

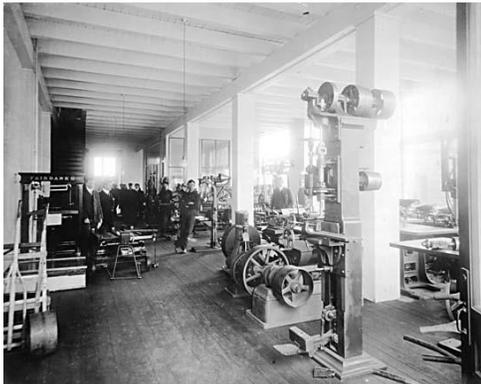
## Thomas Skinner & Son Ltd. 1904 - 2004

In 1904, Thomas Skinner, a Scottish immigrant to America, founded Thomas Skinner Co. in Vancouver, B.C. Born in the port town of Leith, Scotland (now part of Edinburgh) in 1856, Thomas Skinner earned his professional marine engineering papers. Before thirty, he had become Chief Engineer on many of the ships that sailed the Atlantic. The dominance of steam and motor vessels over the fully rigged sailing ships of the nineteenth century, brought in a new era in shipping. In 1887, at thirty-one, Thomas Skinner came to the Pacific Northwest, employed by the Great Northern Railroad as the chief engineer of their ships. In the early 1900's, he moved to China to become the Marine Superintendent for the Great Northern Railroad in Hong Kong. Thomas Skinner's experience as Chief of Construction and assembly of Russian submarines, as well as his background as an Inspection Engineer on deep-sea ships, made him a very knowledgeable shipping man. Thomas Skinner's truly pioneer entrepreneurial spirit paired with his shipping and mechanical expertise founded Thomas Skinner Co. to serve the trans-Pacific shipping business. The company distributed equipment and supplies for both the maintenance of ships and for the shipyards.

As well as Vancouver, B.C., Thomas Skinner Co. had offices in both Seattle and Tacoma. Thomas Skinner permanently located his family of five to Tacoma by 1910. There is no official record of the Vancouver office until 1918 when the Canadian Government required all companies to be registered in order to remit the newly legislated income tax. The first known Vancouver location of Thomas Skinner Co. was in the prestigious Yorkshire building at 525 Seymour Street in 1918. This also marked the year that Thomas Skinner's brother, John Dewar Skinner (JD) came to Vancouver as Managing Director of the branch. The passing of Thomas Skinner in 1937 at eighty-one, in Tacoma, Washington, left JD Skinner to run the Vancouver office until his retirement in 1947, when he sold the business to Ideal Iron Works of 369 Alexander Street. JD continued to reside in Vancouver at the present day Kingston Hotel on Richards Street, until his death in 1948. During the Skinner brothers' era, in 1928, Thomas Skinner Co. had moved to its second location at 81 Alexander Street, in present-day Gastown.



**Yorkshire Building, ca.1936  
525 Seymour Street, Vancouver**



**Canadian Fairbanks Morse Co.,  
Machine Tool Showroom, 1905**

Ideal Iron Works' owners, Herb Elstrom Sr. and Francis Smith, purchased Thomas Skinner & Co. and continued to distribute industrial supplies including one of Thomas Skinner's original lines, the U.S. produced Dampney Paint used for the inside of boilers and the bottom of ships, which is still sold by Thomas Skinner and Son Ltd. today.

The soon to be new owner, Max Krainer, was born the only child of Johann and Theresa Krainer in Maria Elaine, Karnten Austria on October 12, 1918.

Johann, left Austria following World War I and came to Canada. Two years later, his family joined him in Disley, Saskatchewan, and shortly thereafter, they moved to Vancouver. Max grew up and received his education in Vancouver completing grade 13 at Bain's School of Business. Max was

trained as a pipe fitter and worked at the Port Mellon pulp mill and at the shipyards in Vancouver. In 1946, he began working for Fairbanks Morse (a large industrial distribution company) as a salesman. For four years, Max called upon industrial clients in Vancouver, and up the coast. He was a successful salesman and did well at Fairbanks. At one of his accounts, the afore mentioned Ideal Iron Works, Max was able to capitalize on his friendship and business connections. The Ideal management had discovered that running a distribution company was different from running a machine shop, and they were pleased to sell Thomas Skinner and Son Co. to Max for a reasonable sum. In 1950, after purchasing Thomas Skinner, Max moved his new business to 14 Powell Street for three years and later to 51 West Cordova where Thomas Skinner and Son Co. was located from 1954 to 1969.



**Michel Maillouchon of EBCO Ind., 1964  
One of Thomas Skinner's Loyal Customers  
1954 - present day**

While running Thomas Skinner and Son Co., Max became involved in several business ventures. One was Skinner Scales, a company started by Max Krainer and Jim Mantel in 1954. They began importing and distributing Murphy scales for large weight scale use such as highway truck scales. They decided that they could make a better scale and began manufacturing the scales in the building behind 51 West

Cordova, commonly known still as 'Blood Alley'. Max and Jims' Skinner Scales continued to succeed and in 1961, they sold it to Max's old employer, Fairbanks Morse, who by this time was called Robert Morse.

While Thomas Skinner and Son Co. had a few other ventures, which included selling mercury outboard motors and a manufacturing air whistle business, Max's main business at Thomas Skinner and Son Co. was distributing machine tools and machine shop supplies. In 1954, Max was awarded the DoALL line. DoALL was the strongest machine shop supply company of that era. Having DoALL as a line allowed Thomas Skinner and Son Co. to open a branch in Winnipeg, in 1954 (1957 Notre Dame Avenue), a branch in Calgary in 1956 (429 – 8th Avenue) and a branch in Edmonton in 1959 (9965 – 82nd Avenue).

Max was possibly too successful with the DoALL line, because in 1959, DoALL informed him that they wanted to own their own distribution in Western Canada. Max handed over his Winnipeg branch to DoALL and in Vancouver opened and ran the Head Office for DoALL Western Canada, until 1962. He then decided that operating his biggest competitor was too much of a conflict of interest and he left DoAll to run Thomas Skinner and Son Co. solely.



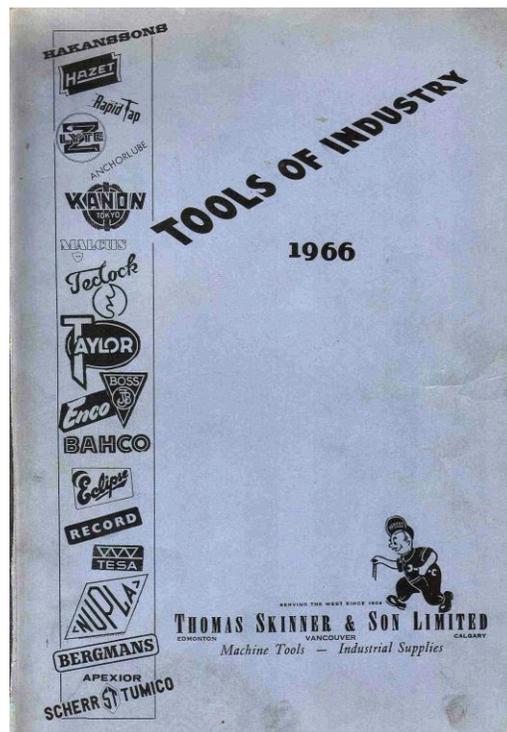
Home of Thomas Skinner & Son Ltd.  
from 1969 – 1990

Without DoAll, Thomas Skinner and Son Co.'s main lines were Voest lathes from Austria, Martin lathes from Germany, Hercus bench lathes from Australia, Strands and Arboga drilling and milling machines from Sweden, Hazet hand tools from Germany, Malcus drills and Boss taps and dies from Germany, and Hakansson blades from Sweden. All of these products were in our first catalogue in 1966.

In the 1960's, Thomas Skinner and Son Co.'s business thrived. It proved difficult however to administer and be profitable in the Calgary and Edmonton locations and thus they were respectively closed in 1967 and 1968.

During the 1970's Max grew his business by being more focused on machine shop equipment and supplies. Thomas Skinner & Son Ltd's new location at 1884 Main Street saw a shift in where our products were being manufactured. Products from Japan increasingly filled the shelves. It was at that time that Thomas Skinner & Son Ltd. began to sell Mitutoyo products, which is still one of their main lines today. The 1970's also marked the involvement of Karl and Paul Krainer, Max's sons. While Karl helped with sales and administration, Paul traveled to Japan and Taiwan to expand the product lines Thomas Skinner & Son Ltd. represented. These included the machine tool lines of Kingston lathes, First brand mills, and Dah Lih mills. Cutting tools such as Yamawa taps and Mitsubishi carbide were added, as were machine accessory lines such as Victor chucks, News dividing heads and Big tappers. Our relationship with Sowa Tool & Machine began in the early 1970's providing Sowa's Western Canadian distribution. Thomas Skinner & Son Ltd.'s products of the time all represented excellent value and were of good to exceptional quality. By the end of the 1970's, Max Krainer's son, G. Paul Krainer was running Thomas Skinner & Son Ltd. With a flourishing business, Paul opened a branch in Edmonton, in 1982 at 9767 – 45th Avenue. In 1983, Vincent Khoo joined Thomas Skinner & Son Ltd. as their Accountant/Administrator and quickly became integral to the success of Thomas Skinner & Son Ltd.

The 1980's were economically tumultuous times. From the boom of the inflationary late 1970's, to the severe economic downturn in the early 1980's when interest rates peaked at 20%-- these were tough years for the company. Growth was primarily due to the sales of imported lines and numerous small machine tools. In 1986, the Edmonton branch moved to its present day location at 9407 – 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The service department was expanded to include two servicemen in Vancouver and one in Edmonton.



1966 Front Cover of Thomas Skinner's  
1st Catalogue



Paul & Max Krainer, 1990

The business boomed in the late 1980's, culminating in the purchase and move to the present Vancouver facility, located at 13880 Vulcan Way, Richmond. It was during this time that sales of CNC machine tools with a few niche lines such as Mitsui Seiki, SNK and Kiwa were initiated, shaping the future direction of Thomas Skinner & Son. With a slowing business climate, the company was



**Grand Opening of Thomas Skinner's Calgary Location July 5, 1995**

forced to re-evaluate their direction. They decided to get serious about the promotion and sale of CNC machine tools, to better serve their customers. CNC was the wave of the future and Thomas Skinner was committed to be a major player.

As the new direction and commitment to distributing CNC machine tools took shape, Thomas Skinner was awarded the Okuma line in January 1991 and the Haas Automation line in April of the same year. These CNC machine tool builders understood the need to have value added distributors to support the growing customer base. It was during this time that both the CNC service and applications teams were added to the company.

In 1992, Thomas Skinner & Son Ltd. acquired the Hyd-Mech line of Canadian-made bandsaws. Thomas Skinner also purchased J & R Tool of Edmonton, significantly adding to their tooling sale base in Alberta. In order to better serve their Calgary customers, they opened a branch there in July 1995 at 4925 – 77th Avenue. In 1997, Don Babineau joined the team and strengthened the sales and administrative operations in his role as Manager of Sales and Operations. Don also initiated the tool room management program which continues to lead the industry today.

In June 2000, Thomas Skinner opened its Winnipeg branch at 820-D Berry Street. Having to abandon these locations thirty years earlier, Thomas Skinner & Son Ltd. was back across the prairies – the circle was complete.

Also, in 2000, Thomas Skinner became an authorized distributor for the Sandvik Coromant line of tooling and carbide inserts. This line allowed the company to fully tool their customers on new machines. Sandvik is the world's largest carbide manufacturer and due to their depth and support, this line has been the strongest addition to Thomas Skinner's tooling offering in their 100-year history. Unfortunately, the year 2000 also marked the death of Max Krainer. One of Max's important legacies was his dedication to his customers. It was always Max's mission to tell his customers all about the latest and greatest. He had an earnest belief in helping his customers with products and services. In an effort to make them feel happy and comfortable, Max spoke a few words from every language that was spoken by his customers. While they were saddened by their loss, the memory of Max Krainer will live on at Thomas Skinner & Son Ltd. through their continuing commitment to quality products and customer service.

In 2001, Thomas Skinner added Lenox, North America's premier bandsaw blade line, and purchased Jordan Industrial. In 2012, they added Blaser Swisslube, the world's leading coolant line. These additions culminated many years of assembling the finest and broadest lines of products offered in Western Canada. Thomas Skinner is proud to be Western Canada's "One Stop For Your Machine Shop".

The history of the Thomas Skinner Company began with an entrepreneurial pioneer who used his expertise to help his customers build and maintain ships. Thomas Skinner was a risk taker who had the technical ability and vision to be a success. Then with Max Krainer, an ambitious salesman, at the helm, the company had many achievements and set a firm course on customer service. Max's high energy, love for people, passion for the business, and generous spirit built a strong and loyal customer base. Under Paul Krainer's leadership over the last 35 years, the company is the clear leader in the Western Canadian market. Their success is due to their quality suppliers and their team of skilled and dedicated employees ensuring the best in customer service.

"Now, we have accomplished a lot in 110 years, which is a true milestone. We attribute our success to being 'Industry Driven and Customer Focused'. We are passionate about serving the industrial metalworking industry and our unwavering support of the educational institutions that bring the youth into the industry we so proudly serve."

Paul Krainer  
President  
Thomas Skinner & Son Ltd.