

[Potsdam, St. Lawrence Co. NY]

The first organization of a Universalist Society at Potsdam of which there is any record took place on the 3d of January, 1824, though there had previously been preaching there by ministers of that denomination. On the above-named day, Gurdon Smith, James Whitcomb, and William Perkins were chosen trustees; Joseph Parkhurst, clerk; Nathaniel Parmeter, collector; Eliphalet Holbrook, monitor.

A constitution was duly adopted, and Rev. Jonathan Wallace was employed as preacher. He served the society many years, sometimes preaching in Potsdam half the time, sometimes, three fourths, and sometimes all the time. In 1827 he was hired by the society to preach three-fourths of the time—two fourths in Potsdam village and one-fourth in the west part of town. Mr. Wallace was a man of marked ability whose permanent residence was in Potsdam up to the time of his recent death in an honored old age.

The early meetings in the village, according to the records, were in the “yellow school-house” up to 1836, when a frame house of worship was erected on Elm street, at the corner of the public park. Up to 1852 there was only a secular organization—not a complete church. On the 17th and 18th of January of that year a church of twenty-five members was organized; the hand of fellowship was given them, and Joseph Miles, Timothy Bacon, Solomon Parmeter, and John Lucas were chosen deacons. There were several reorganizations between that time and 1859, and several constitutions adopted which, however, did not seriously differ from each other. In 1858 the number of trustees was changed from three to five. In 1874, under the pastorate of Rev. A. U. Hutchins, there was a marked revival of interest, and twenty-three members were admitted to the church.

In 1876 and 1877 an elegant and substantial church edifice was erected on the site of the old one. It is built of Potsdam sandstone, is forty-six by sixty-five feet in size, and cost about thirteen thousand dollars aside from the ground.

The following ministers have served the church, either as settled pastors or temporary supplies, since its organization in 1824: Jonathan Wallace, W. H. Waggoner, Jonathan Douglass, U. M. Fisk, E. Fisher, M. Goodrich, Frank M. Hicks, Moses Marston, E. Hathaway, and A. W. Hutchins. There has been no pastor since the close of Mr. Hutchins' labors in February, 1876.

The following are the present officers of the society: Trustees, E. A. Merritt, George W. Waldo, James Lemon, Isaac Mathews, and Myron H. Wait; Secretary and Treasurer, J. H. Baum.

L. H. Everts & Co., *History of St. Lawrence Co., New York 1749-1878*
(reprint Interlaken NY: 1982), pp. 252-53