



**EMPIRE STATE  
POSTAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY**

**APS UNIT 28**

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## A SMALL STORY ABOUT RISELEYS

*By Maris Tirums*

Illustrated is a picture postcard mailed from Riseleys, New York, to Margaretville, New York, in 1905. Both towns are in the Catskill Mountains. Riseleys is in north central Ulster County and Margaretville is in Delaware County.

The dispatch postmark is RISELEYS / AUG / 9 / 1905, N.Y., with a concentric circle target killer on Scott 300, the one cent dark green Franklin value from the 1902 regular issue. The arrival postmark is MARGARETVILLE, N.Y. / AUG / 9 / 1905 / 6 PM / REC'D. Unseen is the picture side of the card which shows a colorized photo view of a very crude appearing hunter's cabin in the Catskill Mountains.



Every postal history item tells a story. I have said as much to other collectors who have chosen to ignore covers as not being interesting collectibles. This postcard is no exception, and its story is a little more interesting than most.

On the day this card was mailed, there was no post office in New York named Riseleys. Why then does the postmark so clearly read Riseleys? The answer, I believe, is simply that the postmaster who canceled the card wanted to show the true origin of the card by using an old canceler rather than postmark the card with the Phoenicia canceler where the card was actually processed after posting. Maybe he grabbed the old Riseleys canceler without giving the matter any thought at all.

The Riseleys post office was opened on February 13, 1897. The first postmaster's name was George B. Riseleys, and I assume he simply named the post office after himself. Perhaps he owned the local general store in a very rural area which saw some commerce from hunters and campers coming to the Catskills. On July 31, 1902, the post office closed and remained closed for almost four years until April 4, 1906. During that period, postal services to local residents were provided by the Phoenicia post office.

After reopening, the Riseleys post office, under a different postmaster, stayed open until 1919 when it closed again, and Phoenicia became the permanent post office for the area. The Phoenicia post office still operates today, even though the population of the community is approximately three hundred. ■