

The Story of a North Country Town  
Chapter XLIV: Canton Newspapers (excerpt)  
by Dr. James Milford Payson

We must go back more than a century to come to Canton's first newspaper. As far as the writer can learn, no specimens have been preserved of Canton's first attempts at journalism... The writer's authority for what follows is from Mr. Gage Curtis, in his judgment the most accurate of any of St. Lawrence county's historians. Canton's first newspaper really dates from 1827, the year that Canton's old Universalist church was erected, the first in the village and the second in the township, the first in the town being Brick Chapel. In this year a certain Reverend Johnithan Wallace, a Universalist minister, was connected with the *St. Lawrence Republican* at Ogdensburg. About this time he founded a Universalist paper known as "The Day Star." After six months this paper was merged with "The Gospel Advocate" at Utica, and a little later the establishment was moved to Canton. The writer has not been able to learn much about this Reverend Johnithan Wallace, except that he was one of the early Universalist preachers in this section before Canton had any settled pastor. Whence he came, how long he was connected with the *St. Lawrence Republican*, how long he continued his publication at Canton, and whither he finally went, the writer does not know. The most interesting fact is that Canton's first paper was a Universalist paper.

*St. Lawrence Plaindealer*, Canton NY, Tue. 5 Jul 1932

Transcribed on 22 Feb 2008 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY