



SKINNER'S PRESERVED DELICACIES

Family Notices of Brainard Skinner

Brainard Skinner was the son of Charles Skinner and Elizabeth Simmonds was christened 10 June 1827 at the Wycliff Chapel, Stepney in London.

On 26 March 1884, at Sandgate, Brainard Skinner married Catherine Stokes, daughter of William Stokes and Eliza Owen.

Brainard died on 26 April 1896 and was buried at Toowong Cemetery on 28 April. He was 70 years old.

Annual In Memoriam notices were inserted in the newspaper by his widow Catherine.

On 1 June 1910 Albert Edward Kinnear married Catherine Skinner, widow of Brainard, at St Andrew's Church, Lutwyche.

Catherine Kinnear died on 12 May 1923 at her residence in Curzon Street, Toowoomba.

Brainard Skinner worked in England for many celebrated preserving companies including Cooper & Aves. In 1872, a small preserving works was established at O'Connell Town in partnership with Mr Lynde and later with Mr Clarke.

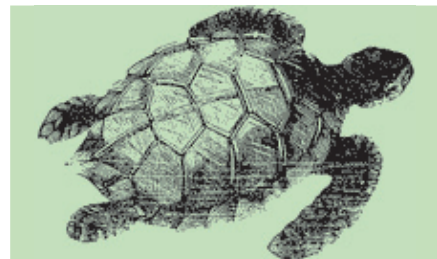
Skinner had perfected a process of canning meat, fish and fruit that did not need a high pressure steam boiler. The factory contained a tinsmith's shop, butcher's shop, kitchen, preserving room, and smoke house.

Turtle Soup

Skinner's most famous product was his Green Turtle Soup. The turtles were sourced from Moreton Bay and the soup was canned in a concentrated form. The soup was recommended by physicians as it was very sustaining. It was used by several Queensland Governors and supplied to their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales. It won 30 First

Prizes, 8 Gold Medals from 1878 to 1887 as well as a Gold Medal at Earls Court. The soup was said to be a very superior article and free from any tinned or preserved flavour.

It was exported to the southern states and to Great Britain.



Not only did Skinner make Turtle Soup he also made Beche-de-Mer Soup. It was reported that *This Soup is not only delicious and enjoyable by persons in health, but it is moreover, an exceedingly light and nutritious food for invalids, especially for those whose digestive powers are weak.*

**TURTLE WANTED. — GREEN
TURTLE ALIVE.**
REGULAR SUPPLY wanted every week.
Contract can be had for a number.
B. SKINNER,
Brisbane,
Preserver of Pineapples, all kinds of Fruits,
Meats, Tongues, Relishes, Jams, Soups. Sixty
Tins for £4; sample cases assorted, all kinds.

The Queenslander - January/February 1885

By Appointment



*Sir Arthur Kennedy,
K.C.M.G.*

*Governor of Queensland
Supplier of Skinner's Turtle Soup*

Seafood

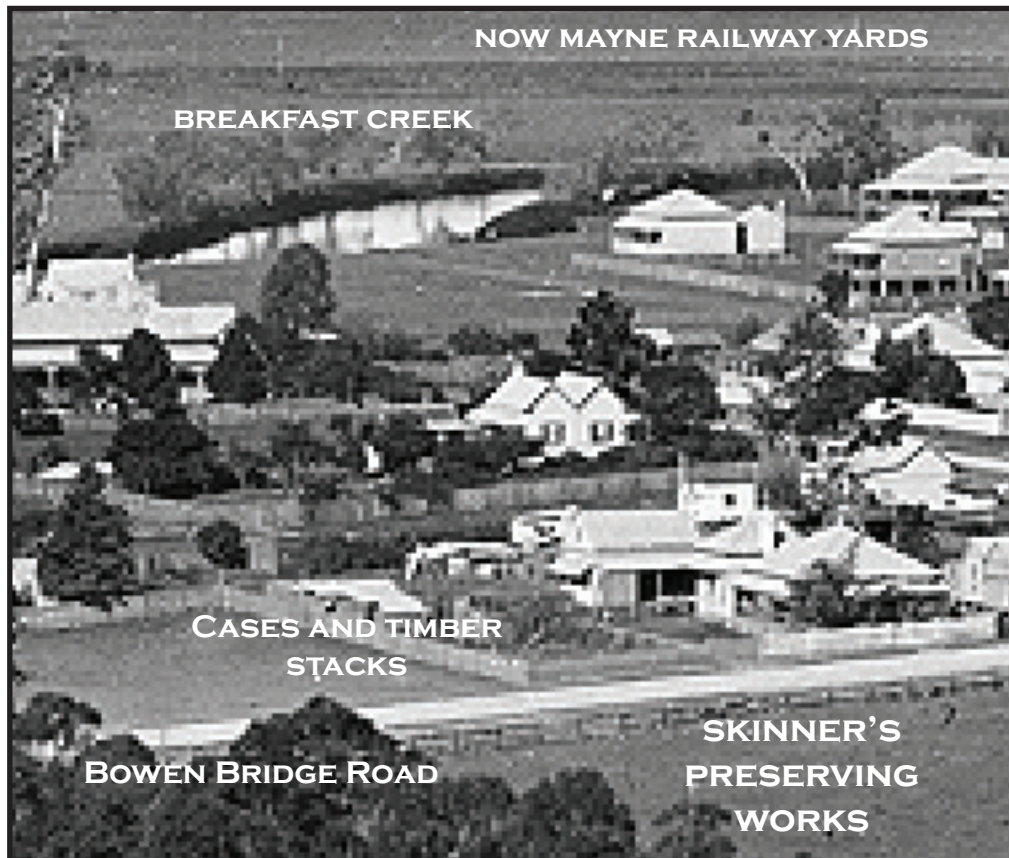
Skinner was also famous for his other preserved seafood.

He preserved local mullet and also bream and whiting in such a way that upon opening the tin, the contents could be tipped out in to a frying pan and cooked as fresh fish.

The dugong paté made from local dugongs was also another popular Skinner product as were potted prawns and shrimp.

Fruit

Brainard pioneered the preserving of pineapples. The sliced product preserved in syrup retained its flavour and fresh appearance. He preferred local fruit to that from North Queensland and those imported from Fiji via



**BRAINARD SKINNER'S PRESERVING WORKS,
LATER SITE OF WINDSOR PICTURES. (BREAKFAST CREEK**

Sydney. But it was not the only fruit tinned.

Skinner preserved peaches, stewed pears, apricots, quinces, gooseberries, loquats and guavas in syrup. He also made citron marmalade, pineapple, rosella, quince and cape gooseberry jams.

A common size of tin was 2 lb (just over 900 grams) and they were packed in wooden cases of 48 and 60 tins.

In the 1880s a case of 60 tins cost £4 (\$8). Larger tins containing 12 lb (5.4 kg) of jams and meat were also produced. After 1883 the cases themselves were charged as an extra cost of 2/- (20¢) due to higher costs

of timber and labour.

His products were well received. *"After all, the colonies are not so backward in their knowledge how to preserve fruit, I have eaten the most delicious preserved fruit, which had been preserved by a Mr Skinner of Brisbane, as well preserved as any tinned fruit that I have seen in any part of the world, not too sweet, but well done: and the pineapples were excellent, and his preserved turtle for soup was equally good."* **Duke of Manchester 1883.**

Meats

Ox-tail soup was another favourite product as well as large tins of various meats: sheep and ox tongues,



BOWEN BRIDGE ROAD, O'CONNELL TOWN -
IN THE BACKGROUND, LEGEYT STREET. LANE'S STORE.

strasburg beef and sausages
veal and ham, brawn, chicken and ham in tins, luncheon beef, braised shoulder of mutton, potted hams, pigeons, spiced ox-cheek, haricot ox-tail, Brighton hunting beef, luncheon beef, Oxford sausages, picnic pies.

Labels

Whilst Skinner's products were superior and well-liked the exterior was very plain. Part of a report from the International Exhibition of 1879 in London is as follows: *Mr Skinner also has luncheon beef, tongues &c., in tins. I can speak only respecting the exterior of these, and the numerous comparisons afforded in the*

matter of labelling and general "get-up" in the American and colonial courts would, I am sure, convince Mr Skinner, were he to pay a visit to this exhibition, that greater attention to pleasing the eye would be advisable. His labels are commonplace and unattractive. All the Yankee tinned goods are set off with bright colours and dandy designs, there is no room for mistake about the superior first impressions thus created. For window dressing no grocer would choose Skinner's tins Skinner's exhibits have a particular interest, as including articles which only Queensland among the Australian colonies can, or

at least does offer. Turtle soups, from Moreton Bay, and various preparations of wallaby, are among his preserved foods, and it is a pity that any means of extending a knowledge of their excellence should be neglected.

Marriage & Death

In his 58th year, on 26 March 1884, Skinner married Catherine Stokes of Brisbane. Perhaps she worked for Skinner at the preserving works. The death of Brainard Skinner occurred on 26 April 1896 leaving Catherine to run the business.

Every year she placed a memorial advertisement in the paper to her former husband. Finally in 1910, she married Albert Kinnear.

Continuity

Initially J. & G. Harris, Brisbane merchants took all of Brainard's output. Later using U.K. and local agents and directly, Skinner sold his goods. So far apart from references in the early 1870s, there are no mention later of partners in the company. A lot of publicity was generated by the exhibition of the products overseas and in Australia. Catherine continued this procedure.

A report from the Glasgow Exhibition in 1891, mentioned a collection of Skinner's specialities - turtle soups and jellies, beche-de-

mer soup, potted dugong, bottled fruits and jams were in the Queensland Court.

Exhibitions

Catherine continued exhibiting at Australian Shows include the Brisbane Exhibition.

In 1906 Skinners exhibited and assortment of turtle preserves at Sydney. In 1914, after her marriage Catherine exhibited *turtle and beche-de-mer soup which was made and prepared in Brisbane* at the R.N.A. Show.

Catherine died in 1923 and it is presumed the factory was closed by then.

Not Forgotten

On 21 February 1929, a letter was published in **The Courier**.

Sir, - I recently noticed a statement in the Press that a shipment of turtles, some



200, I think, had been sent from Sydney to England and that further shipments were probable. Now I remember that forty or fifty years ago we could buy tinned turtle meat and soup here in Brisbane. It was manufactured by a man named Skinner, and was then regularly on the market. What has become of it?

Gourmet.

Well Brainard and Catherine are long gone but the memory remains.

All the references and clippings about the Skinners are contained in the files of the Windsor and Districts' Historical Society.

These news clippings - largely from The Brisbane Courier were researched and this article was written by David Teague, B.Ed.

