Clear Form Values

Ent D (FMSF only) _____

Survey Log Sheet

Florida Master Site File
Version 5.0 3/19

Survey # (FMSF only) _____

Consult *Guide to the Survey Log Sheet* for detailed instructions.

Manuscript Information

Survey Project (name and project phase)
CEMETERY SURVEY AND MAPPING OF SYLVANIA AME CHURCH, WASHINTON COUNTY, FLORIDA.

Report Title (exactly as on title page)
CEMETERY SURVEY AND MAPPING OF SYLVANIA AME CHURCH, WASHINGTON COUNTY, FLORIDA

Report Authors (as on title page)
1. Mary Glowacki
2. Mike Lavender
3. Sean McConnel
4.

Publication Year 2025 **Number of Pages in Report** (do not include site forms) 49

Publication Information (Give series, number in series, publisher and city. For article or chapter, cite page numbers. Use the style of *American Antiquity*.)

Supervisors of Fieldwork (even if same as author) Names Mary Glowacki

Affiliation of Fieldworkers: Organization Other City Tallahassee

Key Words/Phrases (Don't use county name, or common words like *archaeology*, *structure*, *survey, architecture, etc.*)
1. Sylvania AME
2. Cemetery
3. Historic Blacks
4. GPR
5.
6.
7.
8.

Survey Sponsors (corporation, government unit, organization, or person funding fieldwork) Clear Sponsor Values
Name Sylvania AME Church Organization Other
Address/Phone/E-mail

Recorder of Log Sheet Mary Glowacki **Date Log Sheet Completed** 7-7-2025

Is this survey or project a continuation of a previous project? ☒No ☐Yes: **Previous survey #s (FMSF only)**

Project Area Mapping

Clear Mapping Values

Counties (select every county in which field survey was done; attach additional sheet if necessary)
1. Washington
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

USGS 1:24,000 Map Names/Year of Latest Revision (attach additional sheet if necessary)
1. Name VERNON Year
2. Name Year
3. Name Year
4. Name Year
5. Name Year
6. Name Year

Field Dates and Project Area Description

Fieldwork Dates: Start 6-23-2025 End 6-26-2025 **Total Area Surveyed** (fill in one) _____hectares 5.00 acres
Number of Distinct Tracts or Areas Surveyed 1
If Corridor (fill in one for each) **Width:** _____meters _____feet **Length:** _____kilometers _____miles

Florida Master Site File / Div. of Historical Resources / R.A. Gray Bldg / 500 S Bronough St., Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250
Phone 850.245.6440, Fax 850.245.6439, Email: SiteFile@dos.myflorida.com

Survey Log Sheet

Survey #_____

Research and Field Methods

Types of Survey (select all that apply): ☒archaeological ☐architectural ☐historical/archival ☐underwater ☐damage assessment ☐monitoring report ☒other(describe): GPR

Scope/Intensity/Procedures

Systematically walked cemetery recording each marked grave recording headstone image, inscription, and GPS coordinate. GPR device was employed to cover the entire cemetery without marked burials.

Preliminary Methods (select as many as apply to the project as a whole)

☐Florida Archives (Gray Building)	☐library research- *local public*	☐local property or tax records	☐other historic maps	☐LIDAR
☐Florida Photo Archives (Gray Building)	☐library-special collection	☐newspaper files	☐soils maps or data	☒other remote sensing
☐Site File property search	☐Public Lands Survey (maps at DEP)	☐literature search	☐windshield survey	
☒Site File survey search	☒local informant(s)	☐Sanborn Insurance maps	☐aerial photography	

☐other (describe): GPR

Archaeological Methods (select as many as apply to the project as a whole)

☐Check here if **NO** archaeological methods were used.

☐surface collection, controlled	☐shovel test-other screen size	☐block excavation (at least 2x2 m)	☐metal detector
☐surface collection, **un**controlled	☐water screen	☐soil resistivity	☒other remote sensing
☐shovel test-1/4"screen	☐posthole tests	☐magnetometer	☒pedestrian survey
☐shovel test-1/8" screen	☐auger tests	☐side scan sonar	☐unknown
☐shovel test 1/16"screen	☐coring	☐ground penetrating radar (GPR)	
☐shovel test-unscreened	☐test excavation (at least 1x2 m)	☐LIDAR	

☐other (describe): GPR

Historical/Architectural Methods (select as many as apply to the project as a whole)

☒Check here if **NO** historical/architectural methods were used.

☐building permits	☐demolition permits	☐neighbor interview	☐subdivision maps
☐commercial permits	☐windshield survey	☐occupant interview	☐tax records
☐interior documentation	☐local property records	☐occupation permits	☐unknown

☐other (describe): _____

Survey Results

Resource Significance Evaluated? ☐Yes ☐No Clear Check Boxes

Count of Previously Recorded Resources 288 **Count of Newly Recorded Resources** 769

List Previously Recorded Site ID#s with Site File Forms Completed (attach additional pages if necessary)

List Newly Recorded Site ID#s (attach additional pages if necessary)

See GPS data and GPR report (328 marked, 481 unmarked =809 total)

Site Forms Used: ☐Site File Paper Forms ☒Site File PDF Forms

REQUIRED: Attach Map of Survey or Project Area Boundary

SHPO USE ONLY **SHPO USE ONLY** **SHPO USE ONLY**

Origin of Report: ☐872 ☐Public Lands ☐UW ☐1A32 # _____ ☐Academic ☐Contract ☐Avocational ☐Grant Project # _____ ☐Compliance Review: CRAT # _____

Type of Document: ☐Archaeological Survey ☐Historical/Architectural Survey ☐Marine Survey ☐Cell Tower CRAS ☐Monitoring Report ☐Overview ☐Excavation Report ☐Multi-Site Excavation Report ☐Structure Detailed Report ☐Library, Hist. or Archival Doc ☐Desktop Analysis ☐MPS ☐MRA ☐TG ☐Other: _____

Document Destination: Plottable Projects **Plotability:** _____

Florida Master Site File / Div. of Historical Resources / R.A. Gray Bldg / 500 S Bronough St., Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250
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Page 1

☒Original
☐Update

HISTORICAL CEMETERY FORM
FLORIDA MASTER SITE FILE
Version 5.0 3/19

Consult the *Guide to Historical Cemetery Form* for detailed instructions.

Clear Form Values

Site # WS01346
Field Date 6-23-2025
Form Date 6-26-2025
Recorder #

Cemetery Name Sylvania AME Cemetery Multiple Listing (DHR only)
Project Name CEMETERY SURVEY AND MAPPING OF SYLVANIA AME CHU Survey # (DHR only)
Ownership: ☐private-profit ☒private-nonprofit ☐private-individual ☐private-nonspecific ☐city ☐county ☐state ☐federal ☐Native American ☐foreign ☐unknown

LOCATION & MAPPING

Clear Location Values

USGS 7.5 Map Name VRNN USGS Date Plat or Other Map
City/Town (within 3 miles) In City Limits? ☐yes ☐no ☐unknown County
Township Range Section ¼ section ☐NW ☐SW ☐SE ☐NE Irregular Sect. Name
Township Range Section ¼ section ☐NW ☐SW ☐SE ☐NE
Landgrant Tax Parcel #
UTM Coordinates: Zone ☐16 ☐17 Easting Northing
Other Coordinates: X: 30.61344 Y: -85.67098 Coordinate System & Datum
Address / Vicinity / Route to:
3079 Sylvania Road, Vernon, Florida 32462; SR 278 E of Vernon, 3/4 Mile to County Grade Road, then South one mile
Public Tract Containing Cemetery (e.g. park name)

HISTORY

Year Cemetery Established 1865 ☒approximately ☐year listed or earlier ☐year listed or later Clear Check Boxes
Ownership History (especially original owners)
Sylvania Cemetery is located behind its church built by emancipated slaves after the Civil War. The graveyard contains stones that commemorate them.

Year Burials Ceased, if applicable N/A Reason(s) Burials Ceased (describe below)
It is an active cemetery with the most recent burial in 2024

Range of Death Dates: Earliest Year 1870 Most Recent Year 2024
Acreage Expansions/Dates none
List People Important in Local, State, or National History Buried in Cemetery
A large number of individuals served in the military, particularly WW I and II.

Describe Previous Repair, Cleaning or Restoration Efforts
There is regular lawn maintenance, and family members occasionally clean around marked burials and place flowers.

DESCRIPTION

Clear Description Values

Type (select all that apply) ☐community ☐company town ☐epidemic ☐family ☐fraternal order ☐memorial park ☐military(not national) ☐municipal ☐national ☐potter's field ☐prison ☒religious ☐Rural Movement ☐other(describe):
Ethnic Group(s) Interred (select all that apply) ☐White non-Hispanic ☐Hispanic ☐Asian ☐Caribbean ☒African American ☒American Indian-tribe: ☐other(describe):
Current Status: ☒still used for burials ☐no longer used for burials, but maintained ☐abandoned
Condition: ☒well maintained ☐some areas maintained ☐poorly maintained ☐not maintained, but easily identifiable ☐not maintained, hard to identify ☐not identifiable but known to exist (explain):
Total # of Graves: 809 Does Total # Include Unmarked Graves?: ☒yes ☐no
Describe Evidence of Unmarked Graves (include count) 481 identified by GPR
Total Cemetery Size (give length by width **or** area, specify ft, m, ac, ha, etc.) 5 acres
Describe Cemetery Boundary (e.g. "cast iron fence", stone or brick wall, hedge, etc.) wooded tree line
Historical Vegetation (trees, shrubs, flowers) 2 live oaks, 2 loblolly pines
Public Access: ☒unlimited ☐restricted: how?
Threats (select all that apply) ☐abandonment ☐agriculture ☐mining/timbering ☐public development ☐private development ☐desecration/vandalism ☐other (explain): exposure to storms
Associated Historical Properties/Archaeological Remains (non-cemetery)

☐Check if *Historical Structure Form* completed ☐Check if *Archaeological Site Form* completed

DHR USE ONLY	OFFICIAL EVALUATION	DHR USE ONLY
NR List Date ☐Owner Objection	SHPO – Appears to meet criteria for NR listing: ☐yes ☐no ☐insufficient info Date Init. KEEPER – Determined eligible: ☐yes ☐no Clear Check Boxes Date NR Criteria for Evaluation: ☐a ☐b ☐c ☐d (see *National Register Bulletin 15*, p. 2)	

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HISTORICAL CEMETERY FORM

Site # 8 WS01346

GRAVE MARKER DESCRIPTIONS

Grave Groupings (select all that apply) ☒family ☐fraternal order ☒military ☒religious ☐ethnic heritage ☐other (describe below):

Groupings Indicated By (select all that apply) ☒curbing ☐fence ☐hedge ☐wall ☐other (describe below):
Granite and marble curbs and grass spacing

Describe Orientation of Graves (East/West, North/South, etc.)

Describe/List Methods of Marking Graves Used (i.e., headstones, mounds, depressions, objects or plants, etc.)
Headstones, statues, and other stone markers as well as associated objects and plants

Marker Materials (select all that apply) ☒marble ☒concrete/cement ☐fieldstone ☒granite ☐wrought iron ☐cast iron ☐white bronze/zinc ☒sandstone ☐slate ☐wood ☐other (describe):

Describe Grave Articles Found in Cemetery (objects or decorative items placed on graves by well-wishers)
Real and artificial flowers and paper notes

Describe Marker Damage and Conditions (i.e., sunken, tilted, chipped, weathered but standing, broken in fragments, vandalized, etc.)
Some of the markers (<10%) are sunken, tilted, broken, and heavily weathered. These are the oldest markers for the most part and not likely from vandalism.

Characterize Condition of Inscriptions (legible, illegible, none, etc.) Oldest sandstone markers are heavily weathered with illeg

Distinctive Grave Markers, Monuments, and/or Architectural Features
The Cemetery is organized by family plots; some are memorialized with large granite memorials for the family's plot.

Signatures of Stone Carvers (specify name, town if available)
No Stone Carvers were recorded

RESEARCH METHODS (select all that apply)

☒FMSF record search (sites/surveys)	☒library research	☐building permits	☐Sanborn maps
☒FL State Archives/photo collection	☐city directory	☐occupant/owner interview	☐plat maps
☐property appraiser / tax records	☒newspaper files	☐neighbor interview	☐Public Lands Survey (DEP)
☒cultural resource survey	☒historic photos	☐interior inspection	☐HABS/HAER record search

☒other methods (describe) physical survey included GPR

Bibliographic References (if unpublished give FMSF manuscript # or location where document available)
See CEMETERY SURVEY AND MAPPING OF SYLVANIA AME CHURCH WASHINGTON COUNTY, FLORIDA by PCARG (2025)

OPINION OF RESOURCE SIGNIFICANCE

Clear Significance Values

Appears to meet the criteria for National Register listing individually? ☒yes ☐no ☐insufficient information

Appears to meet the criteria for National Register listing as part of a district? ☐yes ☒no ☐insufficient information

Explanation of Evaluation (**required**, whether significant or not)
Age of cemetery (Civil War era), nature of cemetery (one of first AME churches in county), may contain prehistoric or historic Native American burials

Areas of Historical Significance (see *National Register Bulletin 15,* p. 8 for categories: e.g. "architecture", "ethnic heritage", etc.)

1. African American
2. Archaeology-historic
3. Religion
4. Black history
5. Archaeology-prehistoric
6.

DOCUMENTATION

Clear Documentation Values

Accessible Documentation Not Filed with the Site File - including field notes, analysis notes, photos, plans and other important documents

1) **D**ocument type None known **M**aintaining organization
Document description **F**ile or accession #'s

2) **D**ocument type None known **M**aintaining organization
Document description **F**ile or accession #'s

INFORMANT & RECORDER INFORMATION

Local Informant (name and contact information)

Recorder Information: **N**ame Mary Glowacki **A**ffiliation Other

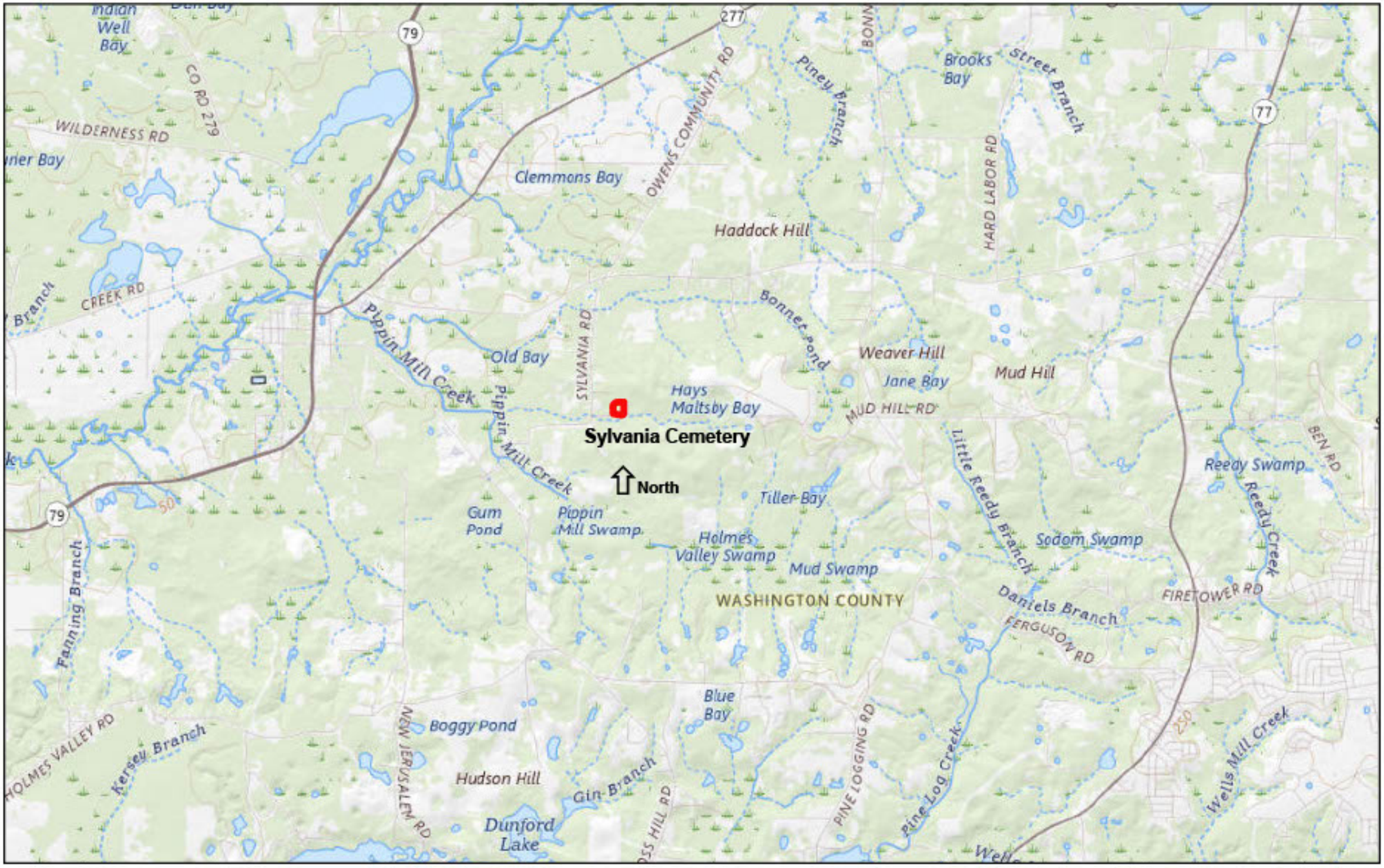
Address / Phone / E-mail 2018 Wahalaw Nene, Tallahassee, FL 32301

Required Attachments

❶ **PHOTOCOPY OF USGS 7.5' MAP WITH BOUNDARIES CLEARLY MARKED**

❷ **PHOTOS - DIGITAL (.jpeg or .tiff) AND HARD COPY FORMAT (plain paper acceptable)**
Helpful photos include the main gate or entrance, representative general views, unusual monuments or markers, and damage or neglect.

Sylvania Cemetery (USGS)



6/10/2025

1:82,215

0 0.5 1 2 mi

0 0.75 1.5 3 km

USGS The National Map: National Boundaries Dataset, 3DEP Elevation Program, Geographic Names Information System, National Hydrography

CEMETERY SURVEY AND MAPPING OF SYLVANIA AME CHURCH WASHINGTON COUNTY, FLORIDA

Image of Sylvania AME Church with cemetery in background (www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2328270/sylvania-cemetery)

Submitted to

Sylvania AME Church and Visit Washington County Florida

By

Pre-Columbian Archaeological Research Group, Inc.
Investigators Dr. Mary Glowacki and
Michael Lavender

Including geophysical report by Dr. Sean Connel of Bigman Geophysical

June 10, 2025

PCARG

Acknowledgements

We thank Sylvania AME Church and Visit Washington County Florida for the opportunity to carry out this project, and the Division of Historical Resources (DHR) for its funding and grant management. We are grateful to Dale Cox of DR Historic Preservation, Inc., for his assistance with historic research.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

Sylvania AME Church is located in Washington County, Florida, on Sylvania Road in Vernon. The property covers an area of 4.7 acres [Figures 1, 2].

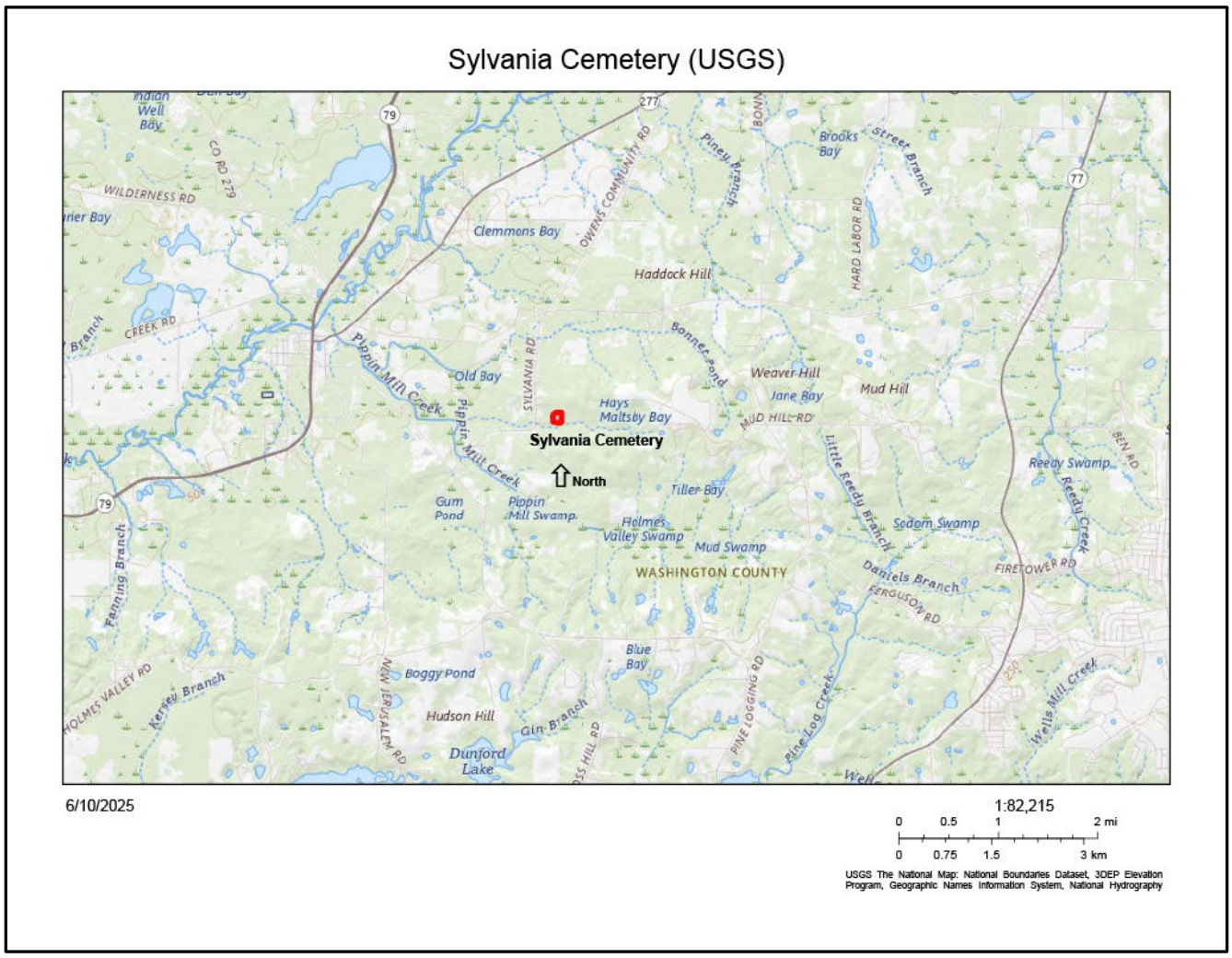


Figure 1. USGS map showing the location of Sylvania AME Cemetery (red dot) in Washington County, FL.

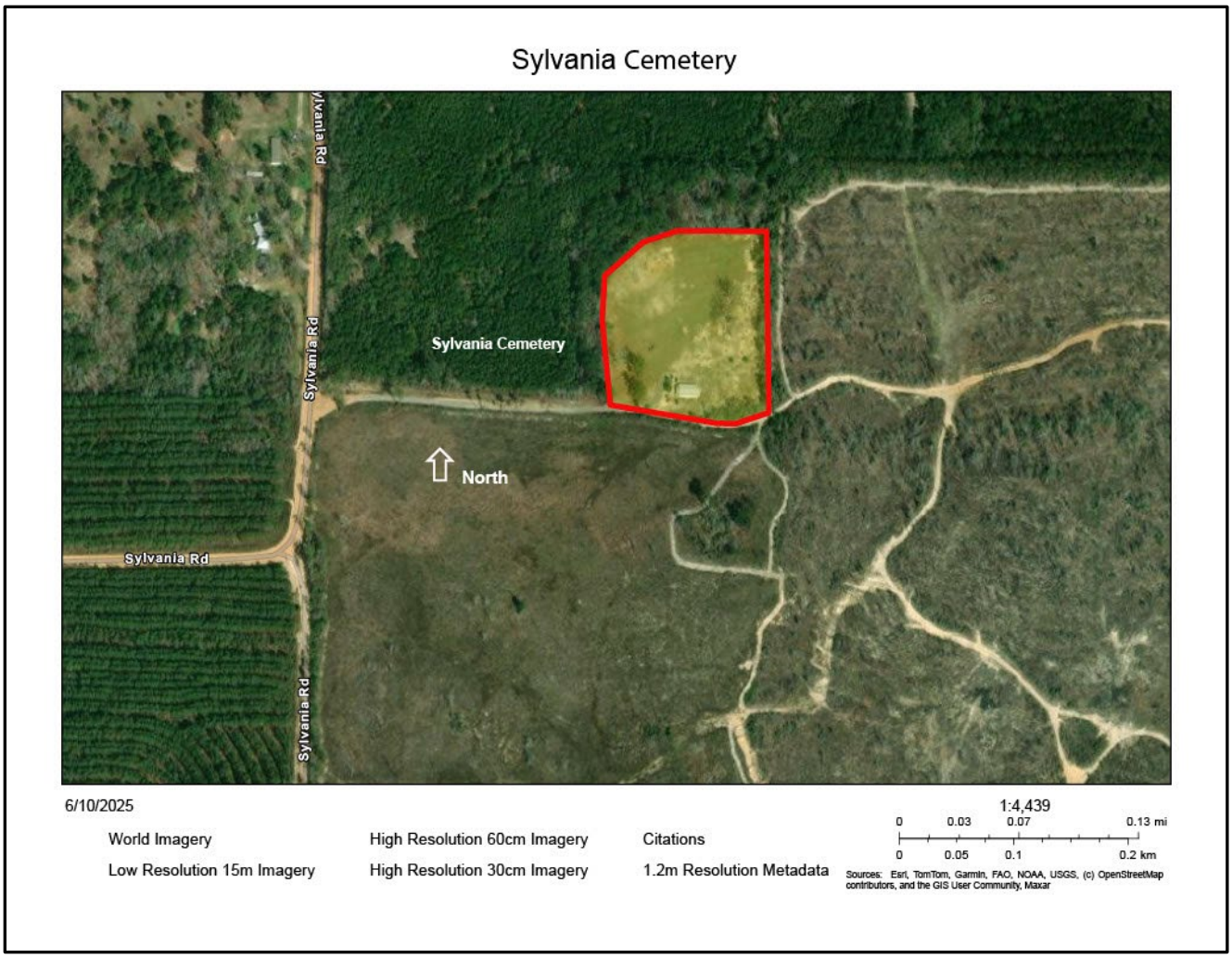


Figure 2. Sylvania AME Church off of Sylvania Road in Veron, FL.

This work was conducted in response to a request issued by Visit Washington County Florida for a survey of marked and unmarked burials at the Sylvania AME Church cemetery, an historic African American cemetery established more than 120 years ago. The church property covers approximately 5 acres. The Sylvania Cemetery is located behind its church built by emancipated slaves after the Civil War. The graveyard contains stones that commemorate the early members of the church. As of 2020, Sylvania Cemetery recorded 288 graves. A large number have been photographed and uploaded to FindAGrave.com.

Pre-Columbian Archaeological Research Group, Inc. (PCARG) mapped marked graves, transcribed inscriptions from grave markers, and utilized Ground Penetrating RADAR (GPR) to locate and map unmarked and unknown graves in the cemetery. The project produced a map of the cemetery with GPS coordinates identifying all burials and generated an inventory of each individual marked grave.

Geographic and Environmental Setting

The modern land surface of Washington County is the result of prehistoric fluvial and marine deposition

during periods when sea level was higher than present. Subsequent erosion by marine currents and waves, as well as later downcutting by freshwater streams, superimposed both relict marine features, in the form of terraces, and incised stream valleys and ravines on the older sediments. Rainwater runoff, draining into adjacent stream valleys, gradually shaped the highlands into the rolling hills characterizing much of the county today. Additionally, dissolution of the shallow underlying carbonate rock units resulted in the formation of sinkholes, caves and underground drainage. Washington County may be subdivided into a series of geomorphic provinces based on both the elevation and shape of the land surface. There are three broad geomorphic districts within Washington County - the Southern Pine Hills District, the Dougherty Karst Plain District, and the Apalachicola Delta District. The project area of Sylvania AME Cemetery is located within the Dougherty Karst Plain District.

The Dougherty Karst Plain District occupies a portion of the central Northwest Florida panhandle, including most of Washington County. It is comprised of a flat-to-gently-rolling, southwestward sloping plain generally characterized by karst terrain. Karst terrain in Florida is underlain by soluble limestone and dolostone, and commonly contains solution landforms such as sinkholes, closed depressions, subterranean drainage and caves dissolved in the bedrock by slightly-acidic groundwater. In more general terms, the location of the Sylvania AME Cemetery, is situated in an area identified as the Northern Highlands, adjacent to the Gulf Coastal Lowlands that surrounds it [Figure 3]. The soil type series associated with the area is Dothan-Fuquaq-Bonifay (US Natural Resources Conservation Service 2014:408).

Figure 3. Map of Florida highlighting the highland and coastal lowland regions. It shows that the area of Sylvania AME Cemetery, circled in red, in located in the highlands of Washington County (After FLGS-Map-Series-No-112).

Several vegetation communities have been defined within the survey area. Among these communities are three major classifications: 1) upland hardwood hammocks and forests, xeric sand hill vegetation community including scrub oak and longleaf pines, and pine forests, 2) floodplain cypress, bay, magnolia, and hardwood communities, and 3) poorly drained basin lands containing cypress sloughs, extensive stands of titi and bay, and areas of hardwoods. Upland vegetation primarily consists of live oak, water oak, red oak, laurel oak, turkey oak, bluejack oak, and post oak, hickory, various species of pine, including longleaf, loblolly, and slash pine, along with red cedar, holly, wax myrtle, dogwood, saw palmetto, gallberry, spruce pine, wiregrass, and various other shrubs, vines, and grasses as understory. Floodplain and wetlands vegetation includes primarily stands of titi, bald cypress, cyrilla, bay, river birch, swamp tupelo, red cedar, blackgum, sweetgum, loblolly and slash pine, red maple, American elm, willow, box elder, sycamore, ash, beech, live oak, water oak, swamp chestnut oak, and laurel oak. A wide variety of wildlife exists within these settings including freshwater fish, turtles, alligators, frogs, snakes, several species of waterfowl,

numerous small and medium-sized mammals, deer, Florida black bear, and a wide range of permanent and migratory birds (Hardin 1990; Schmidt 1978, 1997).

Cultural and Historic Background

Paleoindian Period (ca. 12,000 BC-8,000 BC)

The earliest human occupation of Northwest Florida dates to the Paleoindian period. Paleoindians entered North America and arrived in the Southeastern United States near the end of the Pleistocene, more than 14,000 years ago. Glaciers covered much of the northern half of the continent with much of the earth's water frozen in ice. Climatic conditions were substantially different from today. The region was drier and cooler, sea levels were significantly lower (as much as 100 meters below today's sea level), and the Gulf Coast shoreline extended roughly 100 miles seaward of its present location. Modern coastal areas, which are now flat, low and wet, were formerly dry. Inland drainages, springs, and wetlands were virtually non-existent, and the water table was much lower. Fresh water was scarce and available only in rain-fed water ponds and lakes, and deep sinkholes fed by springs most plentiful in the karstic limestone formations, as well as in the eroding valleys where rainwater recharged seep springs in the Pleistocene sands. These water sources supported rich natural communities of plants and animals. Paleoindians took advantage of these resources, subsisting on hunting, fishing, and collecting a wide range of fauna and flora (Anderson and Sassaman 2012:36-59; Dunbar 1991; Halligan et al. 2016; Milanich 1994:37-59).

Relative to later cultural periods, the Paleoindian period is sparsely represented. This is because much of its associated archaeological remains now lie underwater, caused by sea level rise, while their inland manifestations are generally buried under later site occupations or by natural soil deposition. Paleoindians lived in small, mobile groups, recorded as ephemeral camps and procurement sites. Limited preservation of such sites is due to their great antiquity and occupations by subsequent groups. Most of the Paleoindian record consists of stone tools and debitage but some bone and ivory. The principal diagnostic stone tool of the period is the lanceolate-shaped point, Clovis, associated with hunting now extinct megafauna such as the mastodon and the giant bison (Anderson and Sassaman 2012:36-59; Dunbar 1991; Halligan et al. 2016; Milanich 1994:37-59) [Figure 4].

Figure 4. Hypothetical rendering of a Paleoindian hunt of megalithic fauna. In the foreground is depicted an example of period lithic tools (https://www.nps.gov/ocmu/learn/historyculture/images/Paleo-Indian-Painting-JPG)

While considerable evidence for a Paleoindian occupation has been reported on the Chipola River to the northeast, Sylvania AME Cemetery area has produced little evidence (White 2024 Vol. 1:101-105). However, few formal archaeological surveys have been carried out in the interior of the county without which our knowledge of early sites is limited (FMSF 2025).

Archaic Period (ca. 8,000 BC-1,000 BC)

At the end of the Paleoindian Period (the beginning of the Holocene), the climate began to resemble today's climate, being much warmer and drier than previously. Sea level had risen to within 10 meters of its present level and continued its rise during the period. By the Archaic Period, people had greatly diversified their subsistence, and a wide variety of extant animal and plant resources were exploited. There is some evidence that plant domestication began during the Archaic stage (Gremillion 2002). Archaic settlements appear to be seasonally occupied as base and special use camps.

The Archaic Period is the longest period of cultural development in pre-Columbian North America. It is divided into three sub-periods reflecting the gradual fluctuation in climate until current conditions were reached in the last stage. Important advancements include construction of mounds, shell rings, and other earthworks in association with larger settlements and the establishment of long-distance trade. Additionally, the Archaic Period is marked by a greater diversity of artifacts than are recorded for the

Paleoindian Period. Projectile points are smaller and triangular with notched or stemmed bases along with scrapers and knives. Ground stone tools, such as celts, and ornaments, such as pendants, make up the Archaic assemblage as well as gourd and basket containers, and wooden tools and dugout canoes (Anderson and Sassaman 2012:66-113; Milanich 1994:61-87, 95-100).

In Florida the Kirk Serrated and Bolen Plain and Beveled points are diagnostic of the Early Archaic; the latter have been dated to around 7,000 BC on the Aucilla River (Carter and Dunbar 2006), east of the project area. Other artifact types include deer antler and bone points, hooks, handles and awls, often found in Florida rivers, and the atlatl or spear-thrower appears with banner stones or ground-stone weights indicating improved hunting technology. The stone points are believed to have been hafted to a foreshaft that socketed into the atlatl dart shaft and detached from that shaft (much like a harpoon point) upon impact. That prevented breakage of the shaft and permitted reloading with spare points. The foreshaft also served as a handle when the point was used as a knife. That dual use is reflected in their designation as projectile point/knives (PPKs).

Early Archaic points are extremely numerous in the upper and middle Apalachicola River region (items lost and/or discarded at hunter butchering locations), but occupation sites are usually ephemeral. Hundreds of Early Archaic projectile point/knives have been surface collected around the coastal bay shorelines and inland, especially within the Chipola River drainage and upland Jackson County. West of the Chipola River, through the central portion of Washington County, there has been little archaeological survey to know the extent of these early sites. The lack of chert quarry locations in Washington County versus those in nearby Jackson County (see Upchurch et al. 1982) may be one explanation as it would have fostered conservation of stone tools that would have been discarded in chert quarry areas.

The Middle Archaic dates from approximately 5,000 BC-3,000 BC with diagnostic projectile points, known as "Florida Archaic Stemmed" [Figure 5], are characterized by shorter, wider stems than the previous types, and are prolific in North Florida. The climate of this period continued to become warmer and wetter, reaching our modern climate at approximately 3,000 BC.

Figure 5. Florida Archaic Stemmed projectile points/knives. Surface artifacts from Lime Pit Cave, Jackson County, east of Washington County (after Harding 2017).

The end of the Late Archaic (ca. 3,000 BC-1,000 BC) is defined by the appearance of fiber-tempered ceramics in the greater Southeastern United States. Fiber-tempered pottery (Milanich 1994:85-86) is found at inland sites and also on the Apalachicola Bay shores. Other cultural changes during the late phase of the Archaic include increased populations and a high reliance on aquatic, estuarine, and marine resources. Regional settlements are centered around mounds and/or horseshoe, semicircular or oval shaped middens, though in the Apalachicola-lower Chattahoochee valley, they are linear (Milanich 1994:97,104; PaleoWest 2021:92-97, Appendix D; White 2024:77-80, 162, 164).

Influences from the lower Mississippi Valley, known from Alabama to Mississippi and Louisiana as the Poverty Point Culture, and in Florida as the contemporary Elliott's Point Complex, is also noted archaeologically at this time. It is marked by a distinctive assemblage of baked clay balls, microliths, and exotic items (Milanich 1994: 95, 97-98; Thomas and Campbell 1991). The form of the Late Archaic microliths, generally known as Jaketown Perforators, is distinct and slightly larger than the Late Weeden Island to Fort Walton period microlithic assemblage (see Morse and Tesar 1974:104 for further comparative explanation).

Southeast of the Sylvania AME Church is the Econfina Creek Wildlife Management Area. There, various tracts have been surveyed for archaeological sites with numerous Archaic period sites recorded, though mostly as surface scatter (e.g., Mikell and Shoemaker 2006:136, 137, 142, 144, 146, 151-152-154, 160, 161, 169, 179, 181), suggesting that the area of Hard Labor Creek may likewise produce more sites of this timeframe with further investigation. At present, within the areal coverage of the Wausau USGS Quadrangle map, the location of Sylvania AME Cemetery, there are less than a half dozen recorded Archaic period sites identified primarily as light surface scatters (the result of incidental butchering activities).

Woodland Period (ca. 1,000 BC-AD 1,000)

The Woodland Period is the next major stage of prehistory in eastern North America. It is characterized by significant population growth in the river valleys and along the coast, an increase in pottery use, and the introduction of elaborate ceremonies and mortuary rituals. The Woodland, likewise, is divided into three sub-periods. In Northwest Florida, each is associated with a distinct pottery type (Milanich 1994:111-227).

The Early Woodland Period (ca. 1000 BC-AD 200) in North Florida as well as southern Alabama and Georgia, is characterized by coastal-riverine subsistence, which correlates with the emergence of modern climatic conditions. Principal settlements are located within maritime hammocks near brackish or fresh water (Bense 1985; Milanich 1994:116). Population growth and greater sedentism led to the appearance of village mound complexes. Mounds built for elite burials and civic ceremonial activity are established during this period (Milanich 1994:134-135). Deptford pottery, which corresponds to this temporal phase, is defined by large, deep, and simple bowl to globular and short rim jar-shaped pots with conical bottoms; some Deptford vessels also are tri-and quadrupedal. The majority of Deptford ceramics are sand-tempered, and the vessel exteriors are decorated with paddle stamping, and some net and fabric impression. Bold and Linear Check and Simple Stamped designs are the main patterns (Stephenson et al. 2002) [Figure 6].

Figure 6. Examples of Deptford Linear Check Stamped pottery from the Collection of the Florida Museum of National History (FMNH).

Deptford people used stone tools, but they are rarely encountered in the archaeological record (Milanich 1994:126). Large-stemmed projectile points and medium sized triangular points, bifacially worked tools, small blades, and expedient flake tools have been recovered in very limited numbers. Ground stone tools are also associated. They include basalt/greenstone celts, limestone and sandstone grinding implements, hammerstones and whetstones. Bone tools, including points, awls, flakers, pins, and gouges, are occasionally recovered as well. Oyster, clam, and whelk shells were used as ladles, spoons, cups, picks, and axes (Stephenson et al. 2002:318-351).

As the field has made advancements, archaeologists have come to identify more Early Woodland period sites in this region than previously recorded (White 2024 Vol. 1:194-197). They appear on stream and riverbanks, ponds, and river terraces. A series of Deptford shell mounds have been recorded in the Apalachicola River area (White and Estabrook 1994) and sites along Lake Wimico, Howard Creek, and other tributaries to the Apalachicola River (White 2024 vol. 1:198-201). A Deptford earthen mound, reused during the Fort Walton period, is located at the Waddell's Mill Pond site (8JA65) in Jackson County, seven miles northwest of Marianna, just east of the project area. It establishes the pattern of the

Deptford mound reused as the Fort Walton temple mound (8OK6) in Okaloosa County, Florida (Tesar and Jones 2009).

During the Middle Woodland Period (ca. AD 200-AD 500), Deptford cultural practices continue, but there are changes in pottery production, and sites increase in number and variety. The Swift Creek ceramic type replaced Deptford. It is represented by open jars, and bowls with (smaller than Deptford) footed supports and notched and scalloped rims. Its exterior decorations are unique, with complicated stamped curvilinear elements such as scrolls, concentric circles, teardrops, and spirals [Figure 7]. Complicated stamped designs continued as the culture transitioned into that known as the Early Weeden Island period.

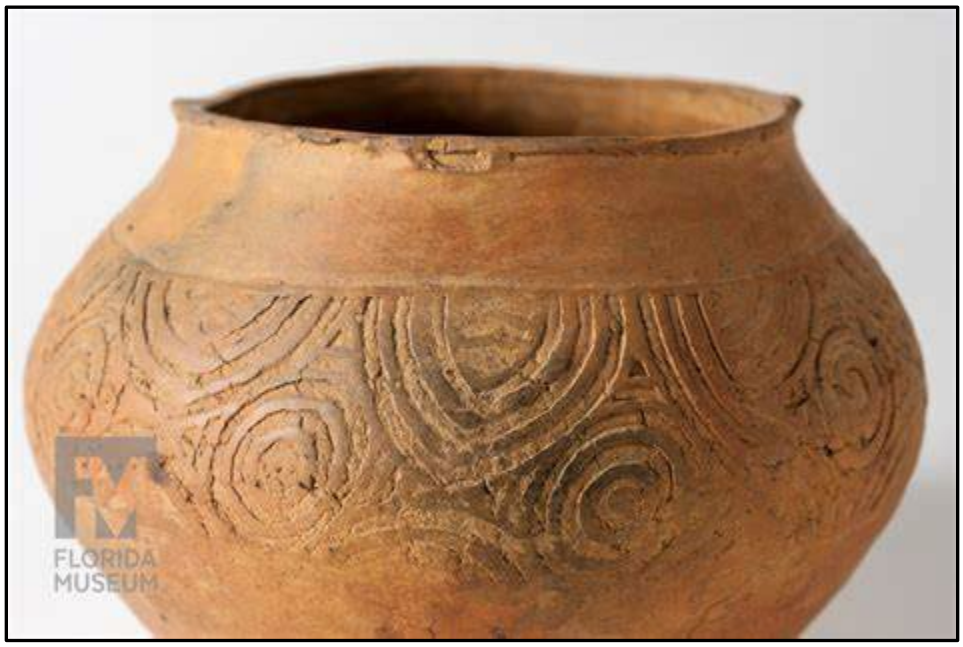


Figure 7. Example of a Swift Creek Complicated Stamped ceramic vessel (of the early Weeden Island period) from the Collection of the Florida Museum of National History (FMNH).

Other artifacts of stone and bone appear to be carryovers from the previous period. Mounds take on a new dimension, some with flat tops and ramps, which supported structures on the summits. These constructions suggest socio-political changes indicative of ranked or class-defined societies. Moreover, certain Swift Creek artifacts indicate participation in the Hopewellian interaction sphere (Stephenson et al. 2002:381-351). Near the tributary accessing Lake Wimico, on the west side of Apalachicola the Pierce Mounds site (8FR14) excavated by C. B. Moore shows the variety of Swift Creek ceramic artifacts and exotic trade items from northern peoples. While the site was established in the Early Woodland period, it was a major Middle to Late Woodland complex, with significant influence throughout the region.

The Late Woodland Period (ca. AD 500-AD 1,000) in Northwest Florida is called Weeden Island (Willey 1949; Willey and Woodbury 1942). Weeden Island pottery is best known for its decorative technique using incising and punctation, and for the manufacture of effigy vessels in human and animal

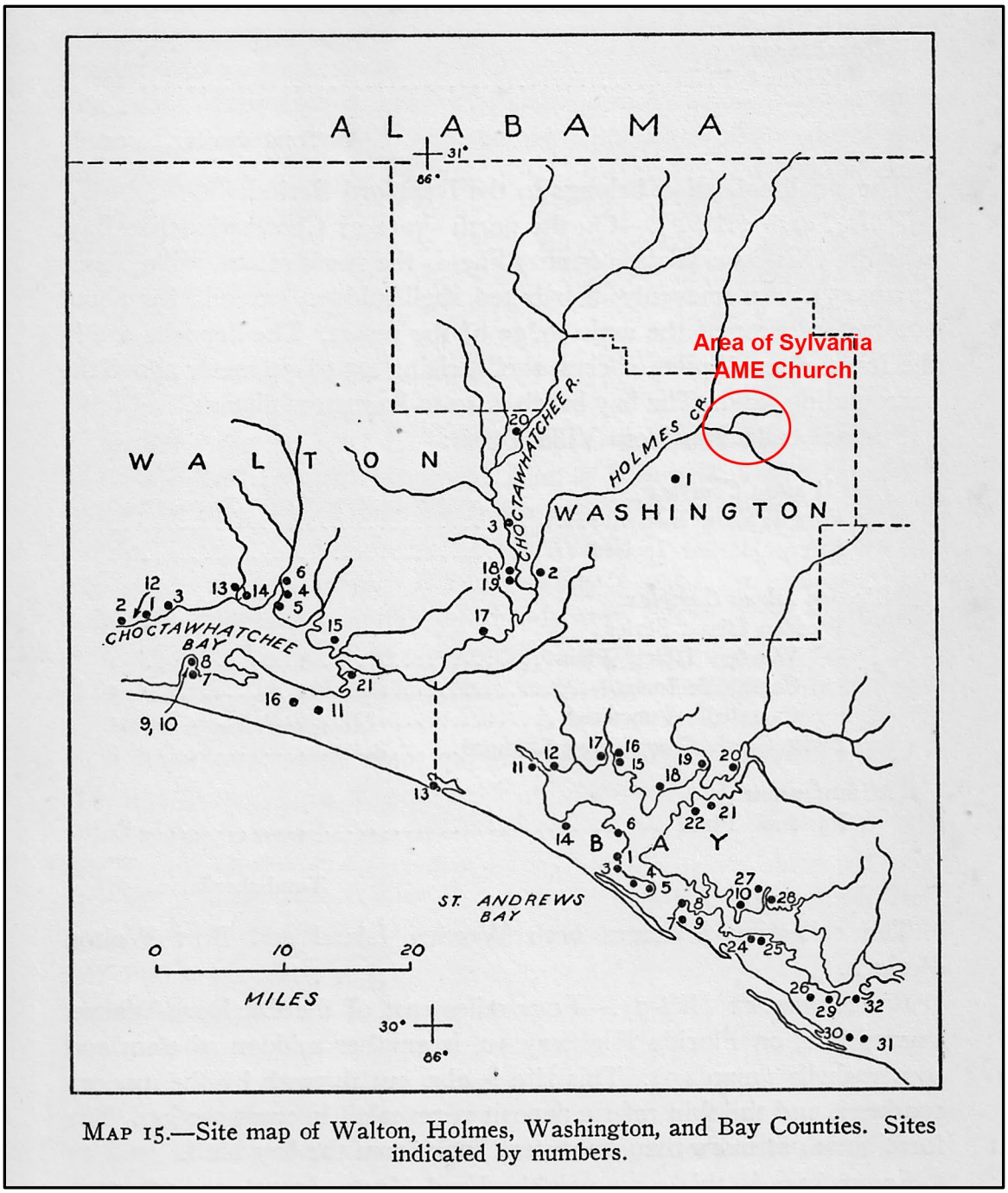
forms. Willey originally subdivided the ceramic sequence into two phases—the early one dominated by Swift Creek Complicated Stamped, late variety, and the later one by incised, punctated, plain, and other styles and eventually dominated by Wakulla Check Stamped. Later, George Percy and David Brose (1974) further broke down the sequence in five phases. More recently, Greg Mikell and colleagues (Mikell et al. 1989) reworked the Weeden Island chronology to define three periods for the Tyndall Air Force Base sites and it seems to be the most relevant sequence for the North Florida region.

Following the latter system, Weeden Island I is characterized by late varieties of Swift Creek Complicated Stamped and St. Andrews Complicated Stamped ceramics, small quantities of Weeden Island incised and punctate types (e.g., Carrabelle Punctated, Keith Incised, and Weeden Island Incised). Weeden Island II is marked by high percentages of Wakulla Check Stamped ceramics, check stamping returning in popularity from the Deptford Period, and an increase in frequency of Weeden Island incised, punctated and other types with surface-related treatments. Weeden Island III is dominated by Wakulla Check Stamped, and very limited numbers of Weeden Island incised and punctated types (Mikell et al. 1989:219-229).

Late Woodland village midden and mound sites are often found in different settings than earlier Middle Woodland period sites. New settlements appear in the upper reaches of the bay systems (Bense 1989). These new settlements reflect a regional population increase and the need to redistribute people to areas of new resources. At these new locations, the ring midden pattern continues. New burial mounds, some with ramps and flat summits were constructed. The mounds contained sacred paraphernalia found throughout the culture area, such as effigy vessels [Figure 8], mica, galena, and shell ornaments, such as gorgets. Subsistence studies, however, show that Weeden Island peoples continued to exploit shellfish, fish, deer, and plants as primary food resources as did their predecessors (Anderson and Mainford 2002:15-19).

Figure 8. Weeden Island effigy vessel (thevelvetdoor.wordpress.com).

Numerous Weeden Island habitation and mound sites are reported inland and along tributaries of the Apalachicola River in Gulf, Calhoun, Franklin, Liberty, Gadsden and Jackson Counties (Percy and Brose 1974; White 2018). Both Swift Creek and early Weeden Island pottery has been recovered from hundreds of sites, including up to 30 burial mounds, in the Apalachicola Valley. To the west, Woodland sites proliferate along the Gulf Coast, with numerous sites along riverways immediately north of St. Andrews Bay in Bay County (such as in the Econfina WMA), and north in areas of the Choctawhatchee River, which divides Washington County from Walton County to the west (FMSF database). Much of Washington County's upland areas, though have sparce site recording. Archaeologist Gordon Willey's 1949 map of this region illustrates this pattern [Figure 9], which has changed little overtime, in spite of more recent surveys and the lack of surveys in more remote areas.



MAP 15.—Site map of Walton, Holmes, Washington, and Bay Counties. Sites indicated by numbers.

Figure 9. Map after Willey (1949) showing Sylvania AME Cemetery, circled in red. Note how few archaeological sites were recorded in Washington County at the time.

Mississippian Period (AD 1,000-AD 1,500)

After approximately AD 1,000 Weeden Island culture transitioned into Fort Walton culture. Research suggests that Mississippian cultural influences appear in the Apalachicola River valley at this time, including new social, religious, and political ideas, namely chiefdom organizations with ruling elites,

supported by maize agriculture and redistribution tribute systems. However, in coastal areas of Northwest Florida, the Woodland settlement and subsistence patterns continued with large communities located on coastal hammocks, surrounded by many smaller satellite camps, in a variety of coastal and upland environments. Agriculture is not considered to have been as important on the coast as in the river valleys due to the very poor nature of the coastal soils (Scarry 1980, 1981; Tesar and Jones 1981).

Diagnostic artifacts of the Mississippian period in Florida include Ft. Walton pottery, characterized by exterior decoration of zone incising complimented by punctation is known as Fort Walton Incised, while similarly incised pottery without punctations is known as Point Washington Incised [Figure 10]. Effigy vessels also are part of the assemblage, a carryover from Weeden Island. At large, ceremonial inland centers, such as Lake Jackson (8LE1), burial goods associated with elite mound burials, include copper artifacts such as breast plates, shell and pearl beads crafted into jewelry, and shell gorgets and cups; steatite pipes, and ochre (Milanich 1994:365-380).

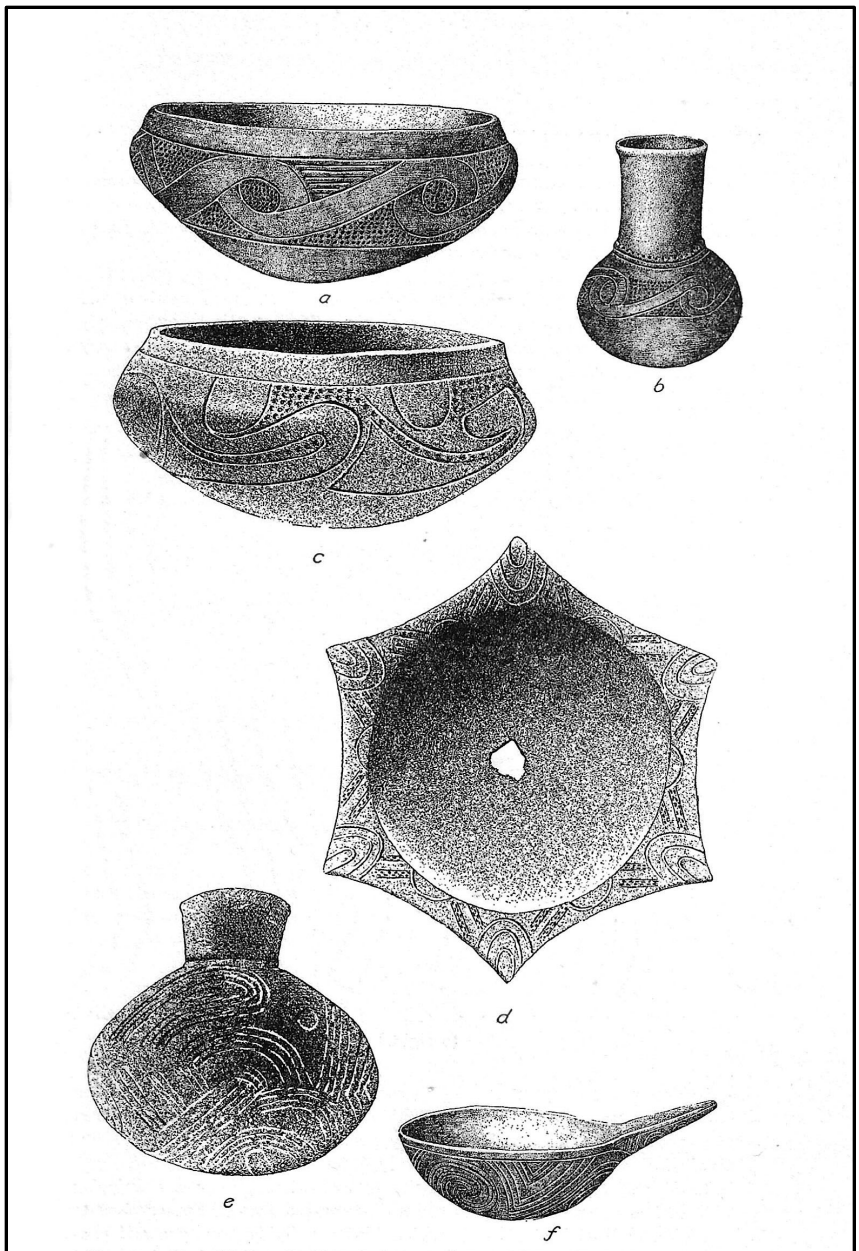


FIG. 57.—Fort Walton Period vessels. *a-d*, Fort Walton Incised; *e*, Pensacola Three-line Incised; *f*, Point Washington Incised. (Redrawn from Moore. Year, figure number, and site: *a*, 1901: 24, Fort Walton; *b*, 1903: 105, Chipola Cut-Off; *c*, 1901: 17, Fort Walton; *d*, 1901: 22, Fort Walton; *e*, 1901: 81, Point Washington; *f*, 1901: 96, Point Washington. Vessels *a*, *b*, *d*, *f* are ¼ actual size; *c*, *e*, ½ actual size.)

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Figure 10. Sketches of Fort Walton incised pottery vessels (after Willey 1949).

The Waddells Mill Pond site (JA65) is a Fort Walton period site located seven miles northwest of Marianna, Florida, just east of the project area. Excavations at the site during the 1960s and 1970s revealed two mounds, a palisaded village, and cave habitations. The site is believed to have been abandoned prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the region in 1674. There was initial speculation that the 17th century Spanish mission of San Carlos de Chacatos might have been located adjacent to the large cave at Waddell's Mill Pond. Franciscan missionaries established this church in 1674 at a Chacato

village somewhere west of the Chipola River. Archival research by Dale Cox (2024) suggested that it is located not far from Sylvania AME Cemetery.

The interior of Florida Panhandle and, more specifically, the central area of Washington County, shows limited occupation during the Mississippian period. East and west of the region, respectively, the Chattahoochee and the Choctawhatchee rivers, were more desirable for peoples of this period, in part because of their fertile farmlands, maize becoming an important cultigen.

Historic Period

Missionization

The Historic Period is defined by the arrival of Europeans in the Americas in the early 1500s. However, little presence was felt in the project area. During the mid-seventeenth century, however, Spanish authorities began to establish contact with aboriginal territories beyond Spanish-occupied *La Florida*, that is the Southeast United States. As a result, a number of these Native American groups first appear in the historical contexts of mission-period Spanish records. The Spanish priests attempted to establish missions among groups to the west of Tallahassee, such as the Chine, Chatot or Chacato, Sabacola, and Tawasa, though these peoples were primarily known from historic records (Milanich 1995; White 2024:141-143). The Chisca and Chacato resided in the region including what is today, Washington County. Archaeological research a few miles from the Sylvania AME Church on the Hard Labor Creek tract, points to the location of the Chicato Mission, San Carlos [Figure 11].

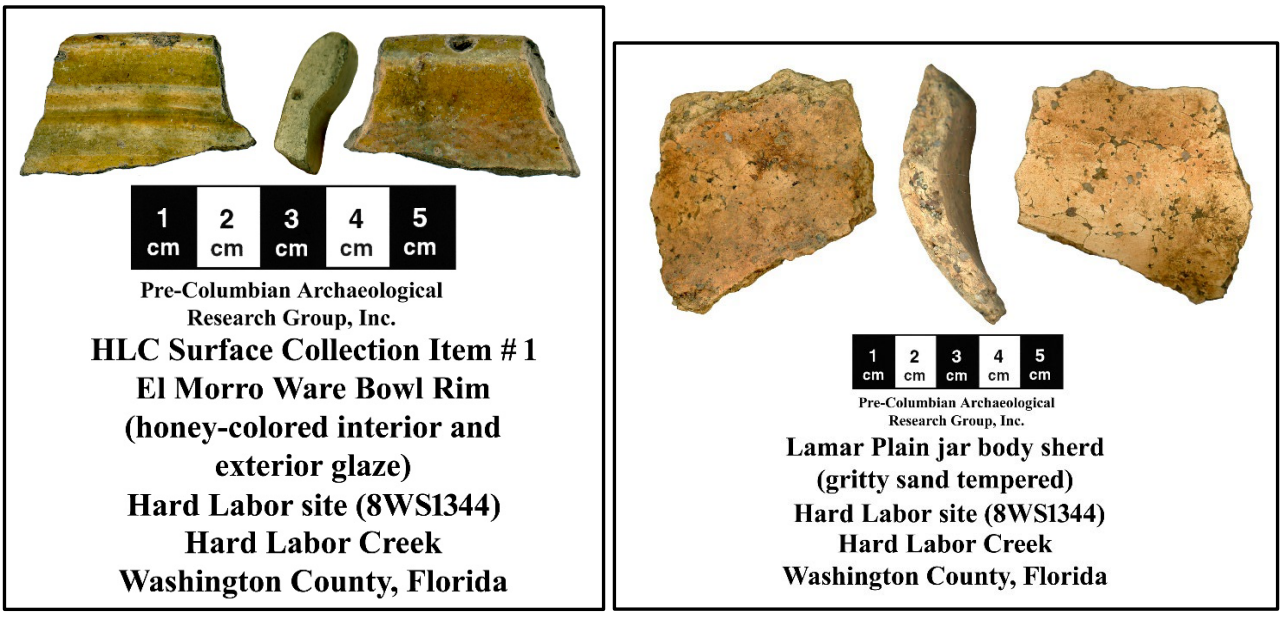

Figure 11. Examples of El Morro (left) and Lamar (right) pottery from the Hard Labor Creek Tract. These artifacts (and others) respectively represent early Spanish and indigenous presence indicative of the mission known as San Carlos.

By the beginning of the 1700s, many of these indigenous groups coalesced to become known as "Creeks." The term was shorthand for "Indians living on Ochese Creek" near Macon, Georga, but traders began applying it to every native resident of the Deep South. They numbered about 10,000 at the time (Saunt 2020). The Creeks in Northwest Florida later became known as the "Seminoles". Archaeologically, Seminole sites can be identified by the presence of a distinctive pottery with brushed exterior surfaces known as "Chattahoochee Brushed" (Bullen 1950).

The British Period

By 1704, the British had allied themselves with certain Creek groups to destroy all of the Spanish missions (Hann 1996). In 1763, they acquired Florda from Spain, controlling the region for 18 years. Although comparatively brief, the British colonial period brought important growth to Florida, mostly on the Gulf Coast. Garrisons were strengthened, population increased, and a lucrative trade was established with settlers and interior American Indian tribes. Primitive roads existed between the coastal forts and these villages, and, of course, the old "mission road" from St. Augustine still traversed northern Florida. Much of the area between the Choctawhatchee and the Apalachicola rivers, part of which was to eventually become Washington County, was controlled by the trading company Panton, Leslie, and Company, later to become John Forbes and Company (Coker and Parker 1996) [Figure 12].

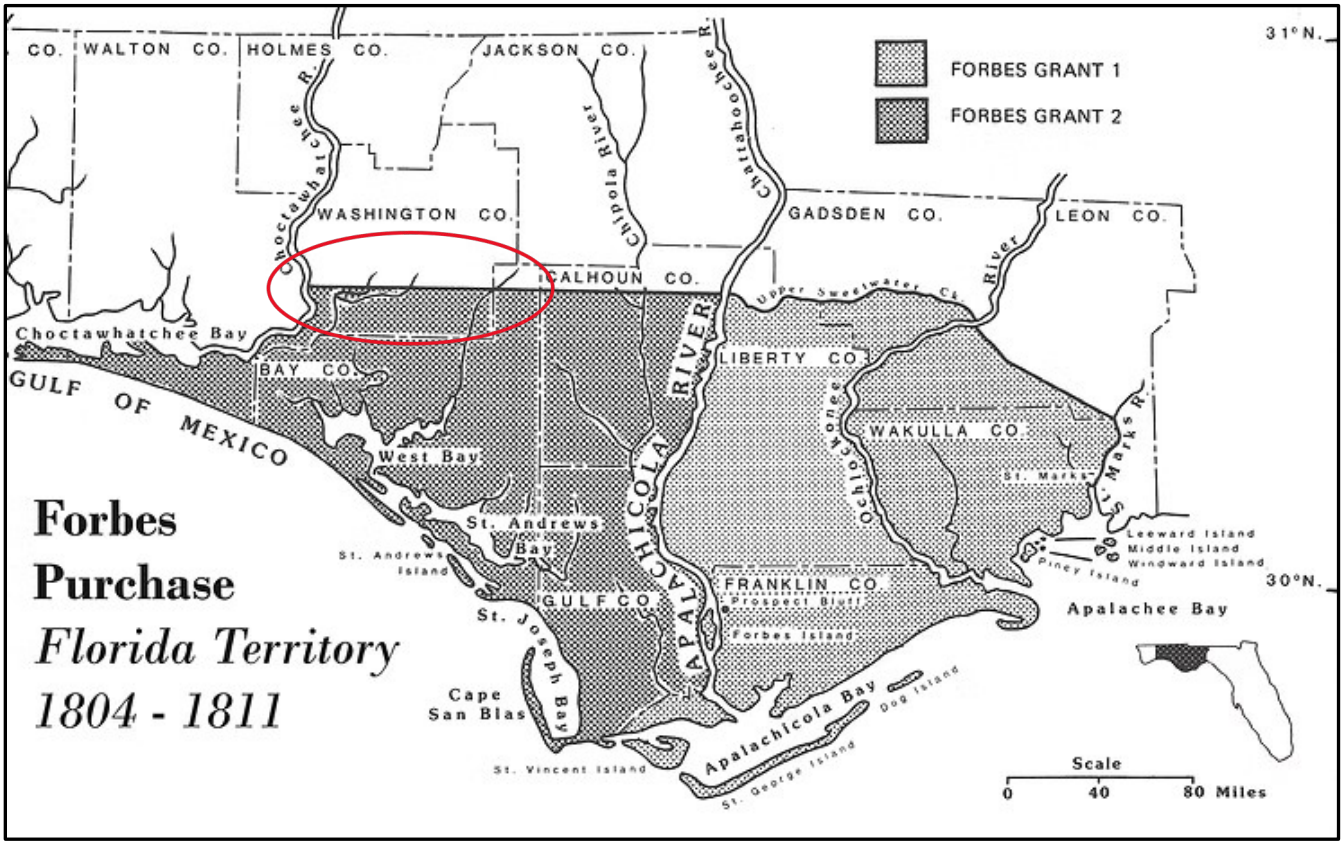

Figure 12. Map of Forbes land grants, which included the south portion of what is now Washington County, circled in red (after www.clanforbes.org/post/forbes-purchase-in-Florida).

Spanish Revival, British Return, and American Territoriality

Spain resumed brief control of Florida from 1781 to 1821. This created a population vacuum, with many British settlers departing to the West Indies. Minimal Spanish presence in the project region was countered by offers to Americans to homestead there. Settlement increased after the War of 1812 and America's purchase of the territory from Spain in 1821. While the British were stationed along the Apalachicola River during the war against the Americans, towards the west there was no real indication of activity, neither British military nor settler (Carswell 1974; Hoffman 2002). The fall out of the War led to American territoriality and the creation in 1825 of Washington County. It was nearly twice the size of the State of Delaware, stretching all the way to the Gulf of Mexico [Figure 13].

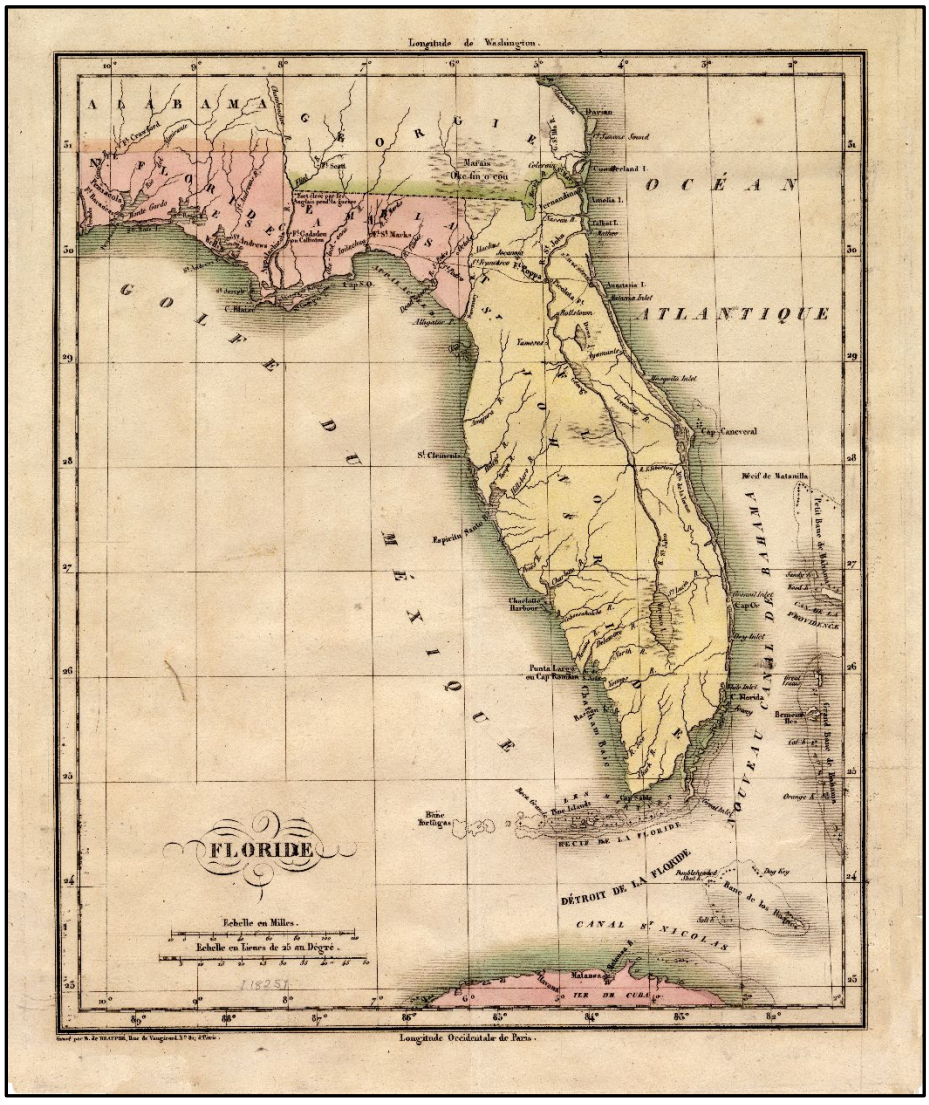

Figure 13. Map of Florida, 1825 (area in light red)
(Grave par B. Beaupre c. 1925,
State Library of Florida, Florida Map Collection, fme 0215).

The Civil War

During the Civil War (1861-1865) Florida sent around 15,000 troops to the Confederate Army, with the vast majority deployed elsewhere. The state's chief importance was as a source of cattle and other food supplies and salt for the Confederacy, and as an entry and exit location for blockade-runners who used its many bays and small inlets to evade the Union Navy. Towards the end, Union forces made it into Florida following Sherman's "March to the Sea". Following the battle of Marianna (in Jackson County), the Union army was left with a large number of injured troops, as well as wagon loads of confiscated supplies and hundreds of slaves freed slaves. Instead of moving south to St. Andrews Bay to cut off the Confederate salt works, the Union withdrew to Choctawhatchee Bay. Confederate contingents, mostly "reservists" were sent from Tallahassee and elsewhere to stop the federal troops. The two armies met up at Hard Labor Creek in what was to be called the Battle of Vernon. Most of the Confederates were captured or scattered by Union Army's General Asboth [Figure 14]. Historic records can only confirm one man was killed during the encounter. It is also unclear how large the two armies were at the point of this crossing, so the footprint of this event is difficult to measure (Cox 2011, Chapter 11).

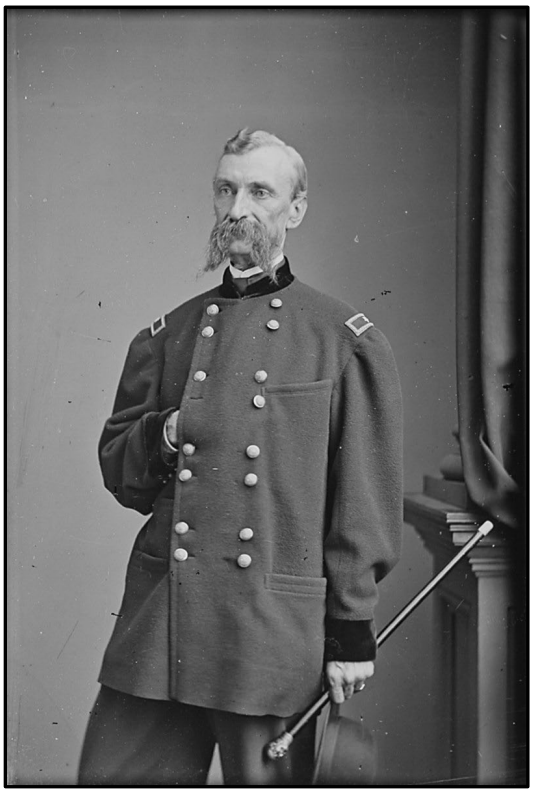

Figure 14. Photograph of Brigadier General Alexander Asboth of the Union Army who met Confederate local Home Guard company Second Lieutenant WB Jones at Hard Labor Creek crossing (by Mathew Benjamin Brady- US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA-526931).

Conditions for African Americans in Florida varied considerably during the war. The 1860 census recorded nearly 63,000 African Americans in the state. Of this figure, almost 62,000 were listed as enslaved, while less than 1,000 were free. Because of the restrictive laws of the time, even those few who were "free" had only very limited freedom (Paisley 1989, Chapter 15).

The conditions of slavery in Florida often differed by region. In the cotton belt plantations of central north Florida, many enslaved African Americans worked under a "gang system" in which large groups of agricultural workers labored from sunup to sundown. In east and west Florida, a "task system" was more common, which provided workers with a daily task quota and could allow some personal time after the tasks were completed. However, in some plantations both systems were used (Paisley 1989, Chapter 15).

In 1850, slaves of the five counties of the Red Hills- Jackson (adjacent to Washington to the west), Gadsden, Leon, Jefferson, and Madison, represented 60% of the entire population of the eastern panhandle region (Paisely 1989:170). The Red Hills was exceptional for growing cotton. In 1860 Leon County was the largest producer of cotton for the region, with seventy-nine farms, most of which were plantations, dependent on slave labor (Paisely 1981:1-18). A few plantations were found on the western edges, such as Jason Gregory's farm in Calhoun County, not far from Washington County [Figure 15].

Figure 15. Gregory House at Ocheesee Landing, Calhoun County, Florida, 1936. It was built and owned by planter Jason Gregory in 1849. Gregory's plantation prospered until the Civil War and the abolition of slavery. This photograph was taken prior to the house being relocated to Torreya State Park in 1935 (State Archives of Florida, PR10983).

As enslaved residents in the Confederate states, most African Americans were forced to support the Confederate war effort. Some went to war as servants to white southern officers. Others performed hard labor, such as building fortifications and roads. Although many enslaved people remained on plantations during the war, many others who had an opportunity fled to Union-held areas, such as Jacksonville and Fernandina in northeast Florida. More than a thousand Black men from Florida joined the Union army, serving in Black regiments [Figure 16].

Figure 16. African American Union soldiers in the battle of Olustee, Florida (Florida Memory N046635).

The Evolution of the African American Methodist Episcopalian Church in Florida

The AME Church is the oldest black Methodist denomination. Founded in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the decade following the American Revolution, it remained primarily a northern institution until the conclusion of the Civil War, when it sought to expand into the South (Rivers and Brown 2001).

The history of Florida's Black Methodists can be traced to the early 1800s. It began with religious officials from South Carolina serving as the circuit riders to East Florida in 1822. The success of the Fernandina church led the South Carolina Conference to increase the number of appointments to the Florida Territory at the next annual conference in 1823. In the succeeding years, lots of planters moved into Middle Florida, the Cotton Belt, bringing their slaves with them. Then, at the outset of the Civil War, many of the white males left to join the Confederate army. When Union soldiers began to occupy the area, most of the white population fled. This left these churches to become entirely Black (www.flumc.org. 2025).

The African Methodist *Episcopal* Church initiated its missionary in Florida in 1865. The movement reflects an emphasis on the respectful, independent spirituality of the African Americans suppressed by pre-abolition Methodism (Rivers and Brown 2001).

Post Civil War to Present Day

Emancipation brought significant changes in the plantation economy throughout the southern United States. In Florida, quail hunt lodges replaced cotton plantations for the growing leisure classes who began vacationing south in the winter. Many former slaves became tenant farmers by entering into "sharecropping" agreements with land and former slave owners. Sharecroppers rented the land they worked and owed a percentage of their yearly crops to the landlord, the system keeping most in debt. Sharecropping continued until the mid-20th century (Florida Memory 2025).

Western Florida gave way to significant development after 1883 when Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company completed 170- mile road from Pensacola to Chattahoochee, including Washington, Calhoun, and Jackson counties and portions of Holmes and Franklin counties. The sawmill and turpentine industry followed. Within a few years, the town of Chipley in Washington County, was considered “the largest inland naval stores shipping center in the world.” It was an early market and shipping point for lumber, crossties, barrel staves, shingles, pilings, utility poles, in addition to cotton, cattle and wool (Carswell 1974) [Figure 17].

Figure 17. Turpentine distillery and rosin yard: Chipley Florida, 1905 (Florida Memory PR04335).

Depletion of the area’s timber resources occurred in the late 1920s and extended through the 1930s, which had a major impact on the economy of the western panhandle and counties such as Washington

(Carswell 1974:261). Conservation efforts ensued. Today, there are two major conservation tracts in Washington County, the Choctawhatchee River Management Area and the Econfina Creek Management Area under the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NWWMD), where wildlife and water resources are protected. The County embraces these public lands and features them as part of its thriving tourism, much of which is focused on historic sites, including the Old Spanish Trail (Washington County Tourism Development Council 2024) [Figure 18].

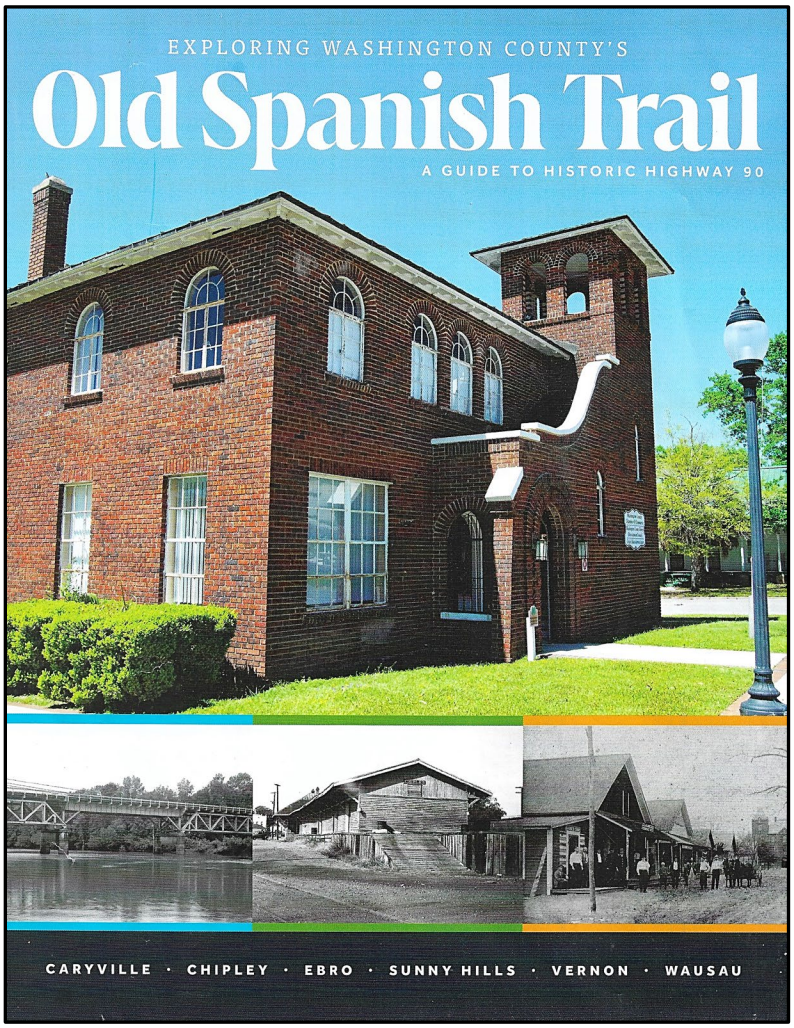

Figure 18. Washington County Guide to Historic Highway 90, the Old Spanish Trail.

Previous Research

Since 1976, approximately 26 archaeological surveys have been conducted in Washington County, within the Vernon USGS quadrangle. A few major projects cleared corridors of highways and pipelines, transversing multiple counties, while others were small addressing upgrades to Highway 7, storm water ponds, and cell towers. None have affected the area around Sylvania AME Cemetery.

The Florida Master Site File indicates that there are 16 archaeological sites located within a radius of approximately 6 miles of the project area. These are small sites, mostly surface scatter of lithic and pottery sherds. They represent culturally unidentified sites and/or historic homesteads. This small number is the result of few investigations in the general area of the Sylvania AME Church. To the south and east are geographic zones respectively riverine and cavernous, associated with early prehistoric and historic occupations. The Ecofina Creek survey (Mikell and Shoemake 2006) to the south, Holmes Creek surveys to the northeast (Mikell and Shoemaker 2011), the latter two Water Management District properties, and Marianna caverns investigations to the northeast, respectively wetter and cavernous environments, have indicated habitations from early prehistory forward. However, the Washington County interior despite limited surveys has shown minimal human occupation. Transient prehistoric and historical activity can still be discerned.

Research Design and Methodology

PCARG began the survey work by performing an initial walkover of the cemetery to help determine a survey strategy for both the physical and geophysical portions of the mapping work.

Staff met with church members to determine if there were living descendants who could provide information about the cemetery, particularly about individual burials that are no longer identifiable due to their age and property changes that have resulted from storms and human activity. Unfortunately, no known members in the area existed.

The physical survey of existing marked graves began with a review of the website FindAGrave.com, which indicated that 288 marked burials had been recorded for the cemetery. Since this website generates data from multiple sources, we counted the headstones to confirm this number. Next, we conducted the inventory for marked burials using a suite of ArcGIS software including Field Maps and ArcGIS, which permitted photographing headstones, recording inscriptions, and GPS mapping of locations for each memorial.

A Geographic information system was created for Sylvania Cemetery using the ArcGIS suite of software. Using ArcGIS Field Map applications, we collected survey grade location data for each marked grave. In field maps we created a form to add photographs of the grave site and recorded all the legible text on the memorials and headstones. This was performed using a Juniper Geode GNS3m GNSS survey grade positioning system feeding location data to a Juniper MESA 3 data collection tablet running ARCGIS Field Maps software. Photographs of the grave sites were taken with the Juniper tablets 16 mega pixel camera within the Field Maps application ensuring their full integration into the map [Figure 18]. The last step records any legible text on memorials and or headstones and incorporates them in the GIS (see Appendix I for resulting inventory).

Figure 19. PCARG staff employing the Juniper MESA 3 and Geode GIS system in the field.

Bigman Geophysical, a remote sensing survey company that specializes in archaeological sites and cemeteries, employed Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to determine the presence of unmarked and unknown graves in the cemetery and periphery while also recording known burials that could be safely and effectively included (see Appendix II for GPR report).

Results and Recommendations

The objective of this project was to record all known and unknow burials with the Sylvania AME Cemetery. Combining two methodologies, ArcGIS Field Map and GPR, PCARG succeeded in nearly doubling the number of graves previously documented. A total of 481 additional unmarked burials were added to the inventory of 305, bringing the complete count to 786.

Moreover, the work generated an aerial plan of the cemetery showing all burial locations and a GIS inventory database of marked burials that includes each interment's spatial location, a photograph of its marker, identifier and memorial text (see Appendices I and II).

In addition to these data, the GPR survey shows that the south and southeast areas of the cemetery contain burials laid out in a less than regular, linear pattern as is the rest of the cemetery. Additionally, it indicated that some of these graves were smaller than average adult burials and represented possible children and/or urn interments placed in vaults or enclosures. Finally, it is believed that more burials may lie beyond the tree line of the cemetery.

Consequently, staff recommend the following for the maintenance and knowledge of Sylvania AME Cemetery:

1. An effort be made to physically mark the locations of newly discovered unmarked graves. Should a storm event impact the cemetery, a small ferrous metal marker would provide secondary locational data.
2. Conduct archival research to see if the irregular burials were associated with a separate group or period than the rest of the cemetery. For example, they may be pre-church, Native American or early settler burials.
3. Conduct archival research to find out more about the known individuals in the cemetery and the role they played in the area's history.
4. As an active cemetery, those involved in future interments should refer to the inventory and database to avoid any unmarked interments.

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APPENDIX I

Sylvania AME Cemetery Inventory

https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/141bcf1aa364418f988b6e6f507535d2

APPENDIX II

BIGMAN GEOPHYSICAL

GPR Investigation at Sylvania Cemetery

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Bigman Geophysical, LLC was contacted to conduct a ground-penetrating radar investigation targeting unmarked graves on a Florida property identified as Sylvania Cemetery. The area of investigation was an open area with many marked graves present and an unknown number of unmarked graves that could impact future cemetery use. There was a stated concern about the possibility of unknown Native American graves that could be present on site. A full-coverage GPR survey was designed to detect and map as many probable grave features as possible (Figure 1). Probable grave features in this context are anomalous signal responses in GPR data that bear characteristics indicating possible unmarked graves. These characteristics include depth, size, shape, amplitude, positional logic (such as rows of features), and subtle changes to context that result from soil changes or variations in moisture below ground surface.

Figure 1: The area of investigation (AOI) shown in yellow on a satellite background.

METHODS

GPR sends electromagnetic pulses to a transmitting antenna at the ground surface, producing a radio wave that travels through the subsurface (Koppenjan 2009). Wave speed depends on the ability of a given medium to transfer energy (Annan 2009, Conyers 2004). When an approaching wave encounters a discontinuity in the physical properties of the soil and the wave's speed changes, some of the energy of the wave front is reflected toward the ground surface (Annan 2009). The two-way travel time (usually recorded in nanoseconds) and the amplitude of the reflection are recorded at the surface by a receiver antenna. Each traverse with the GPR provides a two-dimensional profile of the subsurface. When traverses are collected adjacent to each other, then data can be resampled to create pseudo-3D visuals called time-slices (Conyers 2004).

GPR is a popular and often successful technique for mapping cemeteries and locating unmarked burials. Numerous cemetery case studies document the success of the technique in historic contexts (Bevan 1991; Bigman 2014; Conyers 2006; Davenport 2001; Dionne et al. 2010; Fiedler et al. 2009; Gleason et al. 2011; Honerkamp and Crook 2012; Hunter 2012; Jones 2008; Shaaban et al. 2009; Sjostrom et al. 2009; Tarver and Bigman 2013). Several researchers developed accurate expectations of various burial anomalies by dragging antennas over wood caskets, metal caskets, and grave shafts (Conyers 2006; Fiedler et al. 2009; Sutton and Conyers 2013). While wooden caskets, metal caskets, and stone box graves create a clear high-amplitude reflective signature; burial pits, grave shafts, or deteriorated wooden caskets are more difficult to detect. Grave shafts or burial pits can produce lower amplitude reflections at the ground surface since the top of the grave shaft is less compact than the surrounding, undisturbed ground surface (Bigman 2014). However, under conditions where the ground surface has been systematically unconsolidated, such as through plowing, it is difficult to identify graves in this manner.

DATA COLLECTION

The system used for modeling the subsurface was an IDS Geosystems Stream DP (Figure 2 and 3). That system was chosen due to the advantage of Equalized Scramble Technology (EST) which allows higher-frequency signal to penetrate deeper below ground surface for improved imaging, and for its onboard bevy of 30 pairs of antennas, which accomplish scanning with only four inches of separation between individual profiles. The resulting density of data collection is heavy on CPU operations but produces very high-resolution top-down imagery, wherein buried objects tend to resemble their real-world shape, which helps tremendously in the interpretation of features, especially when tree roots and other subsurface objects are near or intermingled with unmarked graves.

Figure 2: The Stream DP on site with road cones present for data collection purposes. GPR scanning is only possible in places where equipment can physically fit, so many holes exist within the radar survey where obstructions such as trees, headstones, and buildings prevented coverage by pedestrian equipment.

Figure 3: A base/rover pair of Emlid R2+ GNSS systems. A similar set was used on site to produce RTK level accuracy for positioning of data. Nearly the entire survey was conducted in RTK fix, which is generally around two or three inch accuracy for a system moving at pedestrian speeds.

DATA PROCESSING

Geolitix software was used to process and interpret GPR data. The vertical profiles (radargrams) were corrected for time-zero to remove information collected between the antenna array and the ground surface. Data were then gained manually, and an energy decay curve was applied to highlight responses from late arrivals, which typically have weaker energy signatures due to signal attenuation. A bandpass filter was applied to cut off both high and low-frequency noise and interference. A background removal was also applied with an appropriate window to remove banding but avoid filtering out planar signatures of interest. Data migration using signal velocity estimated with the hyperbola fitting method was applied to reduce hyperbolic signatures so that the resulting responses would better approximate the sizes and shapes of their sources. A Hilbert transform was then applied to convert polarity data into absolute magnitude and generate signal envelopes for smoother imagery when creating time slices. An example of the GPR data being processed as a 3D volume is shown below in Figure 4.

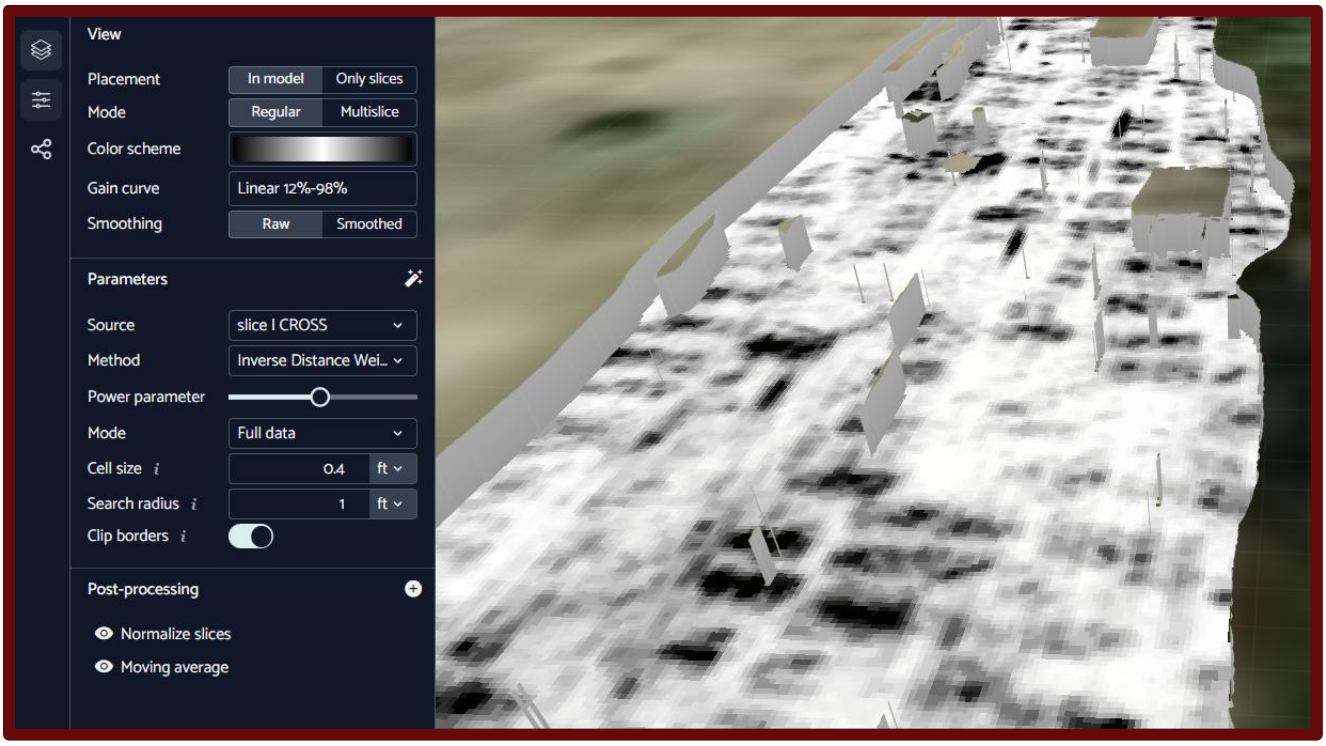

Figure 4: A screenshot of the GPR Data being modeled in a 3D environment. Black rectangular shapes in this image are unmarked graves.

RESULTS

The investigation mapped numerous responses at depths and sizes consistent with human burials. In some places, tree roots were extremely dense, and interpretation was made very difficult, as the physical shape and form of a burial can be distorted and essentially destroyed if a sufficiently large root ball scatters material. It is not likely that GPR could record 100% of graves in a place where dozens of trees have grown to maturity throughout the area. Regardless, hundreds of burial features were detectable, and the nature of the cemetery layout is such that it is possible to reasonably infer areas where unmarked graves are more likely to occur based on the clustering of unmarked graves that were detected. Figures 5 and 6 show summary images.

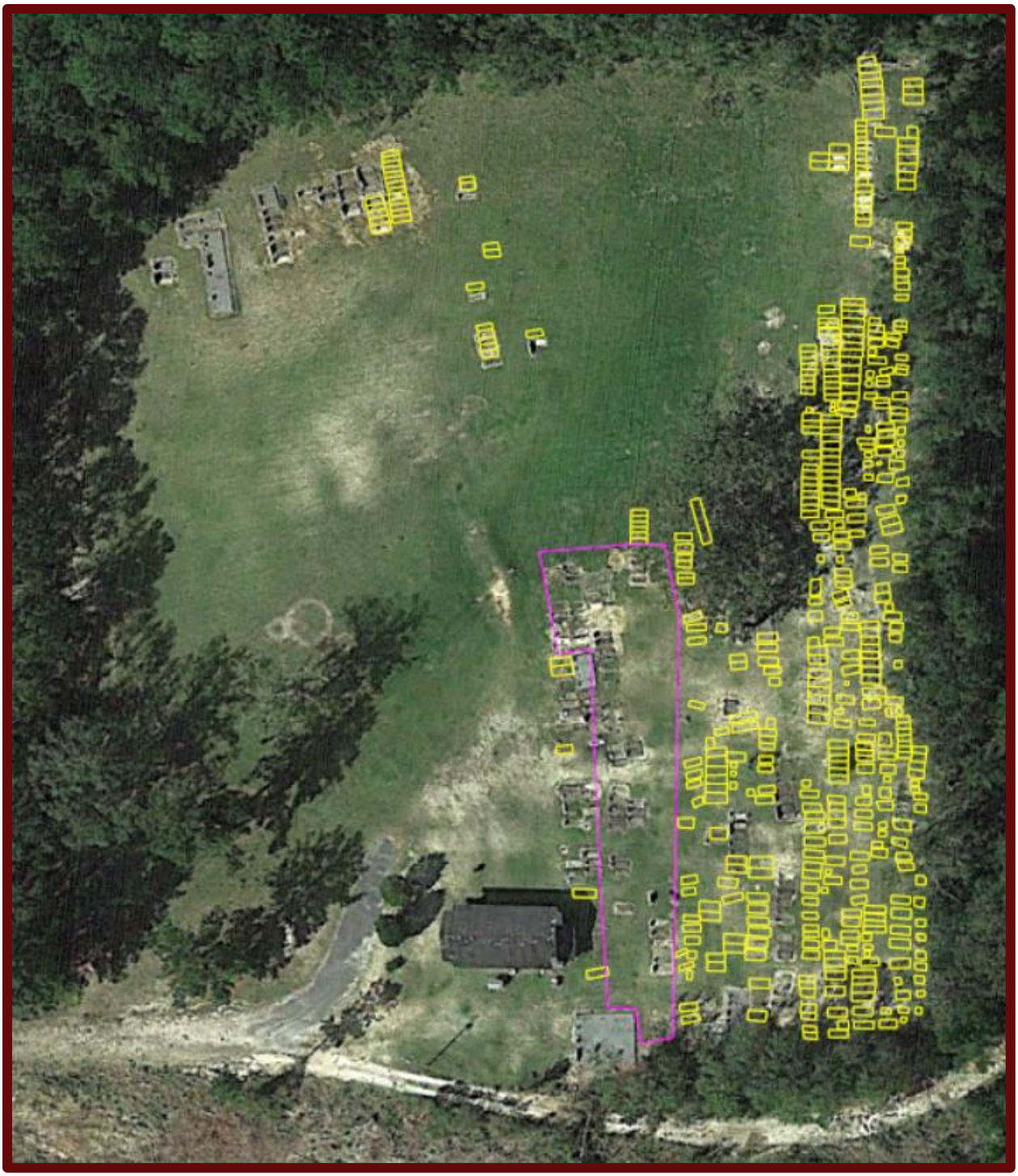

Figure 5: A top-down map showing radar results projected over a satellite map in yellow. An area that was not scanned is drawn pink; data collection in this area was impacted by frequent surface features, many of which may not be present in the satellite image from 2018. Data collected within that polygon was omitted as a result. Marked graves that were too physically large to push equipment over were not surveyed and are thus not drawn in the radar data. These features are already marked and do not need to be mapped with radar equipment.

Figure 6: A close-up image of some of the radar data on the southeastern corner of the cemetery. It is clear that the southeastern corner of the cemetery was heavily populated, and the orientation of rows of graves was surprisingly non-uniform for a relatively flat location. Some of the burial signatures are shorter than others, indicating either child-sized caskets, urn burials, or non-European burial traditions. **Note: not all of radar data could be projected at once, due to the immense 70 gigabyte dataset overwhelming processing computers.**

CONCLUSION

The ground-penetrating radar system recorded 481 features with signal characteristics indicating probable graves. These features are often projected clearly as black rectangular features in the top-down imagery. In other examples, however, features were recorded much shorter than typical caskets. In some cases, these responses are strong and rectangular, indicating either child-sized caskets or urns buried in vaults or enclosures. In some cases, particularly along the southeastern and eastern edges of the cemetery, burial features were much less uniform than typical inhumations (Figures 7-9). In those locations, probable grave signatures were often oriented significantly out of east, despite the essentially flat surface of the cemetery, and the linear patterning familiar to European burial traditions was much less clear or even not present. It is possible that the graves along the forest edge were less expensive plots that present a lower degree of professionalism in their creation, or that section of the cemetery might be significantly older. If Native American burials are present among the identified features, they would most likely be among the non-uniform burials along the forest edge. **Additional graves are likely to exist beyond the tree line;** the GPR survey was limited to places where the equipment could physically scan, but observation in the field noted surface indications of graves past the surveyed area.

All recorded features were drawn on a georeferenced satellite background so that future operations within the cemetery would greatly enhance the sense of where human remains are located throughout the property. This map is available digitally in various GIS and CAD outputs, and will be delivered with this report in Google Earth (KML) compatible format. A final map image of the results is shown in Figure 10.

No geophysical investigation should be treated as 100% certain in any situation due to the limitations of technology and the nature of the scientific process. The results of this investigation mark many locations where radar recorded possible unmarked graves, but in burial detection investigations, there is always a risk that some human burials are undetectable to GPR as a result of physical disturbance or homogenized physical properties preventing radar signal from recording a clear response. The findings here were generated using good practices, well-maintained equipment, and highly trained technicians. Expert analysts reviewed the resulting data to present a high-quality and meaningful, if necessarily imperfect, non-destructive investigation of the subsurface environment.

Figure 7: An image highlighting a number of probable grave signatures that appear out of uniformity with others around them. These characteristics could indicate older or potentially Native American burials.

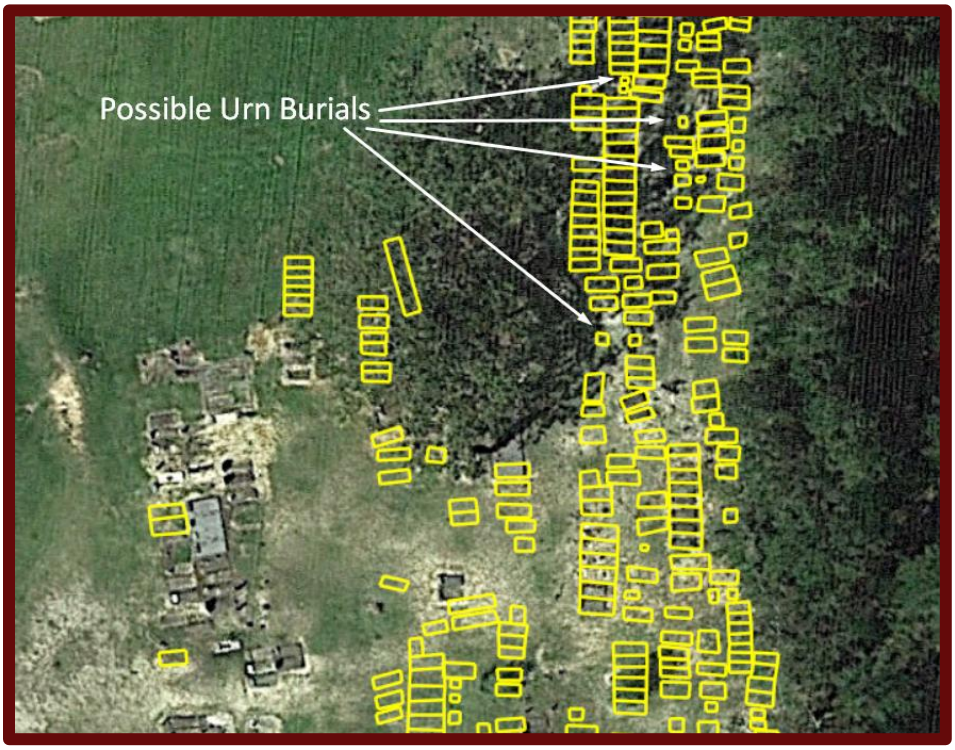

Figure 8: Many smaller buried objects were flagged; these often occurred at burial depths and in locations following cemetery spacing. There is a strong likelihood that these features are smaller burials such as urns or infant burials.

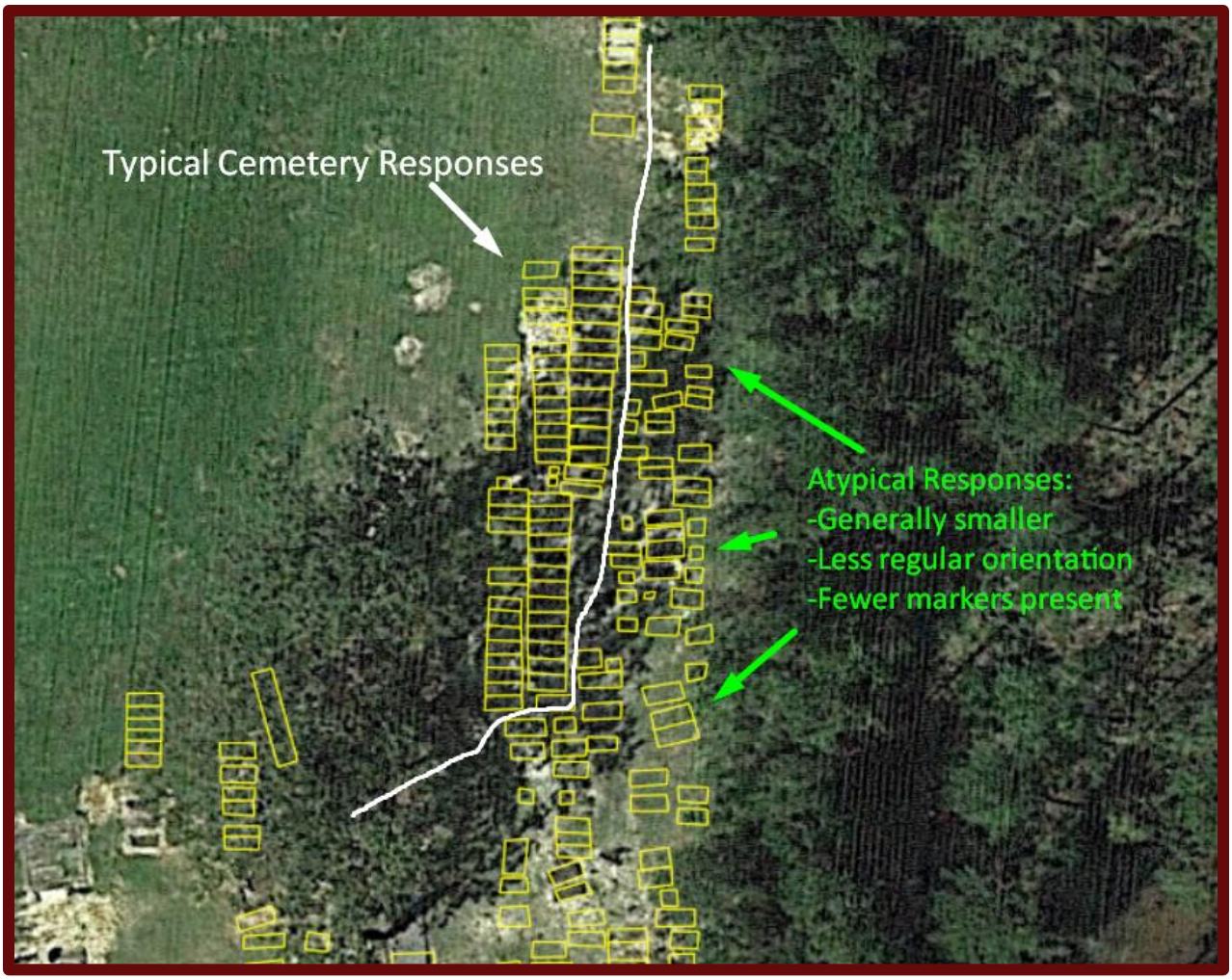

Figure 9: An image showing how grave positioning and uniformity change suddenly on the eastern edge of the cemetery. It is likely that the graves on the east side are older and may even include Native American burials. It must be noted that some of the flagged features could be partial, as scanning could not be conducted past the edge of the mowed area. Operators on site observed that there were surface indications of graves further into the tree line.

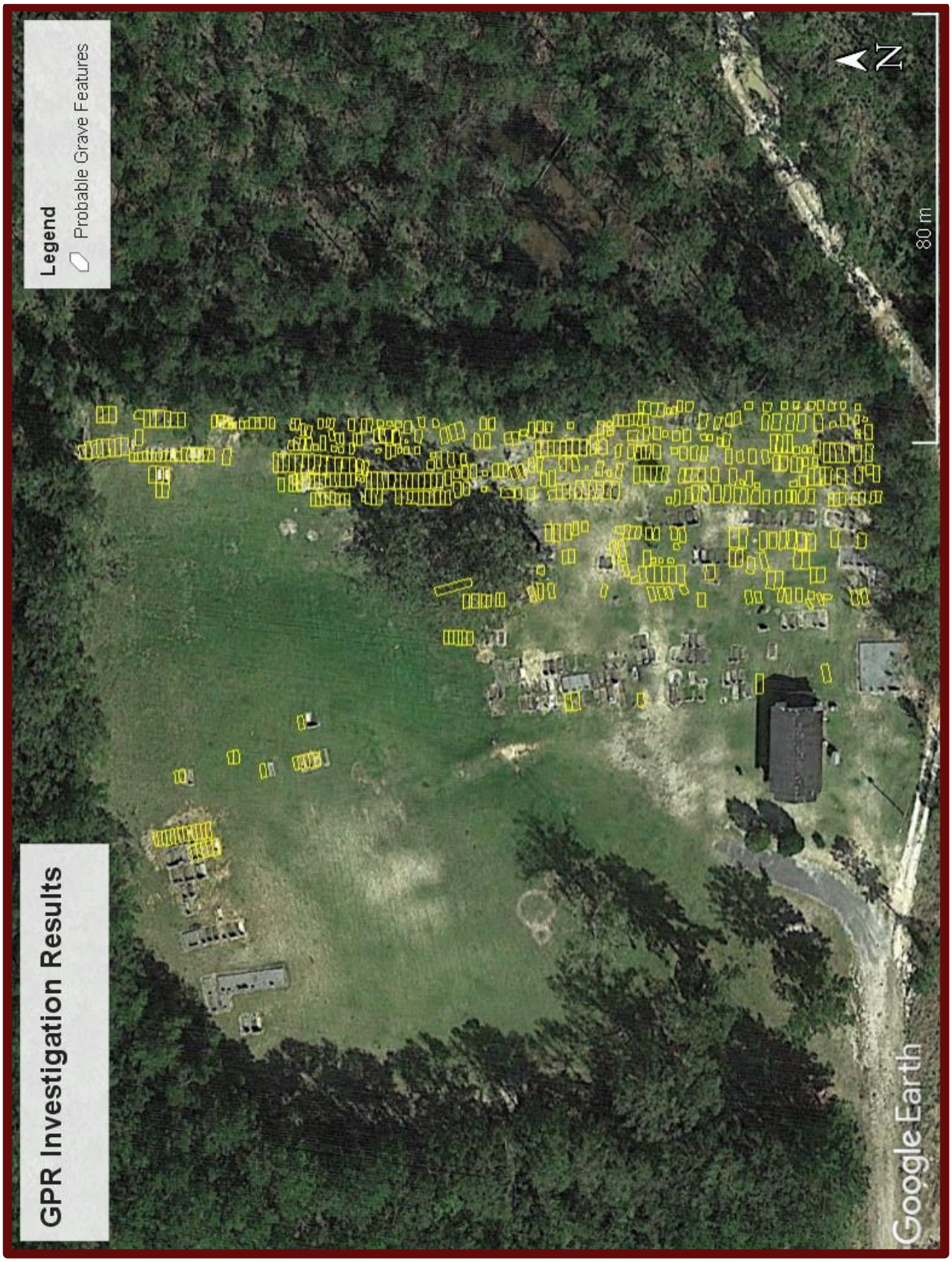

Figure 10: The final results of the GPR investigation. Detected features are drawn in yellow, these are often projected next to visible features, which were not covered by radar equipment.

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