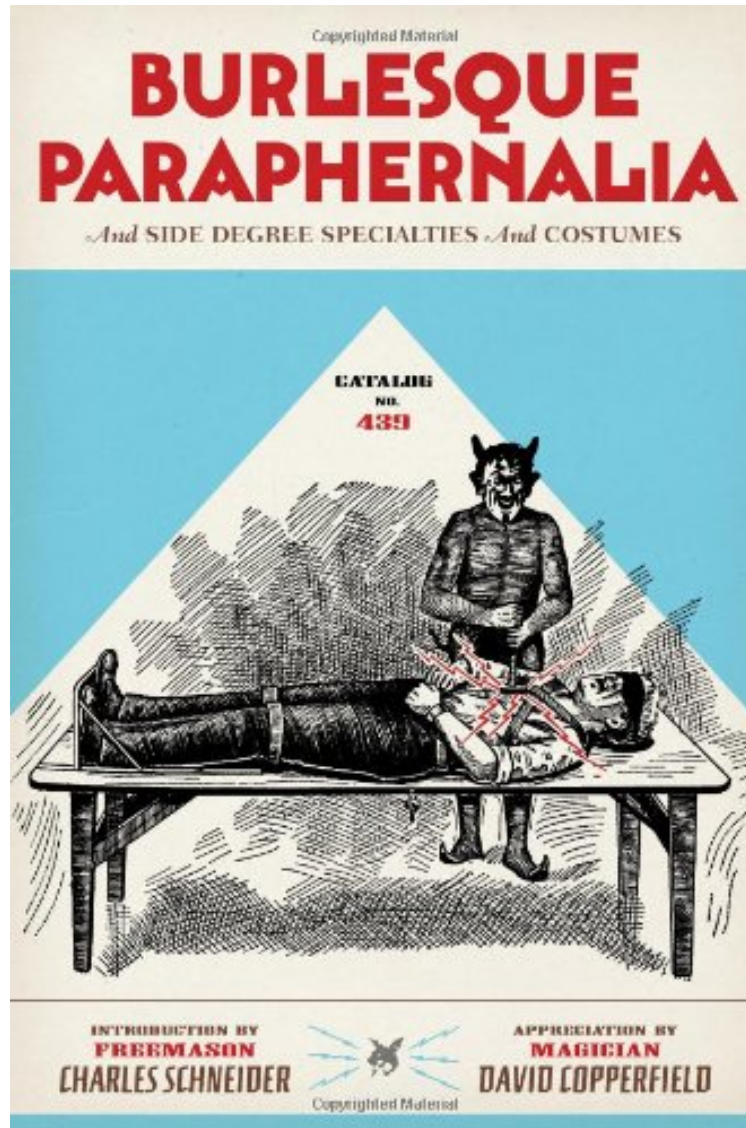


## Catalog No. 439: Burlesque Paraphernalia and Side Degree Specialties and Costumes

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**From Fantagraphics : Catalog No. 439: Burlesque Paraphernalia and Side Degree Specialties and Costumes** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Catalog No. 439: Burlesque Paraphernalia and Side Degree Specialties and Costumes:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. this is a good start. The items in here really are from ...By HooterNWVery interesting historical perspective on late 1800's early 1900's America. If you ever wondered where the

"elks" and the "lions" clubs came from, this is a good start. The items in here really are from a lost age and it's fun to imagine these guys inventing all these crazy props. 6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Only in America

By tvtv3 Once upon a time in America (particularly at the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th Century) three brothers united in the small city of Greenville, Illinois and formed a business. These men were the DeMoulin brothers and they named their business the DeMoulin Brothers Company (imagine that). The business they started was unlike any other business that existed. At this point in history there was no Internet, no television, and no radio. Museums and libraries existed mainly in large metropolitan areas. The middle class was on the rise and, by and large, the American man found that at the end of each day and week he had some leisure time. Seeking out the companionship of other males as well as cheap, and sometimes free, life insurance for their families, these men flocked to lodges. Even the smallest villages in the country usually had at least two to four different lodges that a man could join. Some men joined one, others joined as many as they could. The Freemasons, the Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias, the Modern Woodmen of America, and the Improved Order of Red Men were just a few of the dozens of national fraternal organizations that existed. To make meetings more fun and increase further increase membership, elaborate rituals were developed. The DeMoulin brothers recognized this and were able to capitalize on it by creating a business around the manufacturing of lodge initiation devices and side degree, or burlesque, paraphernalia. From the creation of the DeMoulin Brothers in the late 1890s until 1930, these devices were the bread and butter of the company. CATALOG #439 was the final catalog the DeMoulin Brothers Company published that featured these fraternity initiation devices. CATALOG #439 has now been republished by Fantagraphics Books. Besides the catalog itself, the book contains three distinct essays: an appreciation from magician David Copperfield, an introduction by Charles Schneider, and an essay by William D. Moore about lodges. Copperfield's brief piece reveals that he is an avid collector of DeMoulin merchandise, why it fascinates him, and retells a public accident Copperfield was involved in when he appeared on LATE NIGHT WITH CONAN O'BRIEN. Schneider's introduction is the heart and soul of this new reprint of CATALOG #439. He provides the context for the catalog, a short back story about the three DeMoulin brothers and their company, the relation of the company to the people in and around Greenville, IL, the significance of their work, and why the DeMoulin Brothers and the devices they created are relevant today. Lastly, Moore's essay provides a short historical perspective about fraternal lodges in the United States and how the items the DeMoulin's manufactured fit into that perspective. The catalog doesn't contain all of the equipment, devices, and gadgets ever manufactured by the company, but it contains a majority of them and all of the most popular ones. The Bucking Goat, the Trick Desk Telephone, the Lung Tester, and the Invisible Paddle Machine are just a few of the items of hilarity that can be found within the pages. There is a trick chair that collapses when a person sits in it as well as another trick chair that falls backwards when someone pulls a chain. There's a frightening looking faux guillotine as well as a pledge altar that features a skeleton that pops up and shoots water into the eyes of a praying confessor. There are electric buzzers and carpets, spanking paddles that shoot off a blank cartridge, and a mysterious vat where "goat's blood" can be served from. There are many other devices as well as masks, costumes, and wigs and other hair pieces that could be used to frighten and entertain. In addition there are other artifacts that a lodge could use in their meetings, such as ballot boxes, furniture, and banners as well as items for parades and public displays such as fake weapons, large umbrellas, batons, and flags. Most of the items are illustrated and include a brief description as well as suggestions for other devices and real testimonials from customers. There are three appendixes to CATALOG #439. The first was one that was included in the original DeMoulin Brothers Catalog #439. Appendix I provides directions on how to use the items listed in the catalog as well as suggestions on how to implement them into meetings. Appendix II is a collection of some of the original patents that the DeMoulin brothers had for several of their items. Appendix III includes a few serious items the company manufactured that were geared towards Masons, including priest garments, tabernacles tables and veils, and specially designed metal ornaments. The items listed in CATALOG #439 are highly sought-after by collectors. DeMoulin merchandise has a particular connection to magicians and practical jokesters. Some of their devices served as prototypes for devices created by magicians and illusionists years later. The DeMoulin catalogs themselves, particularly CATALOG #439, were the forerunners for the popular prank and gag catalogs popular with children from the 1930s-1970s. The book is a time machine into a different era of America history, where masculinity wasn't feminized and people were encouraged to snub their noses at the propriety and civil correctness of society. It's a joy to see the book in publication again. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fascination for the Bizarre

By MagicTricks.com It's hard to imagine that these dangerous hazing pranks were the accepted means of inducting new members into mainstream secret societies years ago. But here they are, featured in a reprinted catalog from a company that supplied such equipment. The main idea was to test the new recruit's trust in the organization and its members by blindfolding him and putting him through rituals that would seem frightening to him, but were in fact, safe (or FAIRLY safe). Mild electric shock, simulated drowning, falling through trapdoors, claustrophobic situations and physical punishments of varying intensity were favorite themes. Since the props were meant for secret societies only, the props themselves have mostly been destroyed and are rarely seen by non-members. Magician David Copperfield, who owns an extensive and impressive historical collection of secret society equipment (probably the largest such collection in the world), has written the introduction to this really fascinating book.

Freshen your fraternity with these follies! Do you wish to separate the jolly good fellows from the dour sour pussers from those who seek to ASCEND TO THEIR SIDE DEGREES but you suffer from lack of imagination when it comes to constructing elaborate hazing rituals and DEVICES? Does fake vomit, joy buzzers and a party pack of fake moustaches only produce yawns, rather than giggles, among your once-merry members? Well, look no further than Catalog no. 439: Burlesque and Side degree Specialties: Paraphernalia and Costumes, in which the manufacturers De Moulin Bros. Co. from Greenville, Ill. feature the finest electro-dropo benches, goat-shaped tricycles, electric branding irons (and much much more)! Not only does this 1930 catalog, reproduced with marvelous 21st century machinery, provide tightly rendered pen-and-ink period illustrations and detailed product descriptions, it also has helpful how-tos and scripts to aid in the pulling of these pranks on initiates! (WARNING: Fantagraphics Books is in no way responsible for any resultant maiming, crippling, immolation, or disfigurement resulting from the construction and/or use of devices pictured in this catalogue. At least, we don't think so.) Today, DeMoulin Bros. Co. is one of the largest suppliers of costumes for marching bands in the United States. But in 1930 the company produced an amazing array of props and devices created specifically to be used in minor hazing of candidates in the side degrees of various fraternal organizations. The great 1930 DeMoulin Bros. Company Fraternal Supply Catalog No. 439 is truly a holy grail for the prankster, arm-chair sadist and those interested in the some of the zanier historic arcana lurking behind that neighborhood odd-fellows lodge. This is the ultimate desert-island book for pranksters looking for something edgy and new to dream about, Rube Goldberg-like devices created to instill terror and bemused respect, before the candidate ascends to receive a more sublime form of illumination. All in good fun, it is so the American way! Black-and-white illustrations throughout

About the Author Gary Groth is the co-founder of The Comics Journal and Fantagraphics Books. He lives in Seattle. Charles Schneider obtained his first novelty catalog A Johnson-Smith pamphlet ordered from a comic book at the age of ten and never looked back. He is the editor of the influential CAD: A Handbook for Heels, appeared as the morbid comedian in the film Ghost World, and created the murderers paintings for Art School Confidential. He lives in Culver City, CA.