

8-2013

Inconspicuous but Indispensable: Charles Anderson Dana as Assistant Secretary of War

Aaron Edward Foster
University of Southern Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: https://aquila.usm.edu/masters_theses

Recommended Citation

Foster, Aaron Edward, "Inconspicuous but Indispensable: Charles Anderson Dana as Assistant Secretary of War" (2013). *Master's Theses*. 469.

https://aquila.usm.edu/masters_theses/469

This Masters Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

The University of Southern Mississippi

INCONSPICUOUS BUT INDISPENSABLE:

CHARLES ANDERSON DANA AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR

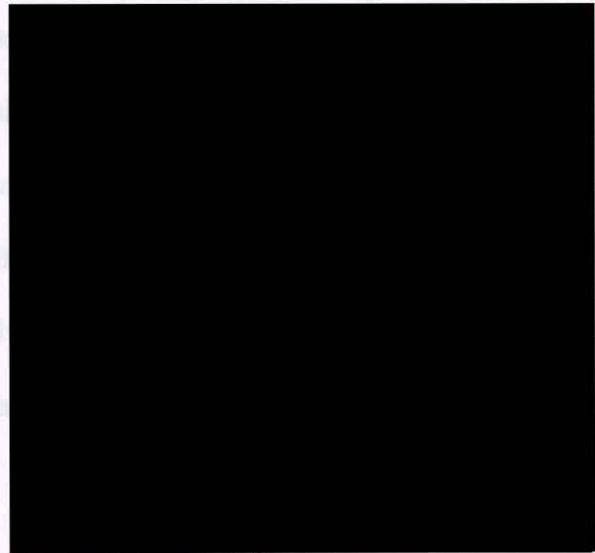
by

Aaron Edward Foster

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts

Approved:



Dean of the Graduate School

August 2013

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

The writer would like to thank Dr. Ural, and the

INCONSPICUOUS BUT INDESPENSIBLE:

other CHARLES ANDERSON DANA AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR

advice, and support throughout. I want to thank Dr. Ural for her

by Aaron Edward Foster

assistance and support during the entire process, especially for her help overcoming the

August 2013

many Charles Anderson Dana's contributions to Union victory during the American Civil War extend far beyond his well-known relationship with General Ulysses S. Grant. Using both his journalistic talents and patriotism, he gained Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton's trust, which was essential for Dana to perform his duties effectively at the War Department in Washington City from 1864 to 1865. His obligations encompassed a broad spectrum of responsibilities from investigating dishonest contractors and federal officials attempting to defraud the government to authorizing the arbitrary arrests of civilians. He simultaneously performed lesser-known activities such as arranging soldiers' furloughs for the 1864 presidential election, functioning as a point of contact for prison facilities, overseeing massive troop movements, procuring supplies, military recruitment, and additional miscellaneous issues that constantly flooded the department during his tenure. Examining Dana's involvement with these obscure, yet vital matters not only reveals the extent of the War Department's authority but also accentuates Dana's key contributions to the Union war effort.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer would like to thank the thesis director, Dr. Susannah J. Ural, and the other committee members, Dr. Kyle F. Zelner and Dr. Andrew A. Wiest for their, insight, advice, and support throughout this project. I especially want to thank Dr. Ural for her assistance and support during the entire process, especially for her help overcoming the many challenges along the way.

Special thanks to the numerous individuals at various archives for helping me plan and conduct my research, especially Juliette Arai and Dr. Mitchell Yockelson at the National Archives in Washington, DC. In addition, while evidence from the Dana Family Papers at the Longfellow House Archives does not appear in this thesis, Lauren Malcolm and Christine Wirth provided great assistance and insight into personal aspects of the Dana family absent from Charles Anderson Dana's official correspondence.

Finally, these acknowledgements would be horribly incomplete without thanking Dr. Jeanne Heidler at the United States Air Force Academy for her continual guidance and encouragement over the past two years, as I explored and struggled to understand various aspects of Dana's Civil War career and contributions.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In late October 1864, a political scandal erupted. Abraham Lincoln was worried about the upcoming election and high-ranking members of his administration were busy trying to win the President a second term. The War Department had been working for months to secure the soldier vote through furloughs and absentee ballots. Reports that New York agents, under Governor Horatio Seymour's guidance, were plotting to steal the election for Democratic candidates using the state's absentee ballots only increased the administration's anxiety. With the arrest of these agents and other suspects, key members of Lincoln's cabinet endeavored to exploit the situation. While it is impossible to determine if this incident actually affected the election's outcome, the trials of several defendants stretched into November and December. Lincoln even personally interviewed one of the prisoners with a seemingly unimportant man sitting quietly in the background witnessing the confession. Unbeknownst to the accused, this person was Assistant Secretary of War Charles Anderson Dana, who managed a variety of War Department affairs, including investigating threats to the Union war effort.¹

Like the accused, few realize, then or today, the extent of Dana's significance to Lincoln's administration and Union victory. While much of the Lincoln scholarship focuses on the President or key members of his cabinet, historical narratives have largely neglected those serving in important, albeit subordinate positions, such as Charles Dana. For this reason, there has been little research concerning his work at the War Department. However, his public service in Washington City involved a wide range of issues for the

¹ Joseph George Jr., "The North Affair: A Lincoln Administration Trial, 1864," *Civil War History* 33, no. 3 (September 1987): 203, 207, 212.

department based on the extent to which Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton delegated authority to his senior subordinates, and the individuals he trusted as Assistant Secretaries of War.

Dana's existing biographical studies focus on two major areas of his life. The most popular was his relationship with Ulysses S. Grant. The first and most comprehensive biography, *The Life of Charles A. Dana* by James Harrison Wilson, represents this trend. While providing a detailed account of Dana's life, this 1907 sketch concentrates on his activities with the Union army and his relationship with Grant during and after the war. However, one must be skeptical of any analysis and judgment present in Wilson's work, as his close friendship with Dana taints many of its accounts. Additionally, this biography provides only vague references to Dana's actual duties while in Washington City, placing them mostly within a self-serving context or the framework of the broader military actions of the Union. For example, *The Life of Charles A. Dana* is filled with claims that Dana "was generally recognized as a more virile and vigorous writer than his chief, and a more consistent and patriotic one than most of his rivals."²

Harry J. Maihafer takes a similar approach in *The General and the Journalists*. In his preface, he summarizes Dana's significance to the war by declaring, "Dana, as a War Department observer sent to report on Grant, was a major player in the general's rise to military prominence."³ Dana's *Recollections of the Civil War*, which Ida Tarbell actually wrote, adheres to this trend, focusing on explaining his interactions with the Union army,

² James Harrison Wilson, *The Life of Charles Anderson Dana* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1907), 177.

³ Harry J. Maihafer, *The General and the Journalists: Ulysses S. Grant, Horace Greeley, and Charles Dana* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1998), xiv.

while devoting only two chapters to topics on his activities while in Washington City.⁴ Charles Vincent Spaniolo's 1965 dissertation, likewise, concentrates on different aspects of Dana's time in the field as well as the significance President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton attributed to Dana's opinions of Union generals.⁵

Janet E. Steele's *The Sun Shines for All* represents the second historiographical trend: his life as a journalist. Although she includes Dana's activities during the Civil War in a twelve-page chapter entitled "Interlude: The Civil War," she highlights his accomplishments and politics as a journalist and editor of some of the most popular and influential newspapers in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century: the *New York Tribune* and the *New York Sun*. While acknowledging that historians have ignored Dana, Steele attempts to disclose the attributes that made him a successful and popular newspaper editor, as well as, how he managed to transform the *New York Sun* from an inconsequential paper to one of the most prominent dailies in the United States.⁶

As Dana's superior, Edwin McMasters Stanton is a very important and influential player in this study. Perhaps only the dearth of works on this Secretary of War surpasses the absence of historical inquiries on Dana. *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War* by Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, first published in 1962,

⁴ Charles Anderson Dana, *Recollections of the Civil War: With Leaders at Washington in the Field in the Sixties* (New York: D. Appleton, 1898), 156-167, 235-247. Both chapters in this autobiography explain certain legal issues offering more of Dana's opinions of key members in Lincoln's Cabinet rather than of Dana's actual duties.

⁵ Charles Vincent Spaniolo, "Charles Anderson Dana: His Early Life and Civil War Career" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1965), 2-4. Spaniolo had five disparate conclusions. First, Dana exhibited great humanitarian sympathies during his youth that were increasingly absent as he aged. Second, he was highly influential when he worked for the *New York Tribune*. Third, the Cairo Claims Commission "overlooked evidence of fraudulent transactions by the Quartermaster at Cairo, Illinois." Fourth, his evaluations of Union military commanders influenced Lincoln's and Stanton's opinions, and finally his evaluations of "military events and leaders was controversial."

⁶ Janet E. Steele, *The Sun Shines for All: Journalism and Ideology in the Life of Charles A. Dana* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993), xi-xiv.

is arguably the most comprehensive and balanced of his biographies.⁷ Still, there are instances where the authors mask or diminish rather unflattering aspects of Stanton's personality.⁸ Their examination of his reforms at the War Department, however, is well done. For this reason, their work provides one of the foundations for the analysis of the Secretary of War in this study.

Concerning changes in the War Department, an important component of Dana's duties included the much-neglected Quartermaster Corps. Overseeing all matters relating to the Union army's logistics, this branch was responsible for obtaining and supplying equipage and transportation. Erna Risch's *Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775-1939* is a comprehensive examination of this bureau. Concentrating on the Quartermaster Corps' continual evolution from its inception to the outbreak of the Second World War, her work is the only study on this topic that includes Dana as a

⁷ While this is the most recent Stanton biography, there are instances in which Frank Abial Flower's *Edwin McMasters Stanton: The Autocrat of Rebellion, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (New York: Saalfield Publishing, 1905) provides a better analysis for the purpose of this examination. For example, instead of viewing Dana as a close friend and confidant of the Secretary of War, Flower handles him more as an Assistant Secretary of War, even devoting a chapter to Stanton's most important lieutenants, in which Dana and two other Assistant Secretaries of War appear. For these reasons, this study uses the two biographies simultaneously, incorporating aspects from a third when necessary, to create an accurate picture of Stanton as a Secretary of War and his actions to reorganize the War Department. However, a common problem with both biographies is the citations. While Flower provides very few citations, making the verification of his claims exceedingly arduous, it is difficult to determine to which passages Thomas and Hyman's citations belong. For a brief overview of the historiography surrounding Stanton's biographies and his place in American memory see Thomas and Hyman's epilogue.

⁸ Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 179, xiv-xv. One such instance addresses Stanton's composure during the battle between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimack*, in which Thomas and Hyman merely portray Stanton as "the most excited of them all," but "soon calmed down." However, they explicitly state in their introduction that while Stanton's biographers have championed his accomplishments, he continues to remain an unpopular figure in American history. With the release of new collections, they attempt to create a "fairer evaluation of Stanton's life." In the end, they have made a fruitful effort towards such a study, even if this biography mitigates facets of Stanton's faults. However, this trend may also be an attempt to curb the negative national opinion of Stanton that two recent works created by attempting to implicate the Secretary of War in the assassination plot of President Lincoln. See David S. Sparks, review of *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War*, by Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 87, no. 1 (January 1963): 119. However, T. Harry Williams's review claims that this is the most authoritative biography written on Stanton, see T. Harry Williams review of *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War*, by Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49, no. 1 (June 1962): 150.

participant in the department's operation. For Risch's purpose, the Civil War represented a period of massive change, necessitating that the Quartermaster Department, along with the War Department, expand and adapt to the military's growing demands to create "an effective depot system."⁹

Another important area of research on the Lincoln administration relates to matters of a legal nature.¹⁰ One of the most recent authorities on this topic is Mark E. Neely Jr.'s *The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties*. Analyzing the effect that Lincoln's policies had on citizens' civil liberties, Neely deviates from other debates that focus on the constitutionality of Lincoln's actions during the Civil War.¹¹ His work is also one of the few in which Dana is credited with an active role in the War

⁹ Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Supply of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775-1939* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History United States Army, 1989), 452. For more information on the Quartermaster's Department consult John Elwood Clark's *Railroads in the Civil War: The Impact of Management on Victory and Defeat* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2001), Sherrod E. East's "Montgomery C. Meigs and the Quartermaster Department," *Military Affairs* 25, no. 4 (Winter 1961-1962): 183-196, and Russell F. Weigley's *Quartermaster General of the Union Army: A Biography of M. C. Meigs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959). While Clark's work represents the most recent scholarship on the Quartermaster Corps, he does not address Dana in an authoritative role. Instead, Clark treats Dana merely as an observer for the War Department during the logistical difficulties surrounding the Battle of Chickamauga. East's article fails to mention Dana and relies heavily on Risch and Weigley's work, which remains the first and only biography to examine the head of the Quartermaster Corps during the Civil War. Weigley focuses almost solely on Meigs and his subordinates, making only vague references to the administrators in the War Department. Even Stanton is not a major individual in this biography.

As the bulk of this study of Dana's involvement with the Quartermaster Corps concerns the Union transportation system, there are several works that provide insight to this issue including Thomas Weber's *The Northern Railroads in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (New York: King's Crown, 1952), George Edgar Turner's *Victory Rode the Rails: The Strategic Place of the Railroads in the Civil War* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill, 1953), and William G. Thomas's *The Iron Way: Railroads, the Civil War, and the Making of Modern America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

¹⁰ The debate concerning the constitutionality of Lincoln's actions and their repercussions is one to which both legal scholars and historians contribute. However, in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, subsequent legislation, and executive action taken under President George H. W. Bush, there have been a number of studies that have used the Lincoln administration as a lens to view President Bush's actions. Such studies include: Daniel Farber's *Lincoln's Constitution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) and Benjamin A. Kleinerman's "Lincoln's Example: Executive Power and the Survival of Constitutionalism," *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 4 (December 2005): 801-816. Even though these examinations provide an interesting comparison, as this study does not seek to compare the constitutionality of President Lincoln's actions with those of another president, it does not cite these analyses.

¹¹ Mark E. Neely Jr., *The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), xi.

Department's investigations.¹² For issues concerning the legality of Lincoln's actions, J. G. Randall's *Constitutional Problems Under Lincoln* remains the authoritative work; however, he makes no mention of Dana's participation in arbitrary arrests, handling war prisoners, and other matters that involved the War Department.¹³ Although this study does not debate the constitutionality of Lincoln's actions, it does acknowledge that Dana was an active participant in some of the president's questionable activities. The approaches these two works use complement each other in their analysis of Dana's legal responsibilities.¹⁴

For this study, the key component of Dana's judicial activities is War Department investigations.¹⁵ Most of the works devoted to this topic focus on specific investigators

¹² Neely only includes Dana in a section that addresses investigations into fraudulent contractors and does not implicate him in any discussion on issues concerning voter fraud nor does Neely emphasize Dana's role in the Lincoln administration's arbitrary arrests. Other works nominally place Dana in this role, such as J. Matthew Gallman's *Mastering Wartime: A Social History of Philadelphia During the Civil War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 289. Dana is such an obscure figure in this work that he is not even in the index.

¹³ Michael Les Benedict, "A Constitutional Crisis," in *Writing the Civil War: The Quest to Understand*, ed. James M. McPherson and William J. Cooper Jr. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 163; J. G. Randall, *Constitutional Problems Under Lincoln* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1951). John A. Marshall's *American Bastille: A History of the Illegal Arrests and Imprisonment of American Citizens in the Northern and Border States, On Account of Their Political Opinions, During the Late Civil War* (Philadelphia: Thomas W. Hartley, 1881) is the previous work that addressed this same issue, although it is a highly biased account of the various actions and activities of the Lincoln administration. Additionally, while it provides a greater degree of detail for the included examples, it only makes vague references to Dana. However, it does include descriptions of some of Dana's lieutenants, such as Lafayette C. Baker. Other works that address legal aspects of Lincoln Administration concerning Dana's activities include: Robert Bruce Murray's *Legal Cases of the Civil War* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003) that included cases brought before the Supreme Court debating the constitutionality of Lincoln administration's actions and Mark E. Neely's *Lincoln and the Triumph of the Nation: Constitutional Conflict in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), which is a comparative examination between the United States and the Confederate Constitutions.

¹⁴ Another important aspect of this study is employing some of the analyses concerning Lincoln's stance towards the Border States to place Dana's actions and directives in the appropriate context. The most recent of these works include William C. Harris's *Lincoln and the Border States: Preserving the Union* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2011). Also see William E. Gienapp's "Abraham Lincoln and the Border States," *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 13 (1922): 13-46.

¹⁵ For analysis of the Provost Marshals during the American Civil War consult: Wilton P. Moore's "Union Army Provost Marshals in the Eastern Theater," *Military Affairs* 24, no. 3 (Autumn 1962): 120-126 and "The Provost Marshal Goes to War," *Civil War History* 5, no. 1 (March 1959): 62-71.

or the origins of the modern United States Secret Service, which was then under the direction of the War Department.¹⁶ Its most famous investigator, Lafayette C. Baker, published personal memoirs of his time in the department shortly after the war.¹⁷

However, most of these historical examinations either ignore Dana or place him in a tertiary role.¹⁸ Works, such as William James Flavin's master's thesis, argues, "Baker operated freely, often disregarding the orders of lesser officials like Charles Dana."¹⁹

Such beliefs represent the pervasive sentiment in works on this topic and are ones that this study seeks to debunk, as Dana's management of War Department inquiries is clearer when placed in the context of actual investigations and his other responsibilities.

¹⁶ Norman Ansley's "The United States Secret Service: An Administrative History," *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Political Science* 47, no. 1 (May-June 1956): 93-109 represents a trend that focuses on the origins of the United States Secret Service and provides the best explanation of the terminology applied during the Civil War to describe the War Department's investigative bureau. Additionally, this article gives a great overview of how this organization changed with the establishment of the current United States Secret Service under the Treasury Department.

¹⁷ Baker is the most examined and understood Provost Marshal General during Dana's tenure, primarily as the result of his extensive account of his involvement. However, another personality who greatly influenced the War Department's handling of investigations was Allan Pinkerton, who had already left the War Department prior to Dana's arrival in Washington City. For more on Pinkerton consult Jay Bonansinga's *Pinkerton's War: The Civil War's Greatest Spy and the Birth of the U.S. Secret Service* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2012) and Allan Pinkerton's *The Spy of the Rebellion: Being a True History of the Spy System of the United States Army during the Late Rebellion. Revealing Many Secrets of the War Hitherto Not Made Public* (New York: Dillingham Publishers, 1888). These two individuals, however, represent exceptions to the scholarship concerning the Provost Marshals in the Civil War.

¹⁸ L. C. Baker, *History of the United States Secret Service* (Philadelphia: L. C. Baker, 1867). While Baker briefly served under the distinction of the Chief of the Detective Service, he also worked under Dana as a Provost Marshal General. Baker has stimulated much interest in the historical community, and, for this reason, he is the subject of many biographies. The fact that Baker has a dismissive attitude towards Dana has been a major contributor to his corresponding posture in Baker's subsequent biographies. These works include William James Flavin's "Lafayette C. Baker and the Union Secret Service," (master's thesis, Emory University, 1973), 264, Jacob Mogelev's *Death to Traitors* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960), and Arthur Orrmont's *Mr. Lincoln's Master Spy: Lafayette C. Baker* (New York: Julian Messner, 1966). For an examination of other aspects of Baker's involvement in the Civil War consult Joseph George Jr.'s "'Black Flag Warfare': Lincoln and the Raids Against Richmond and Jefferson Davis," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 115, no. 3 (July 1991): 291-318.

¹⁹ Flavin, "Lafayette C. Baker and the Union Secret Service," 231. Both Mogelev's and Flavin's work are dismissive of Dana's involvement in the War Department's investigations, which is consistent with the portrayal that Baker offers in his memoirs. However, Flavin's thesis reveals a more thorough understanding of Dana's role in the War Department and incorporates a comparison between Dana's operations in overseeing these investigations and his predecessor: Assistant Secretary of War Peter Watson.

Even with the quantity of scholarly studies concerning the Civil War, many historical questions remain unanswered. Some of these queries include: What was Dana's role in managing the military affairs of a national citizen army that dwarfed any previous one the United States produced? How did Dana operate within the new bureaucracy Stanton created? What role did subordinate staff members, such as Dana, perform in Stanton's organization? What were some of the issues delegated to Assistant Secretaries of War? With all of Stanton's responsibilities, what were his priorities and were Dana's actions congruous? Focusing on an official key to them all, Charles Dana, this thesis addresses these questions.

Dana's tenure at the War Department offers a unique perspective of the issues it handled during the war. In 1860, the department was relatively small. Immediately upon replacing the inept Simon Cameron as Secretary of War in January 1862, Stanton greatly expanded and reformed its operations.²⁰ To do this, he instituted priorities, expectations, and overarching policies to dictate how his revamped department would function with the increased responsibilities and issues that accompanied the mobilization of the nation's population, infrastructure, and manufacturing to maximize the Union's effort to defeat the Confederacy.

The most prevalent changes occurred in the early phases of the war. When Dana's tenure began during the summer of 1864, Stanton had already firmly established the structural apparatus for managing the war. Therefore, a level of continuity for the individuals, agencies, and other federal departments from which Dana received his orders and guidance as well as those providing consultation and direction, already existed.

²⁰ Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 414.

Instead of examining the War Department's evolution under Stanton's leadership, this study explores the department's daily operations from the perspective of one of his most trusted assistants. While Stanton had several Assistant Secretaries, he retained Dana for the duration of the war and entrusted him with great responsibility, including serving as the acting Secretary of War.

While the War Department's structure remained relatively constant during Dana's tenure as Assistant Secretary of War, it was not a static department. The problems, conspiracies, and fraudulent abuses of the government's trust and funds changed continuously, resulting in little consistency in the daily business Dana conducted. Many of the issues he oversaw at the end of the war had been continuous challenges for the War Department, such as raising volunteer regiments. With the first federal draft, however, Dana dealt with problems, albeit sometimes peculiar, resulting from this new policy.

He also handled queries concerning a wide range of governmental policies extending beyond the normal purview of the traditional notions of the functions of the War Department. These included, but were not restricted to, soldiers' furloughs, prisoners, recruiting and transporting personnel, and purchasing provisions, while at the same time humoring businessmen who sought to ensure that an adequate number of turkeys would be available for Union soldiers to celebrate Thanksgiving in 1864. The fact that Dana dealt with a gamut of concerns blurs any notion of a clear division of labor in the Lincoln administration.²¹ Therefore, Dana's experiences offer a great case study into the operation of the War Department.

²¹ The tendency to compartmentalize the duties of specific government bureaus is pervasive in Civil War biographies, in which the authors illustrate the significance of their subjects and in doing so draw artificial boundaries between the responsibilities delegated to each department. In contrast, this study will attempt to blur these divisions and show how the duties of these departments overlapped.

Prior to establishing himself in Washington in 1864, Dana served in a variety of capacities in multiple theatres. These experiences augmented his administrative abilities as well as his perception of the Assistant Secretary of War's responsibilities. Under the guise of investigating fraudulent and illegal activities, Stanton had Dana report on the abilities of Ulysses S. Grant to give the Lincoln Administration a better understanding of his suitability to assume overall command of the Union army. While in the field with the Army of the Tennessee and the Army of the Cumberland, he frequently conversed with the Union commanders. In this way, Dana gained a heightened understanding of military matters, which he continually used to pass judgment on numerous Union commanders, regardless of whether or not Stanton requested it. Witnessing military operations, whether at the siege of Vicksburg or the battle at Chickamauga, gave his dispatches a superior and solid insight and understanding of the tactics, operations, and strategies of the army, especially for a journalist who had never served in any military capacity. While it is impossible to determine how these experiences shaped and transformed his attitudes as Assistant Secretary of War, Dana's communications reveal a perspicacity that encompasses these previous duties.

An important component of this examination is not only revealing aspects of how the War Department operated during the Civil War, but also Dana's significance in its activities. The functions and work of lesser, but still senior, civilian officials are essential to comprehend the Civil War and how the Lincoln Administration was able to perform as an efficient bureaucracy to secure Union victory. The extent of the issues Dana dealt with illustrates the War Department's broad scope of authority. Additionally, the flexibility, dedication, and mental fortitude that Dana demonstrated exposes the type of

individual Stanton appreciated and sought to employ within his new bureaucratic structure.

To accomplish these objectives, this work consists of several chapters. The second provides pertinent background information, including a cursory examination of Dana's life prior to becoming the Assistant Secretary of War. In particular, it focuses briefly on his life working for Horace Greeley at the *New York Tribune*, how Dana became acquainted with Stanton, Dana's first assignments investigating cases of defrauding the United States government, and his duties at the front. In addition, it addresses Stanton's personality, priorities, and mindset when he became Secretary of War to create the department in which Dana would work when he came to Washington City in 1864. It also contains an examination of one of Stanton's previous Assistant Secretaries of War in order to compare him to Dana. The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, it shows how Dana gained Stanton's trust, which was essential for Dana's duties at the department. Second, it discusses how Stanton's unique personality affected Dana. Finally, it reveals the bureaucratic structure he would manage.

The third chapter begins with a study of Dana's management and oversight of War Department inquiries. Comprehensive case files supply much of the information regarding the breadth of these probes, his relationship with his subordinates, and his culpability concerning his actions in some of the Lincoln administration's legal controversies. Addressing the range of issues Dana's agents investigated, this chapter demonstrates that, while an active participant in the arbitrary arrests of civilians, Dana did not abuse his authority.

The fourth chapter expands beyond the scope of legal issues to include various duties he performed at the War Department. Since its bureaucratic structure was already established, the emphasis is to explain Dana's function as Assistant Secretary of War rather than how his management style evolved over time. Based on an examination of his correspondence, this chapter explores Dana's role in securing the soldier vote, handling the wartime prisoner population, overseeing troop movements, procurement, and legal issues such as emancipation. The broad range of these requests reveals not only important information concerning the qualities that Stanton saw in his trusted subordinate but identifies the matters he delegated to Dana. Additionally, as this chapter includes such a wide diversity of topics, the historiography for many of the specific issues is located in the footnotes.

Throughout these chapters, this study employs a much simpler, but similar methodology to that of James M. McPherson in *For Cause and Comrades*.²² Information accumulated from approximately one thousand six hundred pieces of correspondence, addressed directly to Dana or ones that he composed provide the basis for the evidence and conclusions in the second and third chapters of this work. Unlike the soldiers' letters that McPherson uses that could be examined individually to reveal combat motivations, anxieties, or religious beliefs, most of Dana's communications require piecing together dispatches to create a conversation. At times this is relatively simple, as Dana, based on the telegram's timestamp, was most likely in the telegraph office and merely scribbled his

²² James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), vii-xi. Whereas McPherson's work relies on a representative sample of letters and diaries of 1,076 soldiers from the North and South, this study utilizes all available correspondence to and from Dana to create the most comprehensive analysis of his time as Assistant Secretary of War in Washington City.

response underneath the original message, thus creating a direct link similar to the reply function employed with today's email.

However, this is a rarity. Most of the communications used to support this study's conclusions require coordinating numerous dispatches. For example, the telegrams sent and received by the War Department are in two separate categories of microfilm, requiring the verification of each message's subject matter, time, and pertinent individuals and then pairing them with each other. The most impressive collection, and those most commonly cited in this study, are in the bound volumes that the War Department sent and received.²³ While some of these appear in the *War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, most do not. There is also an unbound series of messages with valuable information. Many telegrams, however, are missing and therefore preclude the creation of a coherent conversation. In fact, in many instances, the related telegrams could not be located in any of the examined microfilmed series. Rather, if they still exist, they may be located in an undisclosed collection at the National Archives in Washington, DC or tucked away in various other places.

Therefore, this project relies primarily on information from the National Archives collections in which there was a reasonable expectation, albeit sometimes very remote, for correspondence related to Dana's tenure. Many of the telegrams no longer exist, having been either misplaced, thrown away, or subject to some other fate. It has been difficult to find many of Dana's letters in response to those submitted to the War

²³ The collection mentioned above consists of Microfilm Series 473. The volumes entitled *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861-July 30, 1881* and *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861-March 31, 1869* are parts of this series and represent where the bulk of the material for this project originated. Aspects of this series also include other volumes of telegrams that did not contain much correspondence involving Dana. Volumes entitled *Telegrams Sent by the Provost Marshal General's Office, March 23, 1863-November 2, 1870* and *Telegrams Received by the Provost Marshal General's Office, April 2, 1863-April, 6, 1874* are examples of this.

Department, as it did not make copies. It appears that Dana preferred to use the postal service to send and receive a large amount of his lengthy correspondence, such as affidavits containing relevant information on various aspects of his functions and responsibilities. However, the time it took for the mail to travel, in addition to the comparably limited quantity of letters, means that this source appears less often in this work.

Some of the missing communication, nevertheless, is no doubt intentional. There are several instances of individuals inquiring if the War Department received original telegrams or letters. During a major crisis, Dana likely devoted neither the time nor the energy to grant or deny many minor requests that constantly flooded the War Department, such as furloughs for a single soldier. In many cases, he probably forgot about them. In other instances, he may simply have not wanted to respond to a specific issue. The reasons for this remain a mystery.

Aspects of this approach, however, cater to several possible pitfalls, which this study has taken great steps to avoid. Since little secondary literature exists on which to base this analysis, there is a natural propensity to form conclusions based on the evidence contained in only a few telegrams. The fact that Dana's correspondence involves a wide variety of topics with little overlap exacerbates this tendency. To prevent this, the examples included attempt to illustrate larger trends in Dana's responsibilities as Assistant Secretary of War. However, at times, oddities in the War Department's dispatches reveal as much, if not more, about Dana's dealings and his placement in Stanton's bureaucratic structure as those focusing on matters that are more ordinary.

While this study relies heavily on a primary source analysis, there are areas that rely on secondary literature. The nature of the material covered in the first chapter is the greatest example of this, as the application of various analyses and studies on a range of topics introduce Dana's functions in the War Department and the various issues and personalities that he dealt with while in Washington City. Additionally, this also occurs throughout the second and third chapters where it is necessary to provide a certain level of context surrounding the circumstances and individuals addressed in Dana's correspondence. When this arises, the accompanying footnote lists the authoritative works directly in the text or cites them first, followed by additional sources addressing similar problems, with any inconsistency between them presented in the footnote. Newspaper articles that attest to certain events also help provide some of the needed information and further the explanations of the activities Dana managed, especially concerning the events his operatives investigated.

Even though Dana's penmanship was poor in many instances, this study took great care when citing from his correspondence. The quotations use the original spelling and abbreviations found in the dispatches. When parroted directly from a telegram, this study preserves the original spelling, grammar, and abbreviations. With these precautions, this project seeks to reveal the full extent and significance of Dana's function as Assistant Secretary of War.

CHAPTER II

DANA BEFORE WASHINGTON CITY, THE WAR DEPARTMENT BEFORE DANA

There are several areas, beyond his dealings with General Ulysses S. Grant, in which Charles Dana significantly contributed to the Union war effort. First examining the nature of the relationship between Dana and Secretary Edwin M. Stanton, this chapter then focuses on the development of the Secretary's trust in Dana. Secretary Stanton had several Assistant Secretaries during the war; however, Dana was one of the longest tenured and the only one Secretary Stanton appointed to serve twice. While their alliance was turbulent at times, Dana's personality and qualities earned him Secretary Stanton's confidence, allowing Dana to perform a multitude of tasks while he was in Washington City from the middle of 1864 until he resigned after the war. Second, it considers the extensive reforms and expanded authority of the War Department during this period, which dramatically increased the Secretary of War's responsibilities and required that he appoint numerous assistants to oversee the department's increased workload. Secretary Stanton's transformation of the War Department not only made subordinates, such as Dana, an essential part of the Union war effort; it also compounded the need for the Secretary of War to rely on them implicitly.

The Journalist before the War

Compared to his later years, historians know relatively little about Dana's early life. Born in New Hampshire in 1819, Dana excelled in his coursework as a youth in Vermont and developed a natural affinity for languages.¹ His success in school followed

¹ James Harrison Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1907), 2-3.

him to Harvard in 1839; however, he never graduated.² Instead, after two years, he became a member of Brook Farm, a utopian community in Massachusetts, where he taught Greek and German and worked on his first newspaper: the *Harbinger*.³ Here, he met his future employer, Horace Greeley, who had recently established the *New York Tribune*.⁴ Throughout the remainder of their lives, this relationship would prove tumultuous at times. However, they always shared liberal economic and social interests.⁵

When the *Harbinger* folded in 1846, Dana began his career with the *New York Tribune*, where he worked until the beginning stages of the American Civil War. One of his first assignments was in Paris, France covering the 1848 revolutions erupting throughout the European Continent.⁶ While there, Dana adopted Marxist ideas, including that of class struggle, which reaffirmed his commitment to social change in America.⁷ Throughout the 1850s, as the *New York Tribune*'s readership expanded, Dana became a highly paid editor, second only to Greeley, and a very influential American figure. However, another aspect of his time at the *Tribune* that likely contributed to his tenure with Secretary Stanton was Greeley's personality. In many ways, Greeley mirrored Stanton's insistence for hard work and perfection.⁸ Although Dana worked for Greeley for more than a decade, Dana never commented on how these experiences affected his personality, taught him how to deal with difficult people, or become a stronger

² Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 30; Janet E. Steele, *The Sun Shines for All: Journalism and Ideology in the Life of Charles A. Dana* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 7.

³ Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 32, 36, 51; Steele, *The Sun Shines for All*, 13, 16; Henrietta Dana Raymond, *Sophia Willard Dana Ripley: Co-Founder of Brook Farm* (Portsmouth, NH: Peter E. Randall, 1994), 32-33, 38.

⁴ Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 40; Steele, *The Sun Shines for All*, 14.

⁵ Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 63; Steele, *The Sun Shines for All*, 15. Even though Dana fostered very liberal social and economic views in his early years, later he became a rather conservative figure and his political enemies and competitors criticized him for his previous positions.

⁶ Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 62.

⁷ Steele, *The Sun Shines for All*, 25. Wilson disagrees with Steele, asserting that Dana did not become an abolitionist until later in the 1850s. See Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 116.

⁸ Steele, *The Sun Shines for All*, 29.

individual, but it undoubtedly strengthened his character, or at the very least, prepared him for the enormous demands Secretary Stanton bestowed on his subordinates.

Democratic Stanton

Secretary Stanton's sweeping reforms in the War Department greatly expanded the scope of its responsibilities. As many of Dana's duties as Assistant Secretary of War in Washington City involved managing these newly acquired obligations, it is essential to understand these changes and why the Secretary undertook added responsibilities when the enormity of overseeing the military was already daunting. Born December 19, 1814, Stanton grew up in a religious family.⁹ He became interested in social issues, and his enthusiasm for devouring William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist paper, the *Liberator*, suggests that he had similar leanings.¹⁰ However, until his appointment as Secretary of War under the Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, all of his political offices, beginning with his election as a prosecuting attorney in Ohio, were as, or under a Democrat.¹¹ Eventually, Stanton became involved with President James Buchanan's administration providing legal justifications for his actions. After Jeremiah S. Black, President Buchanan's Attorney General, urged Stanton to come to Washington City, he read in the newspaper that, on Black's advice, the president had appointed him the next

⁹ Thomas, Benjamin P. and Harold M. Hyman, *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 5-6; Fletcher Pratt *Stanton: Lincoln's Secretary of War* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1953), 3. Thomas and Hyman assert that Stanton came from a Methodist family, whereas Pratt asserts that the Stanton was a descendant of Quakers.

¹⁰ Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 11, 31, 42; Frank Abial Flower, *Edwin McMasters Stanton: The Autocrat of Rebellion, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (New York: Saalfield, 1905), 31. Thomas and Hyman cite further evidence that Stanton was an abolitionist based in the underlying tones and comments in his correspondence with Salmon P. Chase, who would serve in Lincoln's administration as Secretary of the Treasury.

¹¹ Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 21; Flower, *Edwin McMasters Stanton*, 36.

Attorney General.¹² In this position, he firmly established the priorities that would guide his actions as Secretary of War.

Following the 1860 presidential election, but before Lincoln's inauguration, several states seceded from the Union, dividing President Buchanan's predominately Southern administration.¹³ Both Buchanan and Stanton actively sought to avoid the outbreak of war and prevent further disunion until Lincoln took office on March 4, 1861.¹⁴ One aspect of Stanton's experiences during this crisis echoes his later reforms and policies as Secretary of War. Before President Lincoln's inauguration, the government began investigations to thwart subversion of federal employees in Washington City.¹⁵ Fearing that Southern sympathizers would attempt an insurrection and establish a provisional Confederate government in Washington City, Stanton worked with the Howard Committee, a Congressional body that Representative William A. Howard formed to investigate government officials that Unionists believed threatened to surrender federal installations, such as forts, and quell their efforts.¹⁶

Two components of Stanton's involvement with these inquiries mirror his future activities as Secretary of War. First, he was committed to the Union's preservation. Subversive activities would jeopardize President Lincoln's attempts to reunite the nation, and Stanton wanted to mitigate these risks. He also understood the damage seditious acts

¹² Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 90-91; Pratt, *Stanton*, 93.

¹³ Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 89; Pratt, *Stanton*, 113.

¹⁴ Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 107, 112; Pratt, *Stanton*, 113; Flower, *Edwin McMasters Stanton*, 100-102. For information concerning President Buchanan's efforts to secure the Union until Lincoln's inauguration, consult William W. Freehling's *The Road to Disunion: Volume II Secessionists Triumphant, 1854-1861* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 488 and James M. McPherson and James K. Hogue, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*, 4th ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2010), 145-47. Freehling draws attention to President Buchanan's activism in attempting to reinforce Fort Sumter as a motivation for other Southern states to follow South Carolina's lead and secede before President Lincoln's initial call for troops, including Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas.

¹⁵ Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 110; Pratt, *Stanton*, 112.

¹⁶ Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 108, 110.

would have as well as the urgency needed to thwart them.¹⁷ Stanton's devotion to this did not diminish after he became Secretary of War. In an 1864 telegram to Major Wiegel, a Provost Marshal in Baltimore, Maryland, Secretary Stanton declared, "Let the enemies of the government show their hands."¹⁸

The second component of Stanton's actions reveals his exceptional political skills. He had to balance the exigency of pursuing those plotting to destroy the Union, while maintaining the appearance of adhering to President Buchanan's policy of Southern conciliation represented in the Crittenden Compromise.¹⁹ Stanton would later use this political skill and combine it with a fervent desire to preserve the United States to oversee the essential activities for the Union war effort at the War Department.

Following his involvement with President Buchanan, Stanton was not optimistic about the future, completely lacking confidence in Lincoln's abilities.²⁰ Upon President Lincoln's inauguration, Stanton could only watch as the new executive built his administration.²¹ Although Stanton served in no formal capacity, he did maintain contact with key individuals, notably Secretary of State William Seward, Secretary of War Simon Cameron, and Attorney General Joseph Holt. Stanton also actively contributed to the

¹⁷ Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 113-14; Flower, *Edwin McMasters Stanton*, 98-104. Flower's account does not include Stanton's involvement with any compromise. Instead, Flower asserts that "if Stanton had not entered the [Buchanan] cabinet and clung to it and fought in it to the end in spite of indignities, disagreements, false words, betrayals, and broken promises, the Federal capital and its archives and the machinery of the Government would have fallen into their [Confederate] hands as planned; and Jefferson Davis instead of Abraham Lincoln would have been inaugurated in Washington and perhaps, as was hoped, without bloodshed." While there is no evidence to uphold these claims, Stanton's contributions to preserving the Union in both accounts are similar, supporting this study's assertion that Stanton placed a very high value on thwarting the efforts to subvert the Union.

¹⁸ Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, to Major Wiegel, Provost Marshal Baltimore, Maryland, May 22, 1864; Vol. 187, p. 452; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 - July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 89); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁹ Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 112.

²⁰ Pratt, *Stanton*, 141.

²¹ Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 119.

expansion of the War Department after the firing on Fort Sumter and again following the First Battle of Bull Run, providing Secretary of War Cameron with recommendations for appointments and assisting him to formulate legal justifications for his actions, as he had done for President Buchanan.²²

Members of Lincoln's administration, however, disapproved of Secretary Cameron. While the diversity of reasons for Secretary Cameron's dismissal extends beyond the purview of this study, two aspects of his removal were important to revamping the War Department that would later affect Dana. First, Stanton had the support of members of the administration when he became Secretary of War, especially Secretary Seward.²³ Second, Stanton's reforms created the necessity for capable subordinates to oversee the War Department's new responsibilities. Without such a transformation, Dana's actions in the war would not have had such significance.

Revitalizing the War Department

On January 20, 1862, Lincoln appointed Stanton Secretary of War. He immediately attacked his duties with gusto. While the War Department had already expanded in 1861, Secretary Stanton continued to transform it into a bureaucratic machine with additional authority and responsibilities, necessitating the appointment of assistants to oversee many of these new functions. Two related components of Secretary Stanton's changes, which this study classifies as the revitalization of the War

²² Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 126.

²³ Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 135; Flower, *Edwin McMasters Stanton*, 117.

Department, are pertinent to Dana's tenure in Washington City from 1864 to 1865: suppression of fraudulent contractors and disloyal activities.²⁴

Prior to the American Civil War, the United States had never been in a situation requiring the mobilization of massive forces. While this presented problems relevant to the organization and sustainment of fielded forces, it also provided Secretary Stanton with a unique opportunity. Due to the conflict's nature and size, the Secretary of War's authority was undefined, permitting Stanton to specify and expand the department's responsibilities.²⁵ Historians contend that the degree to which Secretary Stanton increased his power as well as President Lincoln's demands necessitated this; however, it was clear that the Secretary needed little encouragement. Similar to his involvement with the Howard Committee, Secretary Stanton immediately purged the War Department of individuals that the Congressional Potter Committee accused of disloyal activities.²⁶ He did not stop there. He secured Secretary of State William Seward's investigative organization, relocating it in the War Department under Assistant Secretary Peter Watson.²⁷ Eventually, it would become one of Dana's major responsibilities. It also established the framework for Dana's initial involvement with the War Department.

Before examining Dana's role in the War Department as well as his relationship with Secretary Stanton, it is necessary to understand Stanton's personality. While his disposition was important to the way the War Department functioned, it did cause some problems. The trust established between Secretary Stanton and Dana was due to Dana's

²⁴ For this study, disloyal activities includes Confederate subversive actions in addition to those who disregarded federal legislation and military policies to assist the Confederacy directly (providing arms) and indirectly (importing industrial equipment in exchange for cotton, tobacco, cash, etc.).

²⁵ Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 143.

²⁶ Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 108, 147-48; Flower, *Edwin McMasters Stanton*, 119.

²⁷ Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 153.

ability to cope and thrive under Secretary Stanton, an attribute Dana revealed in a speech he presented to the New Haven Colony Historical Society. He declared that Stanton “was very intense, and one of the most eloquent men that I ever met. He was entirely absorbed in his duties.”²⁸ As opposed to Cameron’s leadership, Secretary Stanton’s administration represented a “time of action.”²⁹ Three and a half decades after working for the Secretary, Dana commented that Stanton’s “energy was something almost superhuman, and when he took hold of the War Department the armies seemed to grow, and they certainly gained in form and vim and thoroughness.”³⁰ Perhaps this drive impressed Dana the most, as he remarked, “I never knew a man who could do so much work in a given time.”³¹

Despite Secretary Stanton’s energy and eloquence, Dana also highlighted his less attractive qualities. According to Dana, Stanton was “impulsive, warm-blooded, very quick in execution, perhaps not always infallible in judgment.”³² He was “a nervous man, a man of imagination”³³ One story in Dana’s *Recollections* exposed the Secretary’s less glamorous side. On the evening of election day 1864, members of Lincoln’s administration nervously awaited the returns.³⁴ When Dana entered the Secretary of War’s office, he found President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton. During a brief pause in the returns and to ease the tension, President Lincoln asked Dana to come and sit with

²⁸ Charles A. Dana, *Lincoln and his Cabinet: A Lecture Delivered on Tuesday, March 10, 1896, before the New Haven Colony Historical Society* (Cleveland, OH: De Vinne, 1896), 20.

²⁹ Dana, *Lincoln and His Cabinet*, 21.

³⁰ Dana, *Lincoln and His Cabinet*, 20.

³¹ Dana, *Lincoln and His Cabinet*, 26.

³² Dana, *Lincoln and His Cabinet*, 26. It is very possible that when Dana refers to Secretary Stanton’s fallacious judgment, he is referring to Stanton’s impetuous removal of Dana as Assistant Secretary of War in November 1862.

³³ Dana, *Lincoln and His Cabinet*, 26.

³⁴ Chapters III and IV of this study examine several of the reasons for this anxiety and incorporate aspects of Dana’s contributions to President Lincoln’s reelection.

him, inquiring whether he had read any of Petroleum V. Nasby's writings, an American political commentator and humorist.³⁵ Dana responded that he had reviewed a few and found them amusing, to which Lincoln pulled out a piece, "Well, let me read you a specimen."³⁶

Dana recalled, "Mr. Stanton viewed these proceedings with great impatience, as I could see, but Mr. Lincoln paid no attention to that. He would read a page or a story, pause to consider a new election telegram, and then open the book again and go ahead with a new passage."³⁷ Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase ended this humorous respite when he interrupted to introduce another individual to the President.³⁸ Secretary Stanton then requested that Dana accompany him to an adjoining room. After the war, Dana clearly recollected, "I shall never forget the fire of his indignation at what seemed to him to be mere nonsense."³⁹ Dana continued, "The idea that when the safety of the republic was thus at issue, when the control of an empire was to be determined by a few figures, the leader, the man most deeply concerned, not merely for himself but for his country, could turn aside to read such balderdash and to laugh at such frivolous jests was, to his [Secretary Stanton's] mind, repugnant, even damnable."⁴⁰

Dana, who usually remained calm in numerous stressful environments, commented on the Secretary's tirade, stating, Stanton "could not understand, apparently, that it was by the relief which these jests afforded to the strain of mind under which Lincoln had so long been living, and to the natural gloom of a melancholy and

³⁵ Charles Anderson Dana, *Recollections of the Civil War: With Leaders at Washington in the Field in the Sixties* (New York: D. Appleton, 1898), 261.

³⁶ Quoted in Dana, *Recollections*, 261.

³⁷ Dana, *Recollections*, 261-62.

³⁸ Dana, *Recollections*, 262.

³⁹ Dana, *Recollections*, 262.

⁴⁰ Dana, *Recollections*, 262.

desponding temperament . . . that the safety and sanity of his intelligence were maintained and preserved."⁴¹ While this was hardly Secretary Stanton's only frenzy, it was the most memorable Dana witnessed at the War Department and served to highlight the eccentric Secretary's passion and personality that Dana contended with throughout his tenure, especially as Assistant Secretary of War in Washington City.

Dana as an Agent of the War Department

When the American Civil War erupted at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, Dana was a highly successful editor of the *New York Tribune*. His writings reveal little desire to work for Lincoln's administration in any capacity. However, a year later a senior member of the newspaper's board approached Dana to inform him, "Mr. Greeley would be glad to have me resign."⁴² While Greeley never specified the exact reason, Dana inferred that it was because "while he was for peace I was for war, and that as long as I stayed on the Tribune there was a spirit there which was not his spirit – that he did not like."⁴³ Upon his departure, Dana received a message from the newly appointed Secretary of War, who, having observed Dana, offered him an appointment to work at the War Department.⁴⁴

One of the most famous cries in the North before the First Battle of Bull Run, credited to Greeley, was "Forward to Richmond."⁴⁵ Its call for a more aggressive Union strategy mirrored the views Dana presented in his editorials, prompting Stanton to send

⁴¹ Dana, *Recollections*, 262.

⁴² Dana, *Recollections*, 1.

⁴³ Dana, *Recollections*, 1-2; Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 171. Wilson argues that the real reason for Dana's dismissal was "Dana was too aggressive, too positive, too self-confident, and too active to travel longer in harmony with Greeley. Their divergent opinions about the war had brought them to the parting of the ways."

⁴⁴ Dana, *Recollections*, 2; Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 190.

⁴⁵ Harry J. Maihafer, *The General and the Journalists: Ulysses S. Grant, Horace Greeley, and Charles Dana* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1998), 69.

Dana an oft-quoted message declaring, "This army has got to fight or run away; and while men are striving nobly in the West, the champagne and oysters on the Potomac must be stopped."⁴⁶ While revealing Stanton's views on the activities of the Army of the Potomac under the command of General George B. McClellan, this communication also indicates that as early as January 1862, Stanton recognized that the pro-Lincoln Dana could be an asset to the Union's cause and hoped to cultivate a relationship. He declared, "I know the task that is before us – I say *us*, because the Tribune has its mission as plainly as I have mine, and they tend to be the same end."⁴⁷ He clearly wanted to harness Dana's literary qualities to help maintain support for the Union cause and "rally around me," but Secretary Stanton also recognized his need for an individual with Dana's qualities to assist in managing the influx of responsibilities that accompanied the War Department's revitalization.⁴⁸

One month after Dana's resignation from the *New York Tribune*, Secretary Stanton hired him to audit the accounts of a quartermaster in Cairo, Illinois.⁴⁹ The Quartermaster Corps was ill-prepared to handle the massive number of requisitions and contracts that the Union army required. While some quartermasters made numerous mistakes, others undoubtedly took advantage of the situation for personal gain, resulting in accounts with numerous problems.⁵⁰ Compounding this issue, newspapers cited evidence of fraudulent and corrupt requisitions.⁵¹ Dana's commission quickly completed

⁴⁶ Quoted in Dana, *Recollections*, 5; Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 166; Maihafer, *The General and the Journalists*, 69.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Dana, *Recollections*, 5.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Dana, *Recollections*, 5.

⁴⁹ Dana, *Recollections*, 11; Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 190.

⁵⁰ Dana, *Recollections*, 12; Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 191.

⁵¹ Dana, *Recollections*, 12.

its inquiry, uncovering a relative lack of corruption.⁵² His involvement with this case, however, became important to the development of trust between Secretary Stanton and Dana.

Through previous correspondence, the Secretary of War believed Dana to be an ardent Union supporter. However, Dana's acuity as a newspaper editor was different from that required of agents at the War Department. For example, while Dana's early assignments used his ability to communicate situations at the front accurately; these talents did not necessarily relate to a natural perspicacity to oversee large operations. Therefore, Secretary Stanton had to gauge Dana's ability to handle managerial aspects of the department. The Secretary's firm stance on corrupt and fraudulent procurement practices required increased activity at the War Department. He needed a capable assistant to oversee these functions. Auditing a quartermaster's accounts presented a suitable situation to test Dana's qualifications for such a position. Clearly, he passed this test as Secretary Stanton offered Dana the job of Assistant Secretary of War that November.⁵³

Things, however, did not start out smoothly. A miscommunication occurred almost immediately between the two. In an unfortunate coincidence, Dana met an old acquaintance, Charles G. Halpine, formerly a journalist, but currently a major in the Union army.⁵⁴ Without thinking, Dana told Major Halpine that Secretary Stanton had appointed him Assistant Secretary of War. Major Halpine then informed his newspaper contacts in New York, who printed the story the next morning.⁵⁵ Secretary Stanton felt

⁵² Dana, *Recollections*, 15.

⁵³ Dana, *Recollections*, 16; Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 194.

⁵⁴ Dana, *Recollections*, 16; Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 194.

⁵⁵ Dana, *Recollections*, 16-17; Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 194.

that this was a breach of confidentiality and abruptly withdrew his offer.⁵⁶ Dana had lost the Secretary's confidence, which Dana worked to regain over the course of 1863 and 1864.

While this incident temporarily prevented Dana from assuming a position at the War Department in Washington City, Secretary Stanton still had a use for the former editor. The Union war effort was experiencing mixed results. In May 1862, the war was not going well for the North in the east. After the defeat at the First Battle of Bull Run, General George B. McClellan assumed command of the Army of the Potomac. While Secretary Stanton initially liked this fellow loyal Democrat, the failure of the Peninsula Campaign in the spring and early summer of 1862 exposed the general's weaknesses.⁵⁷ The situation in the west, however, was very different. General Grant was a rising star. After capturing Fort Henry and Fort Donelson in February 1862, he orchestrated a seemingly miraculous reversal of Union fortunes with a costly victory at the Battle of Shiloh in April. Officials in Washington City, however, were receiving troubling rumors that General Grant was frequently intoxicated.⁵⁸ President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton needed to verify these reports before deciding the general's future.⁵⁹ The individual selected for this task was Dana. His time with General Grant would become a vital aspect for improving Dana's relationship with the Secretary.

⁵⁶ Dana, *Recollections*, 16; Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 194-95.

⁵⁷ Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, 127-28.

⁵⁸ T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York: Vintage Books, 1952), 226. Williams asserts that President Lincoln was the one who wanted to verify General Grant's conduct; however, as head of the War Department, Secretary Stanton most likely wanted to verify these reports as well.

⁵⁹ Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 226. Williams argues that President Lincoln may have even initiated the idea of sending Dana to verify the troubling reports concerning General Grant.

To conceal Dana's true purpose, Secretary Stanton declared that Dana was a commissioner sent to audit payments to Union soldiers in the western theatre.⁶⁰ Although he had met General Grant previously, this was Dana's first opportunity to interact with the Army of the Tennessee's senior officers.⁶¹ At General Grant's headquarters in Milliken's Bend, Mississippi, Dana also confirmed his abolitionist sympathies, which would later influence his actions as Assistant Secretary of War, particularly in regards to the Emancipation Proclamation. Having spent the majority of his life in the Northeast, Dana had only a brief exposure to slavery during previous assignments in the Border States. Therefore, this journey was his first trip into the Deep South. As he recalled, "it was not until I saw these great Louisiana plantations with all their apparatus for living and working that I really felt the aristocratic nature of the institution, and the infernal baseness of that aristocracy."⁶² At this point, he still believed in social justice and these experiences only reaffirmed these beliefs. He declared, "Every day my conviction was intensified that the territorial and political integrity of the nation must be preserved at all costs, no matter how long it took."⁶³ It was not Dana's exposure to slavery, however, but his interactions with the Union commanders that provided the cultivation of trust with the Secretary of War.

Upon Dana's arrival, General Grant was developing a plan to capture Vicksburg. Seizing this strategic position on a bend in the Mississippi River would permit the North to control the river, effectively severing Texas from the rest of the Confederacy. Dana accompanied General Grant's army throughout this campaign, providing Secretary

⁶⁰ Dana, *Recollections*, 22; Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 200-201.

⁶¹ Dana, *Recollections*, 15. Dana first met General Grant when he was part of the War Department and temporarily stayed in Cairo, Illinois, the location of General Grant's headquarters at the time.

⁶² Dana, *Recollections*, 29.

⁶³ Dana, *Recollections*, 29.

Stanton with constant updates on the Army of the Tennessee's progress.⁶⁴ Since military historians have examined Union operations to seize this vital position, this study will not reiterate those events.⁶⁵ Instead, it will focus on Dana's dispatches detailing General Grant's activities to the Secretary of War.

Throughout May 1863, numerous engagements occurred between Union and Confederate forces around Vicksburg. With the defeat of the Confederates outside the fortress, General Grant ordered a frontal assault against the massive defense works.⁶⁶ As the South continued to repulse these attacks, Dana's messages to the War Department reveal an increased fondness for General Grant as a commander as well as faith in his capabilities. Based on his success at Vicksburg and in successive engagements, Dana's judgment also bolstered Secretary Stanton's trust in his agent.

General Grant ordered two major frontal assaults before deciding to besiege the enemy. The first occurred on May 19. While Dana's report covered the day's events, it did not highlight the Union's failure to take the rebel's trenches. Instead, Dana emphasized that for several days, the Union forces had driven the Confederates under General John C. Pemberton into his Vicksburg trenches, resulting in the capture of approximately five thousand prisoners and a reduction in the number of Confederate

⁶⁴ *Ulysses S. Grant: Memoirs and Selected Letters*, ed. Mary D. and William S. McFeely (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1990), 325. Dana composed a large portion of the correspondence included in the reports surrounding the Union operations to capture Vicksburg contained in the *Official Records*.

⁶⁵ For such works, consult Samuel Carter III's *The Final Fortress: The Campaign for Vicksburg, 1862-1863* (New York: St. Martin's, 1980) and William L. Shea and Terrence J. Winschel's *Triumph and Defeat: The Vicksburg Campaign* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003).

⁶⁶ McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 341.

defenders to around 15,000 to 20,000.⁶⁷ Instead of describing the Union failed attack, Dana's report merely stated, "There was sharp fighting through the day yesterday."⁶⁸

After this failure, General Grant carefully prepared a second strike. Launched on May 22, the Confederates again repulsed the attack. Dana's report, however, stated that the Union assault failed, "but without heavy loss."⁶⁹ He blamed these unsuccessful charges not on General Grant's orders, but on faulty information that General John C. McClernand, a political general from Illinois, provided.⁷⁰ Dana declared that General McClernand had reported that his forces had captured "two forts of the rebel line, was hard pressed, and in great need of re-enforcements."⁷¹ General Grant responded to these erroneous reports, ordering renewed drives that were "disastrous."⁷² Dana noted that the Union lost approximately 1,500 soldiers, "though but for McClernand's mistake it would have been inconsiderable."⁷³ Dana's *Recollections* do not paint a favorable picture of General McClernand, averring, "he had not the qualities necessary for commander even of a regiment."⁷⁴ Clearly, Dana's dispatches from Vicksburg reveal an ulterior motive. He not only distanced General Grant from the negative aspects of these operations, but also blamed disappointments on commanders he disliked. It is important to note that

⁶⁷ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 24, part 1 (Washington, DC), 86.

⁶⁸ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 24, part 1 (Washington, DC), 86.

⁶⁹ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 24, part 1 (Washington, DC), 86.

⁷⁰ McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 334.

⁷¹ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 24, part 1 (Washington, DC), 86.

⁷² U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 24, part 1 (Washington, DC), 86.

⁷³ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 24, part 1 (Washington, DC), 87.

⁷⁴ Dana, *Recollections*, 59.

Union casualties from the incidents on May 19 and 22 were over four thousand, the same number lost the previous three weeks during a series of engagements.⁷⁵

General Grant soon realized that Dana was not an auditor, but a highly influential advocate with the War Department. Approximately one week after the failed assaults, General Grant composed a dispatch to Major General Nathaniel P. Banks, the Union commander in charge of the Department of the Gulf, informing him that he was sending Dana to plead for the Army of the Tennessee's request for reinforcements. Understanding the influence that Dana wielded as an agent of the War Department, General Grant declared, "I have nothing further to add since my last that Mr. Dana cannot communicate more fully than can well be done in a written statement."⁷⁶ In debating General Grant's ascendancy to overall commander of the Union forces, several have emphasized Dana's contributions.⁷⁷ However, in view of Dana's future positions in the War Department, Grant's military successes, particularly at the Second Battle of Chattanooga, only served to augment the trust that Secretary Stanton had in Dana's judgment.

Secretary Stanton's opinion of Dana increased throughout 1863, as he accompanied Union forces during two other major operations. In both instances, Dana used his spare time to write his opinions of numerous Union commanders to the Secretary of War. These provided Secretary Stanton with detailed information about officers of various ranks in different armies that he would have lacked without Dana. He included

⁷⁵ McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 341.

⁷⁶ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 24, part 1 (Washington, DC), 87.

⁷⁷ See Wilson, *The Life of Charles Dana*, 245; Maihafer, *The General and the Journalists*, 184; and Charles Vincent Spaniolo, "Charles Anderson Dana: His Early Life and Civil War Career" (doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, 1965), 3.

several letters about officers of the Army of the Tennessee in his *Recollections*. The first analyzed those who held combat commands at the division and brigade levels. His succinct descriptions revealed not only the individual's ability to command, but at what level Dana believed they would be most suited. For example, in describing General A. J. Smith, a career cavalry officer, Dana stated that his division had a reputation for slow movements and that while Smith was a good officer, he "should not be intrusted with any important independent command."⁷⁸

In addition to combat officers, Dana also commented on those in support positions. His descriptions offer colorful portrayals that the Secretary of War must have found informative. Discussing the Quartermaster Corps, Dana declared that one commander "is an invalid almost, and I have never seen him when he appeared to be perfectly well; but he is a man of first-rate abilities and solid character."⁷⁹ While determining the effect that these opinions had on officers' promotions is beyond the scope of this study, Charles Vincent Spaniolo in "Charles Anderson Dana: His Early Life and Civil War Career," asserts that those receiving favorable comments from Dana to the Secretary of War advanced their military careers.⁸⁰ Additionally, Spaniolo contends that those whom Dana did not find to possess praiseworthy attributes suffered.⁸¹ While the extent of these claims is debatable, it does support the argument that the Secretary of War trusted Dana's judgment.

His duties in Washington City required that Secretary Stanton could rely on Dana to make important, and often legal, decisions that would affect the Union war effort. His

⁷⁸ Dana, *Recollections*, 65.

⁷⁹ Dana, *Recollections*, 73.

⁸⁰ Spaniolo, "Charles Anderson Dana," 3.

⁸¹ Spaniolo, "Charles Anderson Dana," 3.

admirable performance as an agent of the War Department with the Army of the Tennessee restored Secretary Stanton's original opinion of Dana that had been tarnished in the 1862 incident with Major Halpine. While the majority of Secretary Stanton's correspondence was devoted to official business, he did express his approval of Dana's performance in a telegram on June 5, 1863. While still with General Grant's forces at Vicksburg, Secretary Stanton informed Dana, "Your telegrams are a great obligation, and are looked for with deep interest. I cannot thank you as much as I feel for the service you are now rendering."⁸²

Dana's reports on Union commanders, however, were not perfect. With the Army of the Tennessee, he provided almost constant communication with the War Department, which Secretary Stanton appreciated. The Union commanders also realized that Dana continuously updated the Secretary of War. For that reason, these commanders could construe Dana's recommendations as a suggestion from the Secretary of War. On April 12, 1863, while the Army of the Tennessee moved into position around Vicksburg, Dana sent Secretary Stanton a telegram discussing the activities of various officers during the army's movements. In this dispatch, Dana stated, "I have remonstrated, so far as I could properly do so, against intrusting so momentous an operation to McClernand, . . . but General Grant will not change."⁸³ Believing Dana had overstepped his authority, Secretary Stanton declared, "Allow me to suggest that you carefully avoid giving any advice in respect to commands that may be assigned, as it may lead to misunderstanding

⁸² U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 24, part 1 (Washington, DC), 93.

⁸³ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 24, part 1 (Washington, DC), 74.

and troublesome complications.”⁸⁴ While there is no record that Dana committed a similar error later in the field, this telegram reveals that he sometimes exceeded his authority.

Secretary Stanton’s Experiences with Thomas A. Scott as Assistant Secretary of War

Not all of Secretary Stanton’s subordinates performed to his high standards. To understand why Secretary Stanton selected Dana to oversee many functions in the War Department as well as the extent of their relationship, it is important to highlight the attributes of other assistant secretaries. One of his first was Thomas A. Scott, who provides a good comparison because he and Dana both performed similar investigative functions. Scott’s reaction to Secretary Stanton’s abrasive personality, however, was very different from Dana’s, highlighting Stanton’s need for individuals with strong personalities to work for him. The fact that Dana thrived as an editor of the *New York Tribune* probably assisted him at the War Department and undoubtedly contributed to his second appointment.

To stop the fraudulent procurement practices of the Quartermaster Corps, Secretary Stanton sent Scott to St. Louis. Revealing that “more than 50% of regulation goods” were of inferior quality and purchased at full price, Scott relayed General Halleck’s opinion that “some equitable arrangements be made by the Government by which justice, at least, may be done the soldiers.”⁸⁵ While most of Scott’s documentation to the Secretary of War appears to be of sufficient quality, Secretary Stanton was unimpressed. It was not merely their performance that separated them, but Scott’s

⁸⁴ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 24, part 1 (Washington, DC), 75.

⁸⁵ Thomas A. Scott, Assistant Secretary of War, to Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, February 9, 1862, *Edwin McMasters Stanton Papers* (roll 2). Chapter Two examines Dana’s role in delivering the justice that Scott’s message seeks.

inability to handle Secretary Stanton's direct and harsh remarks. While the Secretary's initial comments are unknown, when compared to Dana, Scott was inferior. In a message to Secretary Stanton on February 7 specifying the necessity of coordinating the activities of two Union commanders, Scott declared, "Your message of yesterday hurt me. It is all past now – under any + all circumstances you may rely upon me doing my duty to the best of my ability."⁸⁶ While not perfect and sometimes crossing beyond his purview, there is no evidence that Dana declared that Secretary Stanton offended Dana's honor or that the Secretary's remarks miffed him. No record exists that clearly explains why Secretary Stanton decided to appoint Dana as Assistant Secretary of War, but it is likely that Dana's ability to handle the Secretary of War's unique personality was an important factor.

A Second Chance as Assistant Secretary of War

Dana's work in 1862 and 1863 allowed him to reestablish a good relationship with the Secretary. Dana's reports often went beyond the Secretary's expectations, and Dana's ability to handle Stanton's unpredictable personality, just as Dana had done under Horace Greeley, helped to separate Dana from other War Department agents. All of these factors contributed to Dana's advancement during the middle phases of the war, culminating in his reappointment as Assistant Secretary of War after the fall of Vicksburg.⁸⁷ However, it would be a full year before he became fully involved in the activities of the War Department in Washington City. Until then, Secretary Stanton

⁸⁶ Thomas A. Scott, Assistant Secretary of War, to Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, February 7, 1862, *Edwin McMasters Stanton Papers* (roll 2). The underline in the quote is original; however, as this message was most likely a telegram it is possible that Secretary Stanton underlined this comment personality and this copy was the one that is now located in Secretary Stanton's papers.

⁸⁷ Dana, *Recollections*, 103. Even though Secretary Stanton appointed Dana Assistant Secretary of War in 1863, it was not official until January 26, 1864.

required Dana's services with the Army of the Cumberland, reporting on the Union defeat at the Battle of Chickamauga and the retreat to Chattanooga. His performance throughout this campaign not only won him the recognition of other members of President Lincoln's administration, but also further cultivated his relationship with Secretary Stanton.⁸⁸

As General Grant was besieging Confederate forces in Vicksburg and the Army of the Potomac was defeating General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at the Battle of Gettysburg, Confederate General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee retreated from central Tennessee with General William S. Rosecrans's Army of the Cumberland slowly in pursuit.⁸⁹ President Lincoln urged General Rosecrans to attack the Confederates at Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Secretary Stanton sent Dana to accompany the army. Unlike previous assignments, Dana's orders clearly conveyed that he was there as a liaison between the Union army and the War Department, as he secretly had been at Vicksburg.⁹⁰ While General Grant had given him a cordial reception, General Rosecrans "burst out in angry abuse of the Government at Washington," complaining that it had not supported his efforts.⁹¹ Professionally responding to the general's displeasure, Dana informed him, "I have no authority to listen to complaints against the Government. I was sent here for the purpose of finding out what the Government could do to aid you, and have no right to confer with you on other matters."⁹²

⁸⁸ Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase's only mention of Dana in his diary concerns the information included in Dana's dispatches. See *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diary of Salmon P. Chase*, ed. David Donald (New York: Longmans, Green, 1954), 200, 202.

⁸⁹ McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 361.

⁹⁰ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 30, part 3 (Washington, DC), 229.

⁹¹ Dana, *Recollections*, 107.

⁹² Quoted in Dana, *Recollections*, 107.

While General Rosecrans's performance at the Battle of Chickamauga was not stellar, by the time Dana reached the Army of the Cumberland, Rosecrans had skillfully maneuvered around Chattanooga, dislodging the Confederate defenders without a major engagement.⁹³ Pursuing the Confederates south, the two forces clashed on September 19 and 20, 1863. Dana's reports on the progress of this battle would gain him recognition in President Lincoln's cabinet as an important asset to the War Department.

The first day at Chickamauga went well for the Union. Dana attentively sent eleven dispatches to Secretary Stanton. While declaring that the Union suffered heavy casualties from the Confederate attacks, Dana optimistically, and wrongfully, reported, "I do not yet dare to say our victory is complete, but it seems certain."⁹⁴ The following day was different. General Rosecrans misunderstood reports from his commanders concerning a gap in the Union line, and in an attempt to rectify the situation, created a hole for the Confederates to attack.⁹⁵ As the South struck, Dana witnessed chaos as the right flank folded in retreat. After the war, he recalled, "the first thing I saw was General Rosecrans crossing himself ... 'Hello!' I said to myself, 'if the general is crossing himself, we are in a desperate situation.'"⁹⁶ Making his way back to Chattanooga, Dana telegraphed Secretary Stanton "Chickamauga is as fatal a name in our history as Bull Run."⁹⁷

As the telegraphs reached the War Department, members of President Lincoln's administration tried to understand the situation. Secretary of the Treasury Chase cited

⁹³ McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 362.

⁹⁴ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 30, part 1 (Washington, DC), 191.

⁹⁵ McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 363.

⁹⁶ Dana, *Recollections*, 115.

⁹⁷ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 30, part 1 (Washington, DC), 192.

Dana's telegraphs as a source of much sought after information.⁹⁸ As President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton began to comprehend the events in Tennessee, Lincoln requested additional details to determine the level of assistance required.⁹⁹ In response, Dana began sending all the information he could gather beginning with the day of the retreat. He first telegraphed the War Department informing Washington that General George H. Thomas's Corps, augmented by additional Union troops, had shielded the Union retreat, and over ten thousand cavalry and mounted infantry soldiers were "perfectly intact."¹⁰⁰ As more details emerged, his reports provided the number of casualties and effective strength.¹⁰¹ These telegrams conveyed the necessity for reinforcements, and, when combined with the effectiveness of Secretary Stanton's War Department, led to the rapid redeployment of twenty thousand troops from the Army of the Potomac to the Army of the Cumberland.¹⁰²

With General Rosecrans poor performance at Chickamauga, President Lincoln placed the Union forces at Chattanooga under General Grant's command. Still with the Union army, Dana witnessed General Grant's coordinated attack on the Confederate positions on November 24 and 25, 1863. In his telegram to Secretary Stanton on the afternoon of November 25, Dana declared, "Glory to God. The day is decisively ours. Missionary Ridge has just been carried by a magnificent charge of Thomas' troops, and

⁹⁸ Chase, *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet*, 200, 202. The mention of Dana's dispatches at the Battle of Chickamauga is Secretary Chase's only reference to Dana in this diary.

⁹⁹ Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 281.

¹⁰⁰ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 30, part 1 (Washington, DC), 193.

¹⁰¹ General Thomas's reports provide the specifics Dana had for that particular time; for example, declaring that a specific division lost one third of its men. See U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 30, part 1 (Washington, DC), 195.

¹⁰² See John E. Clark Jr.'s "A Serious Disaster: The Federal Government Responds to Defeat at Chickamauga" in *Railroads in the Civil War: The Impact of Management on Victory and Defeat* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 141-159; McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 365-66.

rebels routed. Hooker has got in their rear."¹⁰³ Chattanooga became the last major engagement Dana witnessed in 1863. He spent the winter of 1863-1864 briefly performing duties for the War Department before accompanying General Grant and the Army of the Potomac, on its campaign from Spotsylvania to Petersburg in the spring of 1864. Throughout this campaign, Dana again served as a liaison between the War Department and the Union army. With the Army of the Potomac stalled at Petersburg, Dana returned to Washington City for the remainder of the war. His service there represents a part of his Civil War career as important to the federal war effort as his duties had been when he accompanied the Union army.¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

With the revitalization of the War Department, Secretary Stanton needed an individual he could rely on to oversee the extensive responsibilities now within his department's jurisdiction. While Watson helped Secretary Stanton build the War Department's bureaucratic infrastructure, Dana oversaw it during the crucial period of 1864 and 1865. An essential component of reestablishing the Secretary of War's faith in Dana's abilities was his tremendous performance reporting on the activities of the Union forces he accompanied. As the Battle of Chickamauga revealed, President Lincoln and the War Department needed detailed information to make effective decisions concerning supplies, reinforcements, commanders, and other aspects of the war. Dana's reports provided this information, and his attention to detail, the performance of his duties, and his strength of character handling Secretary Stanton's personality, gradually reinforced the Secretary of War's confidence. The diversity of the department's responsibilities

¹⁰³ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., 30, part 1 (Washington, DC), 195.

¹⁰⁴ Dana, *Recollections*, 186-223; Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 316-331.

from 1864-1865 necessitated this degree of trust, as the only way Secretary Stanton's War Department could handle everything under its jurisdiction was through capable subordinate officials like Dana.

CHAPTER III

WAR DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATIONS

The second chapter addressed Charles Dana's early life including his involvement with General Ulysses S Grant and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton's revitalization of the War Department. Combining the effects of Stanton's plans and Dana's managerial acuity, this third chapter discloses the Assistant Secretary of War's contributions to the Union war effort, focusing primarily on his assistance investigating fraudulent and suspicious activity under the War Department's jurisdiction. Exploring how the department conducted these inquiries, specifically those concerning the Provost Marshals, it outlines the diverse cross-section of cases that Dana oversaw. These include probes into fraudulent contractors, dishonest government employees, blockade-runners, state officials attempting to steal the 1864 presidential election, in addition to newspapers' unauthorized publication of sensitive material. Concluding with an example of Dana's participation in arbitrary arrests, it exposes him as a skillful administrator for the War Department. More importantly, despite accusations of his indiscriminately arresting innocent citizens, he executed these duties fairly, but firmly.¹ His contributions reveal that he and the organization he managed were essential to the government's endeavors to prosecute fraudulent contractors and others intent on harming the Union war effort. This also shows that this increased level of federal authority led to some abuse, of which Dana was an active participant.

¹ John A. Marshall's *American Bastille: A History of the Illegal Arrests and Imprisonment of American Citizens in the Northern and Border States, on Account of Their Political Opinions during the Late Civil War* (Philadelphia: Thomas W. Hartley, 1881) is one of the more critical examinations of the War Department and the federal government's investigative practices. Despite his highly-biased approach, Marshall provides solid information concerning specific events used in this analysis.

War Department Investigators

Who conducted these investigations? In simple terms, they were military and civilian agents of the War Department, in addition to federal, state, and local law enforcement officials, including marshals and nonmilitary contractors. Excluding the actions of specific agents, as Dana rarely dealt with them, this examination focuses on those who employed and supervised them, especially those east of the Mississippi River. Dana's *Recollections*, James Harrison Wilson's biography, and numerous official dispatches refer to this organization by several names including the National Detectives and the Secret Service.² Therefore, this analysis employs the all-inclusive term Agents of the War Department when referring to officials, including civilians, involved in conducting these investigations, performing arrests, and overseeing the initial detainment of the accused.³

The primary group composing the Agents of the War Department was the Provost Marshals. While past versions handled only issues concerning soldiers, during the Civil War the group had broader responsibilities.⁴ It was the muscle behind the War Department's mission to quell suspicious and fraudulent activities within the civilian population and arrest individuals according to Dana's and his superiors' orders.⁵ Even though the primary historiographical emphasis has centered on the Eastern Theater,

² Charles A. Dana, *Recollections of the Civil War: With the Leaders at Washington and in the Field in the Sixties* (New York: D. Appleton, 1913), 236.

³ Compounding this confusion, Dana's memoir refers to Lafayette C. Baker as the chief detective of the War Department, even though he frequently signed his dispatches Colonel and Agent of the War Department. Colonel Henry S. Olcott's designation as Special Commissioner of the War Department constitutes a similar situation. The Secret Service also oversaw Union spy activities; however, these are beyond the scope of this study. The authoritative work that examines the Union's spy and espionage related activity, albeit sparsely sourced, is Edwin C. Fishel's *The Secret War for the Union: The Untold Story of Military Intelligence in the Civil War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996).

⁴ Wilton P. Moore, "Union Army Provost Marshals in the Eastern Theater," *Military Affairs* 26, no. 3 (Autumn 1962): 120.

⁵ Moore, "Union Army Provost Marshals," 120.

colonels throughout the North as well as Union occupied territory conducted similar functions. With this extensive authority, the organization's proper functioning and management was essential for Dana to perform inquiries and apprehend guilty parties.

There are two components of the War Department's prosecution of fraudulent activities. First, widespread discontent and criticism over the federal contracting system began almost immediately after the eruption of hostilities. On May 25, 1861, the *New York Tribune* published an editorial entitled "Army Peculators," in which the author chastised the middlemen that emerged throughout the North as contractors. Reflecting the Northerners' feelings, the piece declared "how anybody but fiends can, for lucre, willfully palm off upon the Government, sleazy and rotten blankets, and rusty and putrid pork, to cover by night, and food by day, our brave sons and brothers who are enduring unwonted fatigue, and braving death, in defense of our country passes comprehension."⁶ The editor compared these contractors to "Vultures that prey upon the hearts of the dead on the battle field," advocating, "They must be summarily dealt with, and at the very beginning of the war before their crime becomes chronic."⁷ The *Tribune's* warning proved prophetic, as problems with fraudulent contractors continued throughout the war. While the Northern populace was never content with the federal government's ability to

⁶ "Army Peculators," *New York Tribune*, May 25, 1861.

⁷ "Army Peculators," *New York Tribune*, May 25, 1861; Mark R. Wilson, *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2006), 151. Wilson also declares that other newspapers throughout the North reprinted this editorial.

As neither Horace Greeley nor Charles Dana signed their editorials, it is unknown whether Dana wrote this column. However, James Harrison Wilson declares that Dana wrote the editorials advocating, "the Union was in its very nature indissoluble," whereas Greeley's editorials conveyed the possibility of peaceful succession. Applying this criteria, the tone of this message reveals that Dana most likely composed this message. Additionally, this is fitting, as Dana was a senior War Department official charged with ending these abuses that he so clearly articulated in this piece, as this chapter shows. For more information, consult James Harrison Wilson, *The Life of Charles Anderson Dana* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1907), 160.

deal with these injustices; Stanton's War Department became a leader in thwarting these efforts.⁸

Congress, reacting to Northerners' displeasure and demands for punishing offenders, passed a law expanding the federal government's authority to deal with businesses that failed to satisfy the stipulations agreed to in their contracts. Over a year after the *New York Tribune's* editorial, Congress passed a statute on July 17, 1862, which declared:

any person who shall contract to furnish supplies of any kind or description for the army or navy *he* shall be deemed and taken as a part of the land or naval forces of the United States, for which he shall contract to furnish said supplies, and be subject to the rules and regulations for the government of the land and naval force of the United States.⁹

Such legislation provided the War Department with the same jurisdiction over its contractors as it had over its soldiers, giving it the right to arrest suppliers violating their agreements, try them in a military court, and punish them at the discretion of the Secretary of War. Northerners demanded the punishment of these "vultures." After Dana came to Washington City, this became his responsibility, which he executed fairly and firmly. However, it would prove to be much more difficult than the black and white nature alluded to in the editorial.

Fraudulent Contractors

One business that Dana's agents discovered that violated its contracts was Place and Furlay, a coffee roasting company in New York. Even though this case was relatively minor, it illustrates Dana's role, authority, and impartiality throughout the

⁸ Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 190.

⁹ "An Act to provide for the more prompt Settlement of the Accounts of Disbursing Officers," Thirty-Seventh Congress, Session II, Chapter 200, Section 16 (July 17, 1862) in *Public Laws of the United States of America, Passed at the First Sessions of the Thirty-Seventh Congress, 1861-1862*, ed. George P. Sanger (Boston: Little, Brown, 1861), 596.

inquiries he oversaw. On February 1, 1865, he received affidavits from Colonel Lafayette C. Baker in New York, one of his most successful investigators, declaring that Place and Furlay "have committed enormous frauds on the Government."¹⁰ To prevent further abuse, Colonel Baker advised the suspension of all payments to them, which Dana did in an order to the Commissary General of Subsistence in New York.¹¹

Baker's initial report, however, was faulty. Upon hearing of the inquiry, the company, renamed J. K. and E. B. Place, as Furlay had left the organization, wrote to their United States Senator, Edwin D. Morgan, who, in turn, forwarded the correspondence to Dana.¹² It clarified their situation and presented a reliable witness familiar with government contracting, who pleaded for a retraction of the order suspending payment, as it was interfering with the company's current operations as well as its ability to fulfill subsequent orders totaling three thousand dollars.¹³ In exchange, the company's owners agreed to "become personally responsible to the extent of one hundred thousand dollars or more if required that they [the company's owners] will be ready whenever they are wanted to testify and that their books will be open at all times to

¹⁰ Lafayette C. Baker, War Department Agent, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, February 1, 1865; Case 770B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹¹ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Brigadier General Amos B. Eaton, Commissary General of Subsistence, February 2, 1865; Case 770B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹² J. K. and E. B. Place, coffee and tea producer, to Edwin D. Morgan, United States Senator from New York, February 4, 1865; Case 770B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹³ Edwin D. Morgan, United States Senator from New York, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, February 3, 1865; Case 770B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

the inspection of any one appointed by the Government."¹⁴ Contractors frequently attempted to bargain with the War Department to ease their punishment or expunge their reputations. Until the examination concluded, Dana took no action, as this matter and the company's lost profits did not concern him. The department's inquiry took less than a week. On February 6, Dana informed the Commissary General of Subsistence in New York to revoke the previous order as the investigation concluded: the contractor sold the goods with the aforementioned issues to the public, not the government.¹⁵ While only a minor case, it demonstrates the balance of fair-mindedness and resolve Dana exhibited.

A case exposing the potential complexity of these investigations and the extent Dana's managerial skills were necessary to balance the multitude of duties he performed in Washington City concerned a fraudulent tent contractor. On October 21, 1864, Colonel Olcott received a report concerning deficiencies in the hospital tents Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton supplied to the Schuylkill Arsenal in Pennsylvania. It claimed that the tents were four and a half yards deficient and calculated that the duck cotton, burlaps, weight lines, and the string saved the contractor \$9.825 per tent.¹⁶ Colonel Olcott informed Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton that the one thousand tents they delivered did not meet the specifications of their May 20, 1864 contract and requested

¹⁴ Edwin D. Morgan, United States Senator from New York, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, February 3, 1865; Case 770B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁵ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Brigadier General Amos B. Eaton, Commissary General of Subsistence, February 6, 1865; Case 770B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁶ A. Flomerfelt, War Department Inspector, to Colonel Henry S. Olcott, Special Commissioner of the War Department, October 21, 1864; Case 743B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

that they deposit the sum of \$9,825 to compensate the United States Treasury.¹⁷ He concluded stating, "It is proper to add that the Government has no information of any criminality on your part; but it would appear that the firm had by some means been unwittingly led into the error of supplying tents which did not conform to the standard."¹⁸ Had the contractor simply reimbursed the government, this would probably have ended the matter.

Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton, however, chose to dispute Colonel Olcott's request. Accompanying their payment, the contractor declared, "we pay this amount under protest and as all the circumstances are fully known to you we ask and shall expect from you whenever this subject comes before the War Department, such a statement . . . that we shall not suffer a greater loss than is right and just."¹⁹ They also alluded to their perceived unjust treatment at the hands of Colonel Olcott. For example, "The trimmings including the Burlap Sod Cloth were the same that the Government had been receiveing in all the different Departments as standard, they were the same as we were authorized to put upon the Tents by the Government officials, and had any other been used by us the

¹⁷ Colonel Henry S. Olcott, Special Commissioner of the War Department, to Messers Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton, tent contractor, January 9, 1865; Case 743B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁸ Colonel Henry S. Olcott, Special Commissioner of the War Department, to Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton, tent contractor, January 9, 1865; Case 743B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁹ Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton, tent contractor, to Colonel Henry S. Olcott, Special Commissioner of the War Department, January 10, 1865; Case 743B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Tents would not have been received.”²⁰ Posing a rhetorical question, they concluded, “And as you are aware we believe the Government have purchased Burlaps 3 months after they refused ours for the purpose of using them as Sod cloths on Hospital Tents, then why condemn ours?”²¹ Colonel Olcott was intolerant of such accusations and his subsequent correspondence bore a strikingly harsher tone.

No uniform policy for tent procurement existed; therefore, the officers in charge of “the several purchasing dépôts” were responsible for their own contracts.²² Consequently, the contractor’s error was its failure to abide by the standards the procurement officer established in the initial contract. Informing the company of this process, Colonel Olcott added that the individual they cited as furnishing those requirements “was arrested and is now under bonds to appear before a court-martial to answer charges of fraud in collusion with certain contractors. The Government has distinctly repudiated his acts as unauthorized and criminal in the cases of Cozens and others.”²³ To ensure that Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton understood his displeasure, Colonel Olcott concluded, “I do not see how any distinction can be made in your favor,”

²⁰ Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton, tent contractor, to Colonel Henry S. Olcott, Special Commissioner of the War Department, January 10, 1865; Case 743B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1780’s-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

²¹ Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton, tent contractor, to Colonel Henry S. Olcott, Special Commissioner of the War Department, January 10, 1865; Case 743B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1780’s-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

²² Colonel Henry S. Olcott, Special Commissioner of the War Department, to Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton, tent contractor, January 10, 1865; Case 743B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1780’s-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

²³ Colonel Henry S. Olcott, Special Commissioner of the War Department, to Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton, tent contractor, January 10, 1865; Case 743B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1780’s-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

and furthermore, "there is apparent reason for the application of an old principle of law that fraud vitiates a contract; and hence you must suffer the penalty of the ignorance, negligence or criminality of your agent."²⁴ The letter's most important aspect, however, was not its content, but its acknowledgement of Dana's initial involvement. Colonel Olcott "made a complete report of this case and transmitted it with all the papers, to the Hon C. A. Dana, Asst Sec of War who will place them on file in the Department, whence they can be produced at any time when the subject shall be finally adjudicated."²⁵

The tone, structure, and professionalism of Colonel Olcott's reply reveals much about the organization Dana managed. First, had the contractor silently paid for their malfeasance, the War Department would probably have dropped the matter with only a copy of the report filed in its records. Second, Colonel Olcott's calm response to Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton's brazen letter, demonstrated his competence to handle the department's inspectors and ensure that the federal government dealt with its contractors in a courteous and professional manner. These attributes allowed Dana to trust his subordinates, reducing the necessity to micromanage them and seldom requiring his direct involvement in an investigation. However, when the contractor's challenge threatened Colonel Olcott's authority, it escalated the situation.

The importance of this case also illustrates the proficiency of Dana's subordinates to perform their duties. Henry Lewis, a member of the board of directors of Lewis,

²⁴ Colonel Henry S. Olcott, Special Commissioner of the War Department, to Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton, tent contractor, January 10, 1865; Case 743B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

²⁵ Colonel Henry S. Olcott, Special Commissioner of the War Department, to Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton, tent contractor, January 10, 1865; Case 743B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Boardman, and Wharton, later wrote a subdued letter to Dana tactfully explaining the details of their situation and accepting responsibility for their errors. He ended his message acquiescing, "for any loss which the Government may have suffered on account of the improper manufacture of our tents by him, we hold ourselves responsible and are willing to make good."²⁶ Thus, the contractor attempted to rectify its relationship with the War Department to prevent problems attaining future contracts. Upon compensating the government for the error and no longer contesting Colonel Olcott's judgment, Dana chose not to arrest and court-martial them.²⁷ Dana's primary interaction, therefore, was to handle the distribution of the contractor's payment by placing it in the Treasury Department "to the credit of the appropriation for Camp and Garrison Equipage."²⁸

Throughout the conflict, the War Department signed thousands of contracts for goods from coffee and tents, to housing federal criminals in state-run prisons, and railroad transportation. Companies, however, still attempted to thwart the stipulations of their agreements to obtain greater profits. Verifying that the goods provided met the government's expectations proved to be a cumbersome task. Therefore, midway through

²⁶ The date of this message is of great concern. Although Henry Lewis declared, "I wrote and subscribed Before me this 3^d day of November A.D. 1864" and had a Notary Public sign this statement as a witness, the tone of this message is inconsistent with the letter the company sent to Colonel Olcott in January 1865. Had Henry Lewis really desired to "make good," he would have done so upon receipt of Colonel Olcott's initial correspondence, which was extremely cordial. For these reasons, the author believes that Lewis intentionally attempted to deceive Dana. By separating himself from the rest of the board of directors, he made an effort to prevent his company from losing the various other contracts his firm enjoyed throughout the war. Affidavit, Henry Lewis, member of the board of directors of Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton, November 3, 1864; Case 743B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

²⁷ There is no record of Dana ordering the arrest of any member of this contracting company in the case file or in the Records of the Office of the Secretary of War.

²⁸ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Colonel H. Biggs, Quartermaster stationed in Philadelphia, January 11, 1865; Case 743B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 136); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

the war, many army quartermasters began to violate the intent of the War Department's policy. Realizing that contracting also led to inflated prices, the quartermasters sometimes purchased goods on the open market without formal agreements, similar to the way they operated in emergencies.²⁹

Not only quartermasters, but also many Northern civilians became displeased with a system where business leaders were making potentially large profits while others bore the burden of combat.³⁰ They realized that the procurement system favored contracts that concentrated wartime profits in the hands of a relatively few large companies instead of small businesses and created middlemen, such as Lewis, Boardman, and Wharton, who made large profits without producing any goods.³¹ These factors combined to heighten the already negative feelings towards civilian contractors, exhibited in the *New York Tribune's* May 1861 editorial, creating a desire to investigate suspected abuses and then punish responsible parties.³² Dana and the War Department played an integral role in this process by providing a legal counterweight. In overseeing not only inspectors, investigators, arresting authorities, but also those who judged and punished the parties committing fraud, Dana became responsible for easing this civilian discontent. While the War Department's efforts to alleviate this despondency were unsuccessful, Dana's attempts to stymie fraudulent business practices became an important element in regulating some control over the massive procurement system, which expanded to meet

²⁹ Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 138.

³⁰ Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 107.

³¹ Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 147.

³² Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 147.

the war's demands.³³ However, it was not only the contractors, but also members of the Quartermaster Corps who received kickbacks and bribes from prospective suppliers.

Questionable Quartermaster Activity

While chapter four discusses the structure and the divisions within the Quartermaster Corps, there were officers within the bureau throughout the North as well as those accompanying army field units who also had the authority to purchase needed goods. The size of many of these transactions and the competition between contractors allowed these officials to defraud the federal government.³⁴ When suspicions arose that someone was taking advantage of his position for personal gain, Dana's War Department Agents investigated. One such case involved Colonel S. L. Brown of the Quartermaster Corps stationed in New York. His actions demonstrate the variety of ways in which unscrupulous individuals could defraud the government.

E. B. Clark, a clerk in Colonel Brown's office in charge of overseeing the procurement of forage, was the primary witness to the quartermaster's questionable actions. Beginning in August 1864, Clark noticed that Colonel Brown sent his brother-in-law to Chicago to purchase forage, but soon after, began paying Webster and Baxter for New York forage. In November and December, Colonel Brown as well as Webster and Baxter started circumventing established War Department procedures for contracts. Per established policy, the least expensive bid received the contract with monthly purchases equal to the going market rate. Baxter and Webster, however, charged the Quartermaster Corps six to ten cents above the current market rate.³⁵ When Clark informed Colonel

³³ Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 190.

³⁴ Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 159.

³⁵ Affidavit, E. B. Clark, clerk of Colonel S. L. Brown; Case 624B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll

Brown of this fraudulent billing, he dismissed it and paid the invoice without abatement, asserting that Webster and Baxter had properly billed the government.³⁶

Noticing that Colonel Brown continued to pay his brother-in-law, who was no longer associated with the Quartermaster Department in New York, Clark decided to review previous transactions, uncovering more evidence of fraudulent practices. At the beginning of 1864, Colonel Brown had sent an agent to Canada to buy grain with gold he purchased several months prior in New York. Filling out the agent's voucher, Colonel Brown requested the gold's highest market price and issued a voucher for that amount.³⁷ The agent, therefore, not only received the actual cost of the grain, twenty-nine cents above the current New York rate, but also the difference between the purchasing and selling price of the gold.³⁸ Clark also discovered that this was a common practice for Colonel Brown who had several agents that he paid on commission.³⁹ Other dubious practices, such as circumventing government inspectors, compounded these discoveries. These actions represented a wide-range of illegal procurement practices that the War

134); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

³⁶ Affidavit, E. B. Clark, clerk of Colonel S. L. Brown; Case 624B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 134); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

³⁷ Affidavit, E. B. Clark, clerk of Colonel S. L. Brown; Case 624B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 134); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

³⁸ Affidavit, E. B. Clark, clerk of Colonel S. L. Brown; Case 624B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 134); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

³⁹ Affidavit, E. B. Clark, clerk of Colonel S. L. Brown; Case 624B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 134); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Department and the American public loathed. Upon learning of these accusations, Dana and his agents initiated an inquiry.

Colonel Olcott's cursory investigation revealed highly worrisome practices. In a telegram on March 23, 1865, he informed Dana "The case of Col Brown and his oats is very bad Shall I not make a thorough investigation? It would take long and will show up a bad state of things."⁴⁰ Instead of launching a full-scale inquiry, however, Dana requested that Colonel Olcott send the War Department Clark's affidavits and "proceed no farther in the Brown affair without special directions to that effect. The matter is for the present to be kept in strict confidence."⁴¹ On March 31, about a week after Colonel Olcott initiated his examination, Dana filed his final report to the Secretary of War. In it, Dana refers to an affidavit that Colonel Brown had submitted, which is not present in the case file nor is there a record of it in the collections of letters and telegrams that the War Department received. Dana concluded, "In my judgment all the charges adduced by Clark are satisfactorily explained by Col. Brown. I am convinced that he has managed the business of purchasing forage with skill efficiency and honesty and that his operations have been highly advantageous to the Government."⁴²

While this investigation's rapid conclusion, like that of the coffee and tent contractors, was common, the lack of punishment for the blatant abuse of authority

⁴⁰ Colonel Henry S. Olcott, Special Commissioner of the War Department, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, March 23, 1865; Vol. 245, p. 121; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁴¹ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Henry S. Olcott, Special Commissioner of the War Department, March 23, 1865; Vol. 186, p. 46; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 88); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁴² Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, March 31, 1865; Case 624B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 134); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

evident in Clark's affidavit is not. The recommended punishment, the removal of Clark's immediate superior, Captain E. D. Chapman, was odd.⁴³ In Dana's *Recollections*, he discusses another case of a fraudulent contractor in which President Lincoln offered a more moderate punishment. Looking back Dana avers, "my own reflections upon the subject led me to the conclusion that the moderation of the President was wiser than the unrelenting justice of the Assistant Secretary would have been."⁴⁴

Without Colonel Brown's affidavit, other possibilities remain to explain Dana's recommendation. For example, several months prior, Dana received telegrams from Colonel Brown concerning acquiring advance funds to purchase the next month's forage at the current extremely low rates, an action that showed initiative and an attempt to save the government procurement costs.⁴⁵ As Dana and Colonel Brown had already established a relationship, a seemingly complete reversal in his behavior would have surprised Dana. Additionally, Captain Chapman, as Clark's superior, would have provided the information to initiate the investigation. Chapman could have altered facts to show his innocence while implicating Colonel Brown, who was legally responsible for all of the activities and contractors his subordinates handled. While impossible to prove, it would explain Dana's recommendation to the Secretary of War. In addition, without concrete evidence to support Captain Chapman's involvement in fraudulent activities, it

⁴³ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, March 31, 1865; Case 624B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 134); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁴⁴ Dana, *Recollections*, 164.

⁴⁵ S. L. Brown, Assistant Quartermaster, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 5, 1864; Vol. 241, p. 427; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 - March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 115); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

would be difficult to convict him in court-martial proceedings. Therefore, it would have been easier and completely within Stanton's authority, to relieve him from duty.

In addition to investigating fraudulent civilian contractors, Dana and his agents functioned as an internal affairs division, inquiring about the activities of Union military officers. The North struggled with these problems throughout the war. For example, in June 1864, Ohio's Congressman Robert C. Schenck debated legislation to decentralize procurement to allow the army's quartermasters to purchase goods on the free market, permitting free competition between individual producers, as opposed to professional contractors.⁴⁶ These investigations were cumbersome, but essential to ensure that civilians and government employees were not using the war for their own personal advantage. Dana's leadership made these offenders accountable for their actions, while protecting the American soldiers and taxpayers.

Illegal Trade and Blockade Runners

A central tenet of the Union's grand strategy was to establish a blockade to disrupt trade to the rebellious states and cripple its economy. Many textile manufacturers, however, were opposed to this policy. They depended on Southern cotton for their products, creating a demand for those willing to risk capture and prosecution to trade illegally with the Confederate states.⁴⁷ Dana had become familiar with this illicit commerce during his time as a member of an auditing commission and a free cotton trader when he advocated that the War Department suspend all permits because the trade

⁴⁶ Cong. Globe, 38th Cong., 1st Sess. (28 June 1864); Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 144.

⁴⁷ James M. McPherson and James K. Hogue, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*, 4th ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2010), 238-39.

Even though there was illicit trade with the Confederacy throughout the war, the Union blockade, coupled with Southern farmers only planting one third of their 1860 crop in 1862 was successful. The British, the most lucrative importer of Southern cotton, imported only one percent of its 1860 level in 1862. Additionally, many producers switched from cotton to linen and woolen.

harmed the Union war effort.⁴⁸ He continued to prosecute illicit cotton trade, while in Washington City, authorizing the capture and punishment of those ignoring the Union blockade, as they provided food, weapons, and other supplies to the rebels in exchange for cotton, tobacco, or other goods.

On November 3, 1864, Dana received a report from Colonel Baker that Morris Greenwald of McArthur and Company was preparing to sail from New York to Havana, Cuba with a large quantity of blockade goods and Confederate currency.⁴⁹ Dana then consulted Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt, who provided legal advice and justification for many of the President's and the War Department's actions. With Holt's permission from the Bureau of Military Justice, Dana authorized Colonel Baker to arrest Greenwald, who was in possession of a large sum of Confederate monetary capital connected to the sale of goods to individuals in the South. Holt felt that this made the seizure of Greenwald and the aforementioned bonds and notes justified.⁵⁰ Upon receiving Holt's decision, and by the order of President Lincoln, Dana issued authorization for Major General John A. Dix to arrest Greenwald.⁵¹ His apprehension took place that very day. The speed of this event is truly impressive considering that it required coordinating the actions of at least four people (Colonel Baker, Dana, Holt, and General Dix) in order

⁴⁸ Dana, *Recollections*, 18.

⁴⁹ Lafayette C. Baker, Colonel Provost Marshal, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, November 3, 1864; Case 696B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 135); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁵⁰ Joseph Holt, Judge Advocate General, November 3, 1864; Case 696B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 135); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁵¹ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to John A. Dix, Commander Department of the East, November 3, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 185; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 - July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

for Dana and Holt to review Colonel Baker's cursory findings, make an official judgment, and then execute the authority of their respective posts all by 10:40 a.m.⁵²

After Greenwald's arrest, Colonel Baker conducted a normal investigation and presented his findings to Dana. Greenwald's New York defense counsel argued that he had fled the Confederacy and taken an oath of allegiance to the United States and "in no way violated that oath, but has always remained, and now is a true and loyal citizen."⁵³ Using collaborating evidence from the affidavits of Thomas S. Knox, a former Captain and Commissary in the Confederate army, and Theodore Woodall, a former police detective for Confederate Brigadier General John H. Winder, Colonel Baker and his associates discovered that Greenwald was indeed a fervent supporter of the Confederate cause and active blockade-runner. Furthermore, both Knox and Woodall revealed Greenwald's intention to transport "Cotton Machinery and Cotton Cards" to Havana and then return with banned goods and smuggle them through the New York Customs House.⁵⁴

Knox and Woodall make it clear that Greenwald was not merely an opportunistic businessman, but also a Southern sympathizer. Knox recalled that on multiple occasions,

⁵² Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to John A. Dix, Commander Department of the East, November 3, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 185; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁵³ William L. Gardner, Commissioner of Deeds Norfolk County Jail, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, November 25, 1864; Case 696B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 135); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁵⁴ Affidavit of Thomas S. Knox, former Captain and Commissary in the Confederate Army who defected and now a witness in Colonel Baker's investigations; Case 696B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 135); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC; Affidavit of Theodore Woodall, former detective police officer of Brigadier General John H. Winder who defected and now a witness in Colonel Baker's investigations; Case 696B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 135); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

and in the presence of others, Greenwald had "made and in a boastful manner, drank a toast to the health and honor of Jeff. Davis."⁵⁵ Even though he did not testify to these incidents, Woodall stipulated that while in New York, Greenwald received an offer for an unspecified position in the federal government, which he declined because "he was too good a Southern man to accept any position under Lincoln."⁵⁶ From these affidavits and the evidence Colonel Baker discovered in Greenwald's possession, it was clear that Greenwald actively participated in illicit trade with the Confederacy on multiple occasions. After Dana's investigation, Greenwald was no longer a detriment to the Union blockade.⁵⁷

While the War Department could not capture every blockade-runner, the extent, competence, and authority of Dana's agents permitted the federal government to act swiftly to seize suspected illegal traders. In Stanley Lebergott's examination of the profitability of blockade-runners, he analyzed the average success rate in evading capture as well as their expected profits for a successful run. In 1864, the year of Greenwald's case, the success rate was 52.6 percent.⁵⁸ However, there is a very important aspect that Lebergott neglects to include: the likelihood of capture once a blockade-runner arrived in Northern ports. Once agents cooperating with the War Department discovered

⁵⁵ Affidavit of Thomas S. Knox, former Captain and Commissary in the Confederate Army who defected and now a witness in Colonel Baker's investigations; Case 696B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 135); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁵⁶ Affidavit of Theodore Woodall, former detective police officer of Brigadier General John H. Winder who defected and now a witness in Colonel Baker's investigations; Case 696B; *Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1866* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M797, roll 135); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁵⁷ Throughout the remainder of Dana's tenure in the War Department, there is no further correspondence relating to Greenwald.

⁵⁸ Stanley Lebergott, "Through the Blockade: The Profitability and Extent of Cotton Smuggling, 1861-1865," *Journal of Economic History* 41, no. 4 (December 1981): 874.

potentially illegal trade, Dana was able to orchestrate the arrest of the suspected individuals in as little as several hours. Thus, the chance for success was actually substantially lower than Lebergott's original calculations, which undoubtedly assisted the Union in thwarting the Confederacy's trade. Furthermore, this quick response was possible due to the effective management of the Agents of the War Department under Dana's direction.

Attempted Fraud in the 1864 Presidential Election

While Dana was helping arrange for the arrest of Greenwald, he was also involved in investigating voter fraud. In the months before the election, the New York State Legislature passed a bill authorizing its servicemen to vote in the upcoming election by absentee ballot. To prevent either party from exploiting this practice, the law also stipulated that the state send a commissioned officer to oversee the process.⁵⁹ When the state's Democratic Governor, Horatio Seymour, failed to receive the Republican ballots or an answer to his request to appoint two joint commissioners from his Secretary of State, Chauncey M. Depew, Governor Seymour appointed them himself.⁶⁰ He also selected three others to perform completely unrelated functions: Colonel Samuel North, Major Levi Cohn, and Lieutenant Morven M. Jones.⁶¹ Meanwhile, Lincoln's administration received information of possible voting fraud after the apprehension of two New York Democratic agents on October 26.⁶² At this time, Dana's organization provided the most effective way to detain suspected agents and conduct these inquiries, as

⁵⁹ John A. Marshall, *American Bastille*, 560-61.

⁶⁰ Joseph George Jr., "The North Affair: A Lincoln Military Trial, 1864," *Civil War History* 33, no. 3 (September 1987): 201.

⁶¹ George, "The North Affair," 199. Governor Seymour had appointed Colonel North as a New York State agent in Washington City, Major Cohn as a state paymaster, and Lieutenant Jones to assist those New York soldiers currently recuperating in Washington hospitals.

⁶² George, "The North Affair," 201; Marshall, *American Bastille*, 561.

the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other national investigation entities did not yet exist. Using the information available, Dana authorized his agents to arrest Colonel North, Major Cohn, and Lieutenant Jones under the orders of President Lincoln, marking the beginning of Dana's extensive involvement to uncover instances of voter fraud.⁶³

With only a few weeks until November 8, the Agents of the War Department had to find the names and locations of individuals from New York attempting to swing the election in favor of Democratic candidates. On October 19, Colonel Baker found one.⁶⁴ In a frantic order to Major General Gouverneur K. Warren on October 20, Dana stipulated that Governor Seymour had employed Felix McCloskey, a known "ballot box stuffer" from California "employed in frauds + forgeries like those in which other agents of Gov. Seymour have been detected here."⁶⁵ By the order of the Secretary of War, Dana ordered General Warren to arrest McCloskey if he was in the area.⁶⁶

In addition, the War Department received disturbing reports indicating that officers under Major General Marsena R. Patrick's command were giving Democratic New York agents, with or without fraudulent intentions, "favors and furnishing them with facilities not warranted by the passes granted them by this Department."⁶⁷ Dana

⁶³ Marshall, *American Bastille*, 561.

⁶⁴ Lafayette C. Baker, Agent of the War Department, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 29, 1864; Vol. 242, p. 426; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁶⁵ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Gouverneur K. Warren, Union military commander in the east, October 30, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 144; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁶⁶ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Gouverneur K. Warren, Union military commander in the east, October 30, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 144; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁶⁷ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Marsena R. Patrick, Provost Marshal General City Point, October 30, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 146; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 –*

informed General Patrick that the Secretary of War “expects from you careful and exact impartiality toward the representatives of the two parties.” Continuing, Dana declared “as the agents of Governor Seymour here and in Baltimore have been detected in the perpetration of gross frauds and forgeries for the purpose of causing the votes of soldiers to be counted in favor of Democratic candidates when those soldiers intended to vote against such candidates, he expects you to exercise vigilance for the detection of such crimes.”⁶⁸ Dana concluded: “should it finally appear that such wrongs have been consummated when due watchfulness on your post might have prevented them, you will be held responsible for the same.”⁶⁹

In the days preceding the election, Dana sent numerous dispatches trying to ascertain additional information to identify the possible fraudulent agents. He arranged to have Colonel Baker transport McCloskey to Washington City for further questioning. Despite John A. Marshall’s harsh tone concerning these indiscriminate arrests, Dana’s orders were to follow only specific leads with no seizures. For example, on October 31, Dana ordered Major General Benjamin Butler to look after two New York agents whom the War Department suspected “are engaged in such frauds as have recently been discovered here + in Baltimore.”⁷⁰ It is possible that Dana intended this only as a

July 30, 1881 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁶⁸ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Marsena R. Patrick, Provost Marshal General City Point, October 30, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 146; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁶⁹ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Marsena R. Patrick, Provost Marshal General City Point, October 30, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 146; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁷⁰ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Benjamin Butler, Union army commander, October 31, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 149; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

warning that the War Department had suspicions that these two individuals were working to steal the election in favor of the Democratic candidates and that General Butler, a political general in the Union army, should not assist them. President Lincoln relieved General Butler of his command after the election, when it was politically acceptable.

Strictly speaking, Marshall's criticism that Dana authorized the arrests of innocent individuals is entirely justified. With legal approval from the Judge Advocate General's office, Dana issued orders for the arrest of Colonel North, Major Cohn and Lieutenant Jones. A military commission tried and found them innocent, but President Lincoln did not authorize their release until January 1865.⁷¹ There are two aspects of Dana's involvement that are either different or absent from Marshall's and Joseph George Jr.'s account of this event. First, while Marshall asserts that Dana included the phrase "by the order of the President" to "screen himself from personal responsibility," in instances where Dana made arrests that higher authorities sanctioned, he included that in his dispatches.⁷²

Second, in George's description of Major Cohn's affidavit, three individuals were present in the room in addition to the defendant: Judge Advocate John A. Foster, President Lincoln, and Dana.⁷³ As President Lincoln conducted the interview with Major Cohn, and Judge Advocate Foster represented the executive's legal authority, their role in this meeting was clear; however, Dana's presence was peculiar. Even Major Cohn did not recognize Dana, merely assuming that he was the stenographer.⁷⁴ Dana, however, as the head of the federal organization responsible for quashing suspicious activities

⁷¹ George, "The North Affair," 200.

⁷² Marshall, *American Bastille*, 561.

⁷³ George, "The North Affair," 212.

⁷⁴ George, "The North Affair," 212.

throughout the North, oversaw this investigation from the beginning. His presence indicated his desire to receive any additional information from individuals already in custody that could lead to the arrest of other undetected conspirators. While Marshall criticized the handling of this investigation, Dana's management ensured that the Democratic agents did not steal the election away from President Lincoln, assuring that he would have a second term to attempt to end the Civil War as a unified nation.

One element of this investigation differed from others Dana oversaw. It was public. Usually, there was no press coverage. Only high profile cases captured the attention of local newspapers.⁷⁵ However, the trial of Colonel North, Major Cohen, and Lieutenant Jones filled half of the front page of the Republican *Chicago Tribune* on November 5, 1864.⁷⁶ In the days leading up to the election, this story was a sensation with both the Democratic and Republican presses attempting to use it to their advantage. On November 7, in an effort to exonerate Colonel North, the Democratic *New York Herald* published a letter to the editor declaring that Lieutenant Jones's initial statement condemning Colonel North was inconsistent with the one he later gave the paper's reporter.⁷⁷ It further stated that when Lieutenant Jones attempted to explain his involvement with the soldiers who wanted to vote for Democratic candidates, government officials interrupted him and required that he stay at the "agency" for a

⁷⁵ One of the investigations Dana oversaw that received press coverage was William B. Cozzens, a fraudulent contractor from Philadelphia. For more information, consult J. Matthew Gallman's *Mastering Wartime: A Social History or Philadelphia during the Civil War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 289-90.

⁷⁶ "The Election Frauds," *Chicago Tribune*, November 5, 1864.

⁷⁷ W. R. Ablien, "The Case of Colonel North," *New York Herald*, November 7, 1864. The name of the author is blurry and the spelling employed is the best approximation.

couple of days.⁷⁸ Finally, it declared that Lieutenant Jones denied that Colonel North was involved with any of the fraudulent voting practices.⁷⁹

Initially, the press ferociously followed this story, but the sensationalism quickly waned. On the Monday prior to the election, even the *New York Herald* devoted equal space to it and discussions concerning railroad fares.⁸⁰ Critics of Lincoln's administration, such as Marshall, would give a full and scathing account of this incident after the war, but following the election, the news quickly turned to election results and then Sherman's March to the Sea.

Problems with the Press

Following the election, issues arose surrounding the nation's press. In every war, a balance between providing pertinent information to the public and the need to safeguard what could potentially compromise the safety and operations of the soldiers exists. The Civil War was no different. However, unlike later conflicts, there was relatively little censorship.⁸¹ Enforcing existing regulations became Dana's responsibility. In 1862, Congress gave the War Department authority to supervise telegraph communications to thwart the transmission of military information that the Secretary of War had not released. Congress granted this power to the Assistant Secretary of War and General Manager of Military Telegraphs.⁸² Although Dana never used the second title, it became his duty to monitor this communication. As one of the most prominent newspaper editors prior to the war, Dana favored the dissemination of information to newspapers

⁷⁸ Ablien, "The Case of Colonel North."

⁷⁹ Ablien, "The Case of Colonel North."

⁸⁰ "The Increased Railroad Fares: Unwillingness to Take the Exact Legal Fares," *New York Herald*, November 7, 1864.

⁸¹ J. G. Randall, *Constitutional Problems Under Lincoln* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1951), 481, 485.

⁸² Randall, *Constitutional Problems Under Lincoln*, 482-83.

throughout the country. However, in his current position, he needed to ensure that Northern newspapers only published authorized military information.

The federal government had the right to prevent a newspaper from publishing information, especially if it proved too great a threat to the Union's cause.⁸³ However, what this qualification included was subject to interpretation. The Secretary of War could arrest and imprison editors who printed insurrectionary pieces, classified information, and other stories that were harmful to the Union war effort.⁸⁴ The War Department took the issue seriously and had no qualms enforcing it, even after the hostilities ceased. As a result, numerous Northern newspapers suffered under this suppression.

One instance occurred roughly one week after President Lincoln's assassination. Dana received a report concerning the publication of an official telegraph from the Secretary of War in the *American*, a newspaper based in Baltimore, Maryland. The paper had printed a single telegram, as two separate dispatches and mislabeled the time stamps.⁸⁵ While this may seem like a trivial error, and no evidence exists that the journal had an ulterior motive for manipulating the Secretary's dispatch, Dana informed the *American's* editor: "any repetition of such an act will result in the withholding of future dispatches of the Secretary of War from the journal guilty of the same."⁸⁶ In response,

⁸³ Randall, *Constitutional Problems Under Lincoln*, 492.

⁸⁴ Randall, *Constitutional Problems Under Lincoln*, 502-503.

⁸⁵ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to the Editor of the *American*, April 25, 1865; Vol. 187, p. 78; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 - July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 89); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁸⁶ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to the Editor of the *American*, April 25, 1865; Vol. 187, p. 78; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 - July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 89); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

the newspaper editor apologized for their “typographical error” and declared that he split the dispatch “to give greater prominence” to the two distinct topics it covered.⁸⁷

Dana’s conscientiousness for his duties and President Lincoln’s suppression of civil liberties during the Civil War are evident from this example. First, even though Dana was a prominent newspaper editor before and after the war, he took his responsibilities extremely seriously. Breaches in established policy, even when they no longer affected the safety of Union soldiers, needed proper attention. Additionally, the trust Dana developed with the Secretary of War was key to their working relationship. Dana did not hesitate to perform his duty, even when it targeted members of his chosen profession, a radical departure from his leak about his first appointment as Assistant Secretary of War two years earlier. The works of Marshall, J. G. Randall, and Mark E. Neely reveal disgust for the Lincoln administration’s suppression of the constitutionally guaranteed rights of American citizens. While journalists sometimes misrepresent facts or print faulty information, the First Amendment guarantees freedom of the press. In this case, the editor of the *American* only seemed to make a harmless typographical error.

Finally, most of the works that examine the constitutionality and other legal aspects of the Civil War in the North focus on top-level officials who helped the President create and then execute legal procedures.⁸⁸ Those in subordinate positions, such as Dana, were necessary and willing participants in these activities as well. While they did not formulate the policies, they did help execute them. In performing these

⁸⁷ Alex Fulton, Agt Asst P, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, April 25, 1865; Vol. 246, p. 126; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 118); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁸⁸ Mark E. Neely, *The Fate of Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 116. Neely’s work represents one of the shifts in historiography away from the exclusive focus on Lincoln and his senior cabinet members’ involvement in these issues to reveal how Union field commanders and other government officials contributed to these controversial policies and activities.

duties, it is clear that the government suppressed activities that the Constitution protected, even if they posed no harm to the Union. Dana's involvement with this episode was ironic. Less than a decade later, members of President Ulysses S Grant's administration and others filed charges, which they later dismissed, against the *New York Sun* and Dana for libel.⁸⁹

Arbitrary Arrests

While many of the previous examples did not involve arrests, it was a major component of the investigative activities Dana supervised at the War Department. There is considerable debate concerning the actual number of civilians arbitrarily detained from February 1862 through the end of the war. While 13,535 is the traditionally accepted figure, Neely's study argues that is a conservative estimate.⁹⁰ Dana oversaw and authorized many of these during his tenure in Washington City, deriving his legal authority from the Judge Advocate General and his subordinates in the Bureau of Military Justice, who briefed the President concerning court-martial cases.⁹¹ While some implicated only one or two individuals at a time, as in the case concerning voting fraud, others demonstrate that Dana planned and executed larger, multi-state raids. One instance occurred the Monday before election day 1864 and involved the generals in charge of the Northern areas east of the Mississippi River.

While the War Department worried about attempts to influence the presidential election in favor of the Democratic peace candidate, their investigations uncovered

⁸⁹ Wilson, *The Life of Charles Anderson Dana*, 432-33.

⁹⁰ Neely, *The Fate of Liberty*, 130.

⁹¹ Elizabeth D. Leonard, *Lincoln's Forgotten Ally: Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt of Kentucky* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 159. Just as Neely could not determine a concrete number of civilians arbitrarily arrested, it is impossible to determine the number of civilian arrests Dana authorized.

dozens of Confederate agents throughout the North. Dana coordinated a massive raid to arrest these suspects the day before the election.⁹² It targeted eighteen Confederate agents located in most of the major cities across the United States from Boston, Massachusetts to Saint Louis, Missouri.⁹³ After working with the Secretary of War, Dana released his orders to the Union generals in charge of the areas involved on Saturday, November 5.⁹⁴ As a precaution, to prevent word from leaking to other Confederate agents, each general received a list of individuals to arrest at exactly 10:00 a.m. the following Monday.⁹⁵ The result was staggering. Authorities captured all but one

⁹² It is unknown whether these individuals were suspected of fraudulent voting practices similar to the one concerning the New York agents. However, the fact that their arrest occurred the Monday before the election in such a coordinated and methodical fashion suggests that the War Department suspected them of attempting to disrupt the reelection of President Lincoln. Additionally, as several of the individuals targeted in the raid were civilians, the War Department could have waited to arrest them arbitrarily after the election to prevent any negative publicity associated with their detainment that could have jeopardized President Lincoln's reelection.

⁹³ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to William Rosecrans, Union commander St. Louis, Missouri, November 5, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 208; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC; Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to John A. Dix, Union commander New York City, November 5, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 215; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Not all of these Confederate agents were named; many had their aliases listed or physical descriptions.

⁹⁴ The Union commanders involved in the raid included: General William Rosecrans, General Stephen Burbridge, General J. F. Miller, General C. C. Washburne, General Joseph Hooker, General George C. Cadwallader, General Lew Wallace, and General John A. Dix. For more information concerning their positions and locations, consult the citations in the following note.

⁹⁵ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to William Rosecrans, Union commander St. Louis, Missouri, November 5, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 208; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC; Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Stephen Burbridge, Union commander Louisville, Kentucky, November 5, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 209; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC; Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to J. F. Miller, Union commander Nashville, Tennessee, November 5, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 210; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC; Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to C. C. Washburn, Union commander Memphis, Tennessee, November 5, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 211; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office

suspect.⁹⁶ It was the largest legal operation that Dana oversaw and demonstrated his active participation in the arbitrary arrests of civilians, the extensive nature of his organization, and the enormous resources at his disposal to prosecute those who, in the eyes of the Lincoln administration, were a threat to the Union war effort. However, there was little publicity considering the level of coordination needed for this raid, making it impossible to determine the charges each individual faced, with one exception.

Prior to the election, the Confederates launched numerous attacks throughout the North. One of the most famous was the Saint Alban's Raid. At the same time, an incident occurred in Chicago, Illinois in which military authorities took an individual into custody with the same last name as a suspect on Dana's list. On Monday, November 7, 1864, Colonel B. J. Sweet, the commandant of the port at Camp Douglas, arrested numerous Confederate guerilla forces trying to free prisoners of war housed there. In an attempt to frustrate election procedures the following day, their plan was to stuff the

of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC; Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Joseph Hooker, Union commander Cincinnati, Ohio, November 5, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 213; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC; Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to George A. Cadwallader, Union commander Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 5, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 215; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC; Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Lew Wallace, Union commander Baltimore, Maryland, November 5, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 216; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC; Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to John A. Dix, Union commander New York City, November 5, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 215; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁹⁶ George A. Cadwallader, Union commander Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, November 6, 1864; Vol. 243, p. 75; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

ballot boxes to ensure that the Democratic peace candidates carried the city.⁹⁷ In an extended column, the *Chicago Tribune* stated that Colonel Sweet and his agents had been investigating these plotters under the command of Colonel Vincent Marmaduke, brother of the Confederate General John S. Marmaduke, for several days and detained them on November 7; the date Dana's instructions specified.⁹⁸

Even though the article focused primarily on Colonel Marmaduke and the actual Confederate guerillas, the key individual responsible for coordinating their activities was Back S. Morris, the Treasurer of the Sons of Liberty and a retired Illinois circuit judge.⁹⁹ Dana's telegram to General Joseph Hooker ordered the arrest of a Major Morris.¹⁰⁰ Upon Morris's apprehension, the federal agents uncovered evidence of his involvement in a previous prisoner escape from Camp Douglas and the plans for a November 7 prison break.¹⁰¹ With this information, Colonel Sweet and the military authorities were able to seize many of the Confederate agents located throughout Chicago and foil the plot.¹⁰² Major Morris's arrest is the only detention linked to Dana's dispatches. News of it quickly spread throughout the North, appearing the following day in the *New York Herald*.¹⁰³

As these arrests were very controversial during the war, there is little doubt that President Lincoln, Secretary Stanton, and Dana approved of the silence surrounding these

⁹⁷ "The Rebel Raid: Its Magnitude – Designs of the Marauders – How they were Met and Coiled – More 'Arbitrary' Arrests – The Prisoners," *Chicago Tribune*, November 7, 1864.

⁹⁸ "The Rebel Raid."

⁹⁹ "The Rebel Raid."

¹⁰⁰ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Joseph Hooker, Union commander Cincinnati, Ohio, November 5, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 213; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁰¹ "The Rebel Raid."

¹⁰² "The Rebel Raid."

¹⁰³ "Startling News from Chicago: Alleged Plot to Burn the City and Release the Rebel Prisoners at Camp Douglas," *New York Herald*, November 8, 1864.

raids. Dana's authorization for Morris's apprehension was only one of the eighteen Confederate agents targeted in the raid. The results, however, were tremendous, as it thwarted a Confederate prison break and a threat to sabotage the election. There was a very distinct possibility that the other sixteen individuals Dana's agents arrested stopped similar plots. While Dana executed his duties fairly and firmly in his pursuit of justice, he fully employed the expanded authority of the War Department, allowing for the arbitrary arrest of the civilian population. Shoddy intelligence and human error contributed to the abuse of this authority. However, in this instance, it led to the incarceration of an active Confederate sympathizer and stopped a planned prisoner escape.

Conclusion

The degree to which Dana participated in legal activities varied. When dealing with issues concerning fraudulent contractors, his capable subordinates handled most of the details. Dana did not micromanage and limited his involvement. In other legal matters, he acted in a similar manner. While Falvin portrays Dana as a low-level official who merely made suggestions that Colonel Baker frequently ignored, this study found no record of Baker disregarding any of Dana's directives. Dana limited his involvement until necessary, as he had in many other matters requiring his attention.

Additionally, this examination reveals a less glamorous side to Dana's activities. During his tenure, he was a willing participant in the government's efforts to suppress civil liberties and arbitrarily arrest civilians. Scholars critical of the role President Lincoln and his Cabinet Secretaries played in these activities should also consider that those individuals who held positions similar to the Assistant Secretary of War deserve a

share of the blame. While it is true that Dana, and the organization he oversaw, were essential to thwart the efforts of fraudulent contractors as well as those who seriously intended to harm the Union war effort, it is equally true that the enormous authority the federal government wielded during the war led to some government abuse.

Did Dana arrest Colonel North, Major Cohn, and Lieutenant Jones knowing they were innocent? Did he attempt to conceal Colonel Brown's shady business deals? Historians may never know the answer to these and many other questions concerning the intent and extent of the abuse of government authority during the Civil War. However, the evidence indicates that Dana dealt with offenders in a fair manner and did not exploit his authority. Before criticizing his handling of the diverse and complex nature of these cases and his supervision of the Agents of the War Department, one must also understand the enormity of his other duties.

CHAPTER IV

RECONDITE AND UNREMITTING DUTIES

While Chapter III reveals Charles Dana's importance managing the activities of the Agents of the War Department, there was another vital aspect of his tenure as Assistant Secretary of War and a key to Union victory. Beginning with his effort to secure soldiers' furloughs for the 1864 presidential election, this chapter explores Dana's responsibilities representing the more recondite functions of the War Department. Among these were handling prisoners, transporting soldiers, procuring supplies, and managing issues involving federal policies such as the Emancipation Proclamation. While Dana worked in Washington City a mere eleven months, he proved an indispensable administrator for many of the department's obscure, but necessary functions. His ability to oversee these diverse and demanding tasks accentuates his most important contributions to the war effort and underscores the error of gauging his significance simply by his interactions with General Grant.

Many of Dana's duties occurred within the purview of the Quartermaster Corps, the domain of logistics, a frequently overlooked necessity for combat operations. Nevertheless, this division experienced dramatic changes once hostilities erupted and Stanton became Secretary of War. From the ancient Chinese military theorist, Sun Tzu, through the Napoleonic era, to the maxims of Carl von Clausewitz and Antoine Henri Jomini, few commanders and military theorists offer meaningful recommendations to understand its importance.¹ Dana's contributions to this realm are no different.

¹ Sun Tzu, *The Illustrated Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 215, 107; Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 131; Antoine Henri Jomini, "Art of War," in *Roots of Strategy: Book 2*, ed. Brig. Gen. J. D. Hittle (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1987), 450.

The Quartermaster Corps was responsible for ensuring that the troops received a continuous supply of essential equipment and transportation. While supplying isolated frontier outposts presented its own unique challenges, this branch of the War Department was woefully ill-prepared for the demands of the rapidly expanding Union army. At the war's outbreak, it consisted of thirty-five officers with a string of Quartermaster Generals.² The first, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph E. Johnston, resigned upon Virginia's secession and joined the Confederate army.³ Simon Cameron, Stanton's predecessor, replaced Johnston with Montgomery C. Meigs, who aggressively expanded it.⁴ Meigs not only supplied the fielded forces, he and his division oversaw other functions, including helping Stanton prosecute fraud. Consequently, Meigs became an important member of the revitalized War Department. Due to insufficient time and the plethora of functions of the Quartermaster Corps, Stanton delegated the routine coordination between it and the War Department to subordinate civilian administrators, such as Assistant Secretary of War Dana.

While Meigs had many responsibilities, during Dana's tenure he became involved with three areas of the Quartermaster Corps: clothing and equipping the Union army, arranging land and sea transportation, and providing regular supplies to federal forces. Prior to Fort Sumter, the Quartermaster Corps had one designated bureau.⁵ By the time Dana arrived, Meigs had created the bureaucratic apparatus, which would exist for the

² Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775-1939* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1989), 334.

³ Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 333-34.

⁴ Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 337; Russell F. Weigley, *Quartermaster General of the Union Army: A Biography of M. C. Meigs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 213. Weigley argues that Meigs developed a close and cooperative relationship with the Secretary of War, which assisted the Quartermaster Corps in performing its duties.

⁵ Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 337.

remainder of the war.⁶ Similar to Stanton's revamped War Department, Meigs had organized the Quartermaster Corps to function efficiently, permitting Dana and others to perform their duties. However, this division presented Dana with its own unique challenges.

Election Furloughs

The Quartermaster Corps and Dana often worked together to manage the North's massive transportation network. Over this system, a constant supply of sustenance and material traveled to the various Union forces, in addition to military servicemen and government officials. Dana was particularly involved with the latter, especially as it related to furloughs for the 1864 Presidential Election. While investigating fraudulent voting practices in October and early November of 1864, he simultaneously arranged for thousands of leaves for Union soldiers to return home to cast their ballots. As he recalled, "we were busy in the department arranging for soldiers to go home to vote, and also for taking of ballots in the army. There was a constant succession of telegrams from all parts of the country requesting that leave of absence be extended to this or that officer, in order that his district at home might have the benefit of his vote and political influence."⁷ Even though most states passed laws permitting their soldiers to vote in the field, five had not.⁸ While the War Department actively sought to furlough these soldiers, Stanton's primary concern was to ensure that the Union army maintained adequate numbers at the front to counter attacks and maintain pressure on the

⁶ Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 337. The last major addition to the Quartermaster Corps was Colonel Charles Thomas to handle fraudulent cases in 1864.

⁷ Charles A. Dana, *Recollections of the Civil War: With the Leaders at Washington and in the Field in the Sixties* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1913), 260.

⁸ John C. Waugh, *Reelecting Lincoln: The Battle for the 1864 Presidency* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1997), 340. The five states yet to permit some form of absentee voting included: Indiana, Illinois, Delaware, New Jersey, and Oregon.

Confederates. Judiciously, Dana had to decide if it was prudent to grant certain leaves or if it would jeopardize the Union's frontline. An incorrect decision could prove disastrous. Therefore, he was selective in those he granted. In his *Recollections*, Dana recalled, "All the power and influence of the War Department, then something enormous from the vast expenditure and extensive relations of the war, was employed to secure the re-election of Mr. Lincoln."⁹

In Illinois, Republican Governor Richard Yates sought Dana's assistance for the return of as many soldiers as possible. Yates's persistence and variety of demands provide an example to explore this facet of Dana's role in Lincoln's administration as well as his importance to the broader war effort. Requests flooded the War Department, but the only guaranteed furloughs that Dana could authorize were for soldiers hospitalized for sickness and combat injuries, unable to report for regular duty, but stable enough to travel home because their absence would not affect the Union's military strength. Approximately one month prior to the election, Yates requested permission for his state's agents to visit hospitals treating Illinois soldiers. They were to compile the names of those eligible for furloughs so that he could secure their return home. Replying to one of Dana's requests for information, Yates declared that he had "appointed agents to procure lists of sick + wounded [Illinois soldiers] in the field + general Hospitals."¹⁰ However, there was a problem. General William T. Sherman prohibited nonmilitary personnel to proceed south of Nashville, Tennessee. Yates, fearful of being unable to obtain expedient approval for these hospitalized soldiers, urged Dana "to issue orders to

⁹ Dana, *Recollections*, 261.

¹⁰ Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 13, 1864; Vol. 242, p. 66; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

all Medical Directors to furlough all sick + wounded Illinoisans + send them home at once."¹¹ If administrators at Union army hospitals directly granted the furloughs, Yates hoped to expedite the homecoming of these troops. Within three weeks, he again relayed this persistent undertone of urgency as well his perception of the vital nature of the Illinois soldiers' vote for a successful National Union Party election.¹²

There is no known response to this request, but Dana did ask Yates to provide "the names of the three agents you wish to send to Atlanta."¹³ Upon obtaining an answer, Dana sent messages to each individual authorizing them to visit "all the hospitals and camps in the Military Division of the Mississippi" and that "All Military officers are hereby directed to give you every facility for the performance of your duty."¹⁴ Given the War Department's painstaking efforts to secure every possible ballot, it is quite probable that Dana or Stanton gave this order.¹⁵ In addition, four days earlier, Dana received a telegram from Alex Underwood, in York, Pennsylvania, but an active member of the

¹¹ Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 13, 1864; Vol. 242, p. 66; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹² Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 25, 1864; Vol. 242, p. 339; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

The National Union Party was a political conception that President Lincoln devised in order to secure his reelection. As the North still contained a large number of influential democrats, the National Union Party would bridge the gap between Democrats and Republicans, in order for Lincoln to get enough Democratic support to win a second term.

¹³ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois, October 8, 1864; Vol. 183, p. 365; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁴ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to George Lee, Illinois State Official, October 16, 1864; Vol. 183, p. 487; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁵ As this was such a broad order applicable to medical units throughout the Union army, it is likely that Stanton would have issued the order himself. From the telegrams this study examined, Stanton bestowed Dana with the authority to handle specific cases; however, when it came to major policy decisions Stanton issued those orders personally.

Republican Party in New York City. Underwood stated his concern that the “Surgeon in charge of [the] Hospital here says no order to furlough soldiers for the election has been received. Surg Genl Barnes telegraphed no such order has been received.”¹⁶ Clearly all Union soldiers were now the focus of Dana’s authorized furloughs, not only the sick and injured Illinois men.

In New York, Dana’s communication with Ben Field, a prominent coordinator of the state’s Republican Party, provides additional compelling evidence of Dana’s role in securing these furloughs. Field inquired “if and when” the War Department would issue an all-encompassing order “granting leave to soldiers in hospitals to go home to election.”¹⁷ Considering the historical precedent of this state’s propensity to vote for Democratic candidates, the New York Draft riots of 1863, and the discovery of fraud initiated by the state’s governor, Field, like Yates, clearly wanted to ensure that as many soldiers as possible participated in the election.¹⁸ The cumulative effect of these concerns, in cooperation with the Secretary of War, led to Dana’s quick response: “A general order will be issued. I think from Nov. 4th to 11th.”¹⁹

Field and Underwood’s telegrams are very revealing. While these furloughs preoccupied the War Department prior to the election, there was no all-encompassing

¹⁶ Alex Underwood to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 3, 1864; Vol. 241, p. 401; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 115); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁷ Ben Field to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 26, 1864; Vol. 242, p. 347; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁸ The votes that soldiers cast in person would not be affected by the current scheme of voter fraud by the governor, which focused on the “stealing” of absentee votes.

¹⁹ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Ben Field, October 26, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 87; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

policy or general order regarding soldiers unfit for regular service. Without it, Dana had to consider each request individually, an onerous process, as it required the names of each soldier as well as his unit and location. Furthermore, to compile this information, every state had to appoint special commissioners to visit every Union camp and hospital that housed their soldiers. These officials also needed special permission to travel through Union occupied territory to reach their troops. To complicate matters, for part of October, Stanton was away from Washington City. Telegrams during this period reveal that Dana was the acting Secretary of War, thus giving him many additional responsibilities.²⁰

Throughout this stressful period, Dana always exhibited an understanding of the War Department's priorities. While votes were important, he could not compromise the military's primary mission: winning the war. The situation was rarely unequivocal, and Dana exerted considerable energy trying to accommodate as many requests as possible. For example, Yates realized that some Illinois soldiers had furloughs that expired between October 14 and November 8 (Election Day), excluding them from voting. Appealing to the War Department, Yates urged Dana to "issue [an] order for [an] extension of all furloughs to cover that time," pleading that this action "would save hundreds of votes."²¹ Originally, Dana refused, replying, "Pressing military necessity" required that "Every soldier is imperatively needed at the front."²² However, upon

²⁰ Dana's telegrams from October 15-18 show his signature as acting Secretary of War.

²¹ Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 14, 1864; Vol. 242, p. 66; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

²² Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois, October 14, 1864; Vol. 183, p. 472; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

reconsideration, Dana sent Yates a second telegram requesting the names and units of the soldiers in question.²³ The governor, however, was unable to comply, as he only possessed the number of Illinois soldiers, two to three thousand, serving along the Mississippi River or with Sherman's army in Atlanta.²⁴ Instead, Yates pleaded for a "general order extending furloughs."²⁵ While it is unknown whether these soldiers received their furloughs in time to return home before the election, the fact that President Lincoln carried Illinois by only twenty thousand ballots reveals the importance of each vote in determining the division of the state's electoral votes.²⁶

Dana's involvement also helps to convey the governor's sense of urgency. In the early evening of October 21, Yates sent a brief telegram to Dana with the unorthodox request to order Major General William S. Rosecrans "to furlough all paroled prisoners belonging to Illinois Regiments in the Department until after the election."²⁷ While there is no known reply, it illustrates the constant pressure that politicians and party organizers

²³ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois, October 15, 1864; Vol. 183, p. 473; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Even though there is no record of further discussions on this matter, it is possible that Dana consulted with the Secretary of War and then arranged for any extension that Stanton believed would not hinder the war effort. It is important to remember that General William T. Sherman needed the full strength of his army for his March to the Sea after the election and his army included many Illinois soldiers.

²⁴ Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 18, 1864; Vol. 242, p. 152; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

²⁵ Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 18, 1864; Vol. 242, p. 152; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

This study found no telegram responding to Yates' request; however, considering the time it took for Stanton to issue a general order concerning hospitalized troops and his need to balance soldier furloughs against combat strength, it is possible that Dana and Stanton merely ignored this appeal.

²⁶ John Woolley and Gerhard Peters, "Election of 1864," American Presidency Project, accessed May 2, 2013, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1864>.

²⁷ Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 21, 1864; Vol. 242, p. 252; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

placed on the War Department and Dana in particular. It also shows the tremendous effort and contributions that low-level officials gave to the President's reelection. Without Dana's attempts to secure furloughs for soldiers from the five states lacking absentee voting, there was a possibility that President Lincoln could lose them to George B. McClellan and Democratic Congressional candidates who advocated a negotiated peace.²⁸ Due in large part to Dana's work, this did not occur. If President Lincoln had lost the election and been unable to defeat the Confederacy, Dana's efforts would have proved fruitless. His involvement also represented the expanded role of the federal government in elections, since the War Department oversaw not only absentee voting and furloughing soldiers, but also prosecuting those who threatened these efforts.²⁹ Finally, Yates's request reveals that one of Dana's additional responsibilities concerned the nation's wartime prison population.

Prisoners

During the war, the federal government detained three types of prisoners. The first included prisoners of war, uniformed Confederate combatants captured as captulators, deserters, or through other circumstances. Dana's contact with them demonstrates the breadth of his duties with the War Department. For most of these inquiries, Dana merely acted as Stanton's assistant, relaying the Secretary's opinion based on previous cases. For example, Colonel William Hoffman, Commissary-General of Prisoners at Fort Monroe, Virginia, requested clarification of instructions concerning "the delivery of artificial limbs to prisoners of war" and whether he had authorization "to

²⁸ Jonathan W. White, "Canvassing the Troops: The Federal Government and the Soldiers' Right to Vote," *Civil War History* 50, no. 3 (September 2004): 312.

²⁹ White, "Canvassing the Troops," 317.

furnish limbs . . . to cover all such applications.”³⁰ Per the Secretary’s policy, Dana responded that “By order of the Secretary of War” Colonel Hoffman could issue the prosthetic limbs in all similar cases.³¹ To give his response added credibility, Dana enclosed Stanton’s original order issued four months prior that he had “no objections to Messers. Palmer & Co. furnishing wooden legs to the rebels that need them.”³²

For the second and third categories of prisoners, Dana’s responsibilities expanded beyond relaying established protocol. These detainees included those tried and convicted by a general court-martial as well as civilians accused of treasonous acts and held under the jurisdiction of the War Department. While chapter two examined Dana’s role in these investigations, once convicted, the department became responsible for holding these individuals. Therefore, Dana needed to find adequate facilities for them during their sentence or until they no longer posed a threat to the Union war effort, no small task. Although prisons were scattered throughout the North and additional camps constantly opened, Dana realized that the need was greater than the existing accommodations, forcing him to maximize the available space in established facilities.³³

To this end, Dana contacted a variety of Northern institutions to ascertain their capacity, a practice that would continue after the war. The commander at Fort Delaware, Albin F. Schoepf, telegraphed Dana, “Owing to the heavy influx of prisoner of Courts

³⁰ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 2nd ser., 7 (Washington, DC), 68.

³¹ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 2nd ser., 7 (Washington, DC), 69.

³² U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 2nd ser., 7 (Washington, DC), 69.

³³ William B. Hesseltine, “Civil War Prisons: Introduction,” *Civil War History* 8, no. 2 (June 1962): 118.

The accepted figure for the number of Confederates held as prisoner of war in the North is 214,865. However, this number does not include the second and third categories of prisoners held under the jurisdiction of the War Department. As there is no commonly accepted figure for the number of these types of prisoners held during the war, it is possible that the total number of prisoners that the War Department, and, therefore, in part, Dana managed exceeded 220,000.

Martial I was compelled to increase the room for them and therefore filled up casemates which enables me to accommodate eighty more.”³⁴ In May 1865, Dana contacted John Foss, the warden of the New Hampshire State Prison in Concord, addressing the feasibility of accepting prisoners “under sentence of Courts Martial on terms agreed upon in our conversation some months since.”³⁵ With Governor Joseph A. Gilmore’s approval, Foss replied that they were able to “receive fifty prisoners upon the order of the War Dep[artment] immediately. Will take them on the terms agreed upon in our conversation.”³⁶ While Dana negotiated with various state-run prisons, on February 12, 1865, he also telegraphed Major General Edward O. C. Ord, Commander of the Army of the James, at Bermuda Hundred, Virginia, requesting the number of “insane persons” at the Williamsburg Asylum.³⁷

Dana’s dealings with prisoners not only concerned their confinement, but also their transportation. For example, after Stanton’s review of Warden John Parkhurst’s application to commit federal detainees at his facility, Dana arranged for their transfer to Clinton Prison in Dannemora, New York, in the northern part of the state.³⁸ He informed

³⁴ Albin F. Schoeph, Commander of Fort Delaware, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, May 21, 1865; Vol. 247, p. 133; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 118); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

³⁵ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to John Foss, Warden New Hampshire State Prison, May 19, 1865; Vol. 187, p. 428; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 89); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

³⁶ John Foss, Warden New Hampshire State Prison, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, May 19, 1865; Vol. 247, p. 44; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 118); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

³⁷ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Edward Ord, Commander of the Army of the James, February 12, 1865; Vol. 185, p. 271; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 88); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

³⁸ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to John Parkhurst, Warden Clinton Prison, August 30, 1864; Vol. 182, p. 367; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881*

Parkhurst, "The first installment not over fifteen or twenty in number may be expected within ten days."³⁹ Similarly, in November, Dana made arrangements with the Assistant Adjutant General at City Point, Virginia, Colonel J. H. Taylor, to receive five prisoners from the Army of Potomac at Petersburg.⁴⁰

When Dana handled issues directly affecting the detainees, such as the distribution of prosthetic limbs, or their transfers, his correspondence contains a phrase relating to an order by the Secretary of War. In these instances, Dana acted as a functionary for Stanton. For prisoner movements, such as those with Foss and Colonel Taylor, this phrase did not appear. In these cases, Dana, as the most senior civilian, had the authority of the War Department and Stanton's implicit trust to perform these duties. Broader implications of Dana's role exist regarding the North's prison population, especially for captured Confederates. Many studies criticize, albeit justifiably, Lincoln's administration and the War Department for its treatment of those detained. William B. Hesseltine, a pioneering scholar on Civil War prisons, admits that both sides treated their prison populations more severely than was necessary to keep them secure.⁴¹ For example, the Secretary of War ordered the reduction of supplies and sustenance to rebel

(National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 86); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

³⁹ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to John Parkhurst, Warden Clinton Prison, August 30, 1864; Vol. 182, p. 367; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 86); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁴⁰ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Colonel J. H. Taylor, November 11, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 264; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC; Colonel J. H. Taylor to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, November 11, 1864; Vol. 243, p. 160; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁴¹ Hesseltine, "Civil War Prisons," 119.

prisoners to replicate the conditions of Union war prisoners in the South.⁴² Since Dana bore the responsibility for conveying Stanton's decisions for prosthetic limbs and arranging to maximize the capacity of Northern prison facilities, he was also culpable for their consequences, as it was impossible for Stanton to enforce his policy decisions without the diligence and support of valued subordinates such as Dana.⁴³

Transportation

Just as Dana's work was necessary for the War Department to manage the transfer of the Union's large prisoner population, it was also vital for personnel movements. Numerous studies reveal the effects that the Northern railroad network had on the federal war effort and the corresponding influence the conflict had on the development of that

⁴² Hesselstine, "Civil War Prisons," 118-19. Even with these measures, the mortality rate of Southern prisoners was 12 percent opposed to the 15.5 percent Union prisoners experienced.

There have been two trends in the historiography of Civil War prisons. The first involves studies that examine individual prisons. The most popular of these Northern prisons for these studies has been Elmira, most likely because it had the highest fatality rate of any Union prison facility. Such works include Michael Herigen's *Elmira: Death Camp of the North* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002). The entire June 1962 issue of *Civil War History* contains many other similar examinations. Additional studies of Elmira that examine the government contracting with this prison include Michael P. Gray's two works: "Elmira, a City on a Prison-Camp Contract," *Civil War History* 45, no. 4 (December 1999): 322-338 and *The Business of Captivity: Elmira and Its Civil War Prisons* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2001).

The second trend examines the administrative activities and policies of these facilities. Charles W. Sanders Jr.'s work *While in the Hands of the Enemy: Military Prisons of the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 2 breaks away from an apologetic view of the Confederate and Union prisoner of war camps and argues that the mistreatment of those in captivity was avoidable, and the federal government enacted policies that deliberately compounded the misery of these prisoners. However, Sanders does not examine the importance of midlevel officials, such as Dana, who were responsible for enforcing and relaying these destructive policies.

⁴³ Even though this study found no correspondence of Dana's active participation in these affairs, the previous examples reveal that he was a point of contact within the War Department concerning policy decisions for civilian and military officials in charge of the prison facilities. As the Secretary of War's general orders concerning the treatment of Confederate prisoners constituted the War Department's policy and Dana made arrangements for the internment of these individuals beyond the normal capacity of these facilities, he also bears responsibility for the negative repercussions of these actions. However, this does not imply that he bears sole responsibility for the treatment of Confederate prisoners of war and civilians the War Department incarcerated. From the correspondence examined for this study, Dana did not direct the activities of the Northern prison system, and, therefore, does not merit the same culpability for the deplorable conditions concerning their internment as he does for the arbitrary arrests of civilians examined in the previous chapter.

system after the war.⁴⁴ However, these accounts underplay a crucial component that accompanied these movements: complexity. The development of the nation's railroads prior to the Civil War was not conducive for long distance travel. Numerous smaller railroads existed catering to local transportation needs.⁴⁵ The Civil War fundamentally altered this perception.⁴⁶ Studies that grasp this element have almost exclusively focused on the transportation of approximately twenty thousand troops from the east coast to Chattanooga in the summer of 1863 following the Union's defeat at the Battle of Chickamauga.⁴⁷ However, massive transfers, as well as smaller ones, required a great deal of coordination.

For these movements to flow smoothly, constant communication between the War Department, the Quartermaster Corps, and the civilian railroad presidents and supervisors was crucial. The extent of the War Department's responsibilities during this time was so broad that Secretary Stanton could not oversee it personally. Therefore, he needed trusted subordinates, such as Dana, to supervise them. Dana's involvement in two

⁴⁴ There are several different trends to the historiography of Civil War Railroads. As the American Civil War constitutes the first major war in which both sides employed railroads, many studies focus on questions concerning the role of the railroad in Union victory and how the Civil War affected the technological development of the American rail system after the war. For those studies that deal with the railroads in the North consult Thomas Weber's *The Northern Railroads in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (New York: King's Crown, 1952), George Edgar Turner's *Victory Rode the Rails: The Strategic Place of the Railroads in the Civil War* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill, 1953) and John Elwood Clark's *Railroads in the Civil War: Impact of Management on Victory and Defeat* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2001).

There are also many smaller studies that examine the role of the railroads in specific operations. The entire September 1961 issue of *Civil War History* contains many of these smaller examinations, but they also look at the role of the railroad in the success or failure of an operation or the railroad's legacy. However, other studies attempt to draw broader conclusions from the use of railroads. For example, William G. Thomas's *The Iron War: Railroads, the Civil War, and the Making of Modern America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011) connects diverging perspectives between the North and the South concerning the railroads to unique military, social, and political meaning.

⁴⁵ Weber, *The Northern Railroads*, 13.

⁴⁶ Weber, *The Northern Railroads*, 14.

⁴⁷ Clark's *Railroads in the Civil War*, Turner's *Victory Rode the Rails*, and Weber's *The Northern Railroads* all put emphasis on these larger movements. However, Clark's work constitutes a case study of the transportation of troops from the east coast to Chattanooga in 1863 and provides the best analysis for the degree of communication and coordination required for these successful logistical feats.

movements reveals four aspects of the Northern transportation system in the Civil War. First, the great intricacy involved in coordinating the policies and activities between the War Department, the railroads, and the Quartermaster Corps. The complexity existed whether the relocation involved one thousand five hundred or twenty thousand personnel. Second, these transfers demonstrated the system's flexibility. Third, the War Department needed a competent, firm, and astute civilian official to oversee and handle any problems that might arise. Fourth, while Dana was in Washington he was this authority, and it became a significant part of his contribution to the Union war effort.

To move the necessary materials and people, the Quartermaster Corps worked with civilian railroad companies that owned vast resources throughout the North. In order to understand this process, one must envision the chaotic nature of these competing railroad companies. One major provider was John W. Garrett's Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Originally, a Confederate sympathizer, Garrett saw the potential to reap enormous wartime profits and decided to work with the Union.⁴⁸ In this way, he acquired tremendous revenue providing transportation for the Quartermaster Corps. To do this, he fought off the federal government's attempts to control his private enterprise as Stanton had done at Chattanooga.⁴⁹ Although the Quartermaster Corps frequently dealt with railroad company presidents and members of their board of directors, major problems would arise requiring the attention of high-ranking civilian officials in the War Department. Such a situation arose in Dana's first months in Washington.

⁴⁸ Clark, *Railroads in the Civil War*, 32; Weber, *The Northern Railroads*, 28-29. Weber declares that Garrett had two loyalties. The first was to his railroad and this loyalty dictated his second loyalty to the Union.

⁴⁹ Clark, *Railroads in the Civil War*, 32-33.

The transfer of fifteen hundred prisoners from Elmira, New York occurred in October 1864. Garrett was adamant that his competitor the Northern Central Railway not get this contract.⁵⁰ He argued that sending cars “to the Northern Central will cause delays that may prove injurious,” and recommended that the Pennsylvania Central Railroad, which used the same “standard” gauge as the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, supply the quartermaster at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania with suitable cars, “thus saving much delay in placing the cars at Elmira.”⁵¹ Anticipating Dana’s positive response, Garrett began coordinating with the Pennsylvania Central Railroad. The following day, however, John D. Cameron, President of the Northern Central Railway, replied that he “can carry the prisoners from Elmira in troop cars but cannot furnish passenger cars” and requested that Dana relay this message to the quartermaster in charge.⁵² Seeking to facilitate this matter quickly and to Garrett’s detriment, Dana responded to Cameron that he had already contacted the officer in charge of the move ordering him “to put the prisoners on such cars as you are able to furnish.”⁵³

The importance of Dana’s involvement in this issue is twofold. First, it demonstrates the intense competition between the Northern railroads vying for lucrative

⁵⁰ Analyses that examine the Union war effort throughout the conflict agree that the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad was one of the major railroads that transported men and material throughout the war. Unlike the South, however, the North had multiple rail lines traveling from the Ohio River to the major cities on the east coast. The Northern Central Railway was a major competitor with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.

⁵¹ John W. Garrett, President Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 4, 1864; Vol. 241, p. 418; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 115); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC; Clark, *Railroads in the Civil War*, 16.

⁵² John D. Cameron, President Northern Central Railroad, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 5, 1864; Vol. 241, p. 439; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 115); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁵³ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to John D. Cameron, President Northern Central Railroad, October 5, 1864; Vol. 183, p. 336; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

War Department business. In this case, he was able to anticipate problems and make adjustments even before the railroad presidents. His foresight ensured the uninterrupted travel of government personnel throughout his tenure, while transcending inter-railroad squabbling. Second, changing the type of car used in this move was a violation of the railroad's contract with the department, which could result in financial and legal consequences for the Northern Central Railroad. Therefore, Cameron needed Dana's approval before making the change. Expecting this, Dana revised the contractual terms before Cameron made his formal request. While this incident was a relatively minor glitch compared to the massive transfer of soldiers in January 1865, it reveals that even small personnel movements required continuous communication and coordination with the War Department.

At the end 1864, the Union war effort focused on the Eastern Theatre. General Sherman's march through Georgia from Atlanta to Savannah was complete, allowing him to drive north through the Carolinas to join the Army of the Potomac stalled in front of the important rail junction of Petersburg, Virginia. However, not all of the commanders who accompanied Sherman to Atlanta participated in the March to Sea. After the city's fall, Sherman ordered Colonel John M. Schofield into Tennessee under the command of Major General George H. Thomas and the Army of the Cumberland. There, they defeated Confederate General John Bell Hood and the Army of Tennessee at the Battles of Franklin and Nashville in November and December 1864 respectively.⁵⁴ In February 1865, in the Union's attempt to seize Richmond and destroy Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, General Grant ordered now Brigadier General Schofield east to seize

⁵⁴ James M. McPherson and James K. Hogue, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*, 4th ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2010), 500-503.

Wilmington and command the Department of North Carolina. The Quartermaster Corps was responsible for moving General Schofield's troops from the Western Theater to the eastern seaboard to board military transports south. The relocation of troops from Mississippi to North Carolina became the largest and most arduous transfer of troops that Dana oversaw, revealing the complexity of troop movements, the necessity of senior civilian officials to oversee them, and the significance of this aspect of his duties to the Union war effort.

In October 1861, General Meigs appointed Robert Allen, later promoted to Brevet Major General, the Chief Quartermaster of the Department of Missouri and eventually the Mississippi Valley.⁵⁵ To assist him, General Allen ordered Colonel William Myers and Colonel Lewis B. Parsons to manage all rail and river transportation.⁵⁶ On January 12, 1865, Dana informed General Allen and General Thomas that Colonel Parsons would "take general direction of the transportation of Gen. Schofield's corps from the Tennessee to Chesapeake Bay."⁵⁷ The initial plan appeared relatively simple. Dana ordered that the "movement will be made as far as possible by boats from Eastport. If the state of navigation will allow the troops will not be debarked till they reach Parkersburg [West Virginia], but if necessary they will take the rail either at Cairo, Evansville,

⁵⁵ Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 427.

⁵⁶ Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 427-28.

⁵⁷ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Robert Allen, Chief Quartermaster of the Department of Missouri, January 12, 1865; Vol. 185, p. 89; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 - July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 88); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC; Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to George H. Thomas, Commander of the Army of the Cumberland, January 11, 1865; Vol. 185, p. 84; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 - July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 88); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Jeffersonville or Cincinnati.”⁵⁸ From any of these locations, they could then take the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to the eastern seaboard. To simplify matters, Dana stipulated that these soldiers would leave their “transportation behind,” referring to the unit’s livestock, thus Colonel Parsons only needed to arrange for the unit’s personnel and artillery batteries.⁵⁹

The soldiers of Schofield’s new command came from units scattered throughout Union-occupied Mississippi and Tennessee near the Tennessee River. The first group of soldiers assembled in Eastport, Mississippi on January 14, 1865. Parsons arranged for a convoy of naval wartime vessels, including an ironclad, and steamboats to rendezvous at Paducah, Kentucky.⁶⁰ From there, the convoy departed early on the morning of January 17 and arrived in Eastport late that evening, where it met “the entire 2nd Division and two Brigades of the 3rd,” totaling some nine thousand soldiers.⁶¹ Departing for Clifton, Tennessee to procure the remainder of General Schofield’s Corps, the convoy began its

⁵⁸ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Robert Allen, Chief Quartermaster of the Department of Missouri, January 12, 1865; Vol. 185, p. 89; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 88); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁵⁹ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Robert Allen, Chief Quartermaster of the Department of Missouri, January 12, 1865; Vol. 185, p. 89; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 88); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC; Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Lewis B. Parsons, Chief of Railroad Transportation, January 15, 1865; Vol. 185, p. 103; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 88); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁶⁰ Lewis B. Parsons, Chief of Railroad Transportation, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 17, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 110; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁶¹ Lewis B. Parsons, Chief of Railroad Transportation, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 18, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 115; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

journey north along the Tennessee River to Paducah.⁶² It then traveled east along the Ohio River towards Parkersburg and Wheeling, West Virginia with a scheduled arrival time of five to six days based on the river level.⁶³ Passage from northern Mississippi to Alexandria, Virginia required smooth sailing and then rail transportation on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad from Parkersburg or Wheeling.⁶⁴

On January 20, the convoy arrived in Louisville, Kentucky. Favorable weather conditions provided a speedy journey, but the temperature suddenly plummeted and ice began to form on the Ohio River.⁶⁵ Although the convoy was in no immediate danger, Colonel Parsons declared, "All well advised boatsmen agree that it would be entirely unsafe attempting to go above Cincinnati until a change of weather for several days hence

⁶² Lewis B. Parsons, Chief of Railroad Transportation, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 14, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 94; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁶³ Lewis B. Parsons, Chief of Railroad Transportation, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 14, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 94; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁶⁴ Lewis B. Parsons, Chief of Railroad Transportation, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 14, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 94; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Determining the course of travel that Parsons recommended required locating the proper state and location for Clifton and Eastport, as Parsons did not specify the state in his original telegrams. To do this, this study used the estimated transportation times and the times and locations for the various dispatches that Parsons sent throughout this process to create the only realistic path of travel. The only two other possible courses would have been for the convoy to pick up the soldiers at Clifton, TN and then continue south to Eastport, MS and then carry all the troops north or to split the convoy at Clifton, transporting those soldiers north while the rest of the convoy headed south to Eastport. However, as Parsons secured the protection of an ironclad, it is highly unlikely that he would have split up the convoy, weakening its defensive potential.

The War Department frequently used the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad because it managed the only rail line to Washington, DC. Even though this railroad had been constantly harassed throughout the war's early stages because of its close proximity to the Confederate regulars and guerillas, at this point, it was secure and the War Department frequently relied on it for transportation to and from the capital. For more information concerning the securing of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad consult: Weber's *The Northern Railroads*, Thomas's *The Iron Way*, and Festus P. Summers's "The Baltimore and Ohio-First in War," *Civil War History* 7, no. 3 (September 1961): 239-254.

⁶⁵ Lewis B. Parsons, Chief of Railroad Transportation, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 20, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 132; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

on consultation with Genl Schofield and Genl Allen have ordered transportation by rail from Cincinnati.”⁶⁶ Dana informed General Allen that Cincinnati, Ohio, was an acceptable secondary location for the troops to disembark and board trains for the remainder of the trip. He also relayed Colonel Parson’s message to Garrett to ensure that the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad was ready for the troops.⁶⁷ However, this did not happen.

The first sign of trouble occurred late on the morning of January 21. Troops arrived in Cincinnati the previous night, and Colonel Parsons began loading the trains to head east, hoping to transport five to six thousand soldiers by the end of the next day.⁶⁸ However, he began receiving miscellaneous reports of “difficulty on the Baltimore & Ohio RRoad preventing a rapid transfer,” and requested that Dana contact Garrett to ascertain the true nature of the problem.⁶⁹ Several hours later, Garrett informed Dana that a delay on the morning of January 19 was most likely the source of the reports that General Schofield and Colonel Parsons received, but this problem no longer existed.⁷⁰

With the warming weather on the afternoon of January 20, the possibility of transporting more troops up the river to additional rail depots reemerged. If true, this would ease the

⁶⁶ Lewis B. Parsons, Chief of Railroad Transportation, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 20, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 132; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁶⁷ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to John W. Garrett, President of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, January 21, 1865; Vol. 185, p. 148; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 88); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁶⁸ Lewis B. Parsons, Chief of Railroad Transportation, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 21, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 139; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁶⁹ Lewis B. Parsons, Chief of Railroad Transportation, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 21, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 139; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁷⁰ John W. Garrett, President Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 21, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 146; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

congestion associated with moving twenty thousand soldiers from one city. A similar approach, the previous year, had assisted in the transport of troops west to Chattanooga.⁷¹

Garrett recommended using the planned junction at Parkersburg or Benwood, West Virginia. An alternate plan had the army using the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad, which operated closely with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, "from Cincinnati for a portion so that they can be forwarded via Parkersburg."⁷² To handle the influx of traffic for this new course, Garrett made the necessary preparations in Benwood and Parkersburg. Additionally, he stated that he had "pressed equipment west over our whole line and under the organization effected we trust to accomplish satisfactory results with the entire movement."⁷³ However, an unforeseen massive winter storm altered these plans and raised the possibility of severe negative repercussions for the transported soldiers.

The storm was a combination of rain, sleet, and snow that not only delayed the Union troops, but also affected the telegraph wires from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad's western depots to Wheeling.⁷⁴ Garrett assured Dana that the trains hauling the troops were progressing eastward and that his railroad had suspended all routine business along

⁷¹ Clark, *Railroads in the Civil War*, 163.

⁷² John W. Garrett, President Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 21, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 146; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁷³ John W. Garrett, President Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 21, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 146; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁷⁴ John W. Garrett, President Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 23, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 155; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

the route not associated with the transfer.⁷⁵ Finally, Garrett guaranteed, "Every possible precaution has been taken in view of the difficulties of the weather and the season to insure safety and success."⁷⁶ At this point, twenty thousand soldiers from Cincinnati to Bellaire, Ohio, were aboard dozens of trains and steamboats, moving only when weather permitted, with intermittent communication due to malfunctioning telegraph wires. During all this, Dana's primary request was to receive updates on the troops after they left Wheeling heading south towards Washington City.⁷⁷ His main concern was the safety and successful movement of Schofield's corps.

Meanwhile, Dana received a disturbing report from the editor of the *Cincinnati Commercial*, Murat Halstead. He informed Dana, "The soldiers of the 23rd Corps detained here are suffering. They are abandoned by their drunken officers. The detail of facts notorious here would astonish and alarm you," and added, "The loss of the corps in the passage east will be greater than in the campaign against Hood."⁷⁸ Within two hours, Dana contacted Major General Darius N. Couch, who was working with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. He informed Dana that Halstead had greatly exaggerated the situation.

⁷⁵ John W. Garrett, President Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 23, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 155; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁷⁶ John W. Garrett, President Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 23, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 156; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁷⁷ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to John W. Garrett, President Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, January 23, 1865; Vol. 185, p. 166; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 88); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC. Garrett's telegram that includes this information provides a detailed record including the number of cars in each train and the time of departure for these forces.

⁷⁸ M. Halstead, editor of the *Cincinnati Commercial*, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 27, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 208; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

The soldiers in Cincinnati only constituted a couple of regiments and "Proper steps have been taken to gather up all and bring them east."⁷⁹

Two days earlier, Dana had also received disturbing news from Garrett. Unrelated to the weather, transportation schedule, or points of departure, alcohol consumption had disrupted the travel east. On January 17, as a precautionary measure to ensure the discipline of the soldiers once they disembarked from the boats, Dana had telegraphed Major General Philip H. Sheridan, the military commander of the Middle Military Division, ordering him to "cause all liquor shops along the line from Parkersburg and Bellair[e] to be kept closed for the present."⁸⁰ Enforcing this order, however, proved difficult. Dana's telegram from Garrett on January 25 included a message from a Baltimore & Ohio Railroad agent in Benwood that Train Nineteen was delayed for two hours because "Col. White the officer in charge is stopping at Bellaire. The men are nearly all drunk + threaten to shoot us and burn the cars."⁸¹ To restore order and discipline, Garrett requested, "a vigorous officer be placed at Bellaire to insure proper action of officers + men during this movement," emphasizing, "It is more important that the orders to prevent the men from obtaining liquor should be rigidly enforced."⁸²

⁷⁹ D. N. Couch to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 28, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 213; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁸⁰ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Philip H. Sheridan, Commander of the Middle Military Division, January 17, 1865; Vol. 185, p. 131; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 88); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁸¹ John W. Garrett, President Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 25, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 192; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁸² John W. Garrett, President Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 25, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 192; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Considering the massive quantity of communications surrounding this event, it is likely that General Sheridan promptly restored order and discipline to these units.

Other events, such as broken rails, also caused delays, but in the end, Schofield's corps successfully arrived in Alexandria, Virginia for their move south, compliments of the United States Navy. Their ultimate goal was to capture Wilmington, North Carolina to provide a port for General Sherman to supply his divisions.⁸³ Meanwhile, Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston had surprised Sherman's forces at the Battle of Bentonville, North Carolina, but fled before General Sherman could amass his troops for a general assault.⁸⁴ Before pursuing his bloodied foe, he linked up with General Schofield's newly arrived troops at Goldsboro establishing his supply line to Wilmington. Here General Sherman's army recuperated and received supplies, for the first time since it left Savannah, Georgia, in preparation for its final assaults against the Confederate army.⁸⁵ The increase in his forces by twenty thousand soldiers as well as the establishment of a nearby secure supply hub would not have been possible without Dana's management of this troop transfer. Despite the frustrations, it was an important element of General Sherman's march through the Carolinas.⁸⁶

Besides the immediate ramifications for the Union advance on Richmond, this move reveals the strengths of the Union transportation system. Unlike the Confederacy, the North had the benefit of being able to use water transportation to augment its railways, which placed less strain on the railroads and reduced the number of train

⁸³ Chuck Viet, "Navy Acting Like Army," *Naval History* 21, no. 1 (February 2007): 46-51.

⁸⁴ McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 512.

⁸⁵ McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 512.

⁸⁶ Confederate General Johnston would surrender without again fighting a meaningful engagement. Therefore, this troop movement arguably was unnecessary. However, these twenty thousand soldiers and the supply line they opened up under General Sherman's command were arguably an important factor in General Johnston's decision not to engage General Sherman's forces again.

transfers.⁸⁷ Additionally, as the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad's tracks paralleled the Ohio River, Colonel Parsons had some leeway to deal with weather delays. Because the Confederate transportation system lacked this flexibility, it did not have the ability to capitalize on its geographical features and rail network the way the Union could.⁸⁸

Throughout this movement, Dana was responsible to the Secretary of War for its success. The details in the dispatches, the amount of information Dana had to process, and the orders he issued were substantial. His ability to delegate and trust his subordinates, such as Colonel Parsons and General Allen, was a strength that helped Dana manage large and important operations effectively. Additionally, his understanding of the significance of the flurry of events and changing circumstances while calmly managing the situation was an important component of his administrative capabilities.

Furthermore, this example also reveals that his responsibilities included dealing with potential problems, or lack thereof, due to faulty reports. Shorter examinations of this movement exclude faulty information, but those in charge had to confront these issues until proven false or properly resolved.⁸⁹ They also added to the already complex nature of these maneuvers. The intricacy of this operation was Dana's foremost concern from January 11 to 30 and dominated the War Department's communications during that period, but Dana also had to conduct routine business at the department. Matters requiring his attention included reports from the Union assault and capture of Fort Fischer, granting civilians passage to Union occupied areas in the South, tracking a

⁸⁷ Turner, *Victory Rode the Rails*, 33-34.

⁸⁸ Even though few works examine this move in detail, its size, complexity, and flexibility reveal the strength of the Union's transportation system that handled both the men and material supporting the Northern war effort.

⁸⁹ A cursory examination of this movement that negates the influence of faulty information is in Weber, *The Northern Railroads*, 184-86.

notorious blockade runner, arranging for Brigadier General Turner to travel to Washington City for a meeting with the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, conducting investigations of fraud, and making various payments. However, this does not cover the business that required no communication outside the War Department.

Procurement

In addition to arranging the transportation for Union troops and prisoners, another important aspect of Dana's contribution to the Northern war effort was procuring and coordinating the delivery of supplies to the Union army. The extent of these duties included moving equipment and sustenance that civilian contractors supplied to giving orders to commanders in areas not easily accessible to the Quartermaster Corps. Overseeing this required someone with a high level of authority and jurisdiction due to the large amount of money involved. Its importance reveals not only the extent of his power within the War Department, but also the corresponding level of trust that Stanton placed in Dana's abilities as Assistant Secretary of War.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ The manner in which the Civil War affected the Northern economy is a point of contention between historians. Phillip Shaw Paludan summarizes the debate in "What Did the Winners Win?: The Social and Economic History of the North during the Civil War," in *Writing the Civil War: The Quest to Understand*, ed. James M. McPherson and William J. Cooper, Jr. (Columbia, The University of South Carolina Press, 1998):174-200. However, much of the focus of this scholarship concerns the American Civil War as a social event because it facilitated the development of American industrial capitalism. For this thesis, consult Charles A. and Mary R. Beard's *Rise of American Civilization*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1927) and Louis H. Hacker's *The Triumph of American Capitalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940).

Even though many historians have focused on how the North's economic activity facilitated social change, others dwell on the role of American business in supplying the Union army and the complex relationship that developed between the federal government and private enterprise. For an examination of this concerning the Northern transportation system, consult the transportation section included in this chapter. The most recent work on this issues is Mark R. Wilson's *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2006), which includes an extensive historiographical essay examining works that have examined political, social, and economic issues of the Civil War. Claudia D. Goldin and Frank D. Lewis's "The Economic Cost of the American Civil War: Estimates and Implications," *Journal of Economic History* 35, no. 2 (July 1975): 299-326 mathematically examines the direct and indirect costs of the war and concludes that the war did not benefit the North or the United States.

In addition to the funds needed to operate his investigative organization, Dana oversaw matters involving millions of dollars. After the war, he commented on the assets he managed, declaring, "Nearly \$285,000,000 was paid out that year (from June, 1863, to June, 1864) by the quartermaster's office, and \$221,000,000 stood in accounts at the end of the year awaiting examination before payment was made."⁹¹ Summarizing the broad range of purchases, he stated, "We bought fuel, forage, furniture, coffins, medicine, horses, mules, telegraph wire, sugar, coffee, flour, cloth, caps, guns, powder, and thousands of other things. Sometimes our supplies came by contract; again by direct purchase; again by manufacture."⁹²

The Treasury Department procured the funds for the war. Dana's dispatches reveal his connections with that department as well as the faith and confidence they entrusted to him to receive these massive assets. For example, the Quartermaster in New York, Colonel S. L. Brown, the same quartermaster discussed in the previous chapter, purchased his September grain on credit, as the Treasury Department had not placed the necessary funds in his accounts. Several days into October, Colonel Brown sent Dana a telegram inquiring, "When may I expect the one million due me on my estimate for September?" as "My purchases have been made at panic prices and justice to the sellers

Additional works that examine elements of contracting pertinent to this work include: Harold B. Hancock and Norman B. Wilkinson's "A Manufacturer in Wartime: Du Point, 1860-1865," *Business History Review* 40, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 213-236 and Mark R. Wilson's "Gentlemanly Price Fixing and Its Limits: Collusion and Competition in the U.S. Explosives Industry during the Civil War Era," *Business History Review* 77, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 207-234 both examine issues concerning how government procurement during the war affected private enterprise. As Dana was a senior official, who oversaw these purchases, his actions were vital components of this exchange and therefore these affects were due to the policies and practices he employed and constitute a missing component of these studies.

⁹¹ Dana, *Recollections*, 161.

⁹² Dana, *Recollections*, 162.

requires that payments should be promptly made.”⁹³ As the “panic has reduced grain to a very low figure” Colonel Brown also requested assurances from Dana that the Treasury Department would fulfill his requisitions for October purchases as well, so that he could procure a large amount of grain for the next month at greatly reduced prices.⁹⁴ Dana responded, “there will be no difficulty in providing for your necessities at the Treasury.”⁹⁵

Dana also worked directly with civilian contractors. On November 16, Dana received a telegram from George Bliss, Jr. and George W. Blunt, two businessmen from New York. The topic focused on the shipment of twenty thousand turkeys “or equivalents” to the Union army for Thanksgiving, which, to their distress, General Stewart Van Vliet had not yet authorized.⁹⁶ Bliss asked that Dana inform General Van Vliet and “notify us.”⁹⁷ The following day the astute businessman added, “It would be a very great convenience in our turkey business if I could know confidentially to approximate number of men in each of the Armies of the Potomac James and

⁹³ S. L. Brown, Assistant Quartermaster, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 5, 1864; Vol. 241, p. 427; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 115); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁹⁴ S. L. Brown, Assistant Quartermaster, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, October 5, 1864; Vol. 241, p. 440; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 115); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁹⁵ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to S. L. Brown, Assistant Quartermaster, October 5, 1864; Vol. 183, p. 315; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁹⁶ George Bliss Jr. to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, November 16, 1864; Vol. 243, p. 204; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁹⁷ George Bliss Jr. to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, November 16, 1864; Vol. 243, p. 204; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Shenandoah respectively.”⁹⁸ Although this was not a pressing concern, Dana replied that he had forwarded the order to General Van Vliet on November 18, but refused to disclose the number of men, which would have compromised secret information concerning the strength of three major Union armies.⁹⁹ The next day George H. Baker in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania telegraphed, “Please order transportation from Philadelphia to Sheridan’s army for boxes containing four thousand turkeys and Heaven knows what else as a thanksgiving dinner for the brave fellows.”¹⁰⁰

While these issues may appear trivial to the broader context of the war, it illustrates three important aspects of the War Department’s activities. First, while the department was responsible for equipping and sustaining the Union forces, it was necessary to coordinate efforts with other government divisions, such as the Treasury Department. Second, like the agreements with various railroad companies, the War Department had to manage a multitude of civilian contracts, which Congress required in response to the rampant abuse that occurred during Secretary of War Simon Cameron’s tenure. Requiring the supervision of senior civilian officials within the War Department, this was an onerous task. As Assistant Secretary of War, Dana handled this responsibility. In addition, Dana also fielded requests from opportunistic businessmen, who operated without contracts, but still hoped to profit by selling to eager Union

⁹⁸ George Bliss Jr. to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, November 17, 1864; Vol. 243, p. 217; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁹⁹ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to George Bliss Jr., November 18, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 299; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁰⁰ George H. Baker to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, November 19, 1864; Vol. 243, p. 232; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

soldiers. His ability to handle these issues, in a politically sensitive manner, was an important aspect of the department's procurement practices and consistent with his effective handling of fraudulent contractors in chapter two. Furthermore, this element of Dana's involvement was important to the interaction between the purchases the federal government made during the war and the effect this had on private enterprise.

Political Issues

Dana's talents as a manager and his importance to the structure and functioning of the War Department are unquestionable. His skill for handling issues involving federal policies proved similarly successful. These included soldier recruitment, abolition of slavery, and granting approval for Northerners to travel to Union occupied territory. While recruitment was not an issue prior to the Battle of First Bull Run, by the time Dana arrived in Washington City, Congress had passed the Enrollment Act of March 3, 1864. The War Department, however, favored volunteers instead of drafting men to serve in the Union army, arguably the motivation behind the Enrollment Act.¹⁰¹ Subsequently, Dana received a variety of requests from prominent state politicians asking him to support their recruiting efforts. Samuel M. Harrington, Jr., the Secretary of State of Delaware, requested on behalf of the governor "an extension of leave of absence for twenty days be granted to John B. Tanner, clerk in your Department to aid in raising the 8th Regt Del Vols."¹⁰² Dana approved it the following day.¹⁰³ The Union League in

¹⁰¹ Eugene C. Murdock, *One Million Men: The Civil War Draft in the North* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1980), x; James McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 384. For Murdock, the fundamental premise for the North's draft during the Civil War was "a threat to spur volunteering rather than as an end in itself." The purpose of the quota system the federal government installed with the Enrollment Act was to make individual communities raise a certain number of soldiers to serve. If an area did not enlist enough soldiers only then would the draft occur. McPherson parrots this aspect of Murdock's monograph.

¹⁰² Samuel M. Harrington, Jr., Secretary of State of Delaware, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, August 20, 1864; Vol. 240, p. 71; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15,*

Philadelphia asked if Dana would “accept a full regiment from the Union League for one year, to be commanded by veteran officers, whom the Governor will commission.”¹⁰⁴ On November 16, 1864, Governor Yates implored Dana to “order George Bywater,” a draft substitute, “to be assigned or transferred” from his current new unit to the one, “in which he has already served three years.”¹⁰⁵ Dana approved this request.¹⁰⁶

As the Union army continued to win battles and occupy more Confederate territory, Lincoln’s administration dealt with new issues. The Southern civilian population as well as those in the North with family and/or property in Union occupied areas of the South began seeking permission to travel to these places. Much of Dana’s correspondence following the March to the Sea relates to these matters. Many even requested to travel using military naval transportation. In late February, Benjamin N. Martin, the Secretary of the Union Commission in New York, asked Dana to provide transportation for M. T. Hewitt to travel roundtrip to South Carolina “to relieve and

1861 – March 31, 1869 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 115); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁰³ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Samuel M. Harrington, Jr., Secretary of State of Delaware, August 21, 1865; Vol. 182, p. 272; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 86); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁰⁴ George H. Baker, Secretary of the Union League Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, January 18, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 121; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁰⁵ Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, November 16, 1864; Vol. 243, p. 210; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 116); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁰⁶ “Illinois Civil War Muster and Descriptive Rolls Database,” Illinois State Archives, accessed April 17, 2013, <http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/databases/datcivil.html>. According to records located in the Illinois State Archives, Private George Bywater mustered out of the 2nd IL Cavalry on August 11, 1864 and then joined the 45th IL Infantry as a substitute on August 28, 1864. While the recorded ages at time of muster do not correspond to his service, 22 in 1861 and then 21 in 1864, the hair, eyeshade, complexion, and nativity (England) match. Additionally, the remarks for Private Bywater who joined the 45 IL Infantry specify “Trans to CO L 2 ILL Cavalry By Order of War Dept.” Based on this accumulation of evidence, this study asserts that Dana corresponded to the authority in the War Department that issued this order.

report the destitution of Charleston."¹⁰⁷ The following day, Martin also asked Dana to provide government transportation for C. L. Chase to travel to South Carolina "to investigate and relieve the wants of suffering loyalists."¹⁰⁸

The War Department's involvement with the Emancipation Proclamation required the personal attention of the Secretary of War. However, when Stanton was not in Washington, Dana assumed this function, just as he had during the Presidential Election of 1864.¹⁰⁹ In an enthusiastic response to Missouri Governor Thomas C. Fletcher's support of the Emancipation Proclamation, Dana, a long-standing antislavery advocate, declared, "This Department receives with joy the assurance the telegram contained against slavery."¹¹⁰ Dana then added the War Department's conviction that "The abolition of slavery in Missouri is an historical event of vast significance and moment. As in the border struggle of Kansas the slaveholders were the first to begin the war

¹⁰⁷ Benjamin N. Martin, Secretary Union Commission, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, February 23, 1865; Vol. 244, p. 433; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁰⁸ Benjamin N. Martin, Secretary Union Commission, to Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, February 24, 1865, Vol. 244, p. 444; *Telegrams Received by the Secretary of War, April 15, 1861 – March 31, 1869* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 117); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

The examination of unconditional Unionist populations in the South is a growing field in Civil War historiography. Margaret M. Storey's *Loyalty and Loss: Alabama's Unionists in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004) describes how the suffering the Unionists experienced throughout the war and the failures of reconstruction policy shaped their social and political outlook. Unlike the rest of the South's civilian population that could rely on their state and local governments in addition to the vast majority of their neighbors, the Unionists did not have that support structure and therefore suffered heavily throughout the war. Even though Storey explains that the federal government did not do enough to appease the Unionist population during Reconstruction, this correspondence reveals that the federal government knew that this population was suffering and was taking actions to survey its extent in order to take actions to relieve their deprivation.

¹⁰⁹ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Thomas C. Fletcher, Governor of Missouri, January 15, 1865; Vol. 185, p. 105; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹¹⁰ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Thomas C. Fletcher, Governor of Missouri, January 15, 1865; Vol. 185, p. 105; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

against freedom and democracy, so the triumph of emancipation in your great central state is the sure precursor and pledge of the speedy and immovable establishment of liberty and unity for the entire nation.”¹¹¹

Missouri’s proclamation of gradual emancipation was a major event. It had been a source of aggravation between Union and Confederate sympathizers engaged in a brutal political and armed struggle even before the war. In addition, controversy erupted concerning the very manner of emancipation, as the radical faction favored immediate freedom, while President Lincoln and Missouri’s conservative politicians favored a law allowing for a more gradual process.¹¹² Dana’s telegram conveying the federal government’s support for the state’s abolition of slavery symbolized the end of the intense struggle over an issue that had existed before the state’s admission to the Union.¹¹³ Congressional approval for the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which, once ratified by the states, abolished the institution nationally, gave added support. Dana’s endorsement of Missouri’s emancipation bill was a nationally important event, which he made without specifying that it was an order of Secretary Stanton or President Lincoln.

¹¹¹ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Thomas C. Fletcher, Governor of Missouri, January 15, 1865; Vol. 185, p. 105; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹¹² William C. Harris, *Lincoln and the Border States: Preserving the Union* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2011), 323-25.

¹¹³ Throughout the war, Missouri had a tumultuous relationship with President Lincoln’s desire to end slavery. Dana’s message symbolized an end of the slavery component of this struggle. As the emancipation proclamation and other aspects of the abolition has been a topic of fascination amongst Civil War scholars, a comprehensive list of works that address the issue of Missouri’s abolition are not provided here. The works analyze this specific aspect of Missouri’s emancipation, besides Harris’s monograph, include: William E. Parrish’s *Turbulent Partnership: Missouri and the Union, 1861-1865* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1963) and Dennis K. Boman’s *Lincoln’s Resolute Unionist: Hamilton Gamble, Dred Scott Dissenter and Missouri’s Civil War Governor* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006).

Conclusion

It is clear that Dana was a very effective administrator in the War Department. His performance in Washington City was fundamental to the Union war effort. Owing to this, and his prominence as an editor of the *New York Tribune* before the war, Dana earned the respect of many state politicians who were victorious in 1864 due to his efforts. The recently elected Republican Governor of New York, Reuben E. Fenton, even offered Dana the position of Adjutant General in the new administration.¹¹⁴ However, Dana decided to retain his position as Assistant Secretary of War for the remainder of the war, staying in Washington even after accepting the editorship of the *Republican* in Chicago in May 1865.¹¹⁵ As he recalled, "I had arranged to stay in Washington until I could finish the routine business upon which I was then engaged, and until Mr. Stanton could conveniently spare me. This was not until the 1st of July."¹¹⁶

Even though this chapter does not provide all the details of Dana's duties as Assistant Secretary of War, it reveals the broad scope of issues he handled, their significance to the Union war effort, and that lower level government officials were important to the federal cause. While historians focus on Dana's role as a correspondent for the War Department at the Siege of Vicksburg and the Battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga, his responsibilities as Assistant Secretary of War in Washington City are another important facet of his contributions to the war effort. Some of his duties, such as responding to Governor Fletcher's telegram involved little time or coordination.

¹¹⁴ Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to Roscoe Conkling, United States Senator from New York, December 9, 1864; Vol. 184, p. 406; *Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, April 27, 1861 – July 30, 1881* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M473, roll 87); Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹¹⁵ Dana, *Recollections*, 290.

¹¹⁶ Dana, *Recollections*, 290-91.

Arranging election furloughs and overseeing the movement of General Schofield's corps, however, required all of Dana's faculties as a skilled manager. The fact that Dana supervised a multitude of issues, in addition to the Secret Service, is truly impressive and discloses the immense importance of Stanton's Assistant Secretary of War. Even though historians, such as William James Flavin, have denigrated Dana's contributions to the Union war effort, considering Dana's execution of his diverse duties, it is clear that he played an integral part in the War Department and helped secure the preservation of the United States of America.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Edwin Stanton died on Christmas Eve, 1869. In the days that followed, a carriage carrying his widow, Ellen, made its way to Oak Hill Cemetery in Washington City. The man given the honor of escorting her was Charles Anderson Dana. While Thomas Eckert, the supervisor of the central telegraph office, also accompanied them, Dana was the only one of Stanton's Assistant Secretaries of War to have such recognition, symbolizing his significance in Stanton's War Department.¹ While Dana had reported on Union activities and commanders at the front early in the war, he later served as a vital subordinate in Washington City, overseeing investigations, troop movements, furloughs, and many other duties explored in this study. His somber presence in Stanton's funeral procession signified the tremendous role Dana had played not simply in Stanton's career, but also in Union victory.

Dana's government service ended in July 1865 as he returned to his career in journalism. Years later, he published his *Recollections* about his Civil War career, which focused on his travels with Ulysses S. Grant in 1863. The irony is that its success completely overshadowed the far greater contribution Dana made to Union victory in 1864 and 1865. While he was an influential editor at the *New York Tribune* prior to the war, his strained relationship with the paper's senior editor, Horace Greeley, eventually led to Dana's resignation. His ardent support for the Union war effort, however, prompted Stanton to hire Dana to work at the War Department, where his efforts gained the Secretary's confidence and demonstrated an ability to work effectively under

¹ Thomas, Benjamin P. and Harold M. Hyman, *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 640.

Stanton's abrasive personality, which was essential to Dana's future role at the War Department.

After Dana returned to Washington City in the summer of 1864, he remained there for the majority of his time at the War Department. His diverse duties reveal the extent of Stanton's authority as well as the necessity of acquiring able assistants to oversee them. While Dana served as an official contact in the department, relaying the Secretary's decisions, such as those concerning prison administrators, he also had considerable power in other situations that affected the Union war effort. His attempts to secure soldiers' furloughs in 1864 for the presidential election contributed to Lincoln's reelection and eventually a successful conclusion of the war. Managing troop movements in 1865 provided support for General William T. Sherman's final drive towards Richmond, Virginia. Furthermore, his role in investigations of fraud and irregular procurement practices assisted the Quartermaster Corps in punishing dishonest civilian contractors, ensuring that the troops received adequate provisions. All of these activities show Dana's contributions to the economic, political, and military aspects of Union victory.

As Dana's role during the Civil War went far beyond his relationship with General Ulysses S. Grant, so this study hopes to increase scholars' knowledge of the scope of Dana's contributions. Since the advent of the "New Military History," there has been a great, and much needed, focus on the experiences of common soldiers and civilians during war. While this is a fundamental aspect of the Civil War, numerous other components of the effective operation of the War Department have gone unexplored. However, Secretary Stanton alone was not responsible for its success; rather

it took a coordinated effort among the department's effective subordinates. While second tier senior officials remain relatively unknown, a heightened awareness of these individuals and their contributions is necessary to grasp the true scope of the Union war effort. Throughout Dana's tenure in the War Department, he aided the Union in a variety of ways, many of which were unglamorous, but still essential, for the success of the nation and its conflict. An appreciation for the significance of these activities is crucial for a true understanding of the War Department's operations and Dana's Civil War career.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary

Archives

Baton Rouge, LA

Louisiana State University Special Collections

Edwin McMasters Stanton Papers, 1814-1869

Illinois State Archives

Illinois Civil War Muster and Descriptive Rolls Database

Washington, D.C.

National Archives

Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office

Record Group 107, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War

Newspapers

Chicago Tribune

New York Herald

New York Tribune

Published

Baker, L. C. *History of the United States Secret Service*. Philadelphia: L. C. Baker, 1867.

Chase, Salmon P. *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diary of Salmon P. Chase*.

Edited by David Donald. New York: Longmans, Green, 1954.

Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter

Paret. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Congressional Globe (1833-1873).

- Dana, Charles A. *Lincoln and his Cabinet: A Lecture Delivered on Tuesday, March 10, 1896, before the New Haven Colony Historical Society*. Cleveland, OH: De Vinne, 1896.
- . *Recollections of the Civil War: With the Leaders at Washington and in the Field in the Sixties*. New York: D. Appleton, 1913.
- Grant, Ulysses S. *Ulysses S. Grant: Memoirs and Selected Letters*. Edited by Mary D. and William S. McFeely. New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1990.
- Jomini, Antoine Henri. "Art of War." In *Roots of Strategy: Book 2*. Edited by Brig. Gen. J. D. Hittle. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1987.
- Public Laws of the United States of America, Passed at the First Sessions of the Thirty-Seventh Congress, 1861-1862*. Edited by George P. Sanger. Boston: Little, Brown, 1861.
- Pinkerton, Allan. *The Spy of the Rebellion: Being a True History of the Spy System of the United States Army during the Late Rebellion. Revealing Many Secrets of the War Hitherto Not Made Public*. New York: Dillingham, 1888.
- Tzu, Sun. *The Illustrated Art of War*. Translated by Samuel B. Griffith. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- U.S. War Department. *The War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. 128 vols. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901.

Secondary

- Ansley, Norman. "The United States Secret Service: An Administrative History." *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Political Science* 47, no. 1 (May-June 1956): 93-109.
- Beard, Charles A. and Mary R. *Rise of American Civilization*. 2 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1927.
- Benedict, Michael Les. "A Constitutional Crisis." In McPherson, *Writing the Civil War*, 154-73.
- Boman, Dennis K. *Lincoln's Resolute Unionist: Hamilton Gamble, Dred Scott Dissenter and Missouri's Civil War Governor*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006.
- Bonansinga, Jay. *Pinkerton's War: The Civil War's Greatest Spy and the Birth of the U.S. Secret Service*. Guilford, CT: Lyons, 2012.
- Carter, Samuel, III. *The Final Fortress: The Campaign for Vicksburg, 1862-1863*. New York: St. Martin's, 1980.
- Clark, John Elwood. *Railroads in the Civil War: Impact of Management on Victory and Defeat*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2001.
- Donald, David, ed. *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diary of Salmon P. Chase*. New York: Longmans, Green, 1954.
- East, Sherrod E. "Montgomery C. Meigs and the Quartermaster Department." *Military Affairs* 25, no. 4 (Winter 1961-1962): 183-96.
- Farber, Daniel. *Lincoln's Constitution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

- Fishel, Edwin C. *The Secret War for the Union: The Untold Story of Military Intelligence in the Civil War*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996.
- Flavin, William James. *Lafayette C. Baker and the Union Secret Service*. Master's thesis, Emory University, 1973.
- Flower, Frank Abial. *Edwin McMasters Stanton: The Autocrat of Rebellion, Emancipation, and Reconstruction*. New York: Saalfield, 1905.
- Freehling, William W. *The Road to Disunion: Volume II Secessionists Triumphant, 1854-1861*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Gallman, J. Matthew. *Mastering Wartime: A Social History of Philadelphia during the Civil War*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990.
- George, Joseph Jr. "'Black Flag Warfare': Lincoln and the Raids Against Richmond and Jefferson Davis." *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 115, no. 3 (July 1991): 291-318.
- . "The North Affair: A Lincoln Military Trial, 1864." *Civil War History* 33, no. 3 (September 1987): 199-218.
- Gienapp, William E. "Abraham Lincoln and the Border States." *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 13 (1922): 13-46.
- Goldin, Claudia D. and Frank D. Lewis. "The Economic Cost of the American Civil War: Estimates and Implications." *Journal of Economic History* 35, no. 2 (July 1975): 299-326.
- Goodwin, Doris Kearns. *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Simon & Schulster, 2006.

Gray, Michael P. "Elmira, a City on a Prison-Camp Contract." *Civil War History* 45, no. 4 (December 1999): 322-38.

———. *The Business of Captivity: Elmira and Its Civil War Prisons*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2001.

Hacker, Louis H. *The Triumph of American Capitalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1940.

Hancock, Harold B. and Norman B. Wilkinson. "A Manufacturer in Wartime: Du Point, 1860-1865." *Business History Review* 40, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 213-36.

Harris, William C. *Lincoln and the Border States: Preserving the Union*. Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2011.

Herigen, Michael. *Elmira: Death Camp of the North*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002.

Hesseltine, William B. "Civil War Prisons: Introduction." *Civil War History* 8, no. 2 (June 1962): 117-20.

Kleinerman, Benjamin A. "Lincoln's Example: Executive Power and the Survival of Constitutionalism." *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 4 (December 2005): 801-16.

Lebergott, Stanley. "Through the Blockade: The Profitability and Extent of Cotton Smuggling, 1861-1865." *Journal of Economic History* 41, no. 4 (December 1981): 867-88.

Leonard, Elizabeth D. *Lincoln's Forgotten Ally: Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt of Kentucky*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

Maihafer, Harry J. *The General and the Journalists: Ulysses S. Grant, Horace Greeley, and Charles Dana*. Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1998.

- Marshall, John A. *American Bastille: A History of the Illegal Arrests and Imprisonment of American Citizens in the Northern and Border States, on Account of Their Political Opinions during the Late Civil War*. Philadelphia: Thomas W. Hartley, 1881.
- McPherson, James M. *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- McPherson, James M., William J. Cooper, Jr., ed. *Writing the Civil War: The Quest to Understand*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998,
- McPherson, James M. and James K. Hogue. *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*. 4th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2010.
- Mogelever, Jacob. *Death to Traitors: The Story of General Lafayette C. Baker, Lincoln's Forgotten Secret Service Chief*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960.
- Moore, Wilton P. "The Provost Marshal Goes to War." *Civil War History* 5, no. 1 (March 1959): 62-71.
- . "Union Army Provost Marshals in the Eastern Theater." *Military Affairs* 26, no. 3 (Autumn 1962): 120-26.
- Murdock, Eugene C. *One Million Men: The Civil War Draft in the North*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1980.
- Murray, Robert Bruce. *Legal Cases of the Civil War*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003.
- Neely, Mark E. *The Fate of Liberty*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- . *Lincoln and the Triumph of the Nation: Constitutional Conflict in the American Civil War*. Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

- Orrmont, Arthur. *Mr. Lincoln's Master Spy: Lafayette C. Baker*. New York: Julian Messner, 1966.
- Paludan, Phillip Shaw. "What Did the Winners Win?: The Social and Economic History of the North during the Civil War." In McPherson, *Writing the Civil War*, 174-200.
- Parrish, William E. *Turbulent Partnership: Missouri and the Union, 1861-1865*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1963.
- Pratt, Fletcher. *Stanton: Lincoln's Secretary of War*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1953.
- Randall, J. G. *Constitutional Problems Under Lincoln*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1951.
- Raymond, Henrietta Dana. *Sophia Willard Dana Ripley: Co-Founder of Brook Farm*. Portsmouth, NH: Peter E. Randall, 1994.
- Risch, Erna. *Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775-1939*. Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1989.
- Sanders, Charles W. Jr. *While in the Hands of the Enemy: Military Prisons of the Civil War*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005.
- Shea, William L. and Terrence J. Winschel. *Triumph and Defeat: The Vicksburg Campaign*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003.
- Spaniolo, Charles Vincent. "Charles Anderson Dana: His Early Life and Civil War Career." PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1965.
- Sparks, David S. Review of *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War*, by Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman. *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 87, no. 1 (January 1963): 119-20.

- Steele, Janet E. *The Sun Shines for All: Journalism and Ideology in the Life of Charles A. Dana*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993.
- Storey, Margaret M. *Loyalty and Loss: Alabama's Unionists in the Civil War and Reconstruction*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004.
- Summers, Festus P. "The Baltimore and Ohio-First in War." *Civil War History* 7, no. 3 (September 1961): 239-54.
- Thomas, Benjamin P. and Harold M. Hyman. *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962.
- Thomas, William G. *The Iron Way: Railroads, the Civil War, and the Making of Modern America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011.
- Turner, George Edgar. *Victory Rode the Rails: The Strategic Place of the Railroads in the Civil War*. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1953.
- Viet, Chuck. "Navy Acting Like Army." *Naval History* 21, no. 1 (February 2007): 46-51.
- Waugh, John C. *Reelecting Lincoln: The Battle for the 1864 Presidency*. New York: Crown, 1997.
- Weber, Thomas. *The Northern Railroads in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. New York: King's Crown, 1952.
- Weigley, Russell F. *Quartermaster General of the Union Army: A Biography of M. C. Meigs*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.
- White, Jonathan W. "Canvassing the Troops: The Federal Government and the Soldiers' Right to Vote." *Civil War History* 50, no. 3 (September 2004): 291-317.
- Williams, T. Harry. *Lincoln and His Generals*. New York: Vintage Books, 1952.

- . Review of *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War*, by Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman. *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49, no. 1 (June 1962): 150-51.
- Wilson, James Harrison. *The Life of Charles Anderson Dana*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1907.
- Wilson, Mark R. *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2006.
- . "Gentlemanly Price Fixing and Its Limits: Collusion and Competition in the U.S. Explosives Industry during the Civil War Era." *Business History Review* 77, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 207-34.
- Woolley, John and Gerhard Peters. "Election of 1864." American Presidency Project. Accessed May 2, 2013.
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1864>.