

Captain Thomas Bellsnyder
July 20, 1800 – June 21, 1864

Section 16.1 ID# 160120

Thomas Bellsnyder was born on the Island of Curacao, West Indies, on July 20, 1800. He left the island and went to sea following the death of his mother when he was about 16 years old. After arriving in New Orleans in 1824, he served as a steamboat captain on the Mississippi River, travelling between New Orleans and Nashville. Four years later Captain Bellsnyder settled in Nashville.

On March 5, 1829, he married Polly Brooks. She was the daughter of Captain Christopher Brooks, who was in the steamboat business, and his wife Sally Hutchison Brooks. Polly was born in Burkesville, Kentucky, on February 19, 1809 and died in Nashville, of Cholera, on June 17, 1854.

The elegant *Nashville* was Captain Bellsnyder's last steamboat. Built in 1849, she was 200 feet in length with a capacity for 100 cabin passengers. According to local newspapers, *Nashville* was "well decorated but not gaudy, trim but not fragile." *Nashville* ran regularly between Nashville and New Orleans. Captain Bellsnyder died in Nashville on June 21, 1864. His obituary proclaimed that he was "one of our most active and enterprising river men. For some forty years he engaged in the most laborious and toilsome occupation with efficiency and success."

Sources

Davidson Co. Marriage. March 5, 1829 Thomas Bellsnyder & Polly Mary Hopkins Brooks
Steamboatin' on the Cumberland, Byrd Douglas, 1961
Obituary. *Nashville Daily Press & Times*, June 23 & June 24, 1864. Captain Bellsnyder
City Cemetery Interment records for Bellsnider (sic) 1854 & Bellsnider (sic) 1864
City Cemetery Tombstone Inscriptions for Thomas & Polly Bellsnyder

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