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## Documents Online

**Title:** Letter from Jacob Thompson to Jeremiah Black

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### Contact:

Archives & Special Collections  
Waidner-Spahr Library  
Dickinson College  
P.O. Box 1773  
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

[archives@dickinson.edu](mailto:archives@dickinson.edu)

Nov 27 1879

Memphis

Jacob Thompson

Memphis Tenn  
Nov. 27<sup>th</sup> 1879

My dear Judge Black

It has been some time since I have heard from you directly; But when any thing troubles me. I instinctively turn to you for light & counsel.

Last fall in travelling through the North Western States, I received a postal card from a friend advising me that if I would look into Bonner's Child's History of the U. States, published by Harper & Brothers of New York in 1866. Vol. 3. I would find something to interest me. As soon as I returned to Memphis from recuperating from the yellow fever, I got one of <sup>our</sup> Book-Sellers to order the book, and on yesterday I rec<sup>d</sup> it and for the first time read it.

It is so full of lies and misrepresentation, I do not know what view to take of that sentence in which he introduces my name.

I send you the Book. & you will find Vol. 3<sup>rd</sup> page 17. he says, speaking of Pres<sup>t</sup>. Buchanan's Cabinet: "The Secretary of Interior, Jacob Thompson, stole a million, ran away, & became a rebel General". Thus lies in a single line - Now the question which I wish to submit to you as my friend and as counsel is what can be and what ought to be done with such a historian. To hunt him up & kick his stern until his nose bleeds, I suppose would not do. To sue a Beggar-a-liner for slander will give him conspicuousness & consequence which he would never otherwise reach & then not receive from him a dollar on account of his poverty. This would be like the man in the crowd who asked the king as he passed to kick him, or he could

say to his fellows, The King noticed  
- him - To reply to the article in The  
Newspapers is what I cannot consent  
to do. To submit to such a slander  
in silence, requires all the patience  
& philosophy I possess - Now  
my friend, give me your views.

Could the Publishers be made  
liable at law for the slander.  
That I am is strong & if the juries  
of the South can be relied upon  
at all, I think, you could make  
them smart - This whole book is so  
full of falsehood and abuse of the  
Southern, <sup>men</sup> I turn from it with growl-  
loathing and contempt - But still  
it is not pleasant or agreeable to have  
a Northern Historian write you as a  
rascal & run-away for the children  
of the North. Had I would like to leave  
behind me an irreproachable name -  
as I know I have endeavored to square  
my whole life by the rules of honor, honesty,

truth, fidelity to every engagement.  
to live a gentleman, to be a gentleman  
a true friend, patriot & Christian.

Look at this Book and tell me the  
best & wisest course to pursue - I  
must if I can stop this falsehood  
that I was corrupt in office or  
ever stole money -

.. Mrs Thompson & I are quietly  
living in Memphis. Our grand chil-  
dren are off at school. Our health  
is good & my time for the most <sup>part</sup>  
is taken up in looking after my  
forming interests - and this year  
we are doing well - and our people  
are prosperous -

Remember me & Mrs Thompson  
to Mrs Black & the family

Your friend  
I alone am living of those J. Thompson  
grossly slandered. Cobb, Floyd, Green,  
Harrison & Slidell. What ought  
the living to do for the dead