

NAME

Ruben Pickett

b. ¹⁷⁵²
d. *Oct. 19, 1823*

Ancestry

Married

b.

d.

Ancestry

Record

Pastor Grassy Creek Church Granville 1805-

See

Devina Grassy Creek p 89 & 115

File No.

(Over)

History of Grassy Creek Baptist Church
By Robert L. Davis

Elder Vass was a man of fine personal appearance—large and well proportioned, weighing probably two hundred pounds—very sociable and courteous in his manners. In the pulpit, his manner was solemn and dignified. His elocution was very good, with a voice of large compass and melody, which he controlled with considerable skill. He was naturally possessed of musical talent, which, having been cultivated, he employed with great effect in his public ministrations. One of his favorite hymns which he frequently sang, introductory to his pulpit exercises, was, "Blow ye the trumpet, blow," &c.

Concerning the last moments of this honored and devoted servant of Jesus, the writer can say but little. For several years previous to his death his labors in the ministry were much interrupted by feebleness and disease, the attendants of age. About the year 1818, Elder Vass, having lived beyond the ordinary term of human life, being more than eighty years of age, full of years and full of hope, took his departure from this sublunary scene, to enter upon the rest that remains to the people of God. His body was interred in the family burying-ground, near Mountain Creek church, there to sleep in sweet repose until the morning of the resurrection, when the trump of God shall awaken him to immortality.

→ ELDER REUBEN PICKET.

Mr. Picket was born in 1752, in the county of Fauquier, in Virginia. In his 17th year his attention was awakened to eternal things, and after much disquietude of mind, he joyfully submitted to the righteousness of God. A short time after his conversion, he was baptized by Elder Samuel Harris, in the county of Orange, Virginia. His earliest efforts as a public teacher were made when he was not more than eighteen years of age. It might be justly regretted that the stores of knowledge were not then within his reach, and that his mind was not then placed under suitable training. Such advantages would doubtless have been gladly improved by him; but at that early period, the facilities for obtaining education were exceedingly limited. With such opportunities as he did possess, he sought to qualify himself for usefulness. Such were his desires to do good, that through many difficulties, he urged his way to testify to his fellow-men the gospel of the grace of God. He found opportunities of exercising his gift in exhortation, and shortly after he began to preach. He was eminently successful in winning souls to Christ.

At this early period in his ministry, he felt a great desire to travel with Mr. Harris, but being poor and knowing that unless he followed some secular calling for support, his embarrassment would

be great; this made him very unhappy for some time. Spreading his case before the Lord, this text came forcibly to his mind: "Go ye and preach the gospel, and lo I am with you alway." He immediately forsook all earthly employment, and traveled with Elder Harris, expecting to visit an Association in South Carolina. He was, however, detained by severe illness, and left by his brethren in a strange part of the world. His sufferings, both of body and mind, were extremely severe, but they were only the refiner's fire, purging off the dross, and leaving Mr. Picket, like tried gold, to shine with seven-fold more splendor. And after his recovery, he felt the smiles of God in a more abundant manner than he had ever before. He then commenced his ministerial travels in North Carolina and Virginia, disseminating evangelical truth in various directions. He was still only about twenty years of age. Young as he was, his talents were extensively useful. Many acknowledged him as the messenger of peace to their souls; and several churches were constituted through his instrumentality.

He had been the means of originating a church called Reedy Bottom, which was afterwards merged into Mayo, in Halifax county, Va., (now Bethel church, Person county, N. C.) to whose oversight he was called at his ordination, which took place in 1772. He continued their pastor as long as he

lived; and in this relation he was characterized by his activity and faithfulness. He was not, however, confined in his efforts to this congregation. He served Grassy Creek church as their spiritual guide, from 1805 to 1808, efficiently and profitably. Other churches were frequently visited, especially in seasons of difficulty and trial. He possessed a peculiar talent for binding together the hearts of his brethren, and preserving peace in the church. Among the people of God he was universally beloved. No man in the Roanoke Association possessed such vast influence, and no one deserved it more. For many years in succession, he occupied the chair at their annual meetings, and always presided with dignity and to the satisfaction of all. His talents were not of the highest order, but they were of the useful kind. He addressed the hearts and sought to reach the conscience of his hearers. While he was not accustomed to astonish by the brilliancy of his thoughts, he rarely failed to produce a very deep and solemn effect. His appearance and manners were highly impressive. Elder Picket, in his person, was tall, rather slenderly built, of thin visage, of a pleasant countenance and very kind in his manners. Plainness of speech was the marked characteristic of his preaching. He was, in his latter years, subject to great depression of mind, arising from derangement of the nervous system, produced by serious injuries which he received by being over-

turned in a gig. From this accident he suffered much, and being confined at home for a long time, was greatly depressed. Some endeavored to jest him out of this state, but he grew worse. Being visited by a minister (thought to be Elder John Kerr) he told him all his sorrows. He, entering into Picket's feelings, reproved those who had ridiculed him, told him that he was really afflicted, and then addressing himself to Picket, expressed great commiseration for his condition, told him that God alone could help him, and proposed that they should unite in prayer. During this exercise his soul was lifted up, his gloomy feelings left him, and he was filled with joy, which continued until his death, which took place Oct. 19th, 1823.

The memory of this man of God is embalmed in the hearts of hundreds of the lovers of truth.

ELDER ELISHA BATTLE.

The writer has made considerable efforts to collect materials that would enable him to compile a suitable sketch of the life and labors of Elder Battle, but without success. All the information he has been able to obtain was gathered from the recollections of two aged friends, now living in the vicinity of Grassy Creek Church. They knew Mr. Battle well, and remember him very distinctly, but at this distance of time they can only furnish some information of a general character in connection with his

labors in Granville county, during a space of five or six years.

It is believed that Mr. Battle was born in Edgecombe county, N. C., about the year 1780. He moved to Granville in 1814 or 1815, and became the pastor of the churches at Grassy Creek and Tabb's Creek. After serving these and perhaps others, some six years, he removed to or near Raleigh, in Wake county. He was the compiler of a hymn book, which had considerable circulation among the Baptists in this region about the years 1816 and 1820. Mr. Battle was a married man and had children, but how many my informants do not recollect.

As a preacher and pastor he stood high in the estimation of the brethren. His manner in the pulpit was calm and deliberate, his style elegant, and his elocution smooth and flowing. He is described as amiable in disposition, unassuming in manners, and exemplary in deportment, which united in forming a lovely character, and rendered him the subject of high regard by the people whom he served as pastor. In his person he is represented to have been a little below medium size, of genteel figure, attractive in appearance, with blue eyes, hair inclined to be light, and was somewhat deaf. He was reserved and polished in his manners, having enjoyed, it is thought, better educational advantages than was common at that day.