

Skinner Street Cemetery and the Church of England Registers

'Information in this article from "Burial Records Appertaining to Alma Street & Skinner Street Cemeteries Fremantle from year 1831 onwards" compiled by Kate Caldwell.'

Prior to 1831 burials are known to have taken place at Clarence, south of Fremantle, however, in 1831 the first cemetery in Alma Street was consecrated, although it was not until 1847 that it was officially allotted by proclamation. It met the needs of the community until the 'new' cemetery in Skinner Street was dedicated in 1852. In 1899 the current cemetery in Carrington Street was opened and Skinner Street Cemetery closed, although it was still possible to apply to the Governor for special permission for a burial.

Over the years neglect and vandalism took its toll on Skinner Street cemetery so much so that between 1931 and 1935, when the opportunity was offered, many Fremantle families relocated the headstones to either Karrakatta or Fremantle Cemeteries at a cost of five pounds, however, for the most part the actual graves were not disturbed. The cemetery site (covered by tons of soil) is now incorporated into the grounds of John Curtin High School, presumably the bones of many of our ancestors still lie beneath the playing fields.



Skinner Street cemetery was an inter-denominational cemetery with specific areas for each religion. The Roman Catholic Church has recorded the burials from 1852-1874, then there is a break until they resumed between 1887 and 1904. The Anglican Church records are from 1830-1875 (they include some burials at Clarence). Then there is a period for 22 years when no records were known to have been kept, they resumed in 1897 to 1905. It is thought the records of the Methodist church have been lost; there are no known records for any other denomination. By the Cemeteries Act of 1897 the government took control of all cemeteries in the Metropolitan area and established the registry of burials.

It was when looking at the Church of England records between 1850 and 1875 for the burial of Pensioners and their descendants that I noticed that as well as the name, burial date, age, profession or that of the father in the case of children, by whom buried but also the cause of death was noted. Between the 7 March and 17 April 1861 there were 6 deaths from measles, followed by an outbreak of enteric fever (typhoid) between 6 November 1874 and 3 January, 1875 which was the cause of death for 9 people. Influenza, atrophy, convulsions, consumption, colds and diarrhoea were always present together with accidents, drowning and suicides. The most bizarre was the treatment of a woman before burial recorded as "confinement. On board 'Sea Ripple'. Wife of captain was put in zinc case with rum, slung from cabin roof and so brought to harbour".

Jeanette recorded the details of those entries marked pensioners: spellings and abbreviations as recorded:

Burial Date; Name; age; Cause of death;
poss ship; Age; Profession etc

10 Jun 1850 **Charles Watkins**; 6 mths Atrophy;
Scindian off Fremantle; Pensioner's son
19 Feb 1851; **John Skillen**; 45; Self Strangulation in fit
of insanity; Pensioner
9 Sept 1853; **James Arthur**; 3 wks; On board *Robert
Small*, Pensioner's Child
10 Sept 1853; **John Brown**; 13 Days On Board
Phoebe Dunbar, Pensioner's child

24 March 1854; **Sarah Davenport**; 2yrs 4 mths; Pensioner's Child
 26 May 1854; **Mary Jane Tubbs**; 2 mths; Ship; Pensioner's Dtr
 22 Nov 1854; **Frederick Jones**; 1yr 4 mths Inflmtn Chest; Pensioner's son
 19 Dec 1854; **Job Bailey**; 2; Dysentery; Pensioners' son

Pensioner Barracks

22 March 1855; **Eliza Inskip**; 11 mths; Fever; S. Maj Pens. Grd
 30 March 1855; **Ellen Inskip**; 1yr 11mths; Chest Inflammation; S. Maj. Pens. Grd

20 May 1855; **Charles William Gane**; 3 ½ ; Brain Fever; Pens. son
 6 July 1855; **George Clack**; 52; Fever; Pensioner

No entries 1855-1860 From 1860 the date is the date of death

19 Jan 1862; **William Sutcliffe**; 1; Convulsions Pens, son
 5 April 1862; **Abraham Cable**; 18 mths; Son of Joseph Cable; Pens
 24 July 1862; **Mary Jane Yendall**; 2 yrs; Fever; D. of Wm Yendall; Pens
 3 Aug 1862; **Elizabeth Yendall**; 6 ½ ; Fever; D. of Wm Yendall, Pens
 23 Aug 1862; **John Broadhak**; Phthisis; Pensioner
 23 Sept 1862; **Elizabeth Broadhak**; 5 mths; Atrophy; D. of Pens J. Broadhak [Broomhall; Broadbrook]
 29 Sept 1862; **Child of Wm Yendall**; Convulsions
 11 Dec 1862; **Lydia Nicholls**; 15; Fever; D. of John N. Pens
 30 May 1863; **Mary Ann MacDonald**; 2yrs 9mths; Diarrhoea D. of Wm MacD; Pens.
 1 July 1863; **Mrs Chapman**; Fever; Wife; Pensioner
 11 June 1863; **William MacDonald**; 42; Suicide Shot himself ; Pensioner
 10 Oct 1863; **John Greer**; 10 mos; Convulsions Son of John & Sarah Greer; Pensioner
 17 Oct 1863; **Sarah Greer**; 10 mos; Convulsions d of J & S Greer Twin of above
 15 Nov 1863; **Thomas Farrow**; 44; Throat Disease; Pensioner
 23 Jan 1864; **Walter Sutcliffe**; 13 mths; Bronchitis; Son Richard & Mary Sutcliffe; Pensioner
 28 March 1864; **Mary Ann Cunningham**; 22; Phthisis; D. of Pensioner
 2 May 1864; **William Sutton**; 50; "Went silly, wondered in bush and found dead in waterhole"; Pensioner
 6 August 1864; **William Kearns**; 42; Choked by piece of meat; Pensioner
 12 August 1864; **Thomas Pike**; Lockjaw ; Pensioner
 20 August 1864; **Thomas William Lamb**; 3 days; Convulsions; S. of Thomas Lamb Pensioner
 19 May 1865; **Catherine McCreery**; 38; Head; of Thomas McCreery of N. Fremantle; Pensioner
 5 Aug 1865; **Samuel Cook**; 10 mths; Teething & Cold; son of North Fremantle; Pensioner
 21 Feb 1866; **John Farmer**; 43; Found dead & burnt by bush fire; Pensioner
 23 July 1866; **John Richardson**; 42; Consumption; Pensioner

30 July 1866; **James Hay**; Pensioner
 6 Aug 1866; **Eliza Galbraith**; Pensioner
 23 Aug 1867; **Sarah Pickering**; 36 hrs; Convulsions; D. J Pickering; Pensioner
 7 Jan 1868; **Robert Aldgate**; 59; Hung himself in tree; Pensioner
 3 Mar 1868; **Alfred Coffin**; 3wks; Convulsions son Wm. Coffin 11th grave, 3rd plot from entrance gate; Pensioner
 17 May 1868; **Edwin Bull**; 48; Dysentery Acute; Died Military Hospital; Left wife, 6 children; Pensioner
 22 June 1868; **William Joslin**; 6 mths; Atrophy c; Pensioner
 9 Oct 1868; **James Vagg**; infant son of Pensioner
 17 Feb 1869; **John Bir**; 35; Asthma bk up Constitution Single at Military Hospital Fremantle; Pensioner
 31 Jul 1869; **John McMullen**; 29; Result of fall from a horse 2 years ago and being stabbed in the side; Farmer at Freshwater Bay; M dtr of Pensioner Efford.
 20 Aug 1869; **Christina Jones**; abt 9 mths Infant; Pensioner
 30 Sept 1869; **Edward Hussey**; 67; Old Age; at N. Ftle; Pensioner
 10 Dec 1869; **Lucy Harriet Pickering**; Infant; Cold etc; dtr of Pensioner
 22 Jan 1870; **John Taylor**; Infant; Cold etc; s of Pensioner
 16 April 1870; **Amos Ludlam**; 9 mths; Dysentery & Teething; Son of Pensioner
 22 Aug 1870; **Margaret Ann Turner**; 18mths-2yrs; Atrophy; d Pensioner
 21 Nov 1870; **Thomas Ludlam**; 45; Gradual Ailment; Pensioner on the Force.
 3 Jan 1871; **John Jones**; 57 Dysentery & Weakness; Pensioner & Warder
 28 Feb 1871; **Henry Garrish**; 38; Rapid Consumption; Pensioner
 21 March 1871; **Anne Wareham**; Lingerin disease; w Pensioner
 6 July 1871; **Thomas Evans**; Heart Disease; Pensioner
 16 Sept 1871; **Richard Tierney**; 72; Influenza & Old Age; Pensioner Enrolled Force
 24 March 1872; **Henry Gandell**; 50; Cold & Atrophy; Pensioner
 29 Oct 1872; **Thomas Mellowes**; Infant; Cold; S Pens. Force
 1 Jan 1873; **Elizabeth Pickering**, Babe; Cold; Pens. Child
 7 April 1874; **Edward Osbnoud**; 60 odd Age; Pensioner - In District Registry name **Osborne**
 22 July 1874; **William Reuben Locke**; 50; Dropsy of Heart; Sgt. Pensioner.
 2 Nov 1874; **George Cooper**; 63; Pleurisy; Pensioner
 15 Dec 1874; **William Coffin**; 54; Enteric Fever; Pensioner
 6 March 1875; **Arthur Locke**; Inf. 7 mths; Enteric Fever S late; Pensioner Locke
 31 July 1875 **end of register resumes 4 March 1897**
 no cause of death given.