

Lysander Spooner: Anarchist Who Fought the US Post Office

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Historical Paper

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*“If Congress cannot carry the letters of individuals as cheaply as individuals would do it, there is no propriety in their carrying them at all.”<sup>1</sup>*

– Lysander Spooner, “The Unconstitutionality of the Laws of Congress, Prohibiting Private Mails,” 1844.

Since its creation, the Post Office has been shielded from direct competition. However, for a brief period in the 1840s Lysander Spooner and his American Letter Mail Company challenged the authority of the postal monopoly. Though his business was shut down, Spooner’s conflict forced Congress to lower postal rates. His life and works also inspired future radical movements that have and continue to challenge authority.

### **Who was Lysander Spooner?**

Among those who remember him today, Spooner is primarily known for his individualist anarchist political writings. His belief in natural rights led him to speak out against all forms of statism, from southern slavery to taxation.<sup>2</sup> Named after the Spartan admiral victorious in the Peloponnesian War,<sup>3</sup> Lysander Spooner won very few of his own political battles. Still, his entire life was a series of conflicts against assaults on liberty; no example better illustrates this than Spooner’s legal battle against the postal monopoly.

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<sup>1</sup> Lysander Spooner, *The Unconstitutionality of the Laws of Congress, Prohibiting Private Mails*. (New York: Tribune Printing Establishment, 1844.) Accessed December 13, 2017. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/spooner-the-unconstitutionality-of-the-laws-of-congress-prohibiting-private-mails-1844>.

<sup>2</sup> Carl Watner and Steve Shone, "Lysander Spooner: American Anarchist." The Foundation for Economic Education. August 24, 2011. Accessed February 06, 2018. <https://fee.org/articles/lysander-spooner-american-anarchist/>.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Watner, “Lysander Spooner: Libertarian Pioneer.” Reason. March 1973. Accessed February 06, 2018. <http://reason.com/archives/1973/03/01/lysander-spooner-libertarian-p>.

Born in 1808 in Athol, Massachusetts, Lysander Spooner spent his first twenty-five years working on his parents' farm. He then moved to Worcester to study law.<sup>4</sup>

Admission to the Massachusetts state bar required that non-graduates study under an attorney for five years instead of the three required for law school graduates. Openly defying the statute in 1835, Spooner set up his legal practice after only three years of study. Spooner argued that this law was unjust and hurt the "well-educated poor."<sup>5</sup> Due to Spooner's work and political connections, the restriction was eliminated in 1836.<sup>6</sup>

The legal experience Spooner gained would prepare him for his conflict with the postal monopoly. Eventually he found himself in New York City where business was booming – but not for the Post Office.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Postal System of the 1840s**

In Spooner's day, the postal system was an intricate connection of railroads, steamboats, and stagecoaches. The government subsidized the costs of building infrastructure that provided routes on which to send mail. However, postage rates paid for these subsidies, which in turn made the rates expensive.<sup>8</sup>

In 1840 it cost 18.75 cents, over a quarter of a day's wages, to send a letter from Baltimore to New York.<sup>9</sup> From Boston to DC the rate was 25 cents.<sup>10</sup> The average price for a

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Billy, "Lysander Spooner and the United States Postal Monopoly." Digital Journal. April 18, 2009. Accessed December 14, 2017. <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/271139>.

<sup>5</sup> Lysander Spooner, "To the Members of the Legislature of Massachusetts." Worcester Republican, August 26, 1835. Accessed February 3, 2018. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/pages/spooner-collected-works>.

<sup>6</sup> Shively, "Biography."

<sup>7</sup> Shively, "Biography."

<sup>8</sup> Billy, "Lysander Spooner and the United States Postal Monopoly."

<sup>9</sup> "Universal Service and the Postal Monopoly: A Brief History." The United States Postal Service. October 2008. Accessed February 3, 2018.

<https://about.usps.com/universal-postal-service/universal-service-and-postal-monopoly-history.pdf>. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Billy, "Lysander Spooner and the United States Postal Monopoly."

one page letter was 14.5 cents.<sup>11</sup> For perspective, to send a quarter ounce paper from Boston to Albany by train cost two-thirds as much as sending a barrel of flour the same way.<sup>12</sup>

High postage rates were not the only issue facing the Post Office; bureaucracy was rampant. In the 1840s, over eighty percent of non-military government workers were postmasters or post clerks. Positions appeared to change after each election cycle, indicating political corruption within. Congress was also under pressure from the coach contractor lobby, and favorable postage routes were often given to contractors with political connections. In short, the postal system was entangled with politics.<sup>13</sup>

If the postal system was so rife with problems, why did it still exist? Since the Confederation, the Post Office had been granted a legal monopoly. In 1792 the first act of Congress regarding postal statutes prohibited private delivery of mail on any post road. These laws were continually strengthened. Congress amended the law in 1838 to designate railroads as post roads as well.<sup>14</sup>

A postal monopoly was deemed necessary to protect government revenue. Officials reasoned that if private firms were allowed to deliver mail, they would choose only the most convenient and profitable routes. This would leave only the most expensive routes for the government.<sup>15</sup>

High postal rates led some to defy the postal laws. Individuals traveling to different cities doubled as temporary, private postmen. By the 1840s, the government noticed these

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<sup>11</sup> "Universal Service and the Postal Monopoly: A Brief History." 4.

<sup>12</sup> Lucille Goodyear, "Spooner vs. U.S. Postal System." American Legion Magazine. January 1981. Accessed December 13, 2017.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20121019155313/http://www.lysanderspooner.org/STAMP3.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> Billy, "Lysander Spooner and the United States Postal Monopoly."

<sup>14</sup> "Universal Service and the Postal Monopoly: A Brief History." 12-13.

<sup>15</sup> "Universal Service and the Postal Monopoly: A Brief History." 2.

illicit services chipping into their revenues.<sup>16</sup> In 1843, the legality of this method of private letter transport was challenged. The District Court Case of *United States v. Adams* centered around whether it was legal for steamboat passengers to carry private letters with the intent to deliver them. While the court ruled it illegal for anyone to set up their own transport company to deliver mail, it was permissible for passengers to carry mail on existing steamboats and other transport services with the intent of delivering the items<sup>17</sup> As a result, covert, private mail companies sprung up. These companies would have agents use the existing rails, coaches and steamboats to transport letters.<sup>18</sup> In 1845, it is estimated that a third of all letters were being transported by private mail firms.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Conflict Begins**

Spokane viewed the postal monopoly as a violation of natural rights. Just as in the case of the bar requirement, the government was usurping an individual's right to perform labor and acquire property.<sup>20</sup> To combat this attack on liberty, Spooner devised a plan to test the constitutionality of the monopoly. On January 9, 1844 Spooner sent a letter to Charles Wickliffe, the US Postmaster General, announcing, "I propose soon to establish a letter mail from Boston to Baltimore. I shall myself remain in this city, where I shall be ready at any time to answer any suit."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> William Wooldridge, *Uncle Sam, The Monopoly Man*. (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1970.) 18.

<sup>17</sup> *United States v. Adams* (District Court, S.d. New York November, 1843)

<sup>18</sup> Shively, "Biography."

<sup>19</sup> Brian Summers, "The Postal Monopoly." The Foundation for Economic Education. March 01, 1976. Accessed November 2, 2017. <https://fee.org/articles/the-postal-monopoly/>.

<sup>20</sup> Steve J. Shone, *Lysander Spooner: American Anarchist*. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010.) 8.

<sup>21</sup> "Letter from Lysander Spooner to Hon. Charles A. Wickliffe." Letter from Lysander Spooner. January 9, 1844. Accessed February 1, 2018. <http://digitalcollections.nyhistory.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A131497#page/1/mode/2up>.

By January 23, 1844, Spooner's private American Letter Mail Company began distributing mail.<sup>22</sup> His company delivered mail daily between the cities of "New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Boston." Additionally, Spooner's five cent stamps were drastically cheaper than the Post Office's rates.<sup>23</sup>

Unlike other companies, Spooner made no attempt to hide his business from the government. His newspaper advertisement boldly claimed: "The Company design also (if sustained by the public) thoroughly to agitate the question, and test the constitutional right of free competition in the business of carrying letters."<sup>24</sup>

Lysander Spooner laid out his reasoning as to why the Post Office monopoly was unconstitutional in his 1844 pamphlet, "The Unconstitutionality of the Laws of Congress, Prohibiting Private Mails."<sup>25</sup> Using his legal background, Spooner presented the following arguments:

Article I Section 8 of the Constitution granted Congress the power to "establish post offices and post roads." This gave Congress the authority to create a postal service, not the right to prohibit competition. For comparison, the same clause of the Constitution gives Congress the power "to borrow money" yet none disputed that entities aside from Congress could borrow money. If a postal monopoly was legitimate, the Constitution would have granted Congress the "sole and exclusive" power to create a postal service as the Articles of Confederation had done.<sup>26</sup> It did not.

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<sup>22</sup> Lysander Spooner, *Who Caused the Reduction of Postage?: Ought He to Be Paid?* (Boston: Wright & Hasty's Press, 1851.)

<sup>23</sup> "American Post Office." *New-York Daily Tribune.*, February 17, 1844. Accessed December 13, 2017. *Chronicling America.*

<sup>24</sup> "American Post Office."

<sup>25</sup> Spooner, *The Unconstitutionality of the Laws of Congress, Prohibiting Private Mails.*

<sup>26</sup> Spooner, *The Unconstitutionality of the Laws of Congress, Prohibiting Private Mails.*

Additionally, prohibiting competition was not an implied power found within the “necessary and proper” clause either. Some argued that the monopoly was necessary to fund the government Post Office. However, the Constitution did not require the Post Office to fund itself. If necessary, Congress had the power to collect taxes for funding.<sup>27</sup>

The postal monopoly also threatened the First Amendment right to a free press. Free press involved the right to circulate information, but having only a governmental avenue to disseminate information endangered that right. An exclusive government post office “involves a tyranny, and a destruction of individual rights,”<sup>28</sup>

Spooner’s concerns were not baseless. Since its founding, questions of political censorship regarding the Post Office arose. During the debate over the ratification of the Constitution, the pro-constitution Federalists were dominant in the cities through which much mail flowed. Suspiciously, the Anti-Federalists’ correspondence seemed to disappear or face delays. As a result, the Federalist Postmaster General Ebenezer Hazard had been under intense scrutiny. Later, in the 1830s southern postmasters wanted to ban antislavery material, and Congress had debated allowing them to do so.<sup>29</sup> In light of potential free press violations, Spooner felt the ability to send mail privately was essential.

Philosophically, Spooner argued that the postal monopoly violated the natural rights theory upon which the Constitution was founded. There was a natural right to perform labor, established within the right to property, “a right which is guarantied [sic] by most of the State

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<sup>27</sup> Spooner, *The Unconstitutionality of the Laws of Congress, Prohibiting Private Mails*

<sup>28</sup> Spooner, *The Unconstitutionality of the Laws of Congress, Prohibiting Private Mails*.

<sup>29</sup> Wendy McElroy, "The Post Office as a Violation of Constitutional Rights." The Foundation for Economic Education. May 01, 2001. Accessed February 05, 2018.  
<https://fee.org/articles/the-post-office-as-a-violation-of-constitutional-rights/>.

constitutions, and not forbidden by the national constitution.” No law that violated this right was legitimate unless there was express permission for it in the Constitution.<sup>30</sup>

Constitutional or not, the government sought to protect its postal monopoly. Six days after Spooner’s company began, The House of Representatives introduced a resolution to investigate the establishment of private post offices.<sup>31</sup> In the meantime, Spooner’s company was becoming successful. As the US postal revenue went down, the government warned railroad leaders that government mail would be removed from their transit operations unless they refused to serve private companies.<sup>32</sup>

By March 30th, the postmaster general had Lysander Spooner and his agents arrested while using a railroad in Maryland to transport letters. One of Spooner’s agents was found guilty and fined 50 dollars.<sup>33</sup> Yet Spooner soon had a judicial decision that benefited his company. In April, the Massachusetts District Court declared that transport companies were not liable if their passengers secretly transported mail.<sup>34</sup>

In May, the Post Office Committee of the House of Representatives noted about the Post Office that “its popularity, like its revenue, has of late been greatly reduced.”<sup>35</sup> Spooner, still busy with legal challenges, was “discharged on common bail, on four of the charges preferred against him,” on June 14th.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Spooner, *The Unconstitutionality of the Laws of Congress, Prohibiting Private Mails*

<sup>31</sup> “Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States, 1843-1844.” January 29, 1844. Accessed February 6, 2018. Library of Congress.

<sup>32</sup> Goodyear, "Spooner vs. U.S. Postal System."

<sup>33</sup> Spooner, *Who Caused the Reduction of Postage?*

<sup>34</sup> United States v. Kimball (District Court D. Massachusetts April 8, 1844)

<sup>35</sup> Spooner, *Who Caused the Reduction of Postage?*

<sup>36</sup> "Mr Spooner's Case." Newport Mercury, June 15, 1844. Accessed February 5, 2018. Access Newspaper Archive.

By 1845 Congress realized that people had become accustomed to inexpensive mail, and it reluctantly acknowledged the need to lower the postal rates rather than exclusively trying to destroy private carriers.<sup>37</sup> Still, officials stressed that “it was not by competition, but by penal enactment, that the private competition was to be put down.”<sup>38</sup> Eventually, the US Postmaster General begged Congress to lower postage rates. In March 1845, Congress passed a bill fixing the rate of postage at 5 cents within a radius of 300 miles.<sup>39</sup> The Post Office further compromised, implementing tactics that private carriers used to increase efficiency, such as requiring prepayment via stamps. These changes turned the Post Office’s budgetary deficit into a surplus within three years.<sup>40</sup>

The reforms were a victory for Spooner, but they also contributed to the end of his company. The lower prices caused an increased usage of the Post Office.<sup>41</sup> This, along with his legal fees, brought about Spooner’s downfall. As Benjamin Tucker, Spooner’s mentee, described: “as the carrying of each letter constituted a separate offense, the government was able to shower prosecutions on him and crush him out by loading him with legal expenses.”<sup>42</sup>

Though the postal monopoly remained, Spooner’s conflict led to a nearly seventy-five percent reduction in postal rates. In contrast to activists such as Barnabas Bates who sought lower postal prices through politics,<sup>43</sup> Spooner’s competitive approach de facto forced the

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<sup>37</sup> Spooner, *Who Caused the Reduction of Postage?*

<sup>38</sup> “Post Office Reform.” In *The Congressional Globe*, 14:205–6. (Washington: The Globe Office, 1845.)

<sup>39</sup> Spooner, *Who Caused the Reduction of Postage?*

<sup>40</sup> Kelly Olds, “The Challenge to the U.S. Postal Monopoly, 1939-1851” *Cato Journal* vol. 15, No. 1(Spring/Summer 1995). 1-24. Accessed April 1, 2018. <https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/serials/files/cato-journal/1995/5/cj15n1-1.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> Billy, “Lysander Spooner and the United States Postal Monopoly.”

<sup>42</sup> Benjamin Tucker, “Our Nestor Taken From Us.” *Liberty* IV, no. 22 (May 28, 1887): 4-5. Accessed February 5, 2018. <http://library.libertarian-labyrinth.org/files/original/aa7634ed7e4bfd23bee5ee33a65b384.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> Anthony Comegna, “Barnabas Bates and the Battle for Cheap Postage: Barnabas Bates vs. Lysander Spooner.” Editor’s Note. *Libertarianism.org*. n.d. Accessed April 1 2018. <https://www.libertarianism.org/publications/essays/barnabas-bates-battle-cheap-postage-part-four>.

government to respond. Additionally, Spooner's unique political goal distinguished him from other private mail carriers. As American historian Anthony Comegna notes, "Though private posts competed with the government post office throughout the pre-reform era, Spooner's company ruthlessly cut rates with the express purpose of undermining government operations and crowding them out of the business."<sup>44</sup> Finally, the American Letter Mail Company illustrated (however briefly) how a non-governmental, "anarchist" mail system could function. While Spooner did not achieve complete victory, the conflict and compromises were significant.

### **A Lasting Legacy**

Spooner went back to Athol and dedicated himself to the abolitionist cause as the Civil War drew near.<sup>45</sup> After the war, he advocated for the right to secession and various other causes.<sup>46</sup> On May 14, 1887, Lysander Spooner died peacefully in his room, surrounded by his books and pamphlets which he had utilized during his "pamphleteer's warfare."<sup>47</sup> He was never married, and he left no children nor any wealth.<sup>48</sup> Yet Spooner's legacy continues.

Spooner's influence began by serving as a mentor to younger anarchists like Benjamin Tucker, creator of the radical individualist anarchist movement.<sup>49</sup> His influence continues in the modern libertarian movement.<sup>50</sup> Spooner's writings were cited as support for preventing handgun bans in the majority opinion of the 2008 US Supreme Court Case *District of*

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<sup>44</sup> Comegna, "Barnabas Bates and the Battle for Cheap Postage."

<sup>45</sup> Shively, "Biography."

<sup>46</sup> De Santi, "The Abolitionist Secessionist?"

<sup>47</sup> Tucker, "Our Nestor Taken From Us."

<sup>48</sup> Wendy McElroy, "Lysander Spooner." Lew Rockwell. February 11, 2006. Accessed December 13 2017. <https://www.lewrockwell.com/2006/02/wendy-mcelroy/lysander-spooner/>

<sup>49</sup> McElroy, "Lysander Spooner."

<sup>50</sup> De Santi, "The Abolitionist Secessionist?"

*Columbia v. Heller*.<sup>51</sup> Murray Rothbard, founder of the anarcho-capitalist movement, drew inspiration from Spooner's writings while creating his ideology.<sup>52</sup> He praised Spooner in September 1974 saying: "of all the host of Lockean natural rights theorists, Lysander was the only one to push the theory to its logical - and infinitely radical - conclusion: individualist anarchism."<sup>53</sup> In fact, it was Rothbard's synthesis of Spooner's beliefs with those of other philosophers that shaped the modern libertarian movement.<sup>54</sup>

Rothbard admired Spooner most for his action-oriented vision. Rather than merely declaring the state illegitimate, Spooner advocated for peaceful resistance of state coercion. He lived by his beliefs, such as by establishing his mail firm.<sup>55</sup> It takes little effort to denounce government. It is much harder to show how a peaceful, non-governmental system can flourish.<sup>56</sup> With his postal company, Spooner showed how a private, voluntary system can benefit the public.

In 1970, the United States Postal Service replaced the Post Office Department of Spooner's day, yet the legal monopoly remains.<sup>57</sup> Today, private competition exists to a limited extent. Individuals may ship letters with private carriers if it's deemed "extremely urgent," if the rate is at least six times the cost of current USPS first class postage, or if they physically carry letters to their destination.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> District of Columbia v. Heller (Supreme Court of the United States, March 18, 2008).

<sup>52</sup> Murray Rothbard, "THE SPOONER-TUCKER DOCTRINE: AN ECONOMIST'S VIEW." *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 20, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 5-15. Accessed February 6, 2018. [https://mises.org/system/tdf/20\\_1\\_2.pdf?file=1&type=document](https://mises.org/system/tdf/20_1_2.pdf?file=1&type=document).

<sup>53</sup> Murray Rothbard, *The Libertarian Forum* VI, no. 9 (September 1974): 1. Accessed February 6, 2018. <http://rothbard.altervista.org/articles/libertarian-forum/lf-6-9.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> Gerard Casey, *Murray Rothbard*. (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010.)

<sup>55</sup> Rothbard, "THE SPOONER-TUCKER DOCTRINE"

<sup>56</sup> Shively, "Biography."

<sup>57</sup> "Universal Service and the Postal Monopoly: A Brief History." 1-2.

<sup>58</sup> Ethan Trex, "Why Can't You Start a Rival Post Office?" *Mental Floss*. November 19, 2010. Accessed February 06, 2018. <http://mentalfloss.com/article/26424/why-cant-you-start-rival-post-office>.

The legal battles over private delivery still continue as well. In 1971, The Independent Postal System of America delivered Christmas cards for five cents each (three cents less than USPS). A court injunction stopped them.<sup>59</sup> Until 1993, Equifax had been sending letters via Fedex and marking them as “urgent.” The company headquarters were raided in 1993 by armed USPS agents to see if the letters were in fact “extremely urgent.” They were not deemed urgent, and the company was fined 30,000 dollars.<sup>60</sup> Even today, President Donald Trump is feuding with the online company Amazon, claiming in part that their business is damaging Post Office revenues.<sup>61</sup>

The overarching principle illustrated in Lysander Spooner’s life is that instead of expecting the government to reform itself, individuals ought to seek their own solutions to what they view as government problems. Ideologically, Spooner’s entrepreneurial version of government resistance persists. One twenty-first century example of this is the cryptocurrency Bitcoin; the lack of trust in government banking systems led to the creation of nongovernmental currency.<sup>62</sup> The fully anarchist society that Spooner envisioned may never happen. However, as long as individuals with Spooner’s enterprising spirit exist, “anarchy” will always have a place in society.

As summarized in Spooner’s obituary, “To destroy tyranny, root and branch, was the great object of his life.”<sup>63</sup> Lysander Spooner’s life was a series of conflicts with the

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<sup>59</sup> Summers, “The Postal Monopoly.”

<sup>60</sup> Trex, “Why Can’t You Start a Rival Post Office?”

<sup>61</sup> Chris Isidore, “Trump vs. Amazon: Let’s set the record straight” CNN Money. April 1 2018. Accessed April 1 2018. <http://money.cnn.com/2018/03/29/technology/trump-tweets-about-amazon-taxes/index.html?iid=EL>.

<sup>62</sup> Zoë Bernard, “Everything you need to know about Bitcoin, its mysterious origins, and the many alleged identities of its creator” Business Insider. December 2 2017. Accessed April 1 2018.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/bitcoin-history-cryptocurrency-satoshi-nakamoto-2017-12>.

<sup>63</sup> Tucker, “Our Nestor Taken From Us.”

government; the most notable among them being his challenge to the US postal monopoly.

Though his business was defeated, the Post Office compromised on its postage rates.

Spooner's legacy remains as the "father of cheap postage in America."<sup>64</sup> His American Letter Mail Company illustrated how voluntary, non-governmental systems can flourish. Spooner's fight against statism continues today in both the modern movements he inspired and through peaceful entrepreneurship that continually challenges government authority.

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<sup>64</sup> Tucker, "Our Nestor Taken From Us."

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This is an advertisement published in the New York Daily Tribune that Lysander Spooner wrote for the American Letter Mail Company. I used this to both gain details about the company and to illustrate Spooner's intentions in starting the company.

District of Columbia v. Heller (Supreme Court of the United States, March 18, 2008) (LexisNexis, Dist. file).

This is a Supreme Court Case in which Justice Scalia delivers the opinion of the court and references Lysander Spooner's work *The Unconstitutionality of Slavery*. I used this case to show the lasting impact of Spooner's writings.

Chris Isidore. "Trump vs. Amazon: Let's set the record straight" *CNN Money*. April 1 2018. Accessed April 1 2018.  
<http://money.cnn.com/2018/03/29/technology/trump-tweets-about-amazon-taxes/index.html?iid=EL>.

This is an article describing the current feud between Donald Trump and the company Amazon. I used this article to illustrate the ongoing tensions between the government and private package delivery that exist in modern times.

"Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States, 1843-1844." January 29, 1844. Accessed February 6, 2018. Library of Congress.

This is a record of bills and resolutions introduced in the House of Representatives on January 29, 1844. I used this to get information on the resolution to investigate potential violations of postal law.

"Letter from Lysander Spooner to Hon. Charles A. Wickliffe." Letter from Lysander Spooner. January 9, 1844. Accessed February 1, 2018.  
<http://digitalcollections.nyhistory.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A131497#page/1/mode/2up>.

This is a letter Lysander Spooner sent to the US Postmaster General. I used this letter to showcase Spooner's boldness and his direct challenge to the US government's postal monopoly.

"Mr Spooner's Case." *Newport Mercury*, June 15, 1844. Accessed February 5, 2018. Access Newspaper Archive.

This is a newspaper article published during the middle of Lysander Spooner's conflict

with the US Postal Service. I used this article to get information on Spooner's discharge from jail on bail.

“Post Office Reform.” In *The Congressional Globe*, 14:205–6. Washington: The Globe Office, 1845.

This is a book containing the records of Congressional debates. I used this book to find information on the attempts of Congress to end the private mail services.

Rothbard, Murray. *The Libertarian Forum* VI, no. 9 (September 1974): 1. Accessed February 6, 2018. <http://rothbard.altervista.org/articles/libertarian-forum/lf-6-9.pdf>.

This newsletter written by Murray Rothbard contains a portion where he writes about Lysander Spooner. I took a quote from this newsletter to illustrate Spooner's influence on Rothbard.

Rothbard, Murray. "THE SPOONER-TUCKER DOCTRINE: AN ECONOMIST'S VIEW." *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 20, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 5-15. Accessed February 6, 2018. [https://mises.org/system/tdf/20\\_1\\_2.pdf?file=1&type=document](https://mises.org/system/tdf/20_1_2.pdf?file=1&type=document).

This is a journal article Rothbard wrote about Spooner and Tucker's political views. I used it to detail what Rothbard admired about Spooner, as well as how Rothbard drew ideological inspiration from Spooner.

Spooner, Lysander. "To the Members of the Legislature of Massachusetts." *Worcester Republican*, August 26, 1835. Accessed February 3, 2018. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/pages/spooner-collected-works>.

This is a pamphlet Spooner wrote concerning the Massachusetts law that established different criteria for college graduates and non graduates to be admitted to the state bar. I used it to understand his arguments as to why this regulation was unjust, especially to the “well-educated poor.”

Spooner, Lysander. *The Unconstitutionality of the Laws of Congress, Prohibiting Private Mails*. New York: Tribune Printing Establishment, 1844. Accessed December 13, 2017. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/spooner-the-unconstitutionality-of-the-laws-of-congress-prohibiting-private-mails-1844>.

This is a pamphlet that Lysander Spooner published in which he argues that the US Postal monopoly is unconstitutional. I used this to understand his reasoning as to why he believed that the Postal Office was unconstitutional.

Spooner, Lysander. *Who Caused the Reduction of Postage?: Ought He to Be Paid?* Boston:

Wright & Hasty's Press, 1851.

This is a book Spooner wrote which details the events of his conflict with the US Post Office. I used this book to get information about the American Letter Mail Company and the actions of Congress regarding the postal law.

Tucker, Benjamin. "Our Nestor Taken From Us." *Liberty* IV, no. 22 (May 28, 1887): 4-5. Accessed February 5, 2018.  
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This is Lysander Spooner's obituary as published in the periodical *Liberty*. I used this to illustrate the events of Spooner's Post Office conflict and Spooner's life through the eyes of his mentee, Benjamin Tucker.

United States v. Adams (District Court, S.d. New York November, 1843) (LexisNexis, Dist. file).

This is a court case dealing with the legality of transporting mail privately via steamboat. I used this case to get information on the legal status of private mail firms in the 1840s.

United States v. Kimball (District Court D. Massachusetts April 8, 1844) (LexisNexis, Dist. file).

This is a court case dealing with transport companies and liability if their passengers secret carry private mail. I used this case as an example of judicial victory for private mail firms.

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Bernard, Zoë. "Everything you need to know about Bitcoin, its mysterious origins, and the many alleged identities of its creator" *Business Insider*. December 2 2017. Accessed April 1 2018.  
<http://www.businessinsider.com/bitcoin-history-cryptocurrency-satoshi-nakamoto-2017-12>.

This is an article describing the origin of the cryptocurrency Bitcoin. I used this article to get information on why Bitcoin was created and to illustrate the parallels between Bitcoin's purpose and that of the American Letter Mail Company.

Billy, Michael. "Lysander Spooner and the United States Postal Monopoly." *Digital Journal*. April 18, 2009. Accessed December 14, 2017.  
<http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/271139>.

This is an article about Spooner's conflict with the Post Office. I used this article to gain information about the state of postal service before the American Letter Mail Company and the legal tactics the US government used against Spooner's company.

Casey, Gerard. *Murray Rothbard*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010.

This is a book about Murray Rothbard and his political views. I used this book to gain information of Spooner's influence and how it contributed to the modern libertarian movement.

Comegna, Anthony. "Barnabas Bates and the Battle for Cheap Postage: Barnabas Bates vs. Lysander Spooner." Editor's Note. *Libertarianism.org*. n.d. Accessed April 1 2018. <https://www.libertarianism.org/publications/essays/barnabas-bates-battle-cheap-postage-part-four>.

This is an editor's note for a section of a book posted on *Libertarianism.org*. I used information from the editor's note to contrast Spooner with the political reformer Barnabas Bates as well as with other private mail services.

De Santi, Matt. "The Abolitionist Secessionist?" *Abbeville Institute*. March 8, 2016. Accessed December 11, 2017. <https://www.abbevilleinstitute.org/review/the-abolitionist-secessionist/>.

This is an article detailing Lysander Spooner's opposition to slavery and his abolitionist tactics. I used it to gain an understanding of his political beliefs and his legacy.

Goodyear, Lucille. "Spooner vs. U.S. Postal System." *American Legion Magazine*. January 1981. Accessed December 13, 2017. <https://web.archive.org/web/20121019155313/http://www.lysanderspooner.org/STAMP3.htm>.

This is an article about Lysander Spooner's company and how it drove down US postage rates. I used this to detail how Spooner started his company, and the legal tactics the government used in response to Spooner.

LaSorsa, Brian. "USPS: The Cursed Carriers." *Mises Institute*. January 25, 2012. Accessed December 13, 2017. <https://mises.org/library/usps-cursed-carriers>.

This is an article about the current state of the USPS and the competition it faced in the 1800s. I used this article to gain information about Harnden and his postal business, the legal pushback to Spooner's company, and the current financial state of the USPS.

McElroy, Wendy. "Lysander Spooner." Lew Rockwell. February 11, 2006. Accessed December 13 2017.

<https://www.lewrockwell.com/2006/02/wendy-mcelroy/lysander-spooner/>

This is an article about the life and political influence of Lysander Spooner. I used this article to get information about his death.

McElroy, Wendy. "The Post Office as a Violation of Constitutional Rights." The Foundation for Economic Education. May 01, 2001. Accessed February 05, 2018.

<https://fee.org/articles/the-post-office-as-a-violation-of-constitutional-rights/>.

This is an article about the history of the post office abuses of power. I used it to find historical examples of the post office attempting to suppress political speech.

Kelly Olds, "The Challenge to the U.S. Postal Monopoly, 1939-1851" *Cato Journal* vol. 15, No. 1(Spring/Summer 1995). 1-24. Accessed April 1, 2018.

<https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/serials/files/cato-journal/1995/5/cj15n1-1.pdf>

This is a journal article discussing the impact of private mail carriers on the postal monopoly. I used this article to get information on the impact that the 1945 reduction in postage had on the Post Office's revenues. I also got information on how the post office increased their efficiency by borrowing methods from private carriers.

Shively, Charles. "Biography." *Lysanderspooner.org*. Accessed January 25, 2018.

<http://www.lysanderspooner.org/biography/>.

This is a biography of Lysander Spooner's life. I used it to gain information about his early life, as well as details and the chronology of his conflict with the post office.

Shone, Steve J. *Lysander Spooner: American Anarchist*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010.

This is a book about the anarchist philosophy that Lysander Spooner espoused. I used it to gain information about his arguments as to why the postal monopoly was unconstitutional.

Summers, Brian. "The Postal Monopoly" The Foundation for Economic Education. March 01, 1976. Accessed November 2, 2017. <https://fee.org/articles/the-postal-monopoly/>.

This is an article about the monopoly that the USPS has over postal services and the consequences. I used this article to get information about the extent that private mail impacted the post office in the 1840s. I also used it to learn about the Independent Postal System of America.

Trex, Ethan. "Why Can't You Start a Rival Post Office?" Mental Floss. November 19, 2010. Accessed February 06, 2018.

<http://mentalfloss.com/article/26424/why-cant-you-start-rival-post-office>.

This is an article explaining the current USPS postal monopoly. I used it to show what the US mail system looks like today. I also used this article to give examples of the modern consequences of violating postal law.

"Universal Service and the Postal Monopoly: A Brief History." The United States Postal Service. October 2008. Accessed February 3, 2018.

<https://about.usps.com/universal-postal-service/universal-service-and-postal-monopoly-history.pdf>.

This is a detailed explanation of the USPS Postal Monopoly. I used this to gain information about the laws that gave the Postal Office a monopoly and the state of the USPS today.

Watner, Carl. "Lysander Spooner: Libertarian Pioneer." Reason. March 1973. Accessed February 06, 2018.

<http://reason.com/archives/1973/03/01/lysander-spooner-libertarian-p>.

This is an article about Lysander Spooner and his libertarian ideas. I used it to gain information on his beliefs and the origin of his name.

Watner, Carl, and Steve Shone. "Lysander Spooner: American Anarchist." The Foundation for Economic Education. August 24, 2011. Accessed February 06, 2018.

<https://fee.org/articles/lysander-spooner-american-anarchist/>.

This is an article about Lysander Spooner's life and works. I used this article to get an overview of Spooner's life.

Wooldridge, William. *Uncle Sam, The Monopoly Man*. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1970.

This is a book about the history of various government sanctioned monopolies throughout US history. I used this book to get a background on the postal monopoly. In addition, I took information from this book about the methods used by private postmen.