



**Drs. James and George McFatrich** founded the Murine Eye Remedy Company in 1897 in order to sell their patent eye water. Eventually the business expanded to salves, tonics, baths, powders and pills to help cure various eye ailments.

In 1912 The American Medical Association (AMA) blasted Murine for using false advertising. While the AMA conceded that Murine met the letter of the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act, it objected to its deceptive advertising techniques which included claims that Murine could help eyes that were weak, inflamed, tired, strained, itching, blurring and red. Furthermore, the AMA tested the eye water and claimed that its composition was not uniform between sample bottles. According to the AMA, the solution Murine sold cost the company 5 cents a gallon, but the public was being charged \$1.00 per ounce.

The AMA was particularly outraged by the McFatrich brothers' side business, "in addition to their '**patent medicine**' interests, the McFatrichs [run] a school of spectacle fitters rejoicing in the sonorous title of the 'Northern Illinois College of Ophthalmology and Otology.'" While it was true that the school taught neither ophthalmology nor otology, the 1912 course on "optics" cost \$25 and included a handsome framed diploma.

The McFatrichs continued to be investigated by various groups and federal agencies through the 1940s. After that time, Murine eliminated outrageous claims from its advertising and today Murine is still a top seller of over the counter eye drops. The McFatrichs' school combined with others in the area to become the highly respected Illinois College of Optometry.