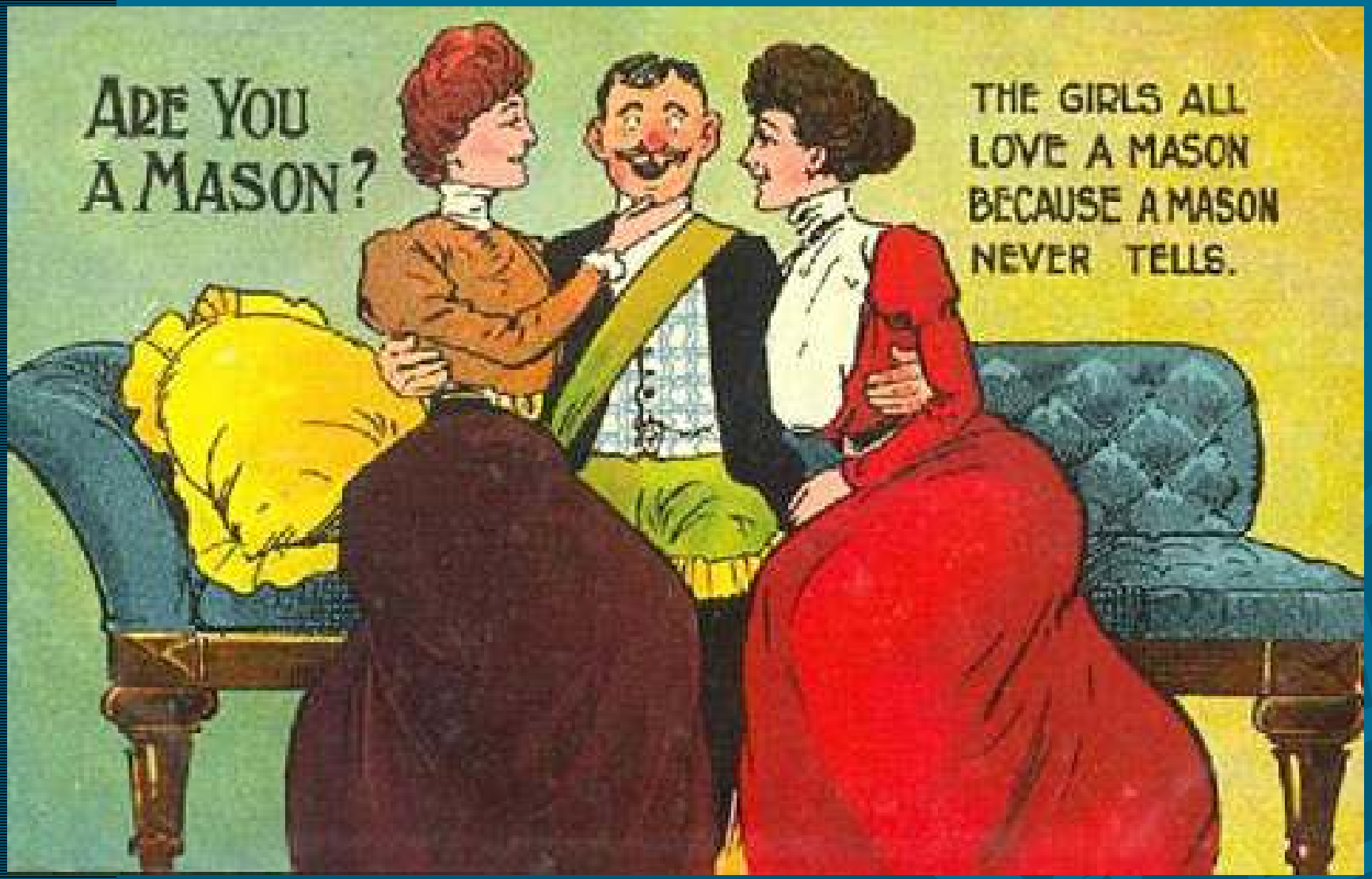
"I dearly love a MASON, because-
a Mason's "ON THE SQUARE"!"

I LOVE TO LOVE
'CAUSE A MA-
A MASON
SON NEVER TELLS

# Secret

I LOVE TO LOVE
A MASON
BECAUSE A MASON
NEVER TELLS
COPYRIGHT
SAMUEL GOLDRING

# Secret


ARE YOU A MASON?
THE GIRLS ALL LOVE A MASON BECAUSE A MASON NEVER TELLS.

# Secret

# Secret

A
MASON
NEVER
TELLS
I'm goin' to make her
a MASON too
so she can't tell on me

# “Riding the Goat”

Popular belief has often identified Masonic initiation with the riding of a goat.

The goat has been both a positive and negative symbol throughout history.

First mentioned with the Odd Fellows, then linked to Secret Societies in general.

First applied to Masonic initiation in the 1840s, by century's end the expression was a popular addition to Masonic humor, and a real aspect of other fraternal societies.

Albert G. Mackey, in his *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* (1873) cites the Rev. Dr. George Oliver in recording a common belief of the early nineteenth century that freemasons practiced some form of witchcraft: "Doctor Oliver says, it was in England a common belief that the Freemasons were accustomed in their Lodges "to raise the Devil." So the riding of the goat, which was believed to be practiced by the witches, was transferred to the Freemasons; and the saying remains to this day, although the belief has long since died out.“ A few of the more inflammatory pamphlets of the mid-eighteenth century did accuse freemasons of satanic practices, but Mackey fails to provide any documentation for his claim that these were the source of the expression, "riding the goat."

# Examples of “The Goat”

•The anonymously written *Free Masonry Exposed* (1871) has a humorous account in which a wife demands to know what went on at the lodge. The husband, divulges to his wife, the secrets of Freemasonry, including a ride on a goat during the "Fellow-Calf degree."

•In *Bobby Bumps Starts a Lodge* (1914), the candidate doesn't ride a goat, but he wears an apron with a goat's head emblem and is initiated by being butted by a goat.

•The expression is also known outside of English-speaking Freemasonry. The Afrikaanse of South Africa up to the present time refer to freemasons as "bok ryers" or "goat riders".

•Outside the literary world, there is also a report from Te Hana, New Zealand, of a simple stonemasons' device, used to move heavy stone blocks, called a goat.

# Examples of “The Goat”

•It is also a curious fact that another North American fraternal society, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, claims to have actually used a goat in its initiation ritual. Prior to 1952, when the blindfolding of candidates was done away with, a range of pranks were played upon incoming members. Reports have it that a widespread practice was for each candidate to ride a live goat around the lodge room.

# Goat Carts

These goat carts, made by DeMoulin Bros., were used by Lodges and Fraternal Groups during initiation ceremonies. An inductee would ride the goat blindfolded while being pushed around the room by Lodge members. The DeMoulin Bros. first product was made in 1892 and quickly became a popular item, especially with Woodmen and Odd Fellow Lodges.

DeMoulin Bros. & Co., Greenville, Ill.

THE BUCKING GOAT

D187-D188

We call this the Bucking Goat because that sensation trait can be so easily and effectively demonstrated. Holes or wheels are out of center to produce the side motion. Goat can be made to gallop and back by working the handle-bar up and down.

We suggest the use of tossing blanket (listed on page 81) with this goat for the purpose of throwing the candidate and letting him experience the thrills of a "Double-header."

This goat is strongly built with steel frame and wheels. Body is upholstered with good wool skin, and has horns and eyes. Shipping weight, 100 pounds.

See suggestions for introducing, page 11 in back of catalog.

D187—Goat, with rubber tires on wheels, frame and wheels finished in aluminum, chest with hinged cover, lock and key ..... $37.00
D188—Goat, same as D-187, but without rubber tires ..... 34.00
Horse, Donkey, Tiger or Camel Body, instead of goat body, extra ..... 10.00

To create more amusement we suggest that Goat be encrypted by persons wearing burlesque costumes. Costumes listed on pages 125-128.

FOUNTAIN ATTACHMENT

D177—Fountain Attachment, can be attached to any of our Goat bodies to produce spray of water from back of goat where candidate sits; extra ..... $ 3.00

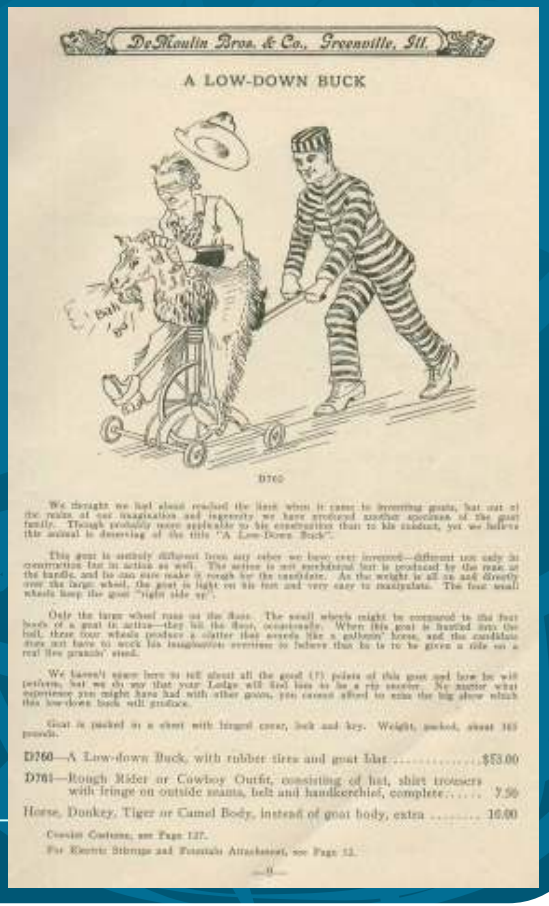
ELECTRIC STIRRUPS

D178—Electrically Wired Stirrups, for either magneto or jump spark battery; extra ..... $ 2.00
D179—Magneto Battery and Cord; extra ..... 11.25
D213—Jump Spark Battery and Cord; extra ..... 23.00

GOAT BLAT

D180—Goat Blat, can be attached to any of our Goat Bodies; extra ..... $ 3.00

—12—



DeMoulin Bros. & Co., Greenville, Ill.

A LOW-DOWN BUCK

D760

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 heels of a goat in action—they hit the floor, occasionally. When this goat is hurtled 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 pranzin' 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 which this low-down buck will produce.

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

D760—A Low-down Buck, with rubber tires and goat blat ..... $53.00
D761—Rough Rider or Cowboy Outfit, consisting of hat, shirt trousers with fringe on outside seams, belt and handkerchief, complete ..... 7.50
Horse, Donkey, Tiger or Camel Body, instead of goat body, extra ..... 10.00

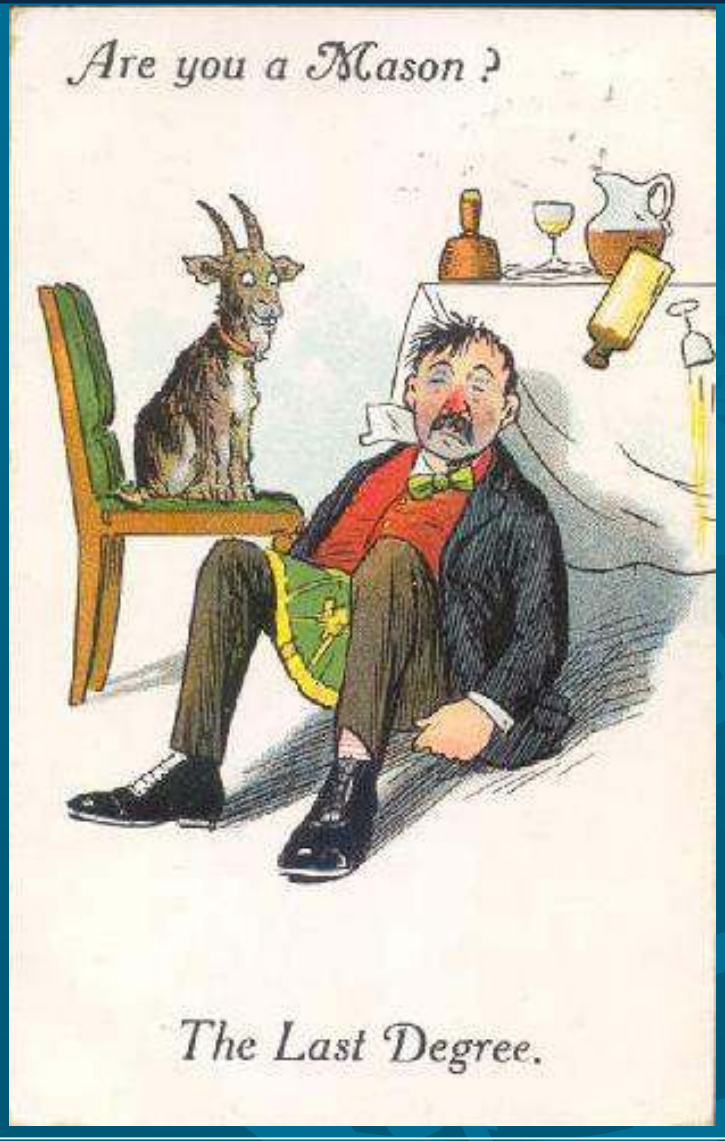
Cowboy Costume, see Page 127.

For Electric Stirrups and Fountain Attachment, see Page 12.

—9—

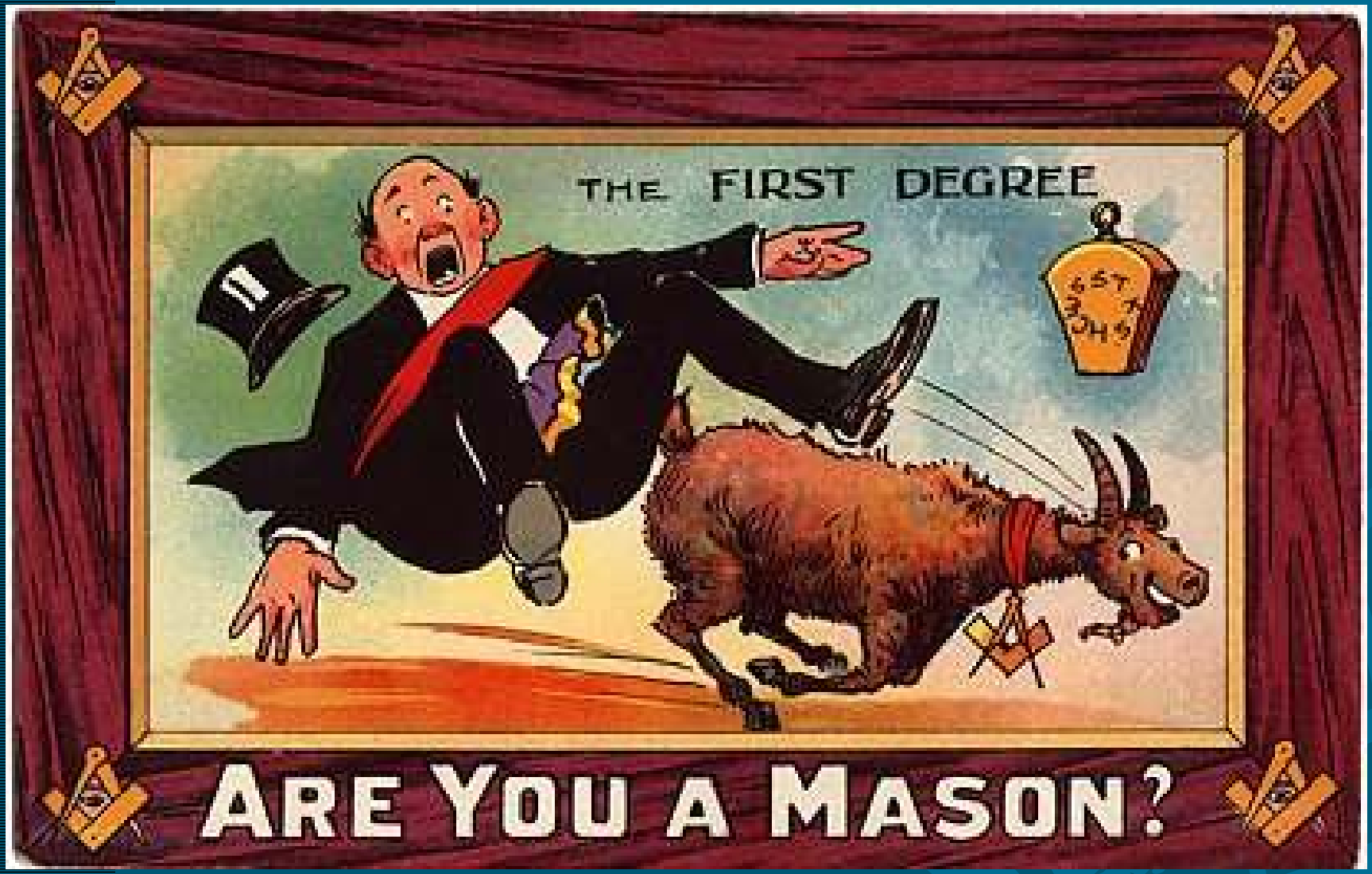
# Goat

# Goat



# Goat

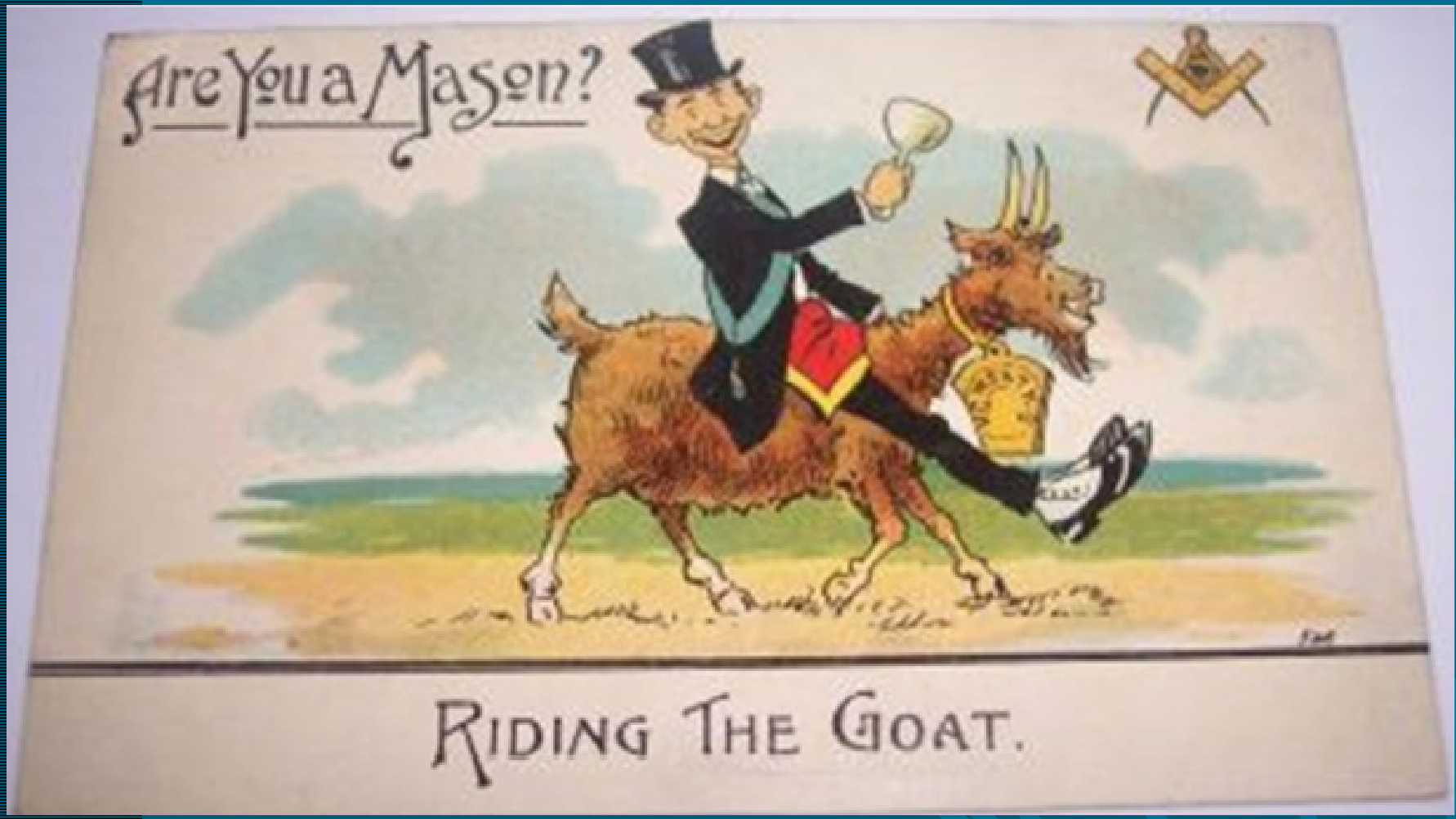
# Goat



# Goat

# Goat

# Goat



# Goat

ARE YOU A MASON?
THE SIGN
FROM LABOUR TO
REFRESHMENT
REST AND
BE
THANKFUL
TO
SALOON
BAR

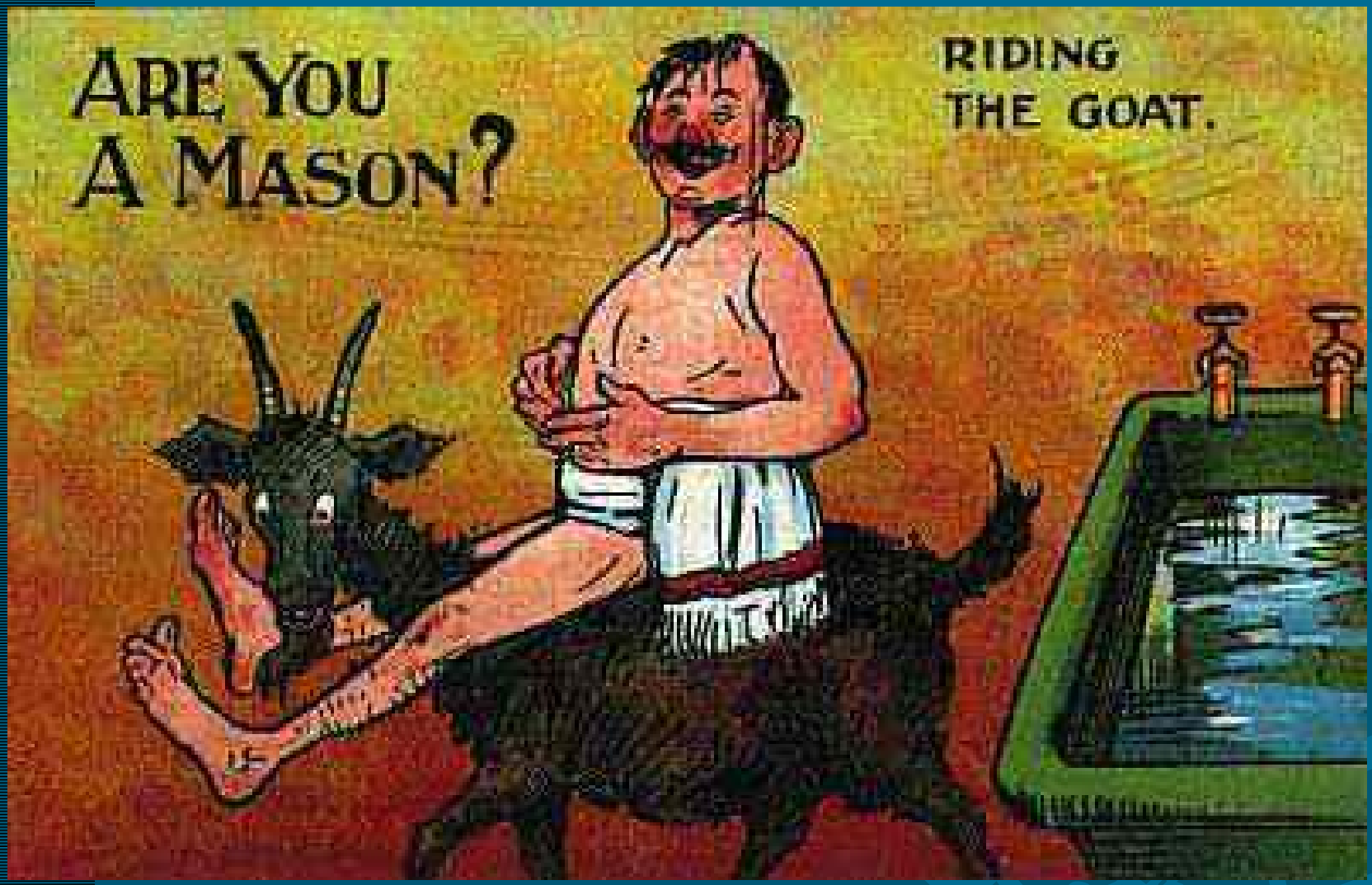
# Goat

# Goat

# Goat

# Goat

# Goat



# Goat

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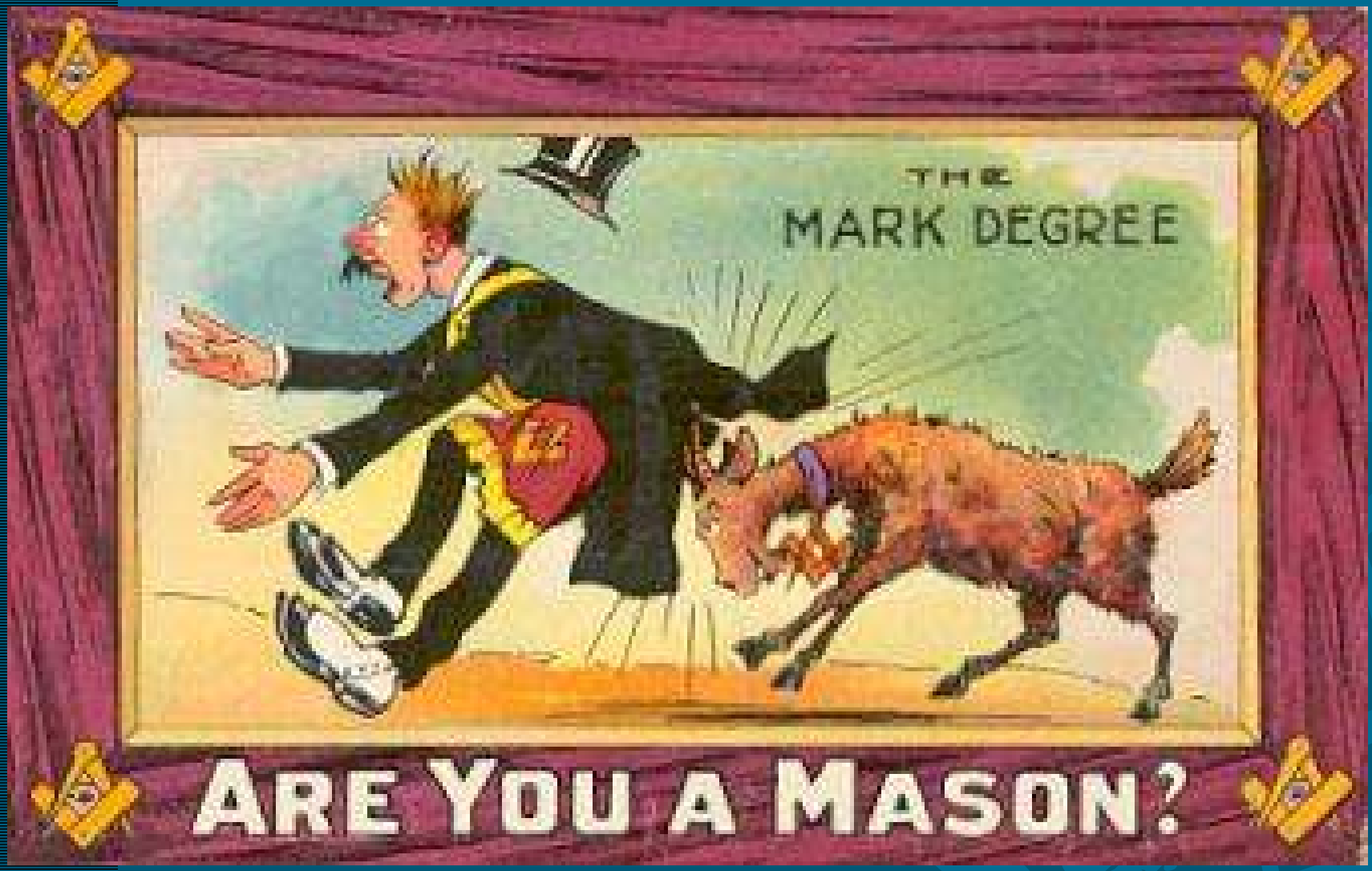
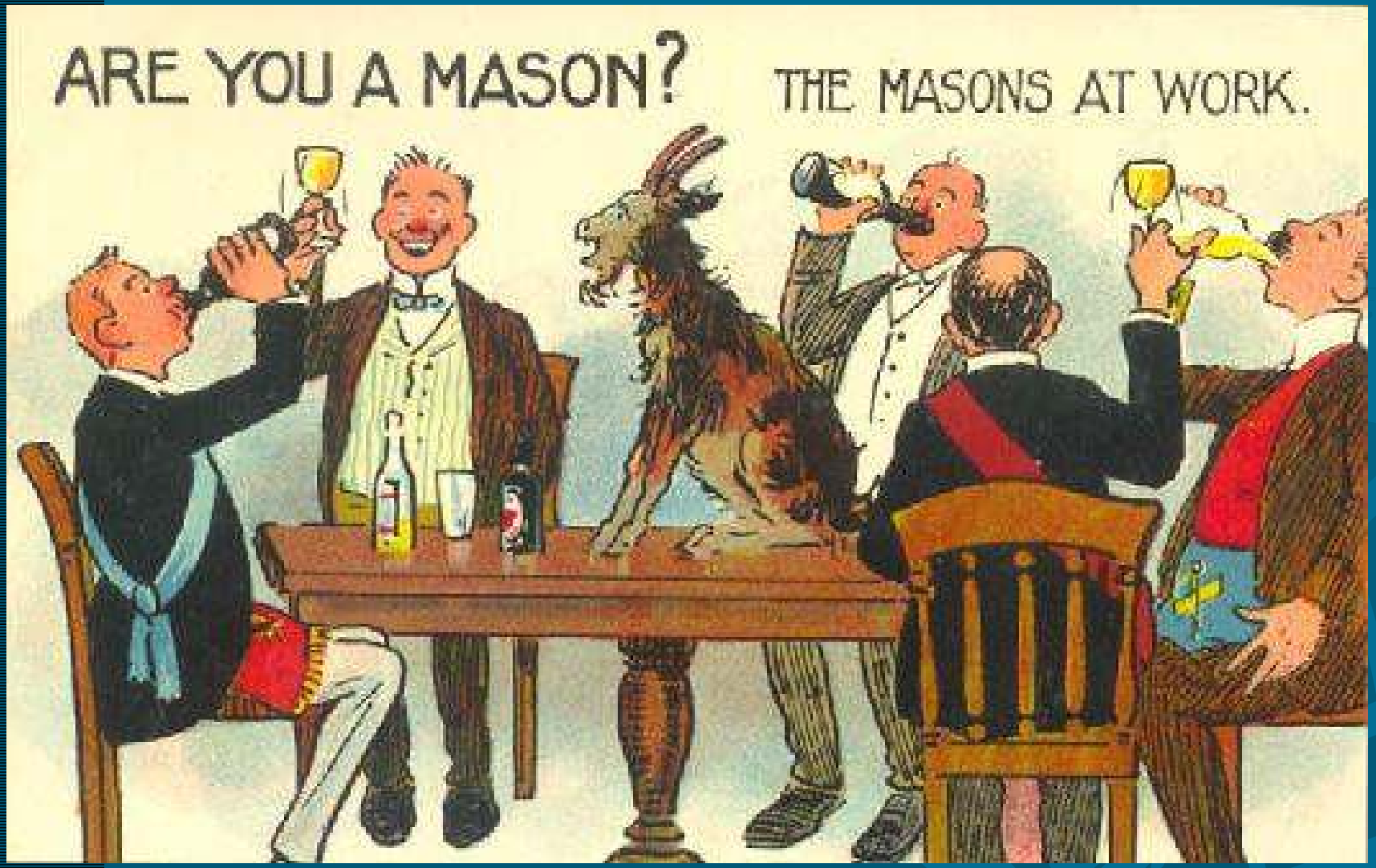


# Goat



# Password

# Password

# Initiation

# Goat

# Goat

# Goat

# Goat

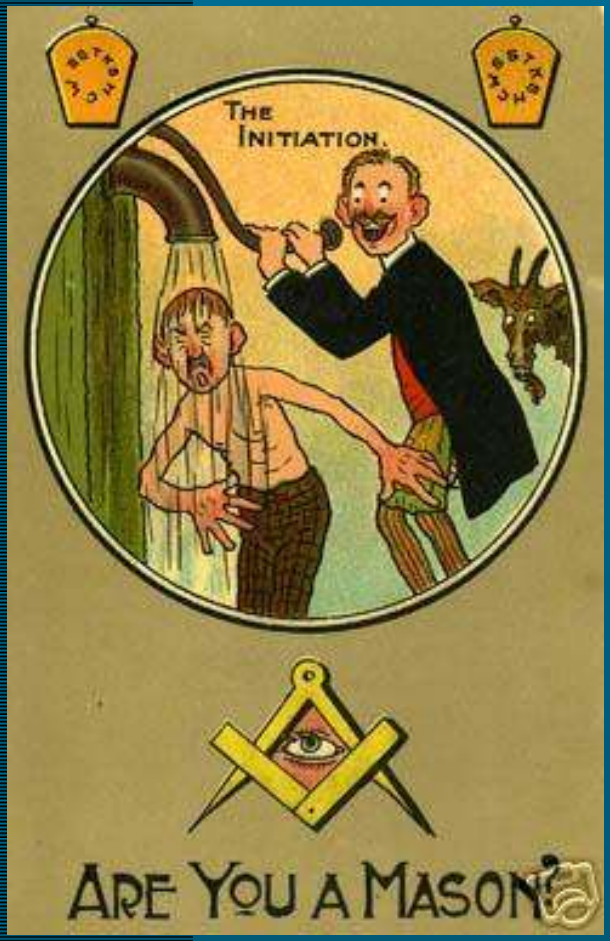
# Goat

# Goat

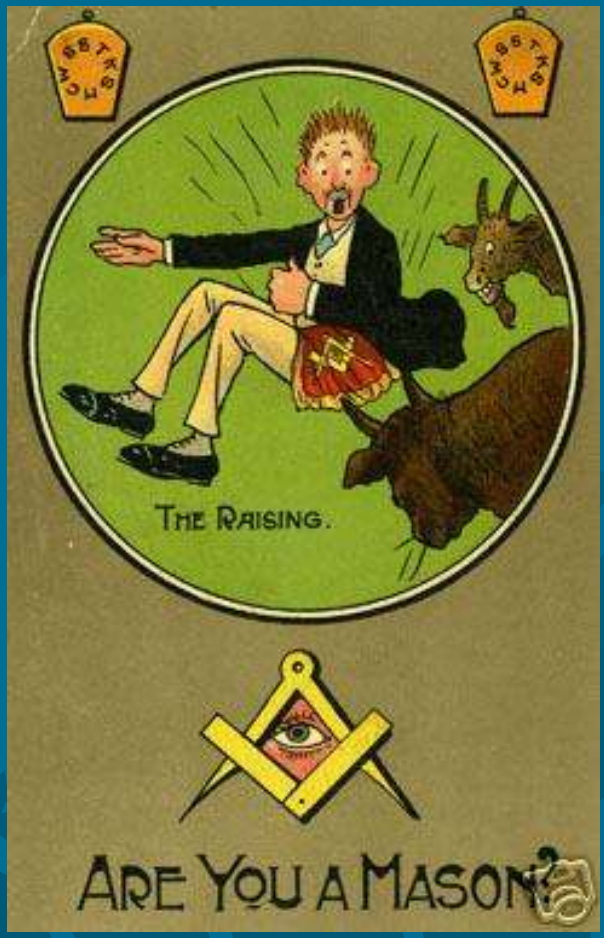
# Goat

# Goat

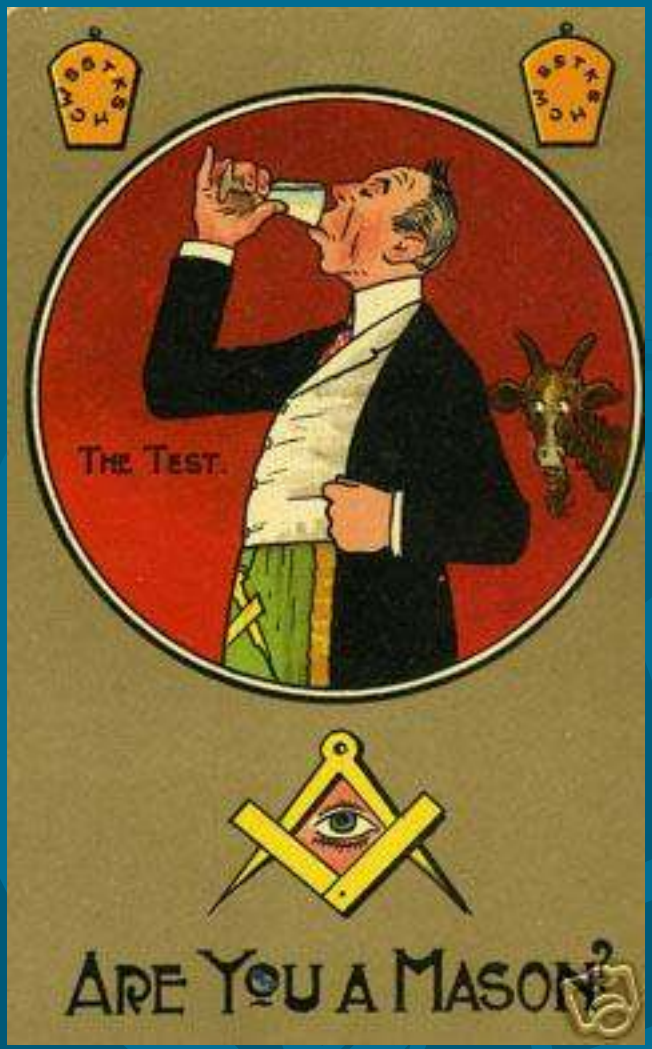
# Degrees


THE INITIATION.
ARE YOU A MASON?

THE PASSING.
ARE YOU A MASON?

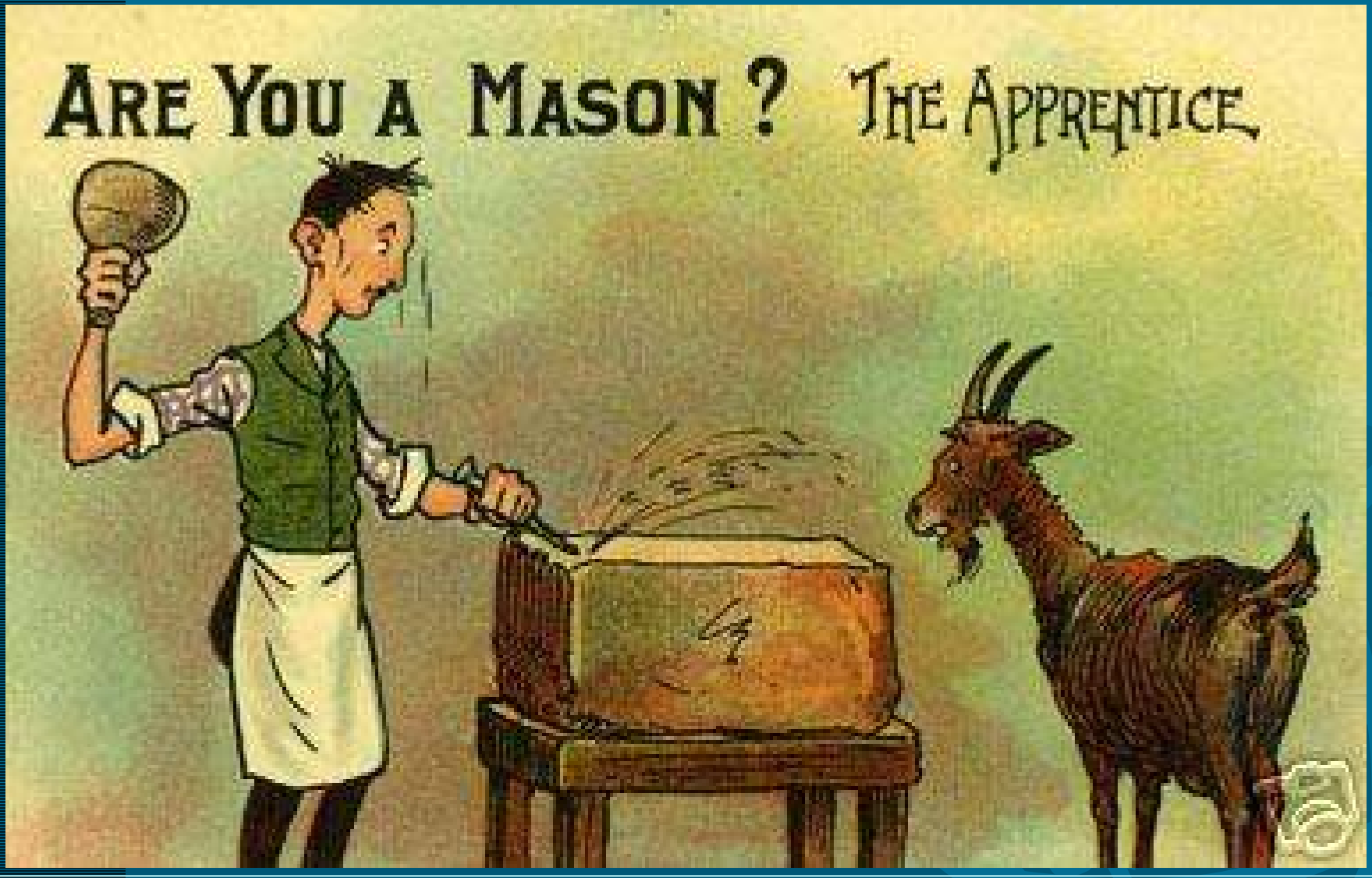

THE RAISING.
ARE YOU A MASON?

# Password



# Password

# Apprentice



# Grand Lodge

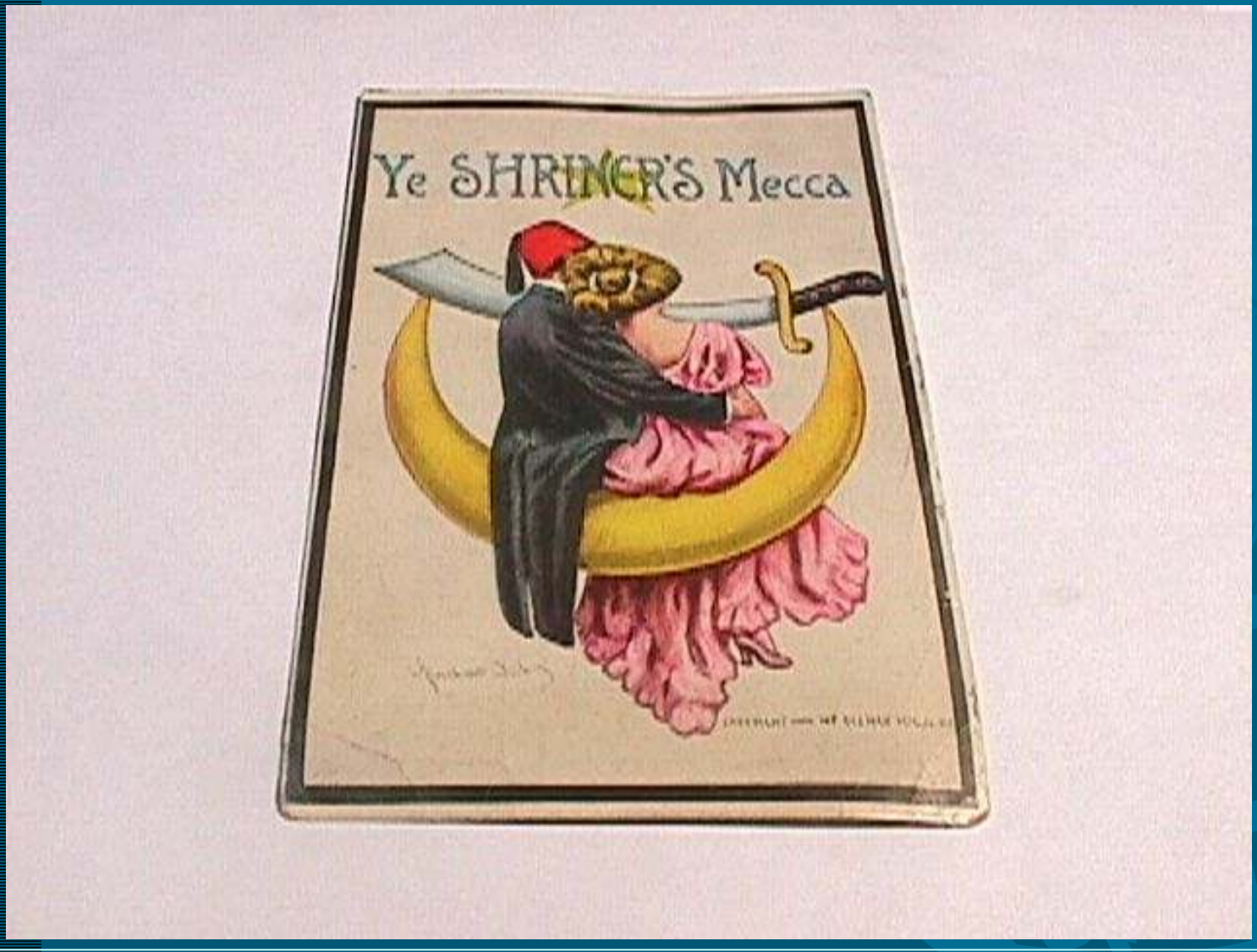
# Shrine

# Shrine

May 16. 1907
Hotel Los Angeles
California
Dear Lady
I am about to retire
with your husband. Where
I expect to return to you
safe and sound J McKinley

# Shrine

# Shrine



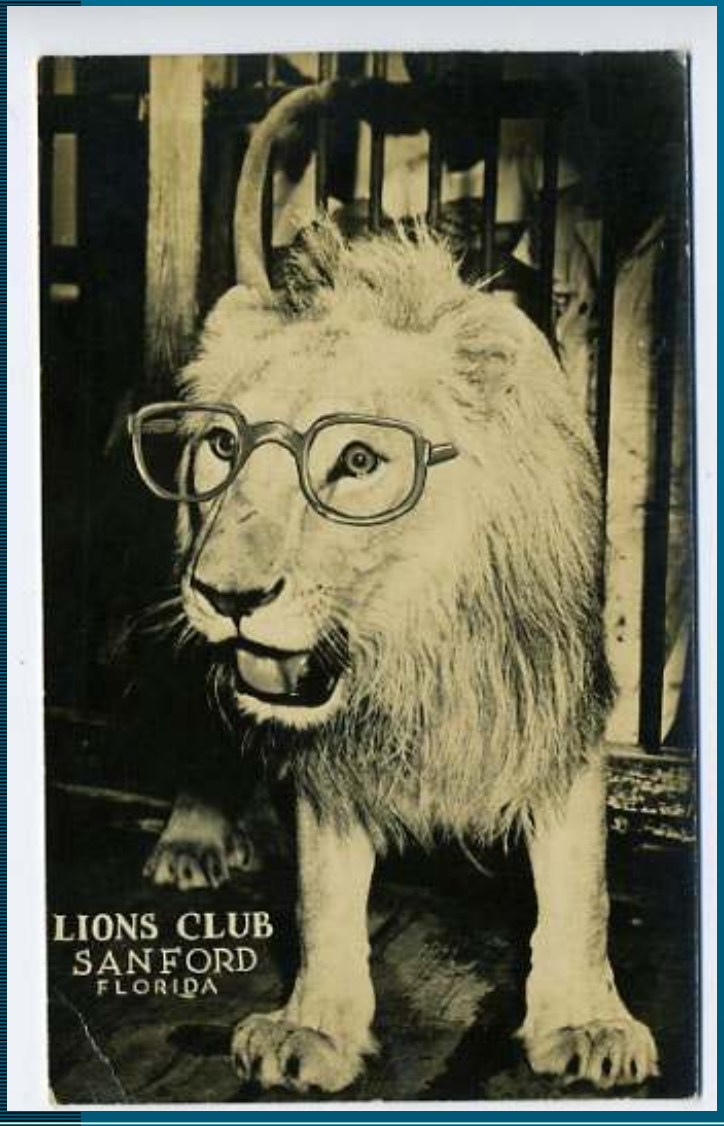
# Shrine

# Shrine?

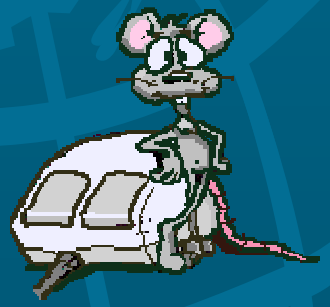
# Jesters

# Elks

# Other Groups



# Final Thought



**To Have a Good Time!**