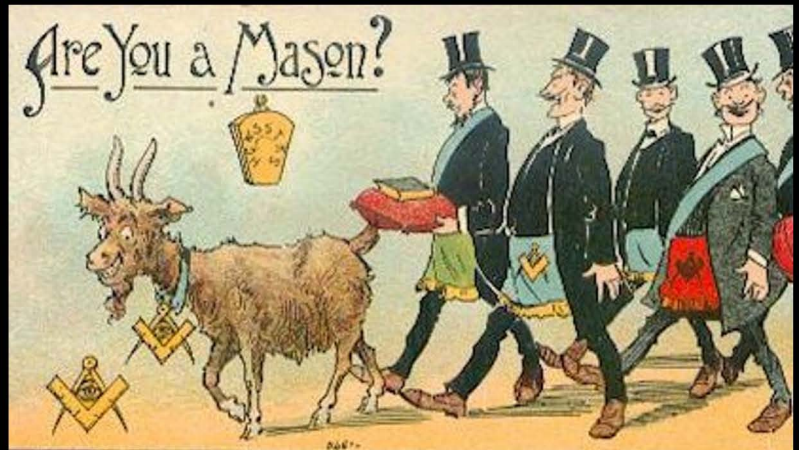
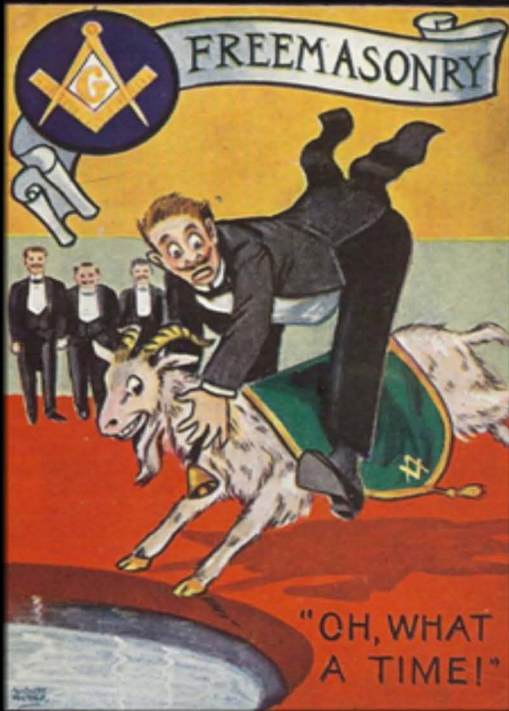


## Riding the Goat

Among the many absurd and false fables surrounding Freemasonry, this one is possibly the most humorous. *Freemasons do not ride a goat in their lodges. It's a joke, perpetrated often by Masons themselves on nervous initiates.* In essence, the attempt to bring levity to the nervous initiate backfired, proving sometimes people should steer clear from shots at comedic relief.



The joke became wider spread for many reasons of course, but one was that fraternal supply merchants in the late 1800s proliferated the gag and offered mechanical goats for use in other fraternal organizations for fun. Rituals in Freemasonry are not "for fun" and are very serious occasions, goats or any other animals have no role.

Early ritual books referred to God as, "God of All Things." This reference was abbreviated as G.O.A.T. The abbreviation was changed to "Grand Architect of the Universe," and abbreviated, G.A.O.T.U. That cleared up the goat issue but then later, G.A.O.T.U. when seen by anti-Masons, began to claim that G.O.A.T.U, clearly word no one was familiar with, was the name of some substitute god worshiped by Freemasons. That idea is as silly as the one about riding goats and has no foundation of accuracy.

