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periences in group loyalty which no other agency supplied. Especially in America, where Blacks were systematically denied any semblance of equality, these fraternal orders offered its members the satisfaction of belonging to an association of equals.

The period between 1890 and 1901 has been called the "Golden Age of Fraternity." It was during this era that the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World (I.B.P.O.E. of W.) was founded.

### General Background

**L**ong before the Civil War, various secret societies were formed among the free Blacks in the North. Prince Hall joined a Masonic Lodge of British soldiers stationed near Boston and obtained a charter for African Lodge No. 1 in 1775. He became the first Grand Master of the first Black Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons. Peter Ogden, a Black ship steward, was initiated in a lodge of the Philomethian Society in Liverpool, England. He established Philomethian Lodge No. 646 in New York City in 1843. The Grand United Order of Odd Fellows grew out of this lodge.

During and immediately after the close of the Civil War, fraternal societies continued to spring up in the newly emancipated Black communities. These societies played an indispensable role in the economic and social development of Black Americans. The International Order of Twelve of the Knights and Daughters of Tabor was founded by Moses Dickson in Independence, Missouri in 1871. Washington Browne, an ex-slave, founded the Grand United Order of True Reformers in Richmond, Virginia in 1881. This society became one of the largest fraternal orders then in existence in the United States. Its business organization was an important milestone in the development of Black business.

A great number of Black associations were formed at this time including the Independent Order of Good Samaritans and Daughters of Samaria, the Knights of Pythias and many others. These organizations brought Black men and women together in the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood and protected them against the onslaughts of an environment which was as openly hostile to them at the time as it is in many covert or hidden ways today.

These fraternal societies were mostly an urban phenomenon. For it was in the cities of America that Blacks were faced with the most competition and opposition. During the last decade of the 19th century, Blacks continued to migrate to the cities of the North. Thousands flocked to Philadelphia, New York, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Detroit and Chicago.

### Reasons For Founding

**O**ne of these cities, Cincinnati, was to become the birthplace of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the

World. Cincinnati was located on the Ohio River, just above the Mason-Dixon line. For this reason, it became the gateway from the South to the North and the Middle West. Cincinnati was ripe for the founding of a fraternal association among Blacks. One writer gave this description of the condition

of Blacks in that city:

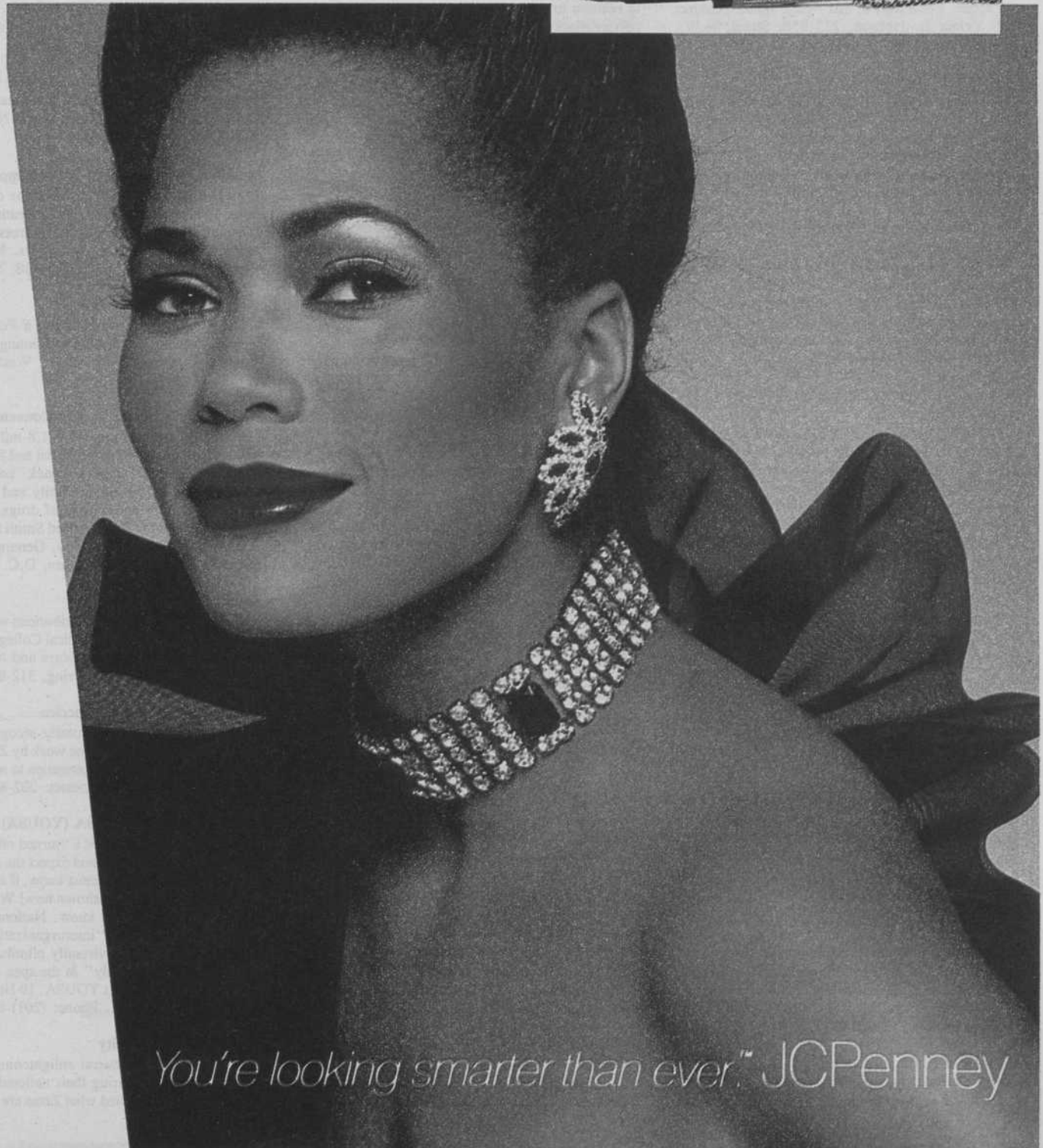
The colored man, in earning his living, is hampered on every side by race prejudice. The labor unions as a whole do not want him and will not have

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