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## In Memoriam: David Elwell Maxwell

John C. Cooper

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# THE FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY.

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## IN MEMORIAM.

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**David Elwell Maxwell.**

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BY JOHN C. COOPER.

David Elwell Maxwell was born in the city of Tallahassee, Florida, February 25th, 1843. He was the son of William M. and Rebecca F. Maxwell. His father came to Florida from Georgia, when the former was a territory. He was educated in or near Tallahassee, until 1857, when he attended school in Cambridge, Massachusetts until 1860.

In 1861 he entered the service of the Confederacy as a volunteer, and soon became a non-commissioned officer in the Second Florida Regiment and was in active service in the campaigns in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania until 1863. In 1863 he was commissioned as a captain of cavalry in the First Florida Cavalry Regiment and served in the campaigns with the Army of Tennessee from that time until the battle at Atlanta, where he was seriously wounded, and from the effects of this wound he was compelled to use crutches until some time after the war had ceased.

In 1865 he began his career with the railroads of this State, which ended only with his death. He was first a clerk in the railroad office at St. Mark's, Florida. In 1868 his connection with the Florida Railroad at Fernandina began, and he was successively Freight Agent,

Division Freight Agent, Assistant Superintendent and General Freight Agent, and Superintendent of that system under its successive names of Florida Railroad, and Atlantic, Gulf and West India Transit Company, operating a line of railroad from Fernandina to Waldo, and thence to Cedar Keys, and from Waldo to Ocala, and from Fernandina to Jacksonville. Under the management of this system by Captain Maxwell the portion of the lines from Yulee to Jacksonville and from Waldo to Ocala were constructed. In 1884 he became the General Superintendent of the Florida Railway and Navigation Company, covering not only the lines of road above mentioned, but also the system from Jacksonville to River Junction. In the latter part of 1885 he became the General Manager of the properties of the Florida Railway and Navigation Company operated by Mr. H. R. D u v a l , as Receiver, and during this receivership the road from Ocala south to Tampa was built. Captain Maxwell actively directed and controlled the constructing of the lines of road from Yulee to Jacksonville, and from Waldo to Ocala, and from Ocala to Tampa. He continued in the management of these properties under Mr. D u v a l as receiver until the organization of the Florida Central and Peninsular Railroad Company and until that company took possession of the properties and began the operating of the railroad July 1st, 1889, and he then became the First Vice-President and General Manager of that company and in active control and management of all its property. In 1894, under his direction, that road was extended from Y u l e e , Florida to Savannah, Georgia, and the southbound railroad from Columbia to Savannah acquired, and thereby a complete system from Tampa, Florida, to Columbia, South Carolina, was established. These results were largely due to the personal service and efforts of Captain Maxwell. He continued the operation of the property as First Vice-President and General Manager until July 13, 1 9 0 0 , when the Seaboard Air Line Railway assumed the con-

t r o l and operation of this system and incorporated it later into the Seaboard system. He was then made a Division Superintendent of the properties in Florida, and later General State Agent for the State of Florida of the Seaboard Air Line Railway and retained this position until the date of his death, which occurred on September 16th, 1908, in Gainesville, Georgia.

From the foregoing brief sketch of the life and labors of D. E. Maxwell it can readily be seen that he was largely instrumental in the development of Florida. The construction of these railroads under his management opened up for occupation and cultivation large portions of the State theretofore very sparsely populated. To him is due in great measure the credit of the growth of the towns and cities along this line of railroad in Florida. He personally labored with intense earnestness for the interests of not only the system with which he was connected, but for the whole state. It can truthfully be said that the state of Florida is as much indebted to him for its material advancement and prosperity during the past quarter century as to any other man in the state.

Captain Maxwell was a courageous and honorable man and possessed of a high order of ability. He performed his duties thoroughly and energetically but with great consideration for the rights of other persons. His life is closely connected and intertwined with the history of Florida since 1860. He never sought to hold political office, but he was deeply interested in the welfare of the state and took an active part in its affairs, and was the loyal friend of any man or any cause that he espoused.

