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**Case Files of
Investigations by
Levi C. Turner
and
Lafayette C. Baker
1861-1866**



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Record Group 94
Records of the
Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917
in the National Archives

CASE FILES OF INVESTIGATIONS BY
LEVI C. TURNER AND LAFAYETTE C. BAKER
1861-1866

On the 137 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced an index volume and unbound case files of investigations by Army Judge Advocate Levi C. Turner, 1862-66, and by Provost Marshal and Special Agent Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-65. The records relate to investigations of subversive activities in the Civil War. The index and the case files are part of the series of records known as the "Turner-Baker papers," and they are in Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917.

Several organizations had general investigative functions during the Civil War. From the outbreak of the war until early in 1862 the Secretary of State, acting through U.S. marshals and other Government officials, caused the arrest and imprisonment of many persons suspected of engaging in treasonable or disloyal activities. By an Executive order in February 1862 the authority to make such arrests was transferred to the War Department.

The offices in the War Department concerned with the investigation of subversive activities were those of the Judge Advocate General and the Provost Marshal General. Although a Judge Advocate for the Army had been authorized as early as March 2, 1849 (9 Stat. 351), increased demands arising from the expanded military operations after the outbreak of the Civil War required the services of more than one judge advocate for the administration of military justice. By an act of Congress approved July 17, 1862 (12 Stat. 598), the President was given authority to appoint a Judge Advocate General and several subordinate judge advocates.

AGO General Order 140, September 24, 1862, announced the newly created post of Provost Marshal General. An act of Congress approved March 3, 1863 (12 Stat. 732), created the Provost Marshal General's Bureau and provided for the appointment of a provost marshal for each congressional district. The provost marshals were military police one of whose duties was to arrest deserters and who could also be assigned to detect subversive activities. In addition, the War Department employed special provost marshals, detectives, and other agents when necessary.

Maj. Levi C. Turner was appointed as Associate Judge Advocate for the Army Around Washington by AGO General Order 95 of August 5, 1862. Under the terms of the order all cases of State prisoners and also cases of military arrests in the District of Columbia and the adjacent counties of Virginia were to be specially assigned to Turner for investigation and determination.

On August 8, 1862, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton issued an order to prevent evasion of military duty and to suppress disloyal practices. The order provided that all citizens liable to be drafted into the militia should be prevented from going to a foreign country and that any person who might be engaged by act, speech, or writing in discouraging volunteer enlistments or in any way giving aid and comfort to the enemy or engaged in any other disloyal practice against the United States would be arrested and imprisoned. All arrests made by U.S. marshals and superintendents or the chiefs of police were to be reported to Judge Advocate Turner in order that the apprehended persons could be tried before a military commission. As a result of an order dated August 11, 1862, and issued by Turner, he established direct contact with all Federal and local law-enforcement officers in the United States by instructing them to properly execute the order of the Secretary of War.

The Turner case files reproduced in this microfilm publication relate to the arrest, parole, and release of suspects. Included in the case files is correspondence with provost marshals, U.S. marshals and detectives, chiefs of police, Governors of States, and military commanders. The records relate both to civilians and to soldiers who were investigated and arrested on such charges as being disloyal, giving aid to the Confederacy, defrauding the Government, resisting the draft, discouraging enlistments, and trading in contraband. Also investigated were men arrested as deserters from the Confederate Army, blockade runners, and State prisoners held in Federal prisons.

In October 1865 Turner reported that he himself had conducted 7,748 examinations, including those relating to deserters from the Confederate Army as well as those relating to aliens, prisoners, and soldiers whose cases after investigation were reported to the Secretary of State. Turner investigated accounts of recruiting officers that were referred to him as "false and fraudulent" and he was responsible, by direction of the Secretary of War, for the transfer of women, children, and Federal prisoners by boat between Annapolis, Md., and City Point, Va. Two such trips, in January and July 1863, were reported. Turner stated that in the execution of his orders he had traveled extensively throughout the country. He became a Colonel in the Volunteer Army on March 13, 1865, and served in the War Department as a judge advocate until his death on March 13, 1867.

In February 1862, when President Abraham Lincoln transferred the power to make extraordinary arrests from the Department of State to the War Department, Secretary of State W. H. Seward recommended Lafayette C. Baker, "a capable and efficient officer," for possible employment by the War Department. Baker had previously been employed in "detective" or "secret" services for the Commanding General of the Army and for Secretary of

State Seward. He was a special agent for the War Department from February until September 1862, when Secretary of War Stanton appointed him as special provost marshal. After Baker was relieved from duty as a special provost marshal on November 7, 1863, he continued his activities as a special agent of the War Department. On June 29, 1863, Baker was appointed Colonel of the First Regiment, District of Columbia Cavalry, a regiment formed because, according to Baker, "The importance of the bureau, and its rapidly accumulating business, rendered a military force, exclusively under my control, a necessity." On April 26, 1865, he became a Brigadier General in the Volunteer Army. Baker's official connection with the War Department ended when he was honorably mustered out on January 15, 1866. He died 2 years later.

The Baker case files, containing fewer papers than the Turner files, include reports submitted by private persons and Government officials relating to suspicious persons and alleged subversive activity, and correspondence concerning cases resulting from the War Department order of March 30, 1862, for the confiscation of abandoned rebel property around Washington, persons reported to be secessionists, detectives employed to ferret out contraband trade, frauds upon the Government, and prospective employees for Baker's detective force.

Many of the Baker case files contain correspondence of Col. H. S. Olcott, special commissioner for both the War Department and the Navy Department, who was appointed to investigate fraudulent claims and contracts. Many files contain reports to and correspondence with Assistant Secretary of War Charles A. Dana. Included in these files are Baker's reports to Secretary Dana, who spent much time investigating cases involving disloyalty to the Government and fraud by contractors for supplies. Baker's work for the War Department included investigating cases of disloyalty, treason, vandalism, and conspiracy. He was also involved in espionage on behalf of the Government.

There are few records in the Baker case files reflecting other of his activities, such as the investigation of frauds in the recruiting service of the Regular Army and of the Navy, the apprehension of John Wilkes Booth and the other conspirators in the Lincoln assassination, the imprisonment of Jefferson Davis, the trial of Henry Wirz, and at the request of the Treasury Department the investigation of its system for issuing currency.

The Turner-Baker papers were brought together after the war by the Bureau of Military Justice. The arrangement of the case files began in 1869; work on Turner's papers was completed in 1871 and on Baker's, in 1873. The papers remained in the Bureau of Military Justice until they were turned over to the Record and Pension Office in 1894. Ultimately all records of the latter office were merged with those of the Office of the Adjutant General.

The files have been arranged separately, first for Turner and then for Baker, and thereunder in numerical order. All documents in a case file have been annotated with the number assigned for that specific file. The Turner files bear only a number; the Baker files carry a number and the symbol "B." Thus the file citation "1" refers to the first case file in the Turner papers and the citation "1-B," to the first case file in the Baker papers.

The Turner papers are dated 1862-66, with a few documents before and after these dates. Reports by Turner and letters and reports received by him are arranged by case file number, 1-4119, except for case-file numbers 1087 and 1088 that probably were never assigned. The Baker papers are dated 1861-65, with a few papers of earlier and later dates. The letters received by Baker, with reports and notes, are also arranged by case-file number, 1B - 845B. The Turner case files are reproduced on Rolls 2-126; the Baker case files, on Rolls 127-137.

A case file may contain one to several hundred documents. Some of the documents in the files bear a file citation other than that assigned by the Bureau of Military Justice. The citation indicates that at one time or another the letter had been filed in some other office.

Some cross-reference slips prepared by the War Department are in this series. They indicate the file number under which case files concerning the same individual have been consolidated. For example, Baker case file 421B relating to Capt. C. A. Krause has been filed with Turner file 1245, which also concerns Krause.

Papers for 16 Turner and 7 Baker case files are missing. For about half of these missing papers there are cross-reference slips that were inserted by War Department clerks to indicate that the documents were removed from their original location and forwarded to another office. When there were obvious indications as to the location of the papers, the National Archives searched among the records of other War Department offices and inserted a cross-reference notation in the Turner-Baker case files and beside the file number in the name index-volume for each document that was found. An asterisk indicates that the case file is among the Turner-Baker papers or has been located in another series. Brackets contain the file designation of the document in other series of records. The index has been reproduced on Roll 1 of this microcopy.

The index, which was compiled by the Bureau of Military Justice, contains information for each entry as follows: case file number, name of individual concerned, occupation, and remarks. The remarks column has been used to indicate the reason for the investigation. Only names of individuals who were

investigated were indexed; other names, such as those on petitions or affidavits, were not indexed.

The entries in the index have been arranged alphabetically, but separately for Turner and for Baker under each letter of the alphabet, and thereunder numerically. Thus the entries for the Turner papers are before the entries for the Baker papers for each letter of the alphabet. The National Archives has stamped each page of the index with the citation "Turner" or "Baker" to indicate the series of papers to which the entries on the page refer.

Also in Record Group 94 are other records from the series of Turner-Baker papers that are not reproduced in this microfilm publication. Among them are letterbooks of Judge Advocate Turner, 1862-70; a memorandum book kept by Turner, 1863-66; rough drafts of Turner's letters and endorsements; lists of prisoners at Camp Chase, Fort McHenry, and other Federal prisons; prison registers; prisoners' statements; applications for passes to visit prisoners; oaths of allegiance, mostly for Virginians; a record of Secret Service funds; and other records relating to prisoners and witnesses. Other series of records in Record Group 94 include documents relating to both Turner and Baker.

In Record Group 153, Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Army), are records relating to both Turner and Baker. Among them are the investigation and trial papers relating to the assassination of President Lincoln, which include documents relating to Baker. These papers have been reproduced on microfilm by the National Archives as Microcopy 599.

In Record Group 107, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, are some records relating to Turner and Baker. A volume containing telegrams sent by Judge Advocate Turner, August 1862-January 1865, is among the series of bound telegrams collected by the Office of the Secretary of War. The volume has been reproduced on Roll 133 of Microcopy 473, Telegrams Collected by the Office of the Secretary of War (Bound), 1861-82.

In Record Group 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, are series of documents that relate to civilians who came into contact with the Army. The Union Provost Marshals' File of Papers Relating to Individual Civilians, reproduced as Microcopy 345, and the Union Provost Marshals' File of Papers Relating to Two or More Civilians, reproduced as Microcopy 416, contain documents assembled from the files of Union Army provost marshals and from other records of Army territorial commands. The files include information relating to deserters, Confederate spies, and civilians suspected of disloyalty.

Other records relating to Baker may be found in Record Group 110, Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau

(Civil War), and in Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

Much of Turner's and Baker's correspondence is published in The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington, 1880-1901). Some of Baker's correspondence is also in his History of the United States Secret Service (Philadelphia, 1867).

The records reproduced in this microcopy were arranged for filming by Steven L. Carson, Kenneth E. Deale, Esau F. Jackson, and Florence P. Williams. These introductory remarks were written by Aloha South, who also provided the other editorial material.

CONTENTS

<u>Roll</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Roll</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Name Index	48	1613-1688
	<u>Turner Case Files:</u>	49	1689-1756
2	1-39	50	1757-1836
3	40-67	51	1837-1952
4	68-120	52	1953-2009
5	121-151	53	2010-2055
6	152-163	54	2056-2084
7	164-199	55	2085-2137
8	200-218	56	2138-2189
9	219-263	57	2190-2231
10	264-300	58	2232-2264
11	301-322	59	2265-2299
12	323-357	60	2300-2345
13	358-412	61	2346-2410
14	413-440	62	2411
15	441-468	63	2412-2440
16	469-507	64	2441-2474
17	508-542	65	2475-2490
18	543-592	66	2491-2528
19	593-633	67	2529-2629
20	634-686	68	2630-2654
21	687-723	69	2655-2685
22	724-773	70	2686-2735
23	774-827	71	2736-2767
24	828-852	72	2768-2804
25	853-892	73	2805-2875
26	893-918	74	2876-2899
27	919-947	75	2900-2927
28	948-983	76	2928-2962
29	984-1010	77	2963-2989
30	1011-1016	78	2990-3020
31	1017-1028	79	3021-3046
32	1029-1039	80	3047-3055
33	1040-1060	81	3056-3086
34	1061-1095	82	3087-3112
35	1096-1116	83	3113
36	1117-1140	84	3114-3160
37	1141-1169	85	3161-3196
38	1170-1181	86	3197-3214
39	1182-1201	87	3215-3255
40	1202-1240	88	3256-3288
41	1241-1280	89	3289-3309
42	1281-1320	90	3310-3336
43	1321-1360	91	3337-3370
44	1361-1431	92	3371-3392
45	1432-1490	93	3393-3420
46	1491-1565	94	3421-3440
47	1566-1612	95	3441-3464

<u>Roll</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Roll</u>	<u>Description</u>
96	3465-3490	121	3880-3959
97	3491-3497	122	3960-3999
98	3498-3520	123	4000-4045
99	3521-3552	124	4046-4069
100	3553-3578	125	4070-4080
101	3579-3608	126	4081-4119
102	3609-3641		<u>Baker Case Files:</u>
103	3642-3652	127	1B-82B
104	3653-3689	128	83B-209B
105	3690-3740	129	210B-314B
106	3741-3751	130	315B-382B
107	3752	131	383B-475B
108	3753(pt.)	132	476B-601B
109	3753(pt.)	133	602B-610B
110	3754-3755(pt.)	134	611B-651B
111	3755(pt.)	135	652B-722B
112	3756-3757	136	723B-783B
113	3758-3762	137	784B-845B
114	3763-3780		
115	3781-3799		
116	3800(pt.)		
117	3800(pt.)-3801		
118	3802(pt.)		
119	3802(pt.)-3830		
120	3831-3879		