



Samuel Bell Maxey: A Biography

Louise Horton

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Samuel Bell Maxey was an important political figure in nineteenth-century Texas, but no previous book-length study of his life and career has been published. Louise Horton has utilized his private papers as well as numerous other sources in preparing this biography, which includes many of Maxey's own comments on his contemporaries. The letters also provide new information on the development of railroads across the Southwest.

An emigrant from Kentucky, Samuel Bell Maxey practiced law in North Texas, raised a regiment at the beginning of the Civil War, returned to Texas to defend the Indian Territory during 1863-1865, and was elected on his first candidacy to be the first Democratic senator from Texas after the Civil War. After two years in office he became Texas's senior senator and held that position until defeated by John H. Reagan in 1887. Maxey's term of office spanned the turbulent period immediately following Reconstruction, and a great deal of his influence derived from his moderation. He was concerned that the breach caused by the Civil War be healed. He was influential among Republican congressmen from the North and aided substantially in Texas's regaining its status in the Union. Louise Horton's biography of Maxey emphasizes the contribution he made to the state and the nation and fills a gap in the history of the post-Civil War period.

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