

Section 1.

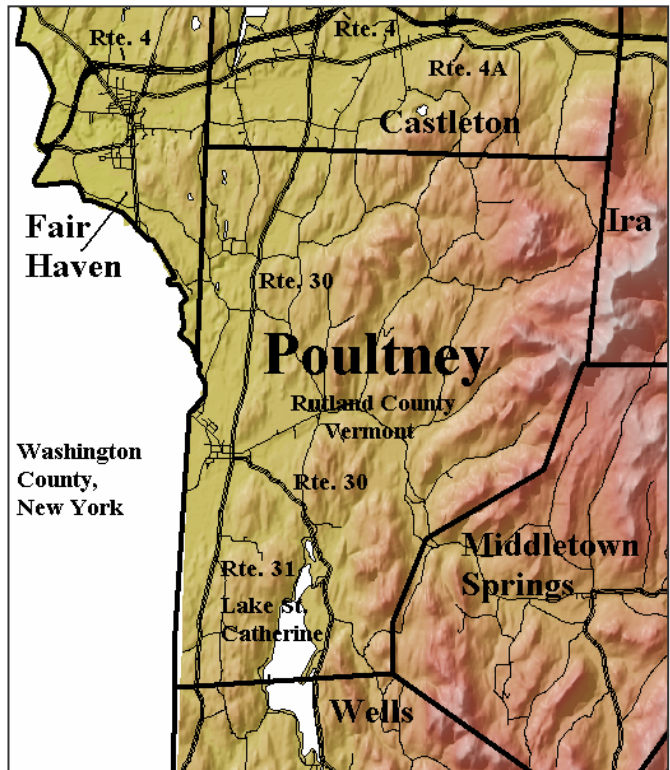
Town Organization

Where is Poultney?

Poultney Town is located in Rutland County, west and slightly south of Rutland City; the town's western border abuts New York State's Washington County. The Vermont towns of Fair Haven and Castleton lie to Poultney's northwest and west, Ira and Middletown Springs lie to the east and south and on the very southern border lies the town of Wells. Significant New York places to Poultney's west include Hampton, Granville and Whitehall, among others.

What's in A Name?

It is almost certain that N.H. Gov. Benning Wentworth chose this town's name to honor one of England's richest and most powerful families (Swift, 1977:413). William Pultney (1684-1764), or Poultney, was the first Earl of Bath. Educated at Christ Church, Oxford, he was considered a brilliant scholar and eloquent orator. A member of Parliament by the age of twenty, he served there for more than 50 years. For a time the Earl was secretary of war. His son, also William, raised a regiment, the Royal Volunteers, at family expense. Though he died young, predeceasing his father in 1763, the Viscount furthered the family reputation with charm and military service. One of the Count's most determined opponents, Sir Robert Walpole, once said he feared Pultney's tongue more than another man's sword, confirming the diversity of this wealthy family's recognized talents and strengthening the reputation of Poultney Town's namesake.



Five or six names used by Wentworth for towns in Vermont and New Hampshire are linked to this family or their friend Charles Wyndham, but there is no evidence that any of these communities were visited or honored in any way by these British gentry. But honor Pultney Wentworth did and the town became one of the earliest settled on the western border, attaining a base population of over a thousand (1,120) when the first census was taken in 1791 and making it the 21st largest place in the state (Swift, 1977:413).

Brief Chronology

September 21, 1761- Town chartered by New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth.

1790- first Vermont library founded in Poultney.

1830s- Ripley Female College is established and is later renamed Green Mountain College.

1851- The first slate quarry in Poultney is opened on the farm owned by Daniel Hooker.

1886 - Village of Poultney chartered on November 22nd.

1875- *A History of the Town of Poultney, Vermont* by Frisbee & Joslin is published.

1936- First classes begin at Poultney High School.

Government and Civic Structure

As Poultney grew, a number of small population clusters emerged. Four areas in particular have Poultney in their designation. Poultney Village, the largest and contemporary commercial core, has been referred to as West Poultney. Then there are North,

East and South Poultney, obvious references to neighborhoods differentiating one from another by their approximate location in areas of the town. Other neighborhoods include Gorhamtown and Clark, Fennel, Hampshire and Moss Hollows (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 – General Town Characteristics

Town Name	Poultney
County	Rutland
Date of Town Charter	September 21, 1761
Incorporated Village(s)	Poultney Village
Other Villages and Neighborhoods (past and present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North, South, and East Poultney; • Gorhamtown; • the Hollows: Clark, Fennel, Hampshire, and Moss

Sources: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2002. *Vermont Indicators Online*.
<http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators>

The Village of Poultney maintains a Village government, which is separate from that of the Town. Poultney Village houses the Town and Village government offices, Town Clerk's Office, Public Library, Post Office, High School, Green Mountain College, Catholic, Methodist, Episcopal and Welsh Presbyterian churches. It is the hub of the community with the majority of businesses located on its Main Street. Commerce is stimulated by the presence of Green Mountain College in the western portion of the Village. A notable historic corridor is represented by an area that begins one mile from the traffic light at the intersection of Main Street and Route 30 and continues to the steps of East Poultney's historic Eagle Tavern (Poultney Historical Society, 2002). Not surprisingly, The Vermont Forum on Sprawl recognizes this historic village center and has designated the area a "Traditional Center" (see Table 1.2).

Table 1.2– Poultney General Planning Characteristics

<i>Vermont Forum on Sprawl</i> Category	1 -"Traditional Center"
Town Plan	October, 2000
Zoning Ordinance	Yes
Subdivision Ordinance	Yes
Septic Approval Process	None

Source: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2002. *Vermont Indicators Online*.
<http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators>

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