

SAM BELL MAXEY HOUSE

state historic site

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VISITORS GUIDE

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Welcome to the original 1868 home of Samuel Bell Maxey, former Confederate general and U.S. senator.

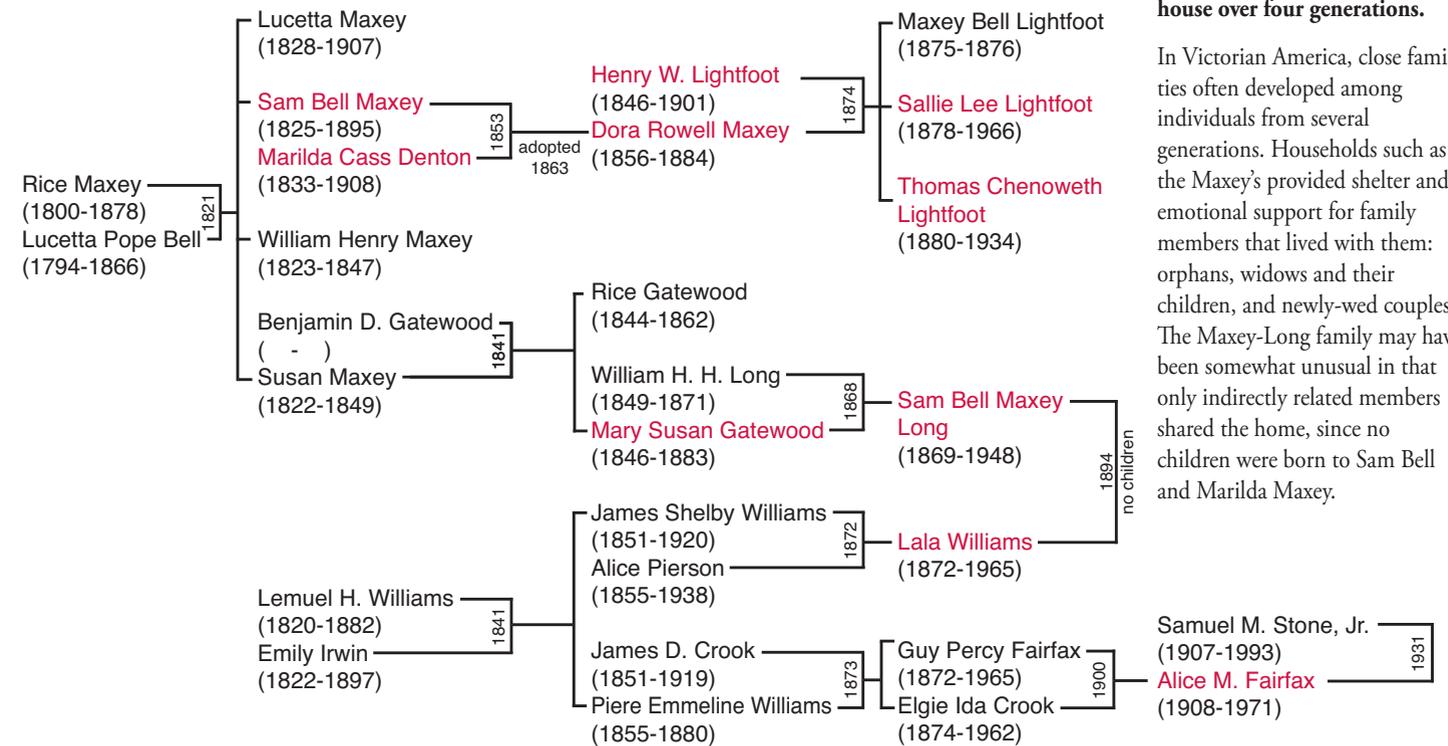
This home was open to many distinguished guests and at one point served as the social center of Paris, Texas. Today, guests continue to enjoy its lovely grounds, impressive architecture and welcoming hosts.



Its grand spaces feature a fine collection of furnishings, clothing and letters providing a voice for generations of Maxey family history. Explore the real stories of a prominent Texas family and how they cherished and modified their Victorian residence and grounds to reflect changing styles and trends in architecture, interior design and technology.

Left: 19th century child's shoe

MAXEY FAMILY GENEALOGY



This abbreviated genealogical chart **highlights** the names of Maxey relatives who lived in the house over four generations.

In Victorian America, close family ties often developed among individuals from several generations. Households such as the Maxey's provided shelter and emotional support for family members that lived with them: orphans, widows and their children, and newly-wed couples. The Maxey-Long family may have been somewhat unusual in that only indirectly related members shared the home, since no children were born to Sam Bell and Marilda Maxey.

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A GRAND HOME

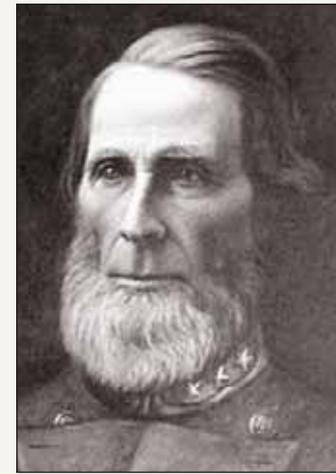
Samuel “Sam” Bell Maxey and his wife Marilda moved into their fashionable High Victorian Italianate-style home in December 1868. The house was designed to resemble an Italian villa with elongated, hooded windows, a portico and open porches. The elaborate carvings on the front columns and other rich architectural details are reflections of the Victorian love for embellishment. This house was a progressive addition to the city’s architecture and considered a proper home for Maxey’s prominent status.

This house and its furnishings reflect nearly 100 years of continuous use by the Maxeys and their extended family. Sam Bell Maxey Long and his wife Lala inherited the home in 1908 and began extensive remodeling in 1911. The Longs made several additions to the back of the building, including a breakfast room, a first floor laundry room and an upstairs sewing room. They combined two of the sitting rooms to create a larger, more formal parlor. Outside, brick walkways were re-laid and the original fence was replaced by a boxwood hedge along Church Street.



Left: Decorative brackets and Corinthian columns support the two-story entry porch. Above: Children participate in hands-on activities during a special event.

Four Generations



Gen. Samuel Bell Maxey, ca. 1895

Samuel Bell Maxey was born on March 30, 1825 to Rice and Lucetta Bell Maxey in Tompkinsville, Kentucky. He graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1846 and served in the U.S. Army during the U.S-Mexico War. After leaving the Army he joined his father’s law firm in Kentucky and married Marilda Cass Denton in 1853.

Maxey and his father moved their families to Paris, Texas in 1857 and continued their law careers. Maxey was elected to the Texas State Senate in December 1860, but the state seceded from the United States before he took office. Instead, he formed the Ninth Texas Infantry Regiment to serve the Confederate States, eventually rising to the rank of major general.

After the Civil War, Maxey resurrected his legal career, but found he required a personal pardon from President Andrew Johnson to continue his law practice or to hold public office. After many unsuccessful attempts, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, Maxey’s classmate from West Point, recommended his presidential pardon and his citizenship rights were restored.

The fees collected from legal cases allowed the newly restored attorney to build his house on Church Street, which was completed in December 1868. Sam Bell and Marilda moved into the house, along with their 14-year-old adopted daughter, Dora Rowell Maxey.

In 1874, Sam Bell Maxey was elected to the first of two terms in the United States Senate. Known as “The Beaver of the Senate,” he developed legislation that improved Texas harbors, railroads, national post offices and post roads. Sen. Maxey died at Eureka Springs, Arkansas in August 1895; his body was brought home to Paris and laid to rest in Evergreen Cemetery.

Marilda Cass Denton Maxey designed and personally cared for the home’s formal garden containing roses, lilies and crape myrtles from her native Kentucky. She enjoyed entertaining visitors and corresponded daily with her husband when he was serving in the U.S. Senate. She presided over the Maxey House until she died in 1908.

Dora Rowell Maxey Lightfoot brought Henry Lightfoot, her new husband and Maxey’s law partner, to live in the Maxey House in 1874 while they waited for their home to be built across Washington Street. Twenty years later, their 16-year-old daughter, Sallie Lee Lightfoot, moved into the Maxey House with her grandparents, due to her father’s relocation after her mother’s death. She lived there until 1966.

Sam Bell Maxey Long, Maxey’s greatnephew, moved into the Maxey House in 1871 with his widowed mother, Mary Susan Long. Long worked closely with Maxey throughout his career and assumed Maxey’s place in the family law firm when Maxey retired in 1892. He married Lala Williams in 1894 and they both lived in the home until their deaths in 1948 and 1965, respectively.

Members of the Maxey’s extended family lived in the house until Lala Williams’ niece, Alice Fairfax Stone, donated it to the city of Paris in 1967. The property was transferred to state ownership in 1976.



From left: Lala Williams Long, Alice Fairfax and Sallie Lee Lightfoot.