John McLean was a wealthy Boston merchant who almost went bankrupt when a long lost ship carrying his merchandise arrived Boston and his fortunes reversed. McLean paid off his creditors and upon his death in 1823, bequeathed $100,000 to the new asylum for the insane. The asylum was renamed in his honor in 1926.

McLean Hospital was founded c.1811, through a charter granted by the Massachusetts Legislature for the "Massachusetts General Hospital Corporation." The Corporation intended to treat both physical and mental illnesses, with a separate facility for each. The hospital opened c.1816 after acquiring the 18-acre estate of Joseph Barrell located on Cobble Hill in Charlestown; the mansion on the estate was built by Charles Bulfinch in 1792.

‘His name was justly conferred upon the street without loss to its ancient possessor, as there was also North Allen Street, now known simply as Allen.’ McLean Street ran off Cardinal O’Connell Way to the left of St Joseph’s church and was lost during Urban Renewal.

Courtesy of the Boston Public Library