

While Luke Matthews himself was said to be one of the richest planters in Madison County, the marriage of his daughter Maria into the Erskine family was, indeed, a combining of wealth and social status. That said, the discussion of land ownership as presented in Shogren, Perroni, and Turner (1989) will continue:

In 1850, Luke Matthews had a total of 71 slaves: 26 female and 45 males; 26 males, age 15 and younger and 12 females, age 15 and younger (U.S. Census Bureau of the Census, Slave Schedules 1850:Roll 21). The majority of these slaves must have lived at Oakendale Plantation, while a few worked as domestic servants. It is possible that these slaves and their freed descendants were later buried in the project area cemetery [Elko Switch Cemetery]. An extract from the 1870 census enumerates many black families living in Section 7, Township 4 South, Range 1 West (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1870:25).

Luke Matthews was a soldier in the War of 1812 and died in Huntsville 1 August 1875. Luke Matthews, his second wife, and their descendants are buried in Maple Hill Cemetery, Huntsville, Alabama (Dorothy S. Johnson, personal correspondence, 1987).

In 1872, Luke and Lucy deeded four properties (approximately 600 to 700 acres each) of Oakendale Plantation to three of his sons and four of his grandchildren (children of John N. Matthews, his oldest son by Lucy A. Spotwood). James P. Matthews was deeded 700 acres of Oakendale, which included the site of the historic cemetery [Elko Switch].

James P. Matthews was the third son of Luke and Lucy Matthews. He was born in Madison County, Alabama on 19 March 1847 and died 16 April 1908 (Dorothy S. Johnson, personal correspondence 1987); Register of Deaths, Madison County, 1881-1912). His wife, Lucy Bierre Matthews, died 11 June 1900. (Shogren et al. 1989:238)

As was typical of the times, the deed from Luke and Lucy Matthews conveyed it to James P. Matthews using the measure of metes and bounds.

. . . more particularly described as being seven hundred (700) acres of that portion of the Oakendale Plantation of said Luke Matthews lying south of the Memphis and Charleston Rail Road tract which is embraced in the following boundaries to wit: on the north side by Rail Road track [,] on the East by the lands of the late Samuel Ward, on the west of the lands of the late Richard Holding and on the south by a line, running parallel with the said Rail Road track and running from the East to the West boundary of said Oakendale Plantation, To have and to hold the said tract of land, Seven Hundred acres, together with the dwelling and houses situated on the same . . . (Deed Records VV:505). (Shogren et al. 1989:240)