Attorney General's Office

June 5, 1857

Sir,

Communication from the subject of the present letter on the subject of the letter carriers at Brooklyn was at first laid aside for more pressing engagements. But yesterday you wrote of yesterday's morning reminding me of the letter carriers' business of carrying letters. I think mail matter belongs exclusively to the government. It ought to be and must be so for reasons which do not need to be repeated. However, from the large town letter carriers to and from the office are a part of the system as much as the transportation of the
Orders from our office to another. These orders are legally appointed by the Post Master General; they are required to give bond; they may collect a certain fixed and uniform sum upon each letter and pay it over to the Post Master; they are under the supervision of the Department of the Interior and are subject to special penalties for a violation of duty. In all intents and purposes, they are public officers.

But it seems that a portion of the citizens of Brooklyn unwilling to be served by the legal carrier and desirous of having one of their own selection associated themselves together and chose a person given a standing order to the Post Master, that he shall deliver all their letters and papers to a prison by them designated; that person being one who was deposed as a legal carrier and discharged from
the Service. The Post Master refuse
to accede in the arrangement

to deliver mail matter agreeably
to the order and the question I
am to advise you upon is whether
you are bound to accede in the
arrangement of these gentlemen
to substitute their own agent for
your.

It seems to me a palatable
effort to evade the law and procure
in from the purpose it was made
for. Letter carriers are appointed for the
benefit of the whole whole
people who live in the district lies
to the end.

I think all who live there may
be treated alike with the same regularity
and at the same cost - the district
as well as the near and those who
get receiving one letter a week as well
as those who get a large number every
...and we continued with the...
day. If a part of the people can have a canner of their own they can break down the system and deprive others of its benefit. You are not authorized to hire these canners in any city more than the aggregate sum which they collect for their service. A private canner may diminish it. If private competition be allowed tolerated that the income may be so reduced that you must close down altogether, and lock up. In that event every man in the city must go to the office whether he will or no for his own benefit or else submit to be placed and neglected in the midst of unregulated and irresponsible canners, Those citizens who make the demand in question should remember that they are not entitled to pay two cents,
mud exposed until 9 o'clock in the 9 o'clock
was not much water in much
dint matter with mud and scum
submered it for about an hour
rust proof at certain times this was
cut must even 100 percent in earlier
headed part which was attached
of the was near a few
of the is dried with wetted scum
at underneath and always a settled water

To remount in the middle part of land
remains aerially and have cultural
animal in with others with one fitted each

heated mud and with blood writing
the event proof of being just a part
on a letter and half a cent on a newspaper merely for the delivery of their own letter and imposing little or the further purpose of accommodating their neighbors also. It is a light task to upon them to cause revenue for a benevolent public purposes. They ought to pay it cheerfully and leave them manage it. And the law where the law puts it in the hands of the proper public authorities.

But they maintain that every citizen has a right under the law to receive his letters from the public that any man carrier. It is true. They may deliver the public matter to return his mail matter and he may call for it himself or have it brought...
away by one whom he authorize, to get it. This provision fits the case of an individual person who
in good faith from motives of economy convenience or out of necessity than his letters should be delivered at
the office to himself, his family clerk servant or a friend. Nor does it
more than a large number
may unite together for the purpose
away regular
of lost to task the general business
in whole or in part
of carrying letters away from the post
Office Department government. Any
man who has occasion to do so may
send a letter by his friends on a regular
route in a mail route by
his own special messenger, or any
special trouble. But in due, not
follow that the merchants of New
York and Philadelphia may therefore
agree to establish a daily mail on
private account between the two
cities. The parties may lawfully
agree to that one shall leave a
letter for the other at a private
house but this is not done on any
principle which would justify
five hundred or a thousand men
in appointing a separate Post
Master for themselves in opposition
to the legal officers.

[Handwritten text continues]

The statutes like others
must be construed according to
its spirit and in such a manner
as to carry out its design. Every
text rule of interpretation
furnishes you to carry out the
particular and exceptional purpose,
so as to speak its general intent
and destroy its [Handwritten text continues]
the law establishing a system of public letter carriers, cuotions and inconvenience was to prevent the postmasters from attending the delivery of letters by persons who were not responsible to your department. It would be trifling with the act of Congress to allow such carriers to be used on any pretext whatsoever.

My opinion on this is that any attempt to establish public letter carriers is a form the Post Office by a private carrier in a town where a public carrier has been appointed by you is altogether unlawful; and no device can be invented which will be reasonable enough to excuse it. A man who intends to make his regular business on a book of his business and to do it improperly for hire in opposition to the public carrier...
I am legally incapable of receiving authority to take letters out of the Post Office for that purpose, no matter what credentials he may have; whether it be a joint order from all his employers or a separate order from each, it must be renewed every day.

I am very respectfully,

[Signature]

Gen. A. W. Brown