

Crudup, Josiah ^[1]

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by Paul I. Chestnut, 1979

13 Jan. 1791–20 May 1872

Josiah Crudup, clergyman, legislator, and congressman, was born in Wakelon, Wake County ^[2], the youngest of the nine children of Josiah Crudup, a Baptist ^[3] minister, and Elizabeth Battle, daughter of Elisha ^[4] and Elizabeth Sumner Battle. Elisha Battle ^[4] moved from Nansemond County, Va., to Edgecombe County ^[5] before the Revolution ^[6]; Elizabeth Sumner Battle was the granddaughter of William Sumner of Sumner Manor, Isle of Wight County, Va., and the cousin of General Jethro Sumner ^[7] of the Continental Army.

Josiah Crudup, Jr., was educated at the Reverend Dr. William McPheeter's ^[8] academy in Raleigh ^[9] and at Columbian College (now George Washington University ^[10]) in Washington, D.C. He studied theology and after his ordination continued in the ministry until his death. He was elected to the state senate in 1820 to represent Wake County, but soon after he took his seat it was declared vacant, because the Constitution of North Carolina prohibited ministers from holding office while still exercising ministerial functions. He was elected to Congress the next year and served one term, 1821–23. Defeated for reelection in 1823, he tried again in 1825 and lost in a close election to Willie P. Mangum ^[11]. He resumed farming and preaching in Granville County ^[12], where he had settled. Although he remained interested in political affairs, he held no other elected office except representation of Granville County at the constitutional convention of 1835 ^[13]. He was a member of the Whig party ^[14] and remained loyal to it throughout his career. Although a large slaveholder himself, he did not favor secession ^[15] and opposed Lincoln in 1860 on the grounds that Lincoln's election would enable secessionists to further their cause throughout the South, his unpopularity bringing many into the secessionist fold.

Crudup was a more effective preacher and farmer than politician, and it was thought that he won more votes by his preaching than by his political expertise. Winning by only a few votes in 1825, Mangum attributed his victory to a heavy rainstorm, which prevented Crudup from attending a meeting at which the two candidates were to speak. Mangum was able to get to this meeting and thought that he won enough votes there to carry the election. Crudup's clerical status did not shield him from criticism, some arguing that he was more interested in the ministry than in politics and should not hold public office. A rumor circulated in 1821 charged him with plying voters with liquor to influence their choice at the ballot box.

A successful farmer, Crudup had extensive landholdings in North Carolina and Mississippi. A stallion he had bred placed second in the judging at the first North Carolina State Fair ^[16] in 1853. In his petition for pardon, submitted following the Civil War ^[17], he estimated that he owned approximately 160 slaves, all of whom remained with him voluntarily after the war. He claimed to be worth about twenty thousand dollars in 1865.

Crudup was married on 16 Nov. 1813 to Mrs. Anne Maria Davis Brickell, daughter of Archibald Davis of Franklin County ^[18]. The Crudups had four children, Archibald Davis, James Henry, Martha, and Edward Alston. Following the death of Anne Brickell Crudup on 27 Mar. 1822, Crudup married Mary E. Boddie, on 5 May 1825. Four children were born to this union, John Boddie, Lucy (Mrs. George Kittrell), Mary (Mrs. John Cannady), and William Boddie. Crudup died at his home near Kittrell and was buried in the family burial ground nearby.

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Additional Resources:

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