

Rooms Western Sanitary Commission
St Louis, May 17th 1862

J.A. Roosevelt Esq

Dear Sir

Your favor of 14th is recd. We have a most valuable colaborer in Boston in the person of Jas M Barnard Esq who has rendered us invaluable service. Mrs Lamb of the city has since the commencement been a steady collector for our association. If at any time you wish to confer with Mr Barnard, he would I know be most happy to hear from you. I have just had an interview with a gentleman who returned to day from Genl Halleck's head quarters. Both armies are entrenched and both gradually advancing their lines. The forces are about equal. The contest must be a terrible one, it is frightful to contemplate. The fate of the South rests upon it, if we are conquerors there the war will quickly end. The action of Genl Hunter is damaging to our cause, it causes the most intense bitterness and gives a coloring to the stances of the ultra secessionists that this war is waged not for the suppression of the rebellion and the restoration of the union, but for the overthrow of slavery. I consider the fate of slavery without any such action as having already received its death blow. Its bitterest enemies can desire or should desire no more. Emancipation should be gradual. Humanity demands it for the poor negro and justice to the owners. I have been a slave owner, but many years ago manumitted them all. Ever since my residence here I have been in favor of gradual emancipation. I am intimately acquainted with the South and the peculiar institution and cannot but feel that a general emancipation should prove alike injurious to the negroes and masters. The moral condition for which the masters are answerable can be greatly improved. I wish that our friends East would act with discretion in this delicate subject. The union men in the West are union men from the love of the union, and not from the hatred to slavery. But I have got off of Sanitary matters on to another subject without intending it, which you will excuse. Our report will be out on Monday which I will send you. What I wrote is for your private use.

Very truly yours
James E Yeatman