

SAM BELL MAXEY HOUSE

— STATE HISTORIC SITE —

Paris, Texas

On-Site Activity

High School

Life Through Artifacts

In these suggested activities, students will examine artifacts to discover more about the lives of the Maxey and Long families. Students will also explore the historic site and compare present day to historic resources to determine how the site has changed over the years.

Historical Context

Sam Bell Maxey's great-nephew, Sam Bell Maxey Long, was born in 1869. He moved into the Maxey house in 1871 with his widowed mother. When his mother died, he moved in permanently with Sam and Marilda Maxey, who raised him from that point on as a son. Long worked closely with Maxey throughout his career, even serving as his great-uncle's page during Maxey's time in the U.S. Senate. Long married Lala Williams in 1894. After their marriage, the couple moved into two of the upstairs rooms of the Maxey house.

In 1896, Sallie Lee Lightfoot, moved into Maxey House to live with her grandparents Sam and Marilda and her cousin Sam Bell and his wife Lala. A later family account states that, "all of them lived in harmony. I never heard Mrs. Long refer to 'my' house or things – it was always 'our car,' 'our house,' etc. They split responsibilities; Mrs. Long grew flowers, Miss Lightfoot arranged them."

In 1916, a devastating fire consumed the city of Paris and destroyed much of downtown and several residential areas with damage estimated at \$11,000,000. Sam, Lala, and Sallie Lee joined together with other citizens and worked tirelessly help rebuild the city of Paris. In honor of the Longs' generosity, Mr. Culbertson commissioned the alabaster lamp, now in the parlor, as a gift for their hard work and dedication.

During World War I, Lala and her family continued their involvement in the community. Sallie Lee and Sam Bell were members on the Executive Board of Directors of the Lamar County Chapter of the Red Cross while Lala played an active role in the organization.

Maxey House Tour

During the tour, highlight house appointments, artifacts, and other material culture that give clues to the quality of life of Maxey and Long family members. Examples might include hand-painted portraits, furniture, books, etc. Distribute the **artifact graphic organizers 1-3** for students to take notes on particular items.

Questions to ask along the tour might include:

- How do the family rooms and the artifacts reflect this family's standing in the community?
- What can you learn about the Maxey and Long families from their possessions?
- How do the artifacts tell you about the daily lives of both the family members and the house staff?

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Primary Source Activity: Letters About Learning

Distribute the **primary source letters, transcriptions,** and the **analysis organizer.** Explain that these are letters were written by W.C. Shields and Sam Bell Maxey in 1879 regarding a county school. Read the letters aloud or ask for volunteer readers. Have students work individually or in pairs to complete the organizer. Share responses.

Primary Source Activity: Mapping Maxey

Historical Context

The 5-acre Maxey property included vegetable gardens, orchards, a vineyard, and livestock, including chickens, turkeys, and pigs. Marilda Maxey, wife of Sam Bell Maxey, started the gardens while the servants helped to maintain and expand them. The garden's decorative plants, including more than 200 varieties of roses, crape myrtle from Kentucky, and bearded irises, reflected the fashion of decorative gardens of the era. The estate also included a servant house, the stable, rose arbors, a chicken coop, a smokehouse, and when the Longs owned the home, a tennis court. After Marilda's death, the Maxey's great-nephew Sam Bell Maxey Long inherited the home and began extensive remodeling in 1911. Maxey Long's wife, Lala, continued to care for the gardens.

Display/distribute the **1885 Bird's Eye View map, 1897 Sanborn map,** and the **satellite map** of the Maxey house. As a group, discuss what differences they notice on the maps. What elements of the house and landscape appear in one map but not the other?

Distribute the **Maxey S. H. S. 1976 site plan.** Have students explore the grounds individually or in pairs and label the location and names of architectural and landscape elements they notice during their observations of the site.

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Artifact Graphic Organizer 1

Find artifacts that relate to these people in the Maxey and Long household. Complete the graphic organizer.

Parlor: Lala and Sam Bell Maxey Long	
What artifacts in this room tell about the Maxey Long's lives in this house?	
List 3 other artifacts in this room that you find interesting:	
1.	I think this artifact is interesting because
2.	I think this artifact is interesting because
3.	I think this artifact is interesting because

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Artifact Graphic Organizer 2

Find artifacts that relate to this person in the Maxey and Long household. Complete the graphic organizer.

Dining Room: Marilda Maxey	
What artifacts in this room tell about Marilda's life running the Maxey household?	
List 3 other artifacts in this room that you find interesting:	
1.	I think this artifact is interesting because
2.	I think this artifact is interesting because
3.	I think this artifact is interesting because

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Artifact Graphic Organizer 3

Find artifacts that relate to these people in the Maxey and Long household. Complete the graphic organizer.

Servant Quarters: Household Staff	
What artifacts tell you about the lives of formerly enslaved people who served in the Maxey household?	
List 3 other artifacts in these quarters that you find interesting:	
1.	I think this artifact is interesting because
2.	I think this artifact is interesting because
3.	I think this artifact is interesting because

Primary Source Activity Resource: W.C. Shield Letter to Sam Bell Maxey, 1879 [transcript]

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Dear Sir –

You may be surprised at the receipt of this but I hope it may not offend you.

I will proceed at once to make my statement and request and hope you will reply. I write in behalf of a new school community just formed in the upper part of Hunt Coy. on the Bonham and Greenville road. It is comparatively a new settlement and a new community and we have succeeded in building us quite a neat school house and have named it “Maxey Hall” in honor of yourself. We have done about all we are able to do and still lack a stove and as we anticipate have a school here during the winter we will very much need *[paper torn]* Believing you to be a friend and patron of education we venture to ask you to present the “Hall” with a stove as a kind of souvenir or remembrance. Should you conclude to do so its reception shall be duly acknowledged in The Bonham News, Greenville Independent, and any other paper you may designate, or in any other way.

Being a stranger to you, I refer you to Eld. J.W. Boyet, Dodd City, Eld. N. Miller, Ladonia, Eld. J.S. Mansfield and Judge H.B. Simonds, Greenville.

Please let me hear from you for I will desire to know whether you receive this or not.

Your s c

W.C. Shields
Hickory Creek, Texas
Oct. 6, 1879

(over)

P.S.
We would be pleased if you would at some time give us a call and a speech at any time that may suit your convenience.

W.C.S.

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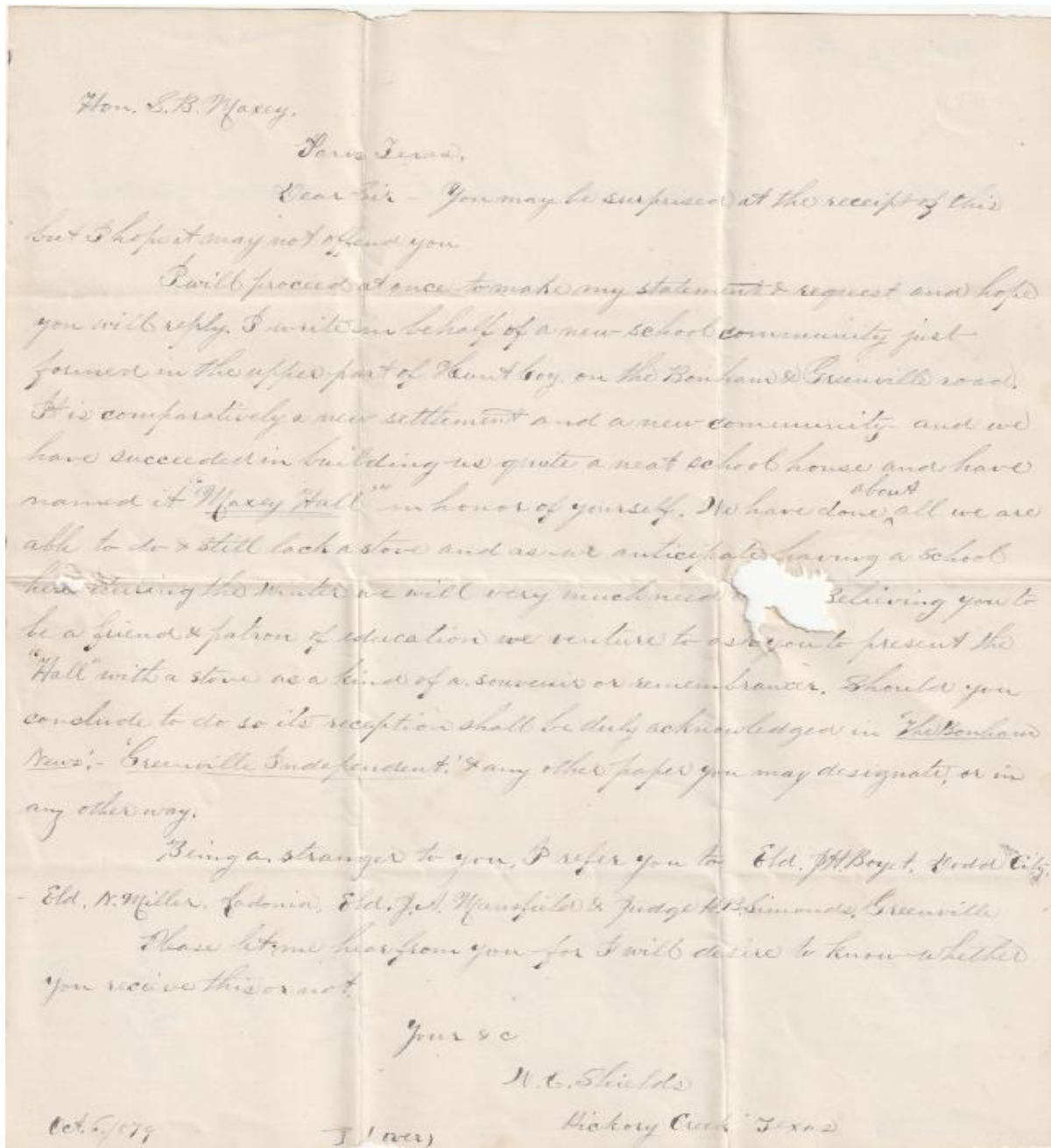
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Primary Source Activity Resource: W.C. Shield Letter to Sam Bell Maxey, 1879



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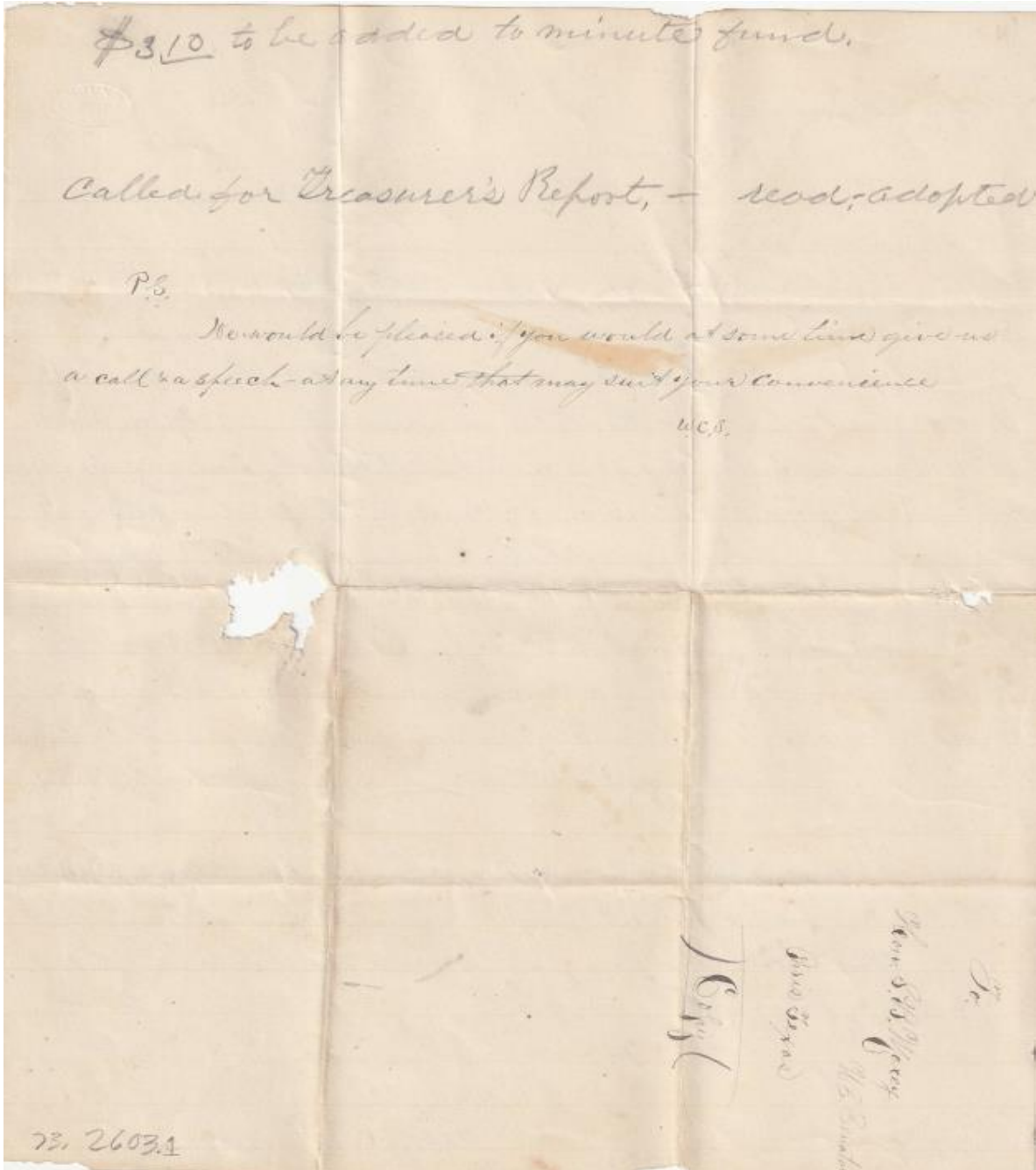
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Primary Source Activity Resource: Sam Bell Maxey Letter to W.C. Shield, 1879 [transcript]

Paris, Texas
Nov. 14, 1879

Mr. W.C. Shields
Hickory Creek P.O.
Hunt Co. Texas

Dear Sir,

Yours of Oct. 6th would have been promptly answered but for my almost continuous absence from home. Enclosed I send you \$ for \$12. [*paper torn*] which I am told by stove men will buy just what you wa [*paper torn*]

Replying to your [*proposition?*] to publish, I beg to say I never do anything of this sort for notoriety. Therefore you will confer a favor by not giving it publicity.

Yours Truly,
S.B. Maxey

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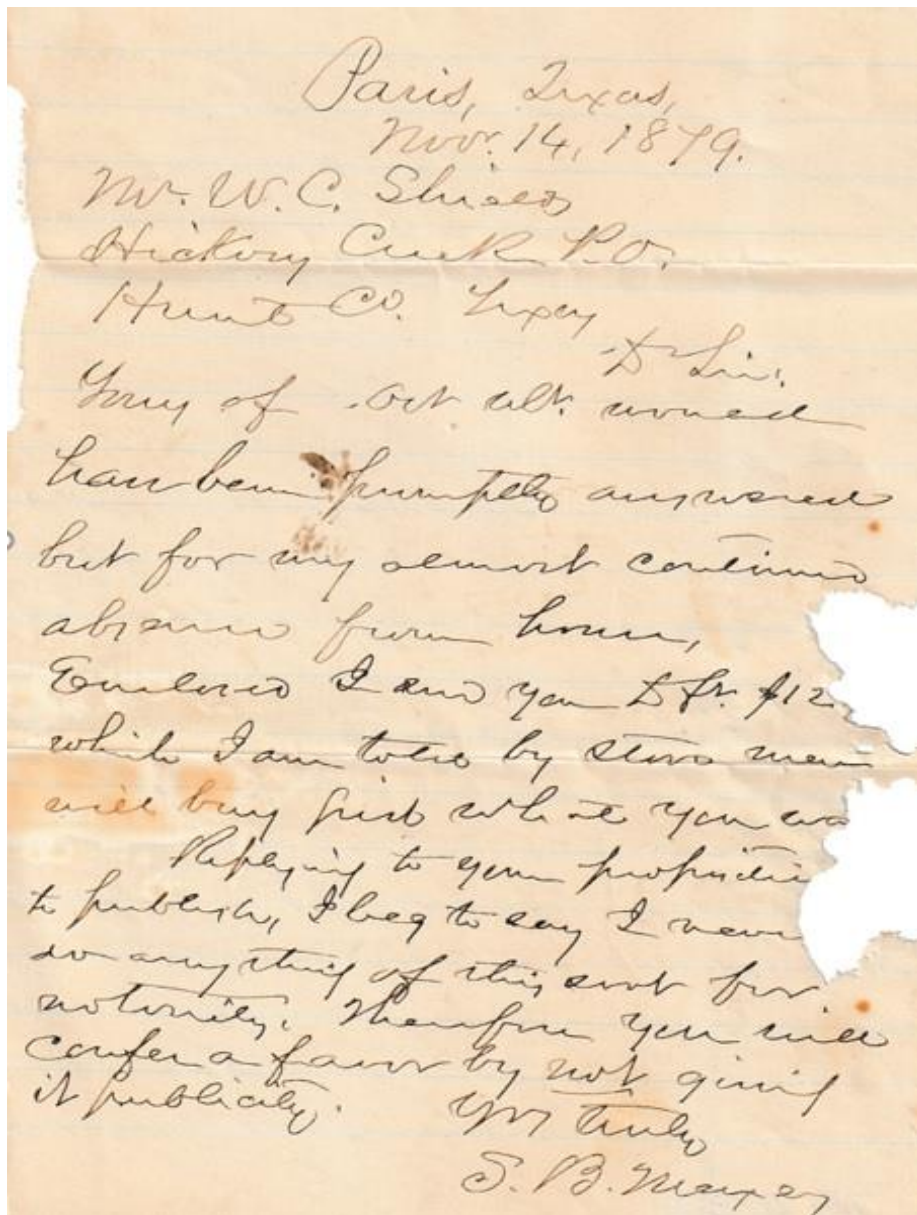
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Primary Source Activity Resource: Sam Bell Maxey Letter to W.C. Shield, 1879



Paris, Texas,
Nov. 14, 1879.
Mr. W. C. Shields
Hickory Creek P.O.
Hunt Co. Texas

Your of Oct. ult. enclosed
has been promptly answered
but for my recent continued
absence from home,
Enclosed I send you \$5.00
which I am told by some men
will buy just what you want
Replying to your proposition
to publish, I beg to say I never
do anything of this sort for
notoriety. Therefore you will
confer a favor by not giving
it publicity.

Yr truly
S. B. Maxey

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Letters About Learning Analysis Organizer

Read both letters carefully to write answers to the questions.

W.C. Shields to Sam Bell Maxey letter

What was the purpose of Shields' letter to Maxey?

Why might Shields think Maxey might be offended by the letter?

Why did Shields target Maxey as a potential benefactor?

Why do you think the community named the school as it did?

Why did Shield name various people at the end of the letter?

Sam Bell Maxey letter to W.C. Shields

How long did it take for Maxey to reply to Shields' letter? Why?

Why did Maxey send Shields that specific amount of money?

Why did Maxey decline Shields' offer of publicity?

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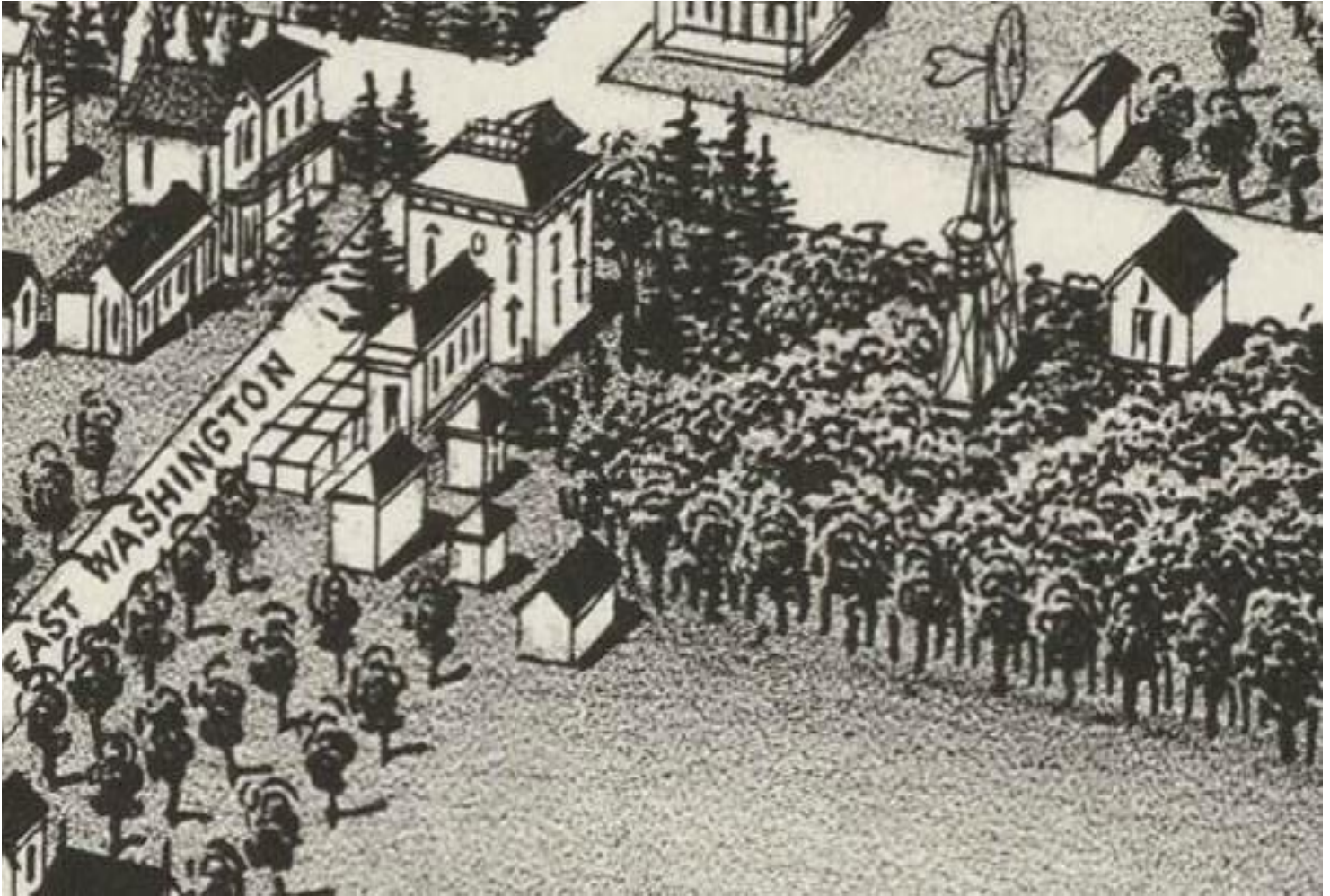
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Activity Image: 1885 Bird's Eye View map from the back of the Maxey house



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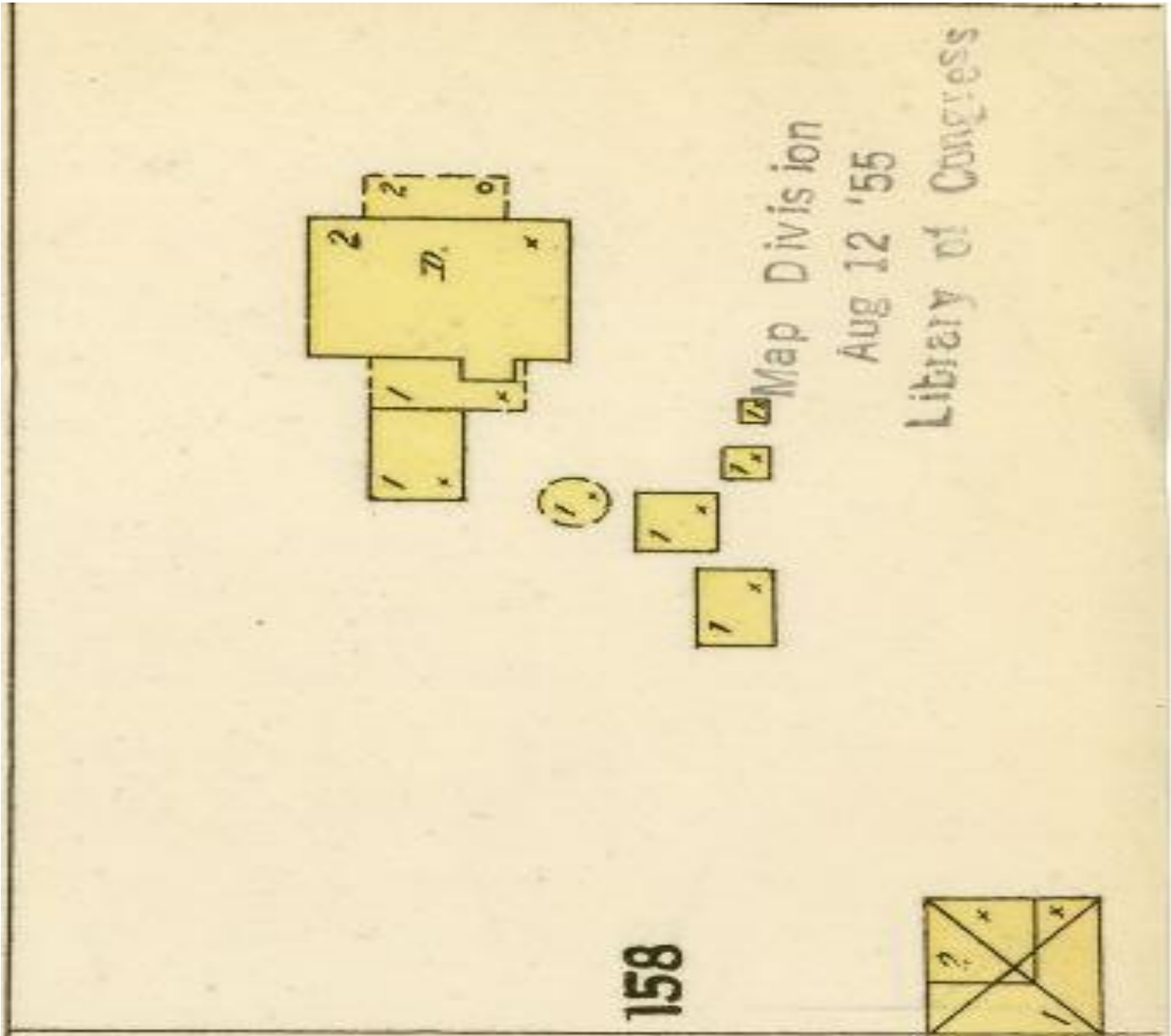
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Activity Image: 1897 Sanborn Map of the Maxey house



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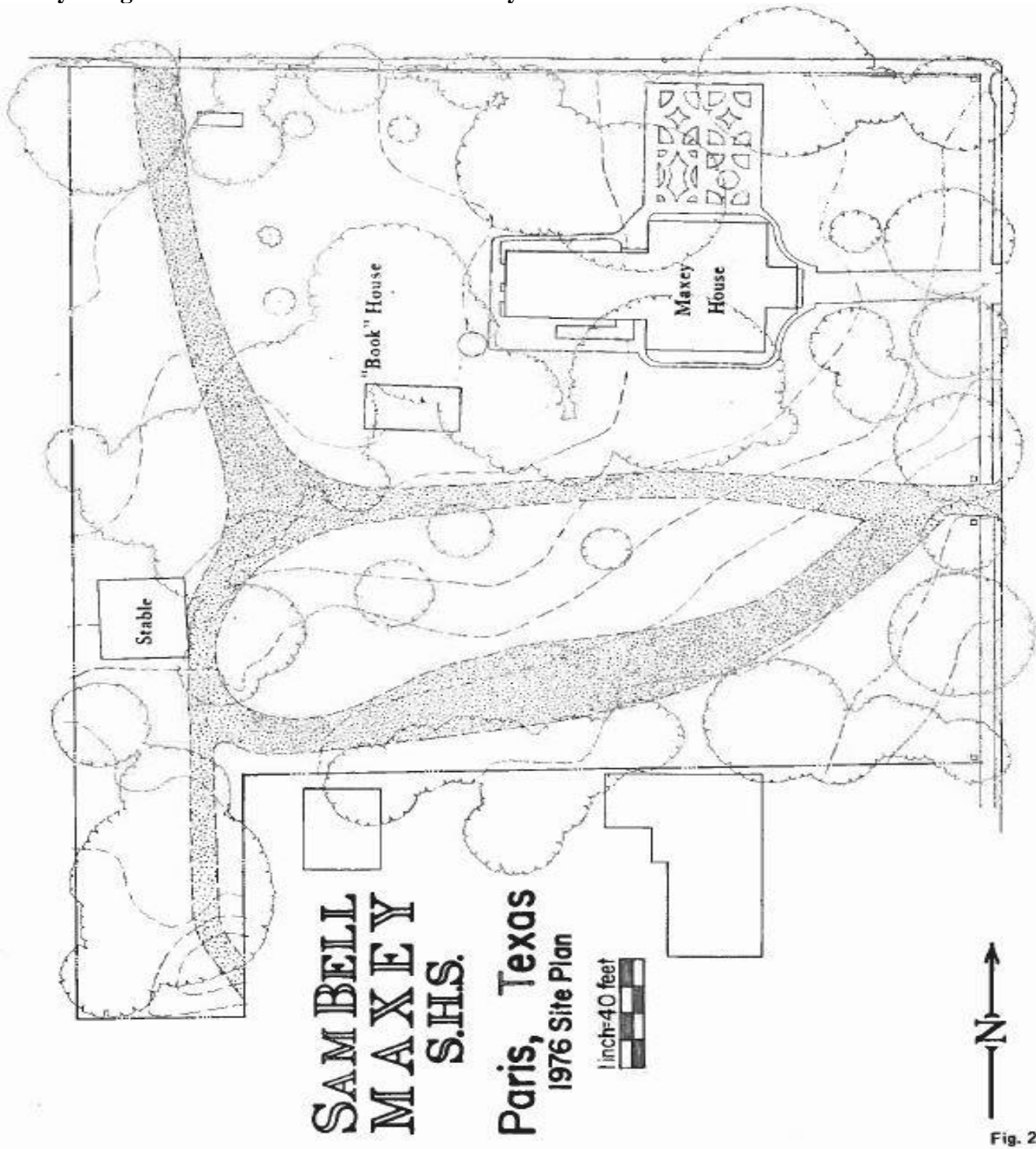
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Activity Image: 1976 Site Plan of Sam Bell Maxey State Historic Site



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Activity Image: Satellite view of the Maxey House State Historic Site



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Activity Resource: Lala feeding the chickens



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Activity Resource: Lala and cousin Baby Alice under the rose arbor



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