



EMPIRE STATE
POSTAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

APS UNIT 28

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INSTANT MESSAGING IN ONLY A MONTH

By Glenn A. Estus

Today we are all used to having almost instantaneous communication with family members either via telephone, or email, or even by letter. But before the middle of the nineteenth century people often left their families and immigrated to other countries, knowing they would probably never see their families again. The letter was the only means of keeping in touch and the news in the letters could be months or years old.

A letter from Hoesville, New York (Fulton County) to Kelso, Scotland, neatly illustrates the point. Kelso is in Roxburghshire on the Scotland/England border.

Hoesville was a short named post office from May 28, 1846, to June 13, 1849. Previously it was known as West Galway Church (1838 to 1846) and changed its name again in 1849 to West Galway (1849 to 1919).

Although the post office was officially known as Hoesville, the writer, a niece of the addressee, Mrs. Eccles, used West Galway as her location. The letter is dated July 23, 1846 less than two months after the post office name was established. According to *New York Postal History: The Post Offices and First Postmaster from 1775 to 1980*, the first postmaster was Peter I. Hoes. Obviously the post office was named after him.

Information with the cover indicates that the letter was mailed from Hoesville on July 29, 1846, and PAID to New York City where it was then carried privately to Liverpool before being entered into the British postal system. On the reverse is a "Liverpool Ship Letter" transit marking (21 Aug 1846) and a Kelso receiving mark (Aug 23, 1846).

The letter sheet is three and a half pages of tightly spaced writing telling of family gatherings, local deaths, the weather — all the things that people still tell family members about today.

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