



# WBro. William H Skinner

*The Prince Of Wales Lodge No.1338 EC*



[Major William Henry Skinner](#), of the Honorary Unattached List, was born at Newport, Monmouthshire, England, on the 3rd of December, 1838, educated in London, and brought up to the building trade. He is the second son of Mr. John Skinner, builder, of Barnstable and Lynton, North Devon, and arrived in Auckland on the 18th of August, 1859, by the ship "Joseph Fletcher."

On the 21st of December in the same year, Mr. Skinner joined the Royal Rifle Volunteers, and served during the earlier part of the Maori war. He volunteered for the corps of Forest Rangers, under Captain Jackson; was in an engagement with the Natives in the bush at "Wellwood," near Mauku, on the 8th of September, 1863, and was attached to the flying column under Colonel Nixon.

Mr. Skinner was gazetted Ensign of the Royal Company on the 18th of January, 1868; Lieutenant commanding No. 2 Company, Auckland Rifle Volunteers, on the 2nd of July, 1874; Sub-Lieutenant Victoria Company, on the 23rd of November, 1875; Lieutenant, on the 18th of May, 1880; Captain, on the 7th of November, 1885; Adjutant, on the 25th of October, 1886, and Major, on the 21st of November, 1889.

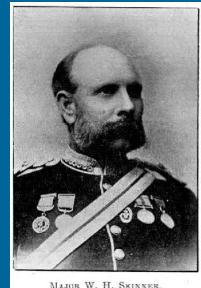
Major Skinner held the Imperial decoration for long service, and also New Zealand war and long service medals; and he was selected to represent New Zealand at the Intercolonial Rifle Match at Melbourne in 1873, and also in 1888. He won the Auckland provincial class firing medal in 1874, and was also the Government representative and Rifle Champion Shot of New Zealand in 1875. Major Skinner won the Government Auckland district first prize in 1876, besides several association, company and other valuable prizes, badges, etc.

After his arrival in the colony, Major Skinner successfully carried on the business of builder and contractor for a number of years. From 1880, he practised the profession of an architect, and designed and carried out several important buildings in Auckland, including the "Star" printing offices, Freemasons' Hall, Grand Hotel, Onehunga Woollen Works, St. Paul's Anglican church in stone, St. John's Presbyterian church at the Thames, and numerous other buildings and residences.

Before leaving England in 1859 for New Zealand, Major Skinner was a student for some years under the Department of Science and Art at South Kensington, and besides winning prizes, he was awarded in 1859 a bronze medal for success in art.

While he was in London, Major Skinner passed much of his spare time in the gymnasium. He thus experienced the advantages of physical training, and after settling in Auckland he wrote, early in the sixties, to the papers on the subject of a gymnasium for Auckland. The matter was there-upon taken up and a strong club was formed, with leading citizens and members of the Provincial Council and the Houses of Parliament on its roll. A suitable gymnasium was obtained and efficiently fitted up and successfully conducted for some years.

Major Skinner was initiated into the Prince of Wales Lodge in 1872 and was the first initiate to rise to the office of Master, which he attained in 1875.



MAJOR W. H. SKINNER  
WBRO WILLIAM HENRY SKINNER



At the formation of the Auckland District Grand Lodge in 1877, he was appointed DGSD and later rose to DGSW

## The Prince of Wales Lodge

[www.englishmasons1338.org.nz](http://www.englishmasons1338.org.nz)

The Prince of Wales Lodge, No. 1338, under the United Grand Lodge of England, was founded on the 18th day of December, 1869, and consecrated on Thursday, the 28th day of September, 1871, at the Masonic Hotel, Princes Street, Auckland, by Bro. J.J. Fitzgibbon, Past Master of the Waitemata Lodge, No. 689, E.C.



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Biography Research 2010

In conjunction with another gentleman, like himself a certificated member of the Home association, Major Skinner, about the same time, established in Auckland, classes for the study and practice of the Tonic Soi Fa system of singing. Good results followed these classes, as several pupils became teachers, and in their turn extended the system to others. Major Skinner has been a working member of the Auckland Choral Society from its inception. He held the position of precentor at the Newton Presbyterian Church for over ten years, and was an active member of the Orpheus Glee Club and several choirs.

He had always taken a great interest in technical education, which he considered to be of very great importance to a young country, and more particularly for a city like Auckland, where there had been a tendency to encourage literary attainments only. Major Skinner was one of the founders of the then technical school, but since its establishment he was not been able to take any active part in its administration.

Major Skinner was initiated into the Prince of Wales Lodge in 1872 and was the first initiate to rise to the office of Master, which he attained in 1875.

At the formation of the Auckland District Grand Lodge in 1877, he was appointed DGSD and later rose to DGSW.

He was also first Principal of the Auckland Chapter, E.C., Past M.W.S. of Southern Cross Chapter of Rose Croix, and Past First Principal of the Ara Chapter, I.C.

He presented the original pedestals on which the two lodge pillars stand.

*Sources:*

*The Cyclopedia of New Zealand [Auckland Provincial District] Contemporary newspaper reports.*