

# Healer earns \$2, goes to 'kindly' Bedford

How did a charlatan like Schlatter, the Divine Healer, lend himself credibility as he traveled about the country in the winter of 1906? Obviously having guts was half the battle, but the man added a little "insurance" to his claim during his visit to Bloomington at the end of November.

It may be recalled that he said he was Charles McLean, brother of the John R. McLean, who owned the Cincinnati *Enquirer*. Only part of the story was true. Yes, there was a John McLean, and he did own the newspaper. But that was as far as it went. An 1890 obituary of Washing-



## Looking back

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ton McLean, father of John, indicated that the deceased had one son and two daughters.

Few if any of Schlatter's hopeful "patients" would have known any of the details of the McLean family history. The hopeful who came to hear him in his meetings at the

Woodman's Hall, were more intent upon becoming among the 7 million he was "destined" to heal.

The meetings were actually "come-on" advertising sessions for his "office hours" at the Fourth Street hotel. There, between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m., he engaged in the laying on of hands on behalf of the ailing. As an added feature, he was willing to go into a trance in order to tell fortunes.

Some Bloomingtonians may have thought Schlatter lacked only a horse and wagon to go with his preposterous claims. It is likely that

complaints about him came from the medical sector, but apparently the police had their suspicions as well.

The Dec. 4, 1906, issue of the Bloomington *Telephone* informed its readers that the divine healer had been invited to discuss his profession and business practices with the chief of police. The charge was predictable — "practicing medicine without a license."

It may be recalled that Schlatter had to tell his audiences that he lived "simply," requiring only a dollar a day for his living and traveling

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