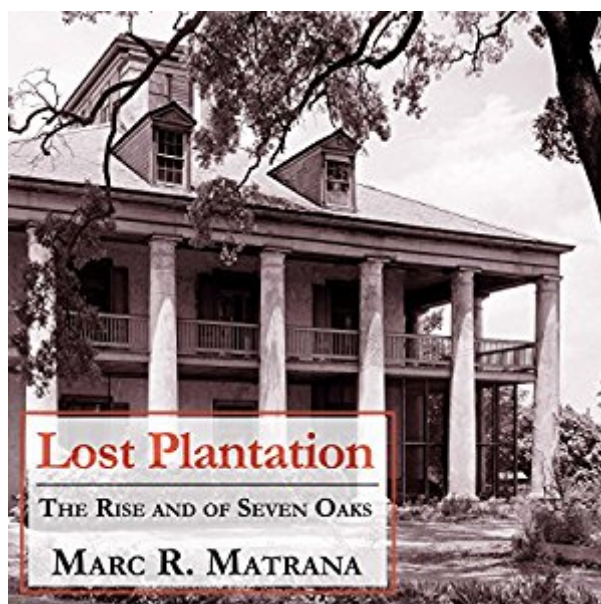


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# Lost Plantation: The Rise And Fall Of Seven Oaks



## Synopsis

Along the fertile banks of the Mississippi River across from New Orleans, planter Camille Zeringue transformed a mediocre colonial plantation into a thriving gem of antebellum sugar production, complete with a columned mansion known as Seven Oaks. Under the moss-strewn oaks, the privileged master nurtured his own family but enslaved many others. Excelling at agriculture, business, an ambitious canal enterprise, and local politics, Zeringue ascended to the very pinnacle of Southern society. But his empire soon came crashing down. After the ravages of the Civil War and a nasty battle with a railroad company, the family eventually lost the great estate. Seven Oaks ultimately ended up in the hands of distant railroad executives whose only desire was to rid themselves of this heap of history. *Lost Plantation: The Rise and Fall of Seven Oaks* tells both of Zeringue's climb to the top and of his legacy's eventual ruin. Preservationists and community members abhorred the railroad's indifferent attitude, and the question of the plantation mansion's fate fueled years of fiery, political battles. These hard-fought confrontations ended in 1977, when the exasperated railroad executives sent bulldozers through the decaying house. By analyzing one failed effort, *Lost Plantation* provides insight into the complex workings of American historical preservation efforts as a whole while illustrating how Southerners deal with their multifaceted past. The rise and fall of Seven Oaks is much more than just a local tragedy - it is a glaring example of how any community can be robbed of its history. Now, as parishes around New Orleans recognize the great aesthetic and monetary value of restoring plantation homes and attracting tourism, Jefferson Parish mourns a manor lost.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

What an awesome book. Old plantations, be they lost forever or saved from the wrecking ball, have fascinated me since I was a little girl. I gobble up everything I can about them, visit sites where they once stood and spend lazy afternoons at the ones we are fortunate to still have with us. No racist fantasies goin on...just basking in their beauty and all that once was and dreaming of a time that is no more. So glad that this book was written to honor the memory of this lost treasure.

Excellent! I thought I knew everything there was about Seven Oaks, being from that area also, but learned a lot more of the history and genealogy involved in this small book. Marc Matrana did a great job and his love of the plantation shows, it was a sad day when they let this beautiful plantation fall to the wrecking ball.

I've always heard of Seven Oaks plantation and 'how sad its story was'. Now I know and can mourn its fate with everyone else who has heard the story. I recommend this little book to anyone who is interested in the early history of Louisiana, its politics, and the building of its plantation culture. And that culture's end. Anyone who is interested in historic preservation will absolutely bleed over this story!

A very sad account of America's lost architecture. At one time, Mississippi was one of the most architecturally diverse states in the country. Sadly, time, neglect, war, vandalism, hurricanes, and fire have reduced the diversity to a mere shadow of its former self. Author Mary Carol Miller does a wonderful job of finding descriptions, backgrounds, and photos of these long lost structures. How unfortunate that photos are all that remain of these once grand structures.

As a Descendant of the Zeringue family, I might be slightly biased about the book, but in trying to be objective - it really was a well written book and very informative. I learned a lot about my Ancestors that I had never known before and even though it brings to light a very troubling past for my family, it is never the less a fact of history and I am also proud of many things about my Ancestors. I was born in 1966, just as Seven Oaks was crumbling to its death. I remember at a very young age, my family having discussions about how wrong it would be if we as a community lost the great treasure that used to be our ancestors home. I never got to go inside or even near the old house as a child

because of its advanced decay, but within the history of the old house within these pages, I felt the experience that was Seven Oaks, and in many ways it felt richer than if I had walked through the ruins as a child. I thank the writer for the time he took to bring this jewel to life in my mind and heart.

I live in South Louisiana and I have read several books that talk about Seven Oaks. This is one of the better books about this plantation. Additionally, here is a link to photos shot for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) during the Great Depression as part of FDR's effort to enhance the Library of Congress while giving Americans

jobs:[http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/item/la0119/Part of: Historic American Buildings Survey](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/item/la0119/Part%20of%20Historic%20American%20Buildings%20Survey) (Library of Congress)

This book is about my ancestors deserving family they had a plantation in New Orleans in the 17 forties it is very interesting and I'm so proud of my heritage by rating of how good people they were

This book is well written. I love the details of the history of Seven Oaks. It does include some pictures which help to illustrate of a time and place long lost.

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