

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin • County Historian

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JUDGE FRED BUSH SKINNER  
1987 - 1946

Fred Bush Skinner was born September 7, 1872 to William G. and Frances Skinner of Medina. His early education was gained at Miss Molly Swift's private school and at the Medina Academy from which he graduated. He received both state and university scholarships for Cornell University where he took his A.B. degree in 1895, his Bachelor of Law the following year and his degree of Master of Laws in 1897. While at Cornell he was editor of the Cornell Daily Sun and a correspondent for the Syracuse Herald. Mr. Skinner also represented the Associated Press at Cornell University. He was able to pay for much of his education with earnings in newspaper work. While attending law school he was president of his class and a member of Phi Beta and Theta Nu Epsilon fraternities.

Following his admission to the bar Mr. Skinner started his practice of law in New York City where he was identified with Justice James O'Malley of the Appellate Division. From New York City he moved to Buffalo where he became associated with the firm of Wardwell and Van Arsdale as managing clerk. After spending a year in Buffalo he returned to Medina where he established his own law office which he maintained for over forty years. He was active in Republican Party Politics and served as Deputy Attorney General for several terms. He was a Justice of the Peace for the Town of Rdigeway from 1904-1944. From 1915 to 1944 he served as Police Justice for the Village of Medina. During his career Judge Skinner served several years as chairman of the Eight Judicial District of the New York State Association of Magistrates. In 1938-1939 he was a member of the faculty of the State School of Magistrates at Geneva, N.Y.

For many years he was a correspondent in Medina for many of the Rochester and Buffalo newspapers as well as a local correspondent for the New York Times and Associated and United Press wire services. He was one of the organizers of the Medina Advertising Club and a founder of the Medina Conservation Club. He took an early lead in also establishing a federal haven for wild life in the Tonawanda Swamp. Judge Skinner appeared before several state and federal agencies in behalf of acquiring what is now the National Wild Life Refuge as a sanctuary.

During World War I Judge Skinner enrolled with the YMCA as an athletic director. He always maintained a great interest in sports and was a member of the Medina Academy baseball team. He once organized a semi-pro team in Medina and officiated as its coach and manager. Judge Skinner was a Thirty-second degree Mason and a member of the Buffalo Consistory. He was a charter member of the Medina Moose Lodge and served as its first Dictator (now Governor). He was also an active member of the Odd Fellow Lodge and the First Presbyterian Church. As a public speaker, Judge Skinner gained a wide reputation and was in demand for many occasions throughout western New York.

After about two years of ill health, he died in January 1946 leaving his wife, the former Imogene Cornell of Hulberton, N.Y.

"Like the sun, only  
when you set in the  
West can you rise  
again with brilliance  
in the East.

