

Captain Alpha Kingsley
November 21, 1778 – September 28, 1846

Section 28.51 ID # 280240

Alpha Kingsley was born in Woodstock, Vermont, on November 21, 1778, to Ebenezer and Thankful Kingsley. When Kingsley was 21 years old, he joined the U.S. Army. In 1808 he was engaged in the construction of the Fort Madison (today Iowa) that was built to gain control over the newly acquired lands along the upper Mississippi River in the Louisiana Purchase (1803). Kingsley was transferred to Fort Southwest Point, East Tennessee, where he married Eliza Ayer in Roane County on November 5, 1809. His son William Bissell Kingsley was born at Southwest Point on December 20, 1810.

After his retirement from active duty at Fort Southwest Point, about 1811, the Kingsleys moved to Nashville. Kingsley was involved with a store, management of The Nashville Inn and served as the Army Paymaster. The City of Nashville purchased land for a public cemetery in 1820. One year later the Mayor employed Kingsley to serve as the first Sexton. The cemetery opened for burials in 1822. Kingsley's had many responsibilities as the Agent and Superintendent. He was in charge making arrangements for burials, interment record keeping, grounds maintenance and sale of burial lots. He held this position for 25 years until his death in 1846.

Alpha and Eliza Kingsley were early members of the Presbyterian Church founded in Nashville in 1814. They also worked to establish the Second Presbyterian Church in 1843. Through the church, Eliza became a close friend of Rachel Jackson. Alpha Kingsley died in Nashville on September 28, 1846. His obituary related that he was "one of the oldest and most respected citizens of this place – one whose death is deeply regretted." Also buried on the Kingsley lot were his sons Alpha and William Bissell Kingsley and his adopted daughter, Eugenia Wilson, wife of George Wilson.

Sources

Vermont Births. Nov. 21, 1778. Alpha Kingsley. On-line
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Obituary. Alpha Kingsley *The Whig* September 29, 1846
City Cemetery Tombstone Inscriptions for Alpha Kingsley, his son William Bissell Kingsley, son Alpha (listed A.H.K.) & adopted daughter Eugenia Wilson City Cemetery website
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