

VOICES OVER THE WATER

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTORS

There is a place that has been called the land of murder and mayhem. The inhabitants “spoke a different language, wore funny dress, carried arms.” Who were these people? What happened here? Why did so many of them leave?

This is a story about identity – American identity as seen through the lens of Scottish ethnic identity. We discovered that there are many people who attend Scottish events who may be partially Scottish or sometimes have no Scottish roots at all. We were curious about the appeal of this identity. We also wanted to look beyond any stereotypes and clichés, and learn about the histories that brought so many people from Scotland, and the Highlands in particular, to America.

It was our goal to show that there was a whole language and culture that was actively repressed. These people were the Gaels, and many settled in North America, interacting with other groups and influencing what the United States is today. We discovered there has been a vast fusion of cultures (as one of our interviewees has strongly elucidated). We have been fortunate to include interviews with people who share a Scottish ancestry with those of Native American, and African American lineages. Many participants also revealed Irish roots and the film looks at the formation of the Ulster Plantation and Scots-Irish emigration.

We believe that there is much to learn about our identity as Americans by looking back into this rich history. As we seek to belong, we must also ask the question, who is choosing you?

In this program, you will hear a variety of "voices." Some speak Gaelic, some from present-day Scotland, and some have a wide variety of regional accents from the United States. Many have disparate opinions as to what happened, giving rise to debate among the descendants of those who experienced these historic events. Some use their literal voice to interpret how they see and hear what these histories communicate. Additionally, the film gives voice to the many participants who contributed to this documentary, including musicians, dancers, chefs, instructors and historians, and in providing some impassioned voiceover work. *Voices Over the Water* was narrated by Karen Allen who is an award-winning actor and director. She is internationally known for her roles in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny*, *National Lampoon's Animal House*, *Starman*, amongst others. Actor Simon Prebble adds to the "Establishment" voice, and provides a context in light of the Highland Clearances in a way which he understands very well.

One of the challenges we embraced in creating this film was to give the subject matter some academic gravitas and yet still show broad appeal for the general public. This program is broadcast on public television stations across the U.S. via American Public Television. There are additional hours of interviews and archival materials from our production that we are working to have available for streaming, presentations, and so on.

Guy Perrotta & Jane Ferguson, Directors