

[Skinner, Charles Rufus]

Passing of Charles R. Skinner

Charles Rufus Skinner, educator, former congressman, state superintendent of education and prominent figure in public life, died Saturday morning at the home of his son, Charles R. Skinner, Jr., at Pelham Manor, after a brief illness from bronchial pneumonia. He lived to the advanced age of 83 years. Mr. Skinner was on a visit to his son's home, and while there was taken ill. Because of his condition and advanced age he was unable to survive the attack. His home was in Albany where he had apartments near a family of life long friends.

Charles R. Skinner was born at Union Square (now Maple View) August 4, 1844, the son of Avery and Charlotte Prior Stebbins Skinner. He received his early education in Mexico Academy, and then attended Clinton Liberal Institute [a Universalist school].

He was valedictorian of the first class to graduate from old Mexico Academy. The other members of the class were Charles L. Stone, of Syracuse; the late Walter C. Stone, former editor of the Camden Advance Journal ; Miss Anna E. Wing and Miss Mary K. Hutchins.

Mr. Skinner taught in Mexico Academy under principal William M. McLaughlin in 1865-66. In 1870 he purchased an interest in the Watertown Times and Reformer, and remained with that paper for four years. In 1876 he was elected to the state assembly, serving five terms.

In 1881 he was elected to the forty-seventh congress and also served in the forty-eighth congress. He was the author of the special delivery of letters bill at a special rate of postage. Also [he] put in force the law requiring U. S. flags to be displayed over or near every public school building in the state. From 1886 to 1892 he was deputy state superintendent of public instruction; from 1892 to 1895 supervisor of teachers' institutes and teachers training classes; 1895 to 1904 state superintendent of public institution; 1906 to 1911 he was assistant Appraiser of the Port of New York. For a number of years Mr. Skinner also served as state legislative librarian, retiring October 31, 1925. He was a prolific writer on many subjects, and author of a number of books. He also lectured and was considered one of the foremost educators of the day. Compulsory education was one of his hobbies. He always took an active part in the campaigns of the Republican party of which for years he had been a member. He held many degrees conferred by various colleges, among them being A. M. Hamilton 1889; L. L. D. Colgate 1895; Litt. D., Tufts 1901.

Charles R. Skinner's father, Judge Avery Skinner¹ was born in New Hampshire in 1796. He was one of the pioneers of the northern section of this state, coming to Watertown in 1816, afterwards settling at Union Square where Charles R. was born, being one of six children, one of his sisters being the late Mrs. Maurice L. Wright of Oswego, mother of Avery Skinner Wright, U. S. Referee in Bankruptcy. A brother was Hon. T. W. Skinner of this Village.

The deceased leaves one daughter, Mrs. Dana Palmer, of Lowell, Mass., and three sons, Harold B. of Yonkers, Albert M. of Watertown, and Charles R. Skinner, Jr., of Pelham Manor.

The body was cremated and the ashes forwarded to Watertown for interment in Brookside cemetery.

Mexico Independent, Mexico NY, Thu. 5 Jul 1928

Transcribed on 20 Jun 2008 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY

¹ This was a Universalist family.