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Subject: Obituary for Rev. John M. Wakefield

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Death of Rev. John Wakefield

At Newark, July 14th, 1875, of heart disease, Rev. John Wakefield, aged 86 years. Mr. Wakefield was born in Huntingdon Co., Pa., March 9th, 1789, was converted at 12 years of age, and at seventeen became a class leader in the Methodist church to which he belonged. At twenty years of age he was married to Miss Mary Bracken, who bore him eleven children, seven of whom are now living; although of one or two of the seven no news has been heard since the close of the war.

Three years after his marriage, having been already preaching several years, he joined the Baltimore conference as a circuit preacher. Soon after he removed to Pa., and joined the Philadelphia conference, where most of his life was spent. His only other important change before he came West was his transfer with others to join the new Pittsburg conference.

In 1829 his wife died, and five years after he was married to Mrs. Mary Keepers, who survives him. He came West in 1855 and settled first near Holderman's Grove, and afterward at Newark. Being nearly seventy years old, and in failing health, he did not join the conference but preached in all directions as a supply and evangelist. A large share of his meetings were held in the Holderman school house.

Last winter he spent at Somonauk with his granddaughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Thomson, returning to Newark last spring.

His last sickness was very painful, but was endured with christian submission. The last Sabbath of his life he spent nearly the entire day in preaching the gospel to those around him. His remembrance of facts and dates were often dim and confused, but the apprehension of spiritual truth was still clear and decided. His sufferings abated towards the last, and he passed away quietly to his rest above.

The Lord he had served three-quarters of a century took his spirit.

He was endowed naturally with a fine constitution and powerful voice, and supernaturally with a peculiar presence of the spirit of God which eminently fitted him for a revivalist. He was one of the well-known leaders in camp meetings forty years ago, and was sure to be brought forward if it was known that he was on the ground. During one sermon of his it is said that one hundred and twenty were born again of the Holy Ghost. He remembered the occasion well as one of especial weariness and weakness but of unusual divine power.

None of his children were able to be present at the funeral but Mr. and Mrs. Waterman, of Creston, Iowa. The funeral services were held in the M.E. church, at Newark. The funeral sermon was by Rev. J.R. Allen, his pastor, from the words "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," and to say it was eloquent would be only belittling mockery unworthy the solemn subject, but it was the eloquence of God's good spirit, and not to the dead but the living. Rev. J.S. David was present, and Rev. J.R. Burns of Somonauk, gave many affecting reminiscences of the deceased, especially of his interviews with him last winter. Epsilon.

-excerpted from the Kendall County Record, 22 July 1875. Published at Yorkville, IL.