

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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**JOHANNA Mc CHESNEY 1862 - 1961**  
"St. Patrick's Own Colleen of Medina..."  
Mrs. Johanna Catherine O'Donnell Fritze McChesney was born in County Tipperary, Ireland on St. Patrick's Day (March 17, 1862). She came to the United States at age 20 making her home in New York City for two years, then moving to Hudson, N.Y., she married her first husband, William T. Fritze who died in 1903. She later married Frank D. McChesney and moved to Niagara County near Lockport where he engaged in farming. He died in 1929, exactly 32 years to the day prior to Mrs. McChesney's death. During her later years, which was close to a quarter of a century, she resided with her daughter, Margaret Raymond, who operates the Maple Crest restaurant and lodging home on West Center Street at Prospect Avenue in Medina.

With an unmistakable Irish brogue she greeted people at the Maple Crest. It is recalled that pipe smoking had been customary with her for many years. Sometimes she even used an Irish clay pipe while other times she smoked cigarettes in a long black holder.

Mrs. McChesney lived in the United States for close to eighty years without ever intending to. Her first trip here was actually her last. She only came to attend the ordination of her cousin the Rev. James O'Donnell, but because of being deathly sick on the voyage to America she put off her return to Ireland. Once she booked passage for a voyage to her native land but was advised against it by her doctor. Ironically, the ship she was to have taken sank on its way. She took that as a final omen for ever again attempting such travel.

Mrs. McChesney died just a few months short of becoming a centenarian. There were several times however when doctors had predicted her demise many years before. She was even once given last rites of the Roman Catholic Church but pulled through and with ready smile and typical Irish charm said she was "fit as an Irish fiddle."