

VALLEY RIVER MEDIA *presents* in association with UniMedia and Moving Images Group

a film by
NADIA DEAN

Starring
DAVID REED MICHAEL EASLER JON PROUDSTAR BARRETT DOYLE

CAMERON

“A clear and vividly evocative account of a complex and little-understood portion of American history. Kudos to Nadia Dean, as accomplished in her artistry as in her scholarship.”

-Bernie Dunlap, Humanities Scholar/Wofford College President Emeritus

Color. 37 minutes.
Cherokee1776@gmail.com
www.CameronTheFilm.com

CAMERON press notes

Short Synopsis

At the start of the American Revolution, a once-popular British Indian agent becomes a hunted man.

Long Synopsis

At the start of the American Revolution, CAMERON follows British Indian agent Alexander Cameron on the run from militiamen hell-bent on his capture. Rumors throughout the Carolina backcountry claim Cameron is inciting Cherokee warriors to attack frontier settlers as a way of restoring British rule. Cameron had sent letters warning settlers of impending Cherokee attacks, but the letters backfire. Torn between his responsibility as a father, honor to his king, loyalty to the Cherokees, and duty to his conscience, Cameron sinks deeper into turmoil, as he realizes his noble attempts to save innocent women and children have become his undoing.

Director's Statement

The idea for *Cameron* emerged after my study of 18th-century letters written by Alexander Cameron, Indian agent among the Cherokee. In my eight years of research and writing *A Demand of Blood*, Cameron and his Cherokee ally Dragging Canoe evolved as central characters in the epic narrative of the Cherokee war of 1776—and it is this war within a war that is the backdrop for *Cameron*—an untold story of the American Revolution.

Alexander Cameron, the liaison between the Cherokee and British Crown, especially intrigued me. His world was part Scot, part Cherokee, and part British sovereignty. The script was driven by my fascination with Cameron's predicament—I asked myself, “How would I feel if my efforts—out of a sense of honor— became my undoing?” The most emotionally charged music I composed for the film is *Beloved No More*, which expresses the gravity of Cameron's loss—loss of home, loss of authority, and loss of honor. Inspired by Chautauqua performers who later became friends, they inspired me to create an emotional drama with actors offering their character's side of the story while speaking directly to the audience. I'd never seen a film like this, but felt it was the right approach.

I was raised primarily in Columbia, South Carolina with frequent stays on my grandfather's North Carolina mountain farm. My ancestors had lived in the Smoky Mountains since the early 18th century. In 1776, on their way to burn Cherokee towns, 2,500 militiamen, including my six-generation grandfather, marched over what later became my mother's childhood farm. My half-Cherokee cousin and I spent many summer days exploring the creeks, woods and waterfalls that would later be depicted in the book and film *Cold Mountain*. That *A Demand of Blood* and *Cameron* involves my husband's Cherokee ancestors—and some of my own—in a profound way ties me to this stirring story of the American Revolution.

As I say in the author's note of *A Demand of Blood*—stories are elemental to the human experience. We need stories. We need them because they are what connect us to each other. And it seems the ones that connect us deeply usually depict a man's dark night of the soul and his eventual triumph over it. As I ruminated about Cameron's sudden loss of liberty, I realized that at the deepest part of our humanity, personal liberty proves to be our greatest need. The film's story raises the question: “Is it possible to fight for my own freedom, without depriving someone else of theirs?”

-Nadia Dean

Production Notes

After writing and recording 11 pieces of music and publishing *A Demand of Blood* (Dec 2012), Nadia Dean began writing the script for *Cameron*. Men who'd become the center of the story—from a book full of intriguing men—were Scotsman Alexander Cameron and the Cherokee war chief Dragging Canoe. She became intrigued by their strong friendship and ability to survive the crushing blow of the American Revolution.

In late 2013, Nadia Dean received a grant from the Graham Foundation of South Carolina to finance the film. Several casting directors advised her that the role of Dragging Canoe would be challenging to cast—and it was. After exhausting talent possibilities on the East Coast, Nadia contacted a casting agent out west and found Jon Proudstar, who'd appeared in several films. For the other roles, Barrett Doyle (Gist) was cast from an Atlanta talent agency, and Nadia's associate producer, Chris Weatherhead, referred two gifted actors from her feature *All For Liberty*. Quite ironically, actor David Reed (Cameron) also portrays a loyalist in *All For Liberty*, and Michael Easler (Williamson) also portrays a rebel in both films.

Nadia wanted the actors' clothing to have a worn, rugged look, just as it would have been in the backcountry. Despite a limited budget, Nadia assembled authentic period costumes on loan from seasoned historical re-enactors. A noted gun collector loaned his antique French Fusil-de-Chasse musket, and Nadia's re-enactor friends loaned a war club, shoulder bag, hunting knife, and powder horn.

Nadia and associate producer Hugh scouted historic locations in South Carolina including Walnut Grove Plantation, where Nadia had as a child become enamored with 18th century history. But the Plantation proved unsuitable for filming, and the decision was made to shoot at Historic Brattonsville, where scenes from *The Patriot* and *All For Liberty* had been filmed. *Cameron's* production team of twelve spent three days at Brattonsville—with two days of guerilla filmmaking at it's best. Since Chris had already worked with cinematographer Richard, actors David and Michael, and the extras, there was a warm rapport among cast and crew. The second unit, shooting in Macon County, N.C., included Jason Ledford and Jesse Knight filming Dragging Canoe's scenes at a historically significant site documented in *A Demand of Blood*—the site of Col. Andrew Williamson's camp in 1776, where he lay just before moving troops deeper into Cherokee country.

Crew Biographies

Nadia Dean—*writer/producer/director*

Nadia is the author of *A Demand of Blood: The Cherokee War of 1776* and veteran broadcast and print journalist. Nadia studied Media Arts and later became a television news producer and correspondent in Washington, D.C. For the film *The Notebook*, Nadia worked as assistant to the location manager after working as a location scout and assistant producer on numerous productions. In 2014, she wrote and produced the short documentary *Cherokee Diplomacy in South Carolina: 1777* for the Museum of the Cherokee in South Carolina funded by the S.C. Humanities Council. Telling the story of the Cherokees in the American Revolution and of Alexander Cameron's extraordinary saga is an endeavor that has spanned the last 12 years of her life.

Chris Weatherhead—*assistant producer/ assistant director*

Chris Weatherhead, co-founder of Actors' Theater of South Carolina, trained as an actress with Brewster Mason of the Royal Shakespeare Company in London, at UC Irvine, California, and in New York with Warren Robertson. A leading lady in theater and film for 35 years, Chris wrote, directed, and produced the feature film, *All For Liberty*; her film won nine international awards and two national historical society awards, including Houston WorldFest and Accolade in California. The film is in world distribution, including Amazon Prime.

Nadia Dean—*Original Score*

Nadia received an early classical piano education that included study of Beethoven, Schubert, and Chopin. As she developed as a composer, early influences included Enya and Loreena McKennitt. For the film's soundtrack, her musical influences include the soundtracks of historical films: Nick Cave and Warren Ellis' *The Assassination of Jesse James*, Ennio Morricone's *The Mission*, John Barry's *Dances With Wolves*, Randy Edelman and Trevor Jones' *The Last of the Mohicans*, and Alan Silvestri's *Forrest Gump Suite*.

Richard Almes – *Director of Photography/Editor*

Richard Almes has for 27 years worked as director, producer, director of photography, and editor for over 1,000 corporate productions, short films, and commercials. Clients include The Boeing Company, Space & Naval Warfare Systems, The Citadel, and Historic Charleston Foundation. Almes was principal cinematographer for *All For Liberty*.

Jason Ledford—*Unit production/additional editor*

Jason Ledford is a Native American filmmaker and musician. He was born in Cherokee, N.C., and is a graduate of Western Carolina University's Film and Television Program. Jason works as a Cinematographer, Producer, Director, and Editor. His credits include the feature films *Partners* and *The Orbs*, and he's served as cameraman on the feature *Shifting Gears*, PBS's *David Holt's State of the Music Live*, and Animal Planet's *Woodfellas*.

Hugh Lambert—*Cherokee cultural advisor & associate producer*

Hugh is a long-time IT professional for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and is an enrolled member of the tribe. Hugh is active in community affairs both on and off the reservation, and serves on the board of the Museum of the Cherokee in South Carolina. For the film, Hugh served as a Cherokee language and cultural advisor, and as a production assistant on location.

Robert Ryals—*Historical Consultant*

Robert Brewton Ryals (MA, History, MS, Library Science) is a public historian with 15 years experience as a 17th-18th century living history interpreter. He appeared in the PBS Series *Trail of History* (Episode: *Waxhaw, North Carolina*).

Cast Biographies

DAVID REED as *Alexander Cameron*

David has worked in radio broadcasting for 30 years and is a life-long stage actor, appearing in more than 70 shows. An east Tennessee native, David immediately felt a tie to the story while reading *A Demand of Blood*, since he was raised near the rivers and historic places mentioned in the book. He worked hard to develop a soft, Scottish accent—one easily understood by American audiences. *Cameron* marks his fifth independent film.

BARRETT DOYLE as *Nathaniel Gist*

Barrett Doyle is an Atlanta-based actor, producer, and visual artist. His BFA from The Savannah College of Art & Design prepared him for his career in theatre, film & television. He's performed at the Actor's Express Theatre, The Aurora Theatre and Georgia Shakespeare. Most recently, with fellow Atlanta Theatre artists and advocates, he launched Catalyst Arts Atlanta.

MICHAEL EASLER as *Col. Andrew Williamson*

In his 45-year career, Easler has worked as an actor, writer, composer/musician, director, and co-producer. On stage, he's appeared in over 100 productions including: *Breaker Morant*, *Cabaret*, *Oleanna*, and *Pump Boys & Dinettes*. Film credits include *All For Liberty*, *Chattahoochie*, *Cold Soldiers*, *The Republic of Pete*, and *Rich in Love*. Television: *Secret Weapon of The Confederacy* (2-hour NatGeo Special, as Gen. PGT Beauregard), *Haunted Hotels* & *3 Perfect Days in Charleston* (Travel Channel) and *The Hunley* (TNT). In 2014, Easler published his Young Adult novella, *Red Tail*.

JON PROUDSTAR as *Dragging Canoe*

Jon is a Yaqui Indian from Tucson, Arizona and has appeared in 40 films and television shows, including *Skin Walkers*, *Into The West*, *Geronimo*, and *Walker Texas Ranger*, working with Kurt Russell, Val Kilmer, Viggo Mortensen and Lou Diamond Phillips. Jon trained with Val Kilmer on the set of Gore Vidal's *Billy the Kid*, and participated in the Sundance Film Institute's labs for writers and directors with Ed Harris and Robert Redford.

Extras

The New Acquisition Militia: Robert Ryals, Barry Grant, and Mark Hall

In 1772, when a border between colonies was finalized, South Carolina acquired land from North Carolina, and a new company of militia was formed called the New Acquisition Militia. In the Cherokee War of 1776, these militiamen served under Col. Andrew Williamson.

Robert Ryals as *Cameron's tavern mate*

Robert Brewton Ryals serves on the planning committee for the annual Ft. Mill History Days festival, and is a Reference Specialist at the York County Public Library in Rock Hill, S.C.

Mark Hall as *Cameron's tavern mate*

Mark Stephen Hall is a South Carolina native and an 18th century re-enactor and weapons expert. He has appeared as an extra in *The Patriot*, *All for Liberty*, *Battle of Buford's Defeat*, and *Battle of Cowpens*.

Barry Grant as *Cameron's tavern mate*

S.C. native Barry Grant is a commercial artist providing graphics, props, and costuming for theater and film, and artwork for books, magazines and film promotions. Grant is a Revolutionary Era re-enactor and appeared as an extra in *The Patriot* and several independent films.

Karen DeLoach as the *Tavern Wench*

Karen has an MA in Art and has produced and directed award-winning short films screened in Piccolo Spoleto, Charleston, SC, Karitos, Chicago, and the Phoenix International Film Festival and served as behind-the-scenes photographer for *Cameron*.

Laura Blythe as *Molly*

Laura is an enrolled member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the Director of the Oconaluftee Indian Village (operated by the Cherokee Historical Association). She enjoys educating people about the history of the Cherokee people and their sacrifices made for those of us who remain.