

NM Mine File No. 513



FINE WESTERN RAILROAD RARITY

THE MAXWELL LAND GRANT AND RAILWAY COMPANY

* 230

1873, New Mexico. Stock certificate for 10 shares. Black/Mauve. Engraved vignette of a seated figure at top center, horse-drawn plow and locomotive at bottom. Signed by JOHN COLLINSON, president of the company who prepared a booklet entitled "The Maxwell Land Grant situated in Colorado and New Mexico, United States of America," which was published in 1870. The Maxwell Land Grant remains one of the largest land grants made in American history and is named after LUCIEN MAXWELL (1818 - 1875), a frontiersman who settled in New Mexico and by purchase and other means, including inheritance, became the sole owner of 1,714,765 acres of lands ranging from Trinidad, Colorado and Springer, New Mexico to the Sangre de Cristo Range. This area had been granted by the Mexican Government on January 11, 1841 to Guadalupe Miranda and Carlos Beaubien and is the granted area which Maxwell gained control of. As a result, Maxwell remains as the single largest private landowner in American history. Maxwell sold his entire holding to a group of English and Dutch capitalists who subsequently defended the grant against lawsuits brought which ended up in the Supreme Court.

The Maxwell Land Grant and Railway Company arose out of the interests of the European group. A truly historic and scenic monument to the early days of the American West.

historic and scarce western company related to one of America's most notorious and controversial land grants. Uncancelled and Fine. \$1,500 - up

"On January 8, 1841, Guadalupe Miranda and Charles Hipolite Trotier de Beaubien petitioned Governor Manuel Armijo of Santa Fe for a tract of land. Two years later, Armijo granted them the property. Lucien Bonaparte Maxwell arrived in Taos in 1841. He married Luz Beaubien, daughter of Charles Beaubien, in 1844. Within a few years, Miranda had moved to Mexico, and offered Beaubien his share of the land. Beaubien was not interested, but his son-in-law, Lucien Maxwell seized the opportunity. In 1858, Miranda's property was signed over to Maxwell for the sum of \$2,745. This was the first step in making Lucien Maxwell the largest individual land owner in the history of the United States.

On May 6, 1869, the option to the Maxwell Land Grant was sold to Jerome Chaffee, George Chilcott, and Charles Holly by Lucien and Luz Beaubien Maxwell. On June 12, 1870, Maxwell was notified that Chaffee and the others had elected to exercise the option to purchase, and that arrangements had been made for them to buy the property for \$1,350,000. On June 30, 1870, the transaction was completed.

Chaffee, Chilcott, and Holly had been negotiating with a group of British capitalists who were interested in the land. They organized under New Mexico laws. Prominent New Mexicans, William A. Pile, Thomas Rush Spencer and John S. Watts were chosen to "front" for the English investors and file for incorporation as the Maxwell Land Grant and Railway Company. Within 10 years, the Maxwell Land Grant and Railway Company had collapsed.

On May 3, 1880, the Maxwell Land Grant Company, was organized under the laws of Holland. The Maxwell Land Grant Co. was a joint-stock commercial association, with its headquarters in Amsterdam and offices in New Mexico (Cimarron) and Colorado. The articles of association state that the purpose of the Maxwell Land Grant Co. was to "acquire ownership of, and to administer the landed property... originally known under the name of the Beaubien and Miranda Grant and afterwards as the Maxwell Estate, together with all the mines, arable lands, forests, buildings, etc. found thereon and all the products, yield and increase thereof, to sell and trade in the same ... or ... to dispose of the said property or any part thereof; with observance, however, of the provisions of the Deed of Mortgage... [and] to do whatsoever the said Association shall be lawfully entitled to do as owner thereof." The Company was involved in activities including mining, timber, coal, farming, irrigation projects, plaster and cement manufacturing. By 1960, the company sold off most of its land and retired from northern New Mexico. As of 1980, the Maxwell Land Grant Company existed in the Netherlands under the name of De Maxwell Petroleum Holding N.V., Amsterdam.

From the earliest days, when the Ute and Jicarilla Apaches considered the land theirs, Beaubien/Miranda or Maxwell Land Grant has been controversial. At its maximum, this grant contained a disputed 1,714,764.93 acres. The United States and the Maxwell Land Grant Co. went to court over the "fraudulent" boundaries in 1887. The Maxwell Land Grant Co. won the case, its title cleared. The decision was confirmed by the Supreme Court in 1887. Familiar New Mexicans who were investors with the Maxwell Land Grant Co. include Stephen Elkins, Frank Springer, Thomas Catron." (library.unm).