

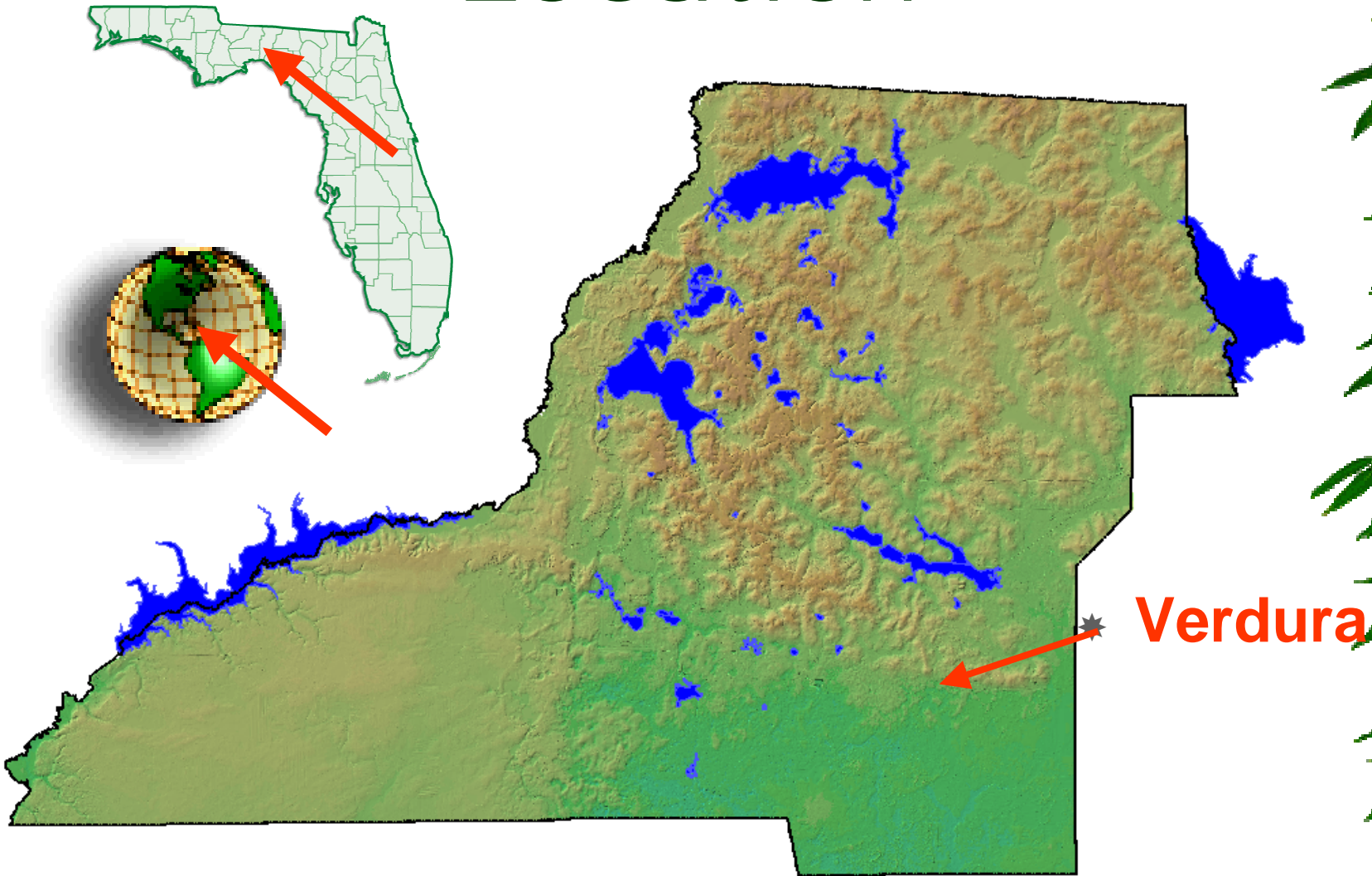
Verdura Plantation

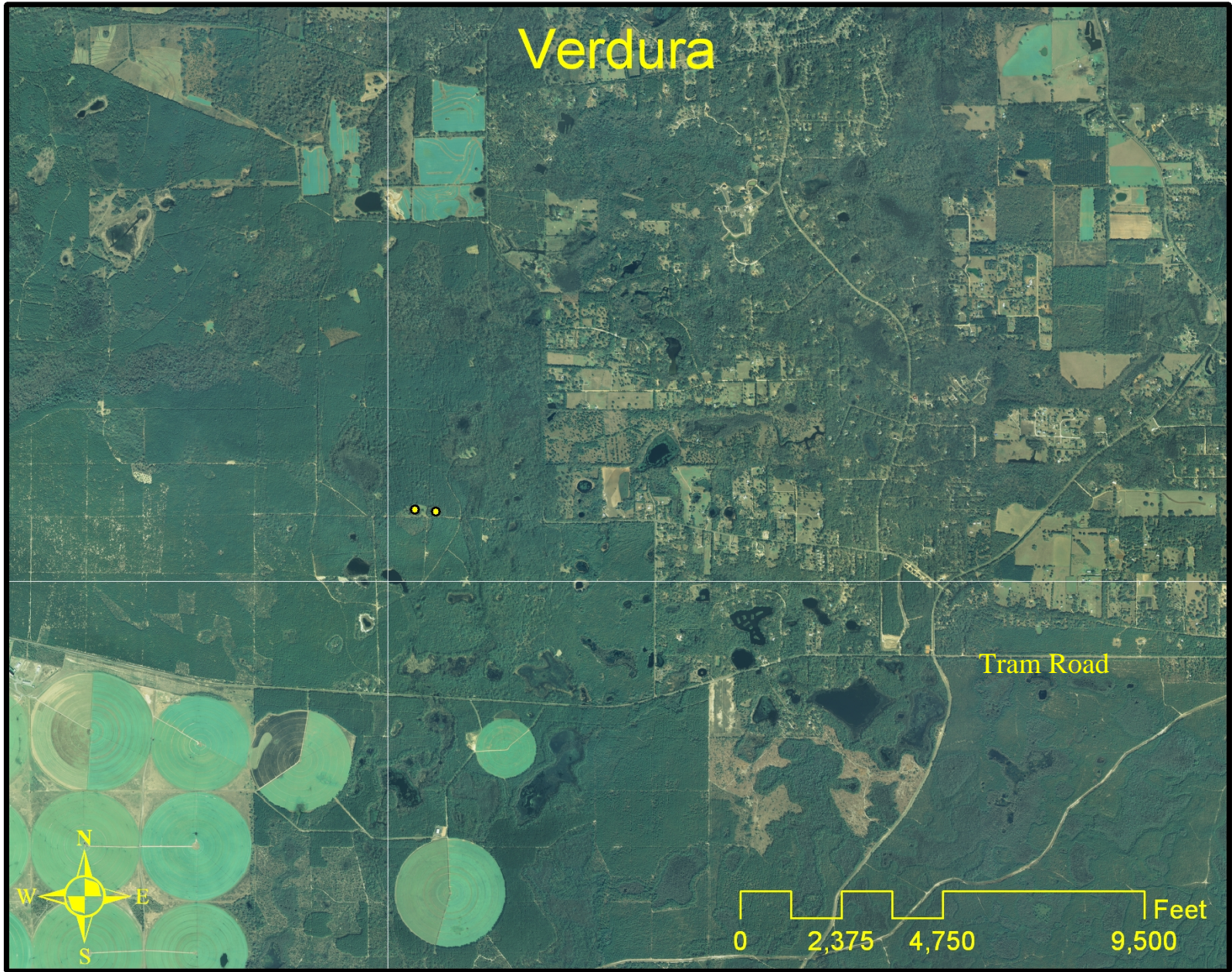
A Lost Tallahassee Landmark

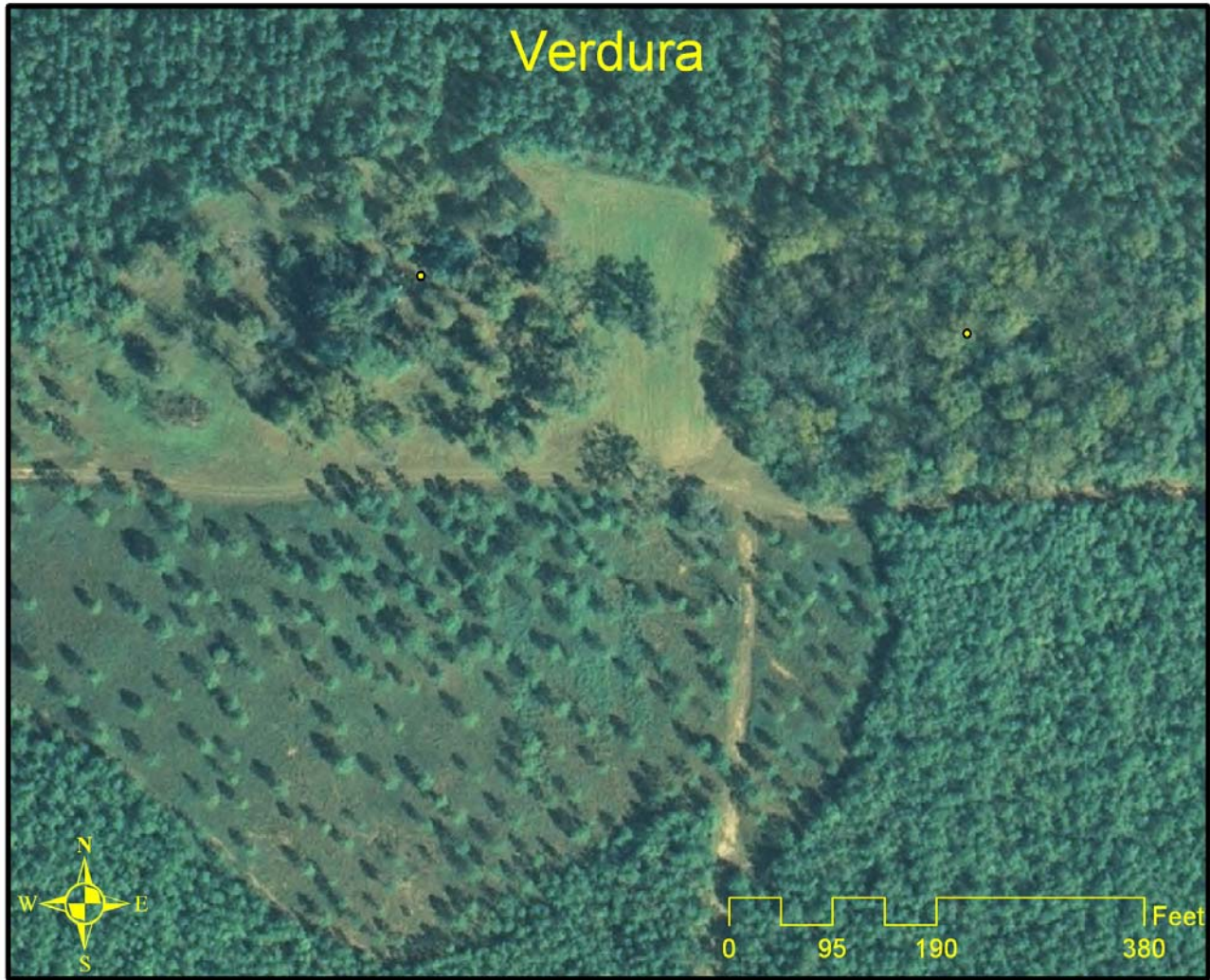
a little-known historic site of the
grandest scale



Location



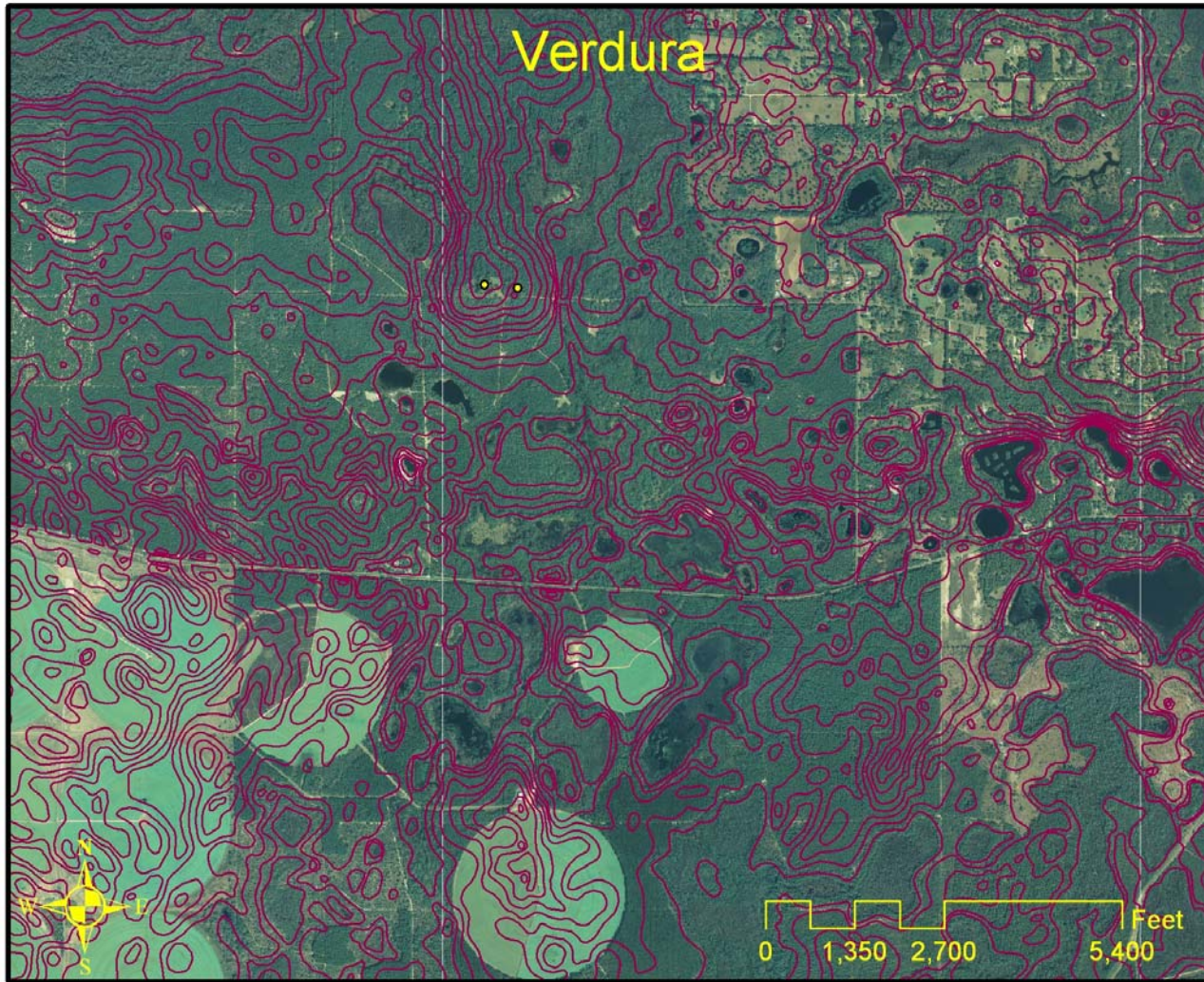




Aerial Photo Source: Florida DOT Resolution: 1 Ft. Flown: 03-06

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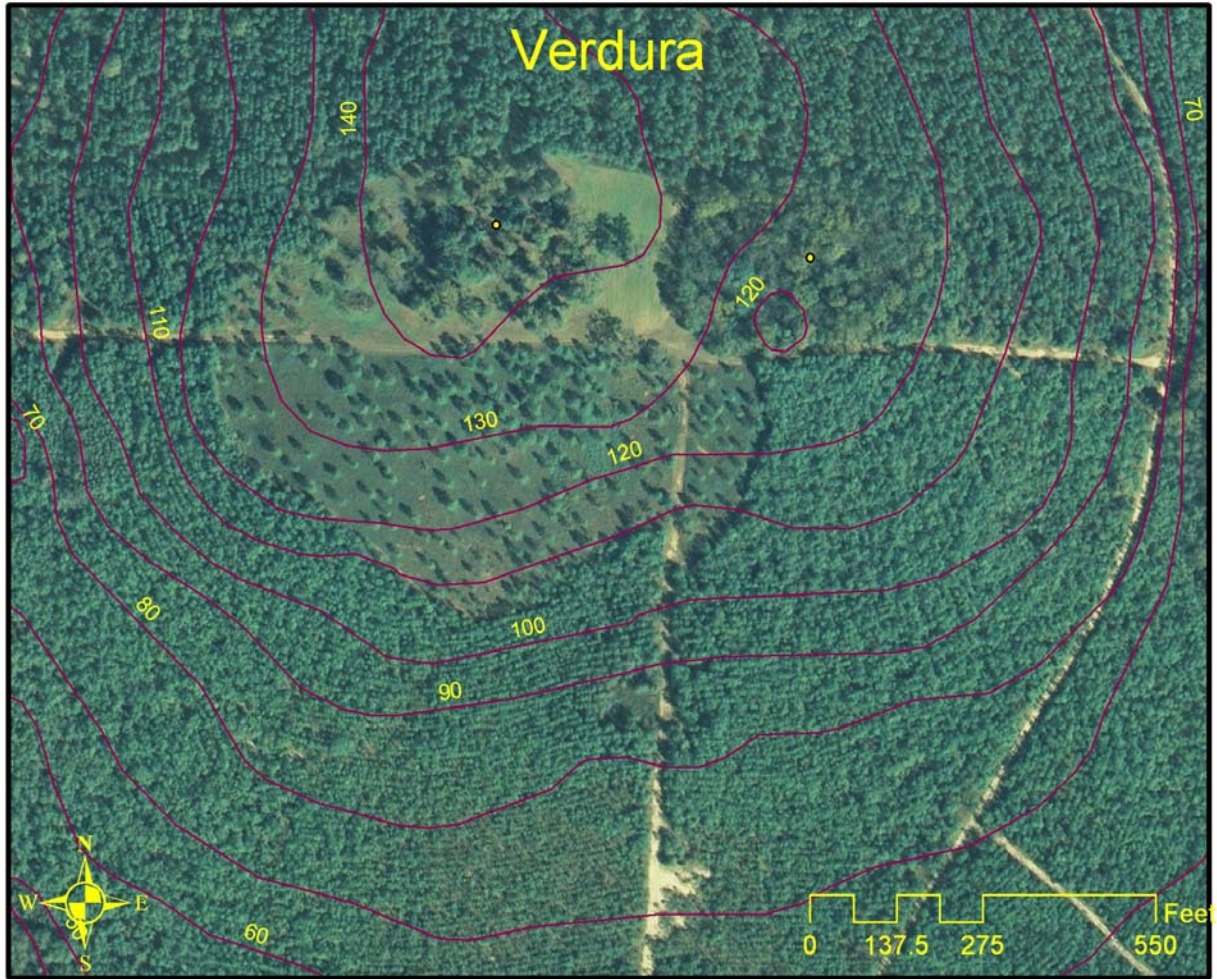




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McGlynn Laboratories, Inc.





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Verdura

- ★ The road to Verdura
- ★ The end of the Cody Scarp
- ★ An island on the paleo sea shore
- ★ One of the last red hills of Tallahassee



Verdura

- ★ The exact site of a Seminole Indian encampment, known to have existed on the property during the Second Seminole War, has not been found.



Verdura

- ★ Cross the bridge
- ★ Just kidding



Verdura

- ★ Resting place of the family of pre-statehood businessman, banker and planter Benjamin Chaires





1/8/2007

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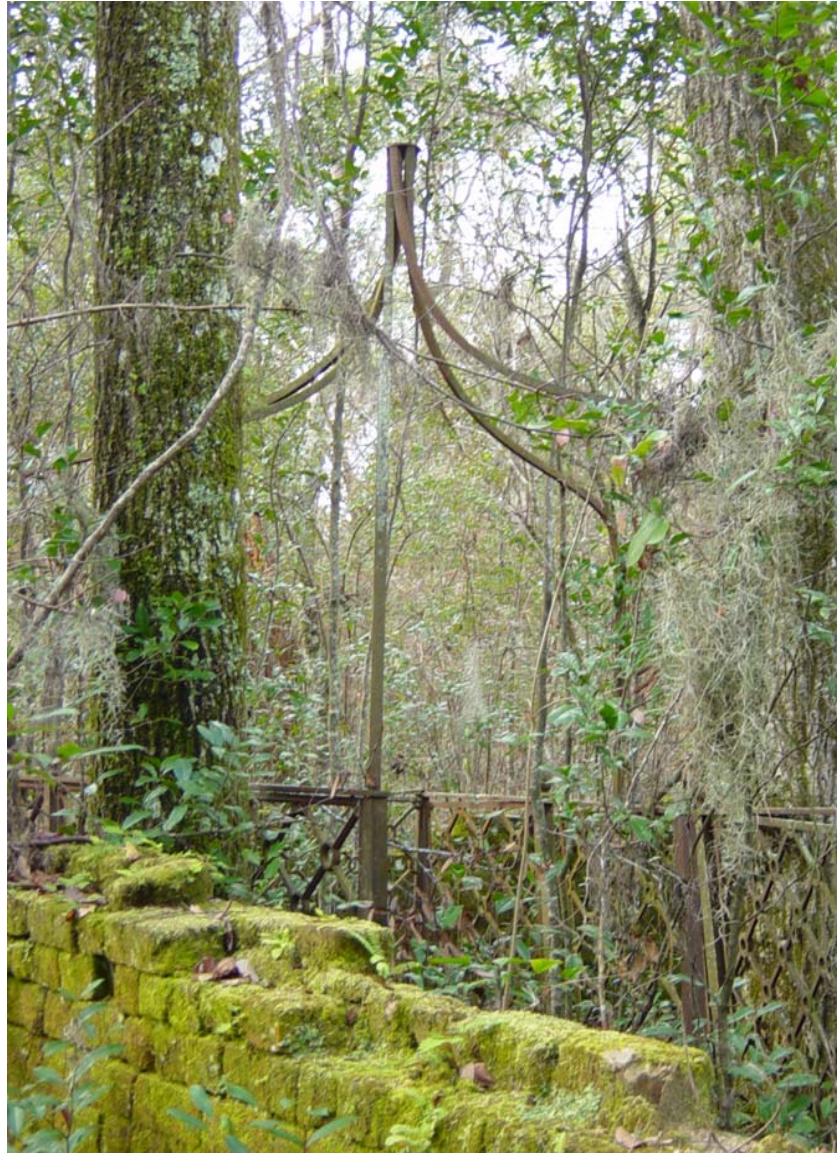
Verdura

- ★ The remains of a Spanish colonial-era mission have been identified, but little studied.



Verdura

- ★ Evidence of occupation by Apalachee Indians and earlier aboriginal peoples have not been studied or properly documented.





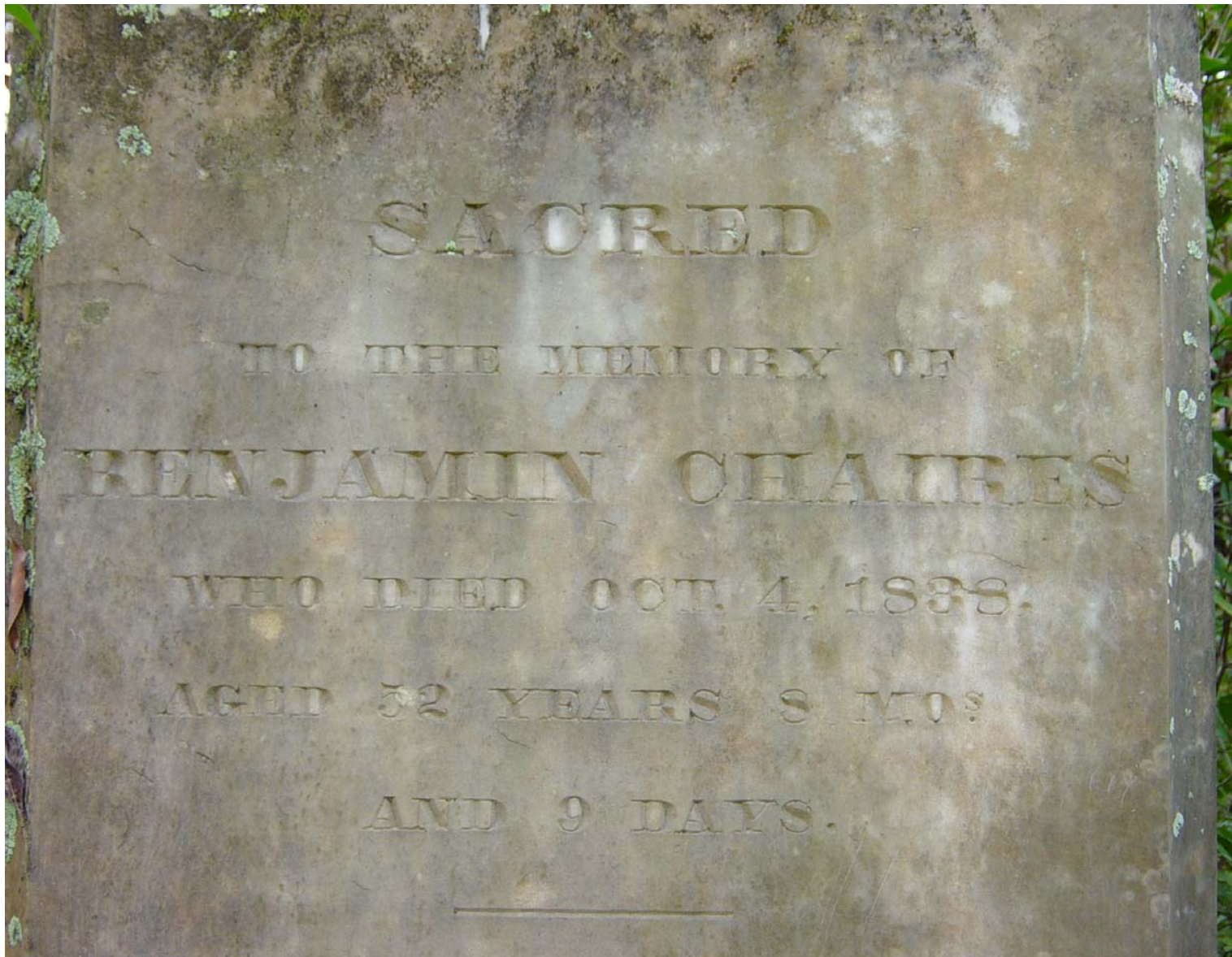
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Verdura

- ★ He came to Tallahassee after pioneering the laying out of Jacksonville.





SACRED

TO THE MEMORY OF

BENJAMIN CHAIRES

WHO DIED OCT. 4, 1888.

AGED 52 YEARS 8 MOS

AND 9 DAYS.

Verdura

- ★ He established the first bank and brought the railroad to Tallahassee, but he was primarily a planter.



Verdura

- ★ He was the first millionaire ever to reside in the state of Florida.





1/8/2007

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Verdura

- * The burial vault of Sarah Chaires
- * Wife of Benjamin,
- * Thoroughly desecrated
- * Her remains are completely removed
- * She had 10 children with Benjamin.



Verdura

- ★ The location of the slave cemetery have not been identified



Verdura

- ★ Verdura is on a high promontory, commanding a panoramic view of the entire region
- ★ On a clear day you can see the St. Marks Lighthouse



Verdura

- ★ Remains of an out-building, the kitchen



Verdura

- ★ Remains of Dutch Oven



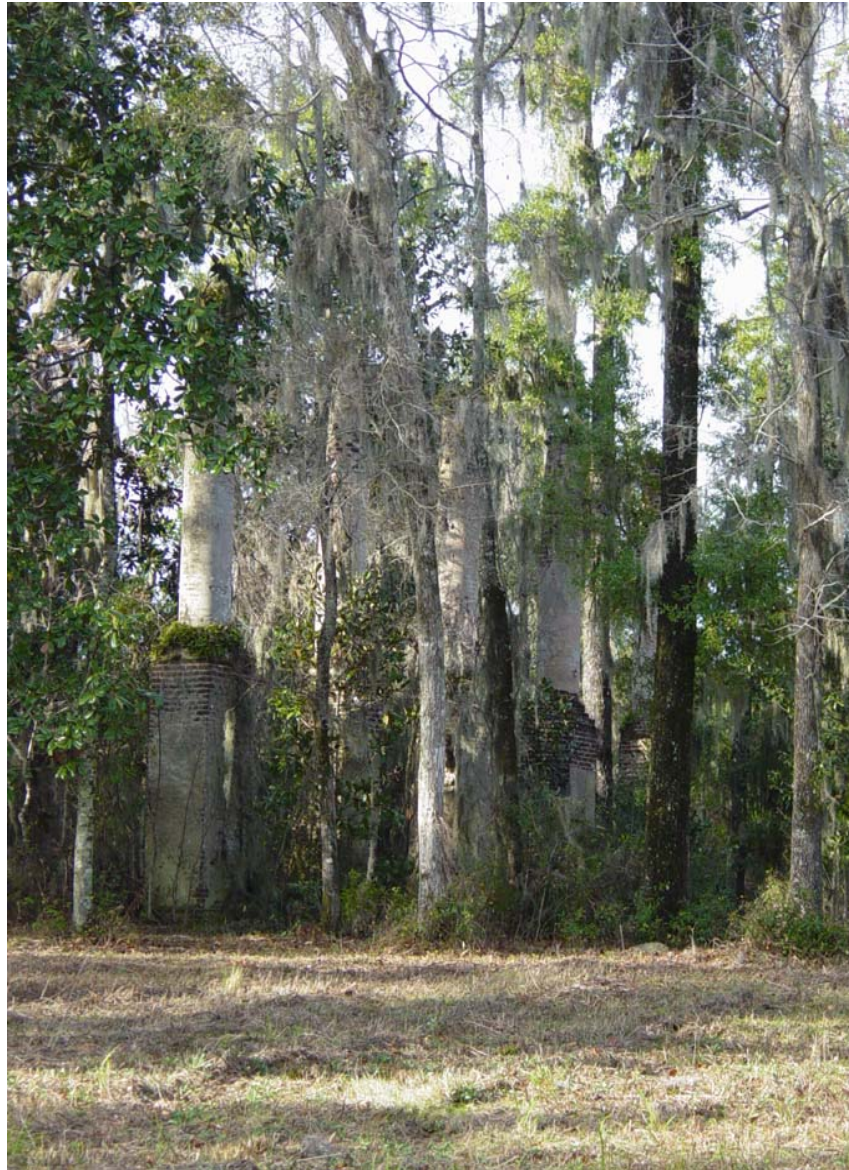
Verdura

- ★ One of the largest examples of the early antebellum plantation style



Verdura

- ★ Verdura was the largest and most elegant plantation in the area, 13 rooms, and three story brick on 9000 acres 7 miles south on Tallahassee.



Verdura

- ★ Built in the 1830s
- ★ Destroyed by fire in approximately 1890.



Verdura

- ★ Benjamin's son Charles married Martha Mash.



Verdura

- ★ In 1880 Charles asked for a divorce, but Martha was pregnant and it was not his child.



Verdura

- ★ Her lover was his 31 year old nephew, Benjamin Cadwallader Chaires Jr.



Verdura

- ★ November 17, 1879 Charles and Benjamin duel in downtown Tallahassee, shots were fired, Benjamin was wounded, both were arrested



Verdura

- ★ Charles died mysteriously at the St. Marks Lighthouse, and the lighthouse keeper received funds from the estate



Verdura

- ★ Court costs associated with Martha's dower petitions caused the estate to be sold to creditors and pass from the Chaires family...



Verdura

- ★ The Ruins of Verdura truly are Florida's Parthenon, and remain the region's most spectacular hidden historical wonder.



Verdura

- ★ Like the ruins of an ancient Greek temple, these forgotten giants stand silent sentinel over Florida's Big Bend region; unseen, uninterrupted and unprotected.



Verdura

- * The Columns of Verdura dwarf the well-known columns currently located at the Chamber of Commerce building in Tallahassee, also designed and constructed by Benjamin Chaires.



Verdura

- ★ The most prominent features are deteriorating due to vandalism, looting, and the elements



Verdura

- ★ This site, unique in Florida due to its diverse historical influences, is a geographic intersection point of Leon County's richly textured history.





Special thanks to

Sharyn Heiland

for the exemplary work on her
master's thesis on Verdura

Plantation in historic
archaeology.