

James Henry Hammond to Harry Hammond, February 19, 1856, James Henry Hammond Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

Redcliffe, 19 Feb. 1856

My Dear Harry:

In the last will I made I left to you, over and above my other children Sally Johnson the mother of Louisa and all the children of both. Sally says Henderson is my child. It is possible, but I do not believe it. Yet act on her's rather than my opinion. Louisa's first child *may* be mine. I think not. Her second I believe is mine. Take care of her and her children who are both of *your* blood if not of mine and of Henderson. The services of the rest will I think compensate for an indulgence to these. I cannot free these people and send them North. It would be cruelty to them. Nor would I like that any but my own blood should own as Slaves my own blood or Louisa. I leave them to your charge, believing that you will best appreciate and most independently carry out my wishes in regard to them. Do not let Louisa or any of my children or possible children be slaves of Strangers. Slavery *in the family* will be their happiest earthly condition.

Ever affectionately,

James Henry Hammond

[James Henry Hammond (November 15, 1807–November 13, 1864) was a politician from South Carolina. He served as a United States Representative from 1835 to 1836, the 60th Governor of South Carolina from 1842 to 1844, and United States Senator from 1857 to 1860. As a young man, Hammond had a homosexual relationship with a college friend, Thomas Jefferson Withers, in 1826. Hammond took as a mistress Sally Johnson, an 18 year old slave seamstress with a baby daughter Louisa, purchasing them for \$900 in 1839. When Louisa was twelve, she also became his mistress. Hammond also sexually molested the four teenage daughters of his brother-in-law Wade Hampton II for more than two years. His wife Catherine, with whom he had six children, temporarily left him when he refused to give up Louisa.]