



Beneath the Oaks: The Story of Evergreen Plantation

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Introduction

- Standing since 1777, the Evergreen Plantation is located in Edgard, LA and is comprised of 37 buildings, including 22 slave cabins and one main house, standing on approximately 575 acres of land.
- It served as a plantation during the pre-Civil War era, and many freedmen continued to live and work there afterwards.
- While we know what the plantation was used for, we are searching into the specifics of life while living there, along with working to create a timeline of events for the site.
- Our aim is to examine previously excavated artifacts and catalogue them to gain insight into the everyday lives of people living, eating, and working on the plantation.



Evergreen Plantation's Cabins where slaves and later on—freedmen would have lived while the land was occupied.

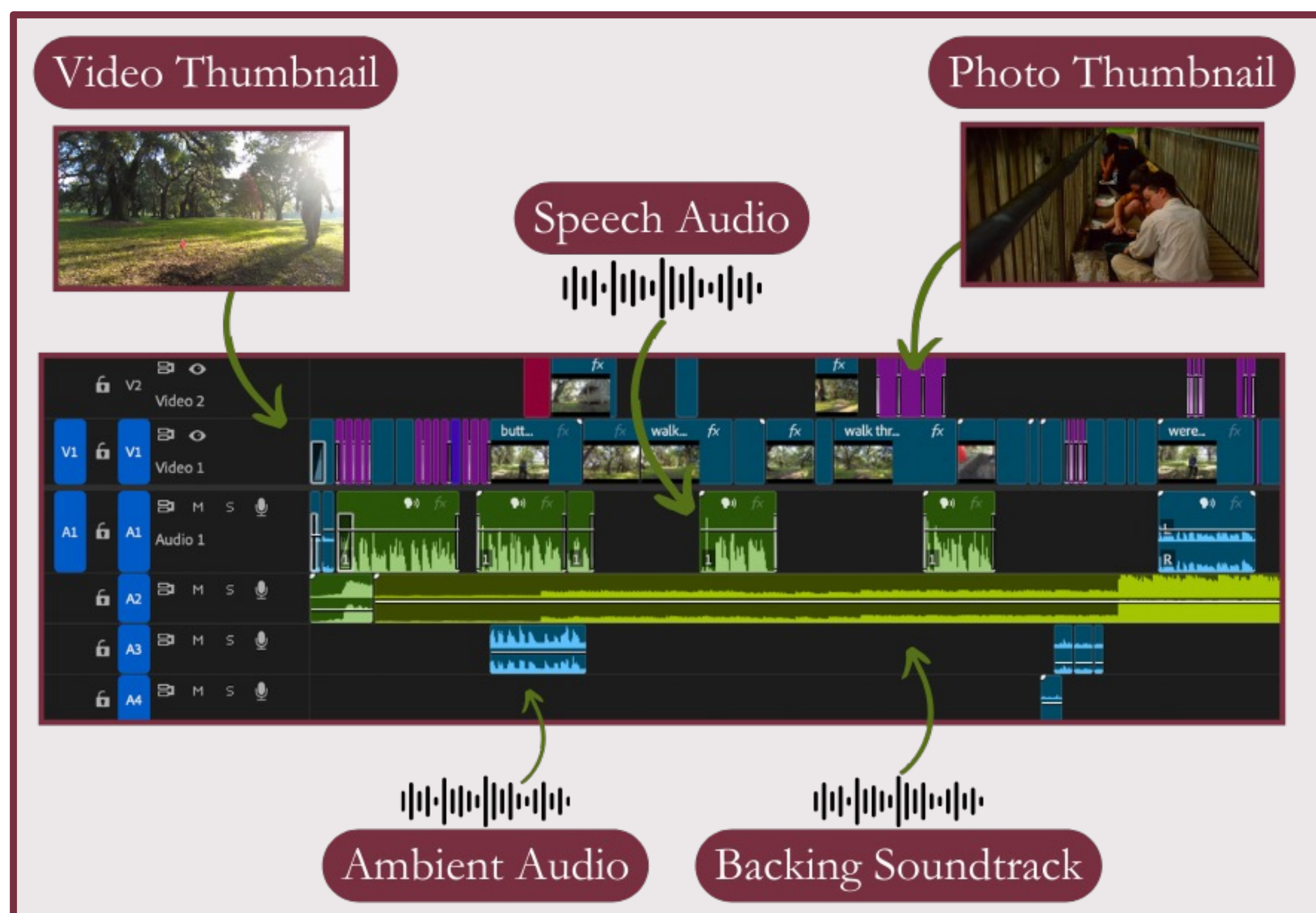
Methods

The center of my research task was to tell the story of the Evergreen Plantation in a comprehensive and graceful manner. To begin the process,

1. I was given over 110 GB of photos and videos to sort through for the final documentary.
2. After reviewing them all and selecting videos that I wanted to include, I began to storyboard.
 - This part of the process took the longest when figuring out how I wanted to tell the story.
3. Once I had finished, I began to place the videos on the Premiere Pro sequence and cut them up. After reordering the videos, I reviewed them with my mentor and tuned it to the vision he had for the project.
4. I then added transitions and presented it to Dr. Mehta as a final draft and I used his final notes to polish the video.

Abstract

- The Evergreen Plantation Archaeological survey is an ongoing project, excavating the Evergreen Plantation, in Edgard, Louisiana. Headed by Dr. Jayur Mehta, the mission of the archaeological survey is to gain a deeper understanding of the lives of people living and working on the plantation pre-, post-, and during slavery. Painting clearer pictures of the past can further inform us of our shared history as a country, giving us time to reflect on what we have done and where we are going.
- My research methods consisted of using previously gathered footage from Evergreen's field schools to construct a documentary. My secondary role was shadowing a graduate student, Isaac Jordan, cataloging artifacts found on the plantation. I was tasked with categorizing and taking note of their characteristics for later analysis.
- The result is a 3-minute documentary that details the history of the plantation, the importance of excavations done today, and the artifacts found throughout the survey. With this video, we want to expose our audience to the history that lives within the plantation as well as encourage them to explore their own communities to discover the past that surrounds them.
- Our results suggest that the people who lived in these cabins didn't have access to some basic necessities, but they found ways to endure. Fragments of cups, buttons sewn onto shirts, and medicine bottles add humanity to history and are evidence of the community built through the hardships of that era. Overall, this project will provide insight into our shared past.

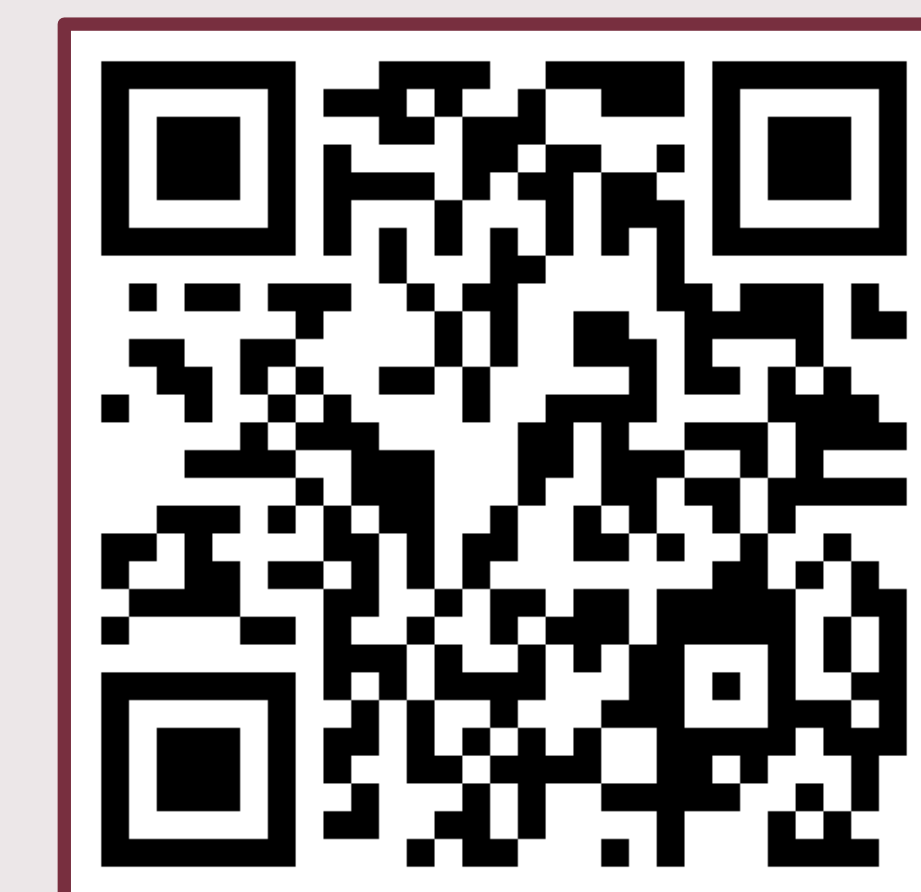


Video-editing timeline for the documentary displaying different visual/audio assets.

Results

While excavations are still ongoing with fieldwork being done on the plantation regularly, the documentary that I have set out to create has been completed and is currently in the process of being published on the plantation's website. With this video, the importance of this excavation and the research being done will be shown to audiences everywhere. I hope that this project will lead people to engage thoughtfully with sites similar to this one and facilitate conversations of the past.

You can watch the documentary here:



Special Acknowledgements

I would like to give a special thanks to my research mentor, Dr. Jayur Mehta, as well as Grad Student, Isaac Jordan, with whom I shadowed in the lab. Also, to my UROP Leaders, Alyssa Duarte and Nadia Nolan!

Resources

- "Evergreen Plantation." *Evergreen Plantation*, www.evergreenplantation.org/.
- Greene, Elizabeth, "Evergreen Plantation." *Buildings and Landmarks of 19th-Century America : American Society Revealed 2017*: 154–159. Print.