

(Continued from Page 18)



the Colored Elks of the World, and further in consideration of the fact that error in name was unintentional, and knowing full well that there are some whose efforts are to destroy the Order under B.F. Howard, we hereby present to this honorable body resolution, to wit: That the Charter of Incorporation of the Improved Order of the Elks of the World be amended to read the "Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World." This error had been made in the Ohio incorporation of the Order in 1899.

Efforts At Unity

Although committees on unification were appointed at both Grand Lodges, the division continued. Lodges and individuals had to choose between the two and pledge their respective allegiances. Each claimed to be the legitimate successor of the First Grand Lodge of 1899. The Grand Lodge group under Atkins developed rapidly. Within two years the number of lodges had increased from 17 to 90 lodges and 16 temples. They had taken 30 lodges from the Howard group and had lost none to that group.

An impassioned letter addressed to Dr. Atkins from Dr. J.W. Ames, Grand Secretary of the Howard faction, shows the pain of the division experienced by both sides. It stated, in part:

...No people can grow strong and prosper divided. Our common enemy, the whites, are fighting us on the outside and on the other, internal strife is marring our growth and development.... Personal aggrandizement should find no place in the hearts and minds of cultured men, when the race is panting for leaders of broad gauge, and their hope and future prosperity, materially, depends upon the earnest efforts of brave men who will not say, I do as others do, but whose self-abnegation is consecrated to their uplift. I would rather have it said that I was a true and faithful private in the ranks than a leader of discord and dissolution.

Atkins replied that he was as much opposed to the schism as any living person, but he would never deal with Ames' group as long as Howard was involved in any way. He stated that he was personally opposed to Howard, adding, "so long as I have any influence with our side I shall use it against him." Atkins felt that the future of Black Elkdom was bright and said that it would be unfortunate that "it should be killed by the stupidity of one man, whoever he may be." At the same time that Atkins was making this statement, Howard was busy enter-

ing law suits against him, along with the Grand Secretary and the Grand Treasurer of the Atkins Grand Lodge.

In the meantime, the opposition of the White Elks broke into open suits and injunctions in various states. This situation was

paralleled in the history of other Black fraternal organizations. The White Odd Fellows of Mississippi tried to prevent the Black Odd Fellows from operating. The White Knights of Pythias of Georgia and North Carolina sought to put an end to the Black Pythians. The White Masons questioned the legitimacy

of Black Masonic Lodges. This entire period was characterized by a policy of exclusion by Whites on the one hand and the determination to stamp out separate Black organizations on the other.

(Continued on Page 20)

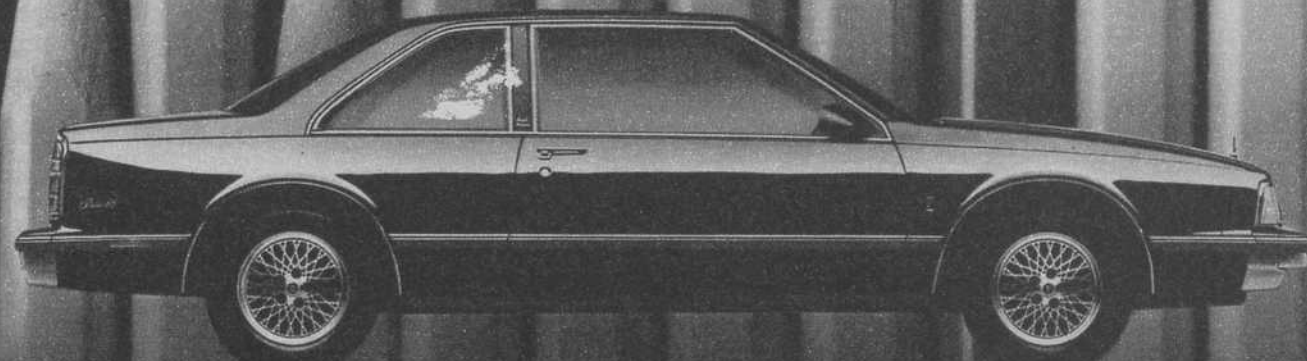
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