

This no doubt is one of the primary reasons for the early interchangeability of the two surnames Madkin and Matkin.

Madkin Mountain on the arsenal (Sheet 5 of the 1986 Redstone Arsenal General Site Map series, with its peak in Sections 20 and 28 of Township 4 South, Range 1 West) derives its name from these early landowners of the area. Not only were there pioneer Madkin / Matkin families in the area, but after the slaves were freed, some of them chose to keep that as their new surname. The result is seen in the census records of the 1800s. While there were no Madkin / Matkin names found in the 1809 Madison County census, nor in the federal censuses of 1830 or 1840 in Madison County, the 1850 census shows 3 “Matkins” families in the county. The 1860 federal census showed only 1 “Matkins” in the county, but the 1870 federal census (after slaves were freed and took surnames) has 56 Soundex “hits” on the Ancestry.com internet census subscription service when searched for Matkin(s) / Madkin(s) in Madison County. Of these Soundex hits, 40 are truly for Matkin(s) / Madkin(s), as opposed to other surnames that share the same Soundex code. Of the 40 Matkin(s) / Madkin(s) hits in the 1870 census of Madison County, the great majority are listed as Colored or Mulatto, living in the Township 4 South Range 1 West area, which is almost entirely on land that is now part of the arsenal. Furthermore, the Matkin Cemetery is within about one-half mile of the location of the Madkin Cemetery, which is thought to be the burial place (on the old plantation) of some of the former slaves of the Matkin family.

The intrigue of the Matkin Cemetery (37-3) is centered around Mary Patton Matkin and the uninscribed obelisk next to hers.