



A FILM BY **ANDREW & CHELSEA MOYNEHAN**
ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS: DYLAN SINNICKSON, ED GERSH, HAROLD MORGAN, NICOLAS RESTIVO, ADRIEN RESTIVO. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: WINGELA FRAZIER, BARBARA OSTROMECKA, JOHN MOYNEHAN, SHARON SANTAMARIA, PETER BRODSKY
MUSIC BY **FOLK SOUL REVIVAL**. DIRECTED AND PRODUCED BY **ANDREW MOYNEHAN** AND **CHELSEA MOYNEHAN**



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BIG MOCCASIN

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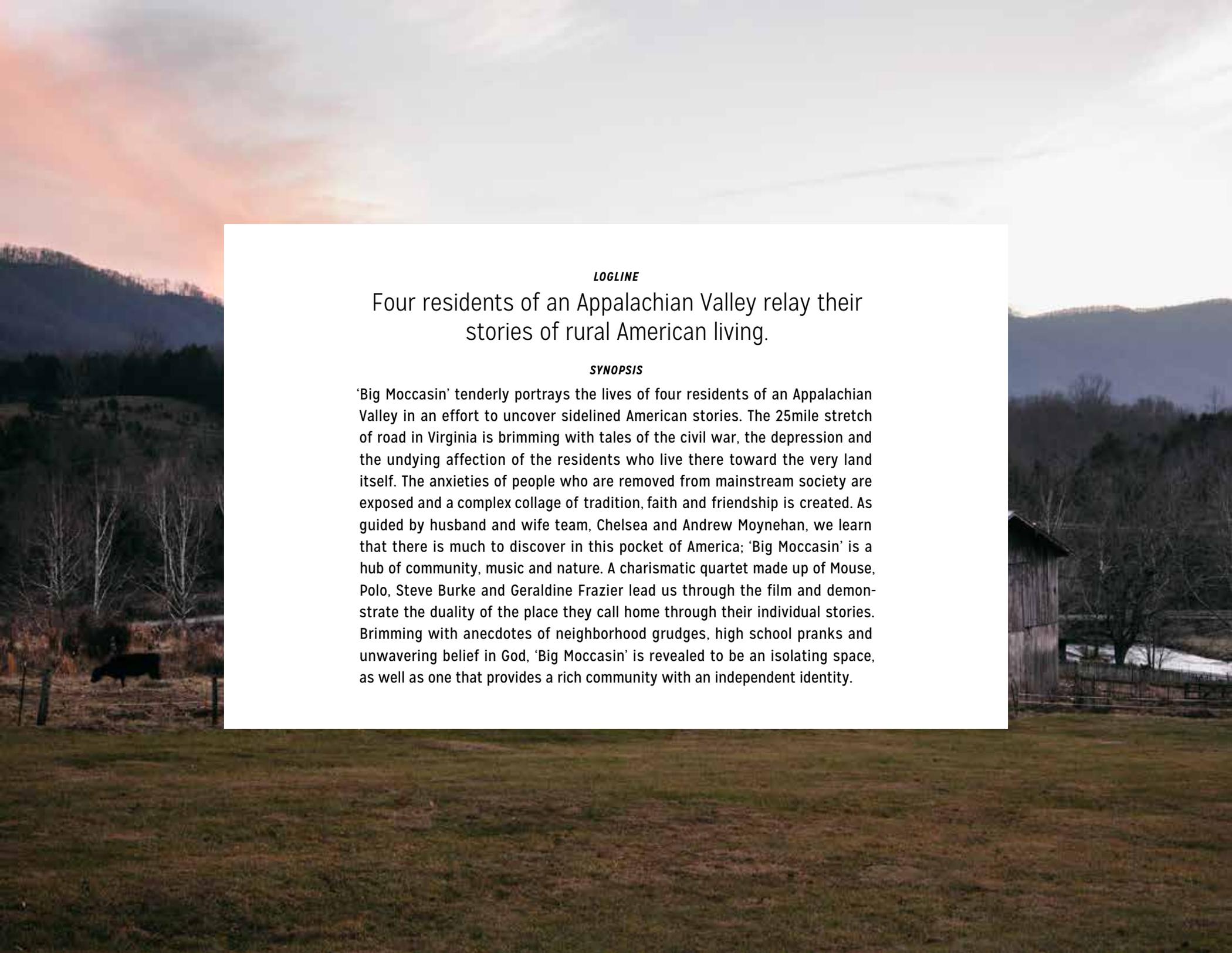
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LOGLINE

Four residents of an Appalachian Valley relay their stories of rural American living.

SYNOPSIS

'Big Moccasin' tenderly portrays the lives of four residents of an Appalachian Valley in an effort to uncover sidelined American stories. The 25-mile stretch of road in Virginia is brimming with tales of the civil war, the depression and the undying affection of the residents who live there toward the very land itself. The anxieties of people who are removed from mainstream society are exposed and a complex collage of tradition, faith and friendship is created. As guided by husband and wife team, Chelsea and Andrew Moynehan, we learn that there is much to discover in this pocket of America; 'Big Moccasin' is a hub of community, music and nature. A charismatic quartet made up of Mouse, Polo, Steve Burke and Geraldine Frazier lead us through the film and demonstrate the duality of the place they call home through their individual stories. Brimming with anecdotes of neighborhood grudges, high school pranks and unwavering belief in God, 'Big Moccasin' is revealed to be an isolating space, as well as one that provides a rich community with an independent identity.

FILMMAKERS STATEMENT

BIG MOCCASIN stems from a deep, personal connection with Appalachia. It is a place that I visited quite often as a young girl. It was the birthplace of my grandmother and grandfather, and the home of my relatives. Southwest Virginia was a place that I would go to and marvel at its simple wonders.

I was raised in Long Island, New York, in a dominantly Jewish community. My father was from the Bronx. When I would visit my grandparents in the mountains, I felt as if I was being transported in time. It was so far disconnected from my life in New York, from the modern and material things. I was confused by the people, by the land, the food, and the thick mountain dialects. It was something that I didn't understand, yet it all felt so familiar.

When my grandfather passed, he was buried in the backyard of their house in the same raw dirt that birthed my grandmothers tomatoes. I still remember the smell of his spit. The scent of cherry flavored chewing tobacco stayed with me throughout my life. It was these visceral memories; the scents, the sounds, and the tradition, that brought me back to Appalachia. This time, as a young filmmaker on a journey to create a depiction of Appalachian life as I remembered it. I wanted to show the area in a way that was unseen by a lot of people. It was important for me to look at the area as an outsider, but with the insight of someone on the inside. It was the same simplicity which baffled me that would later intrigue me.

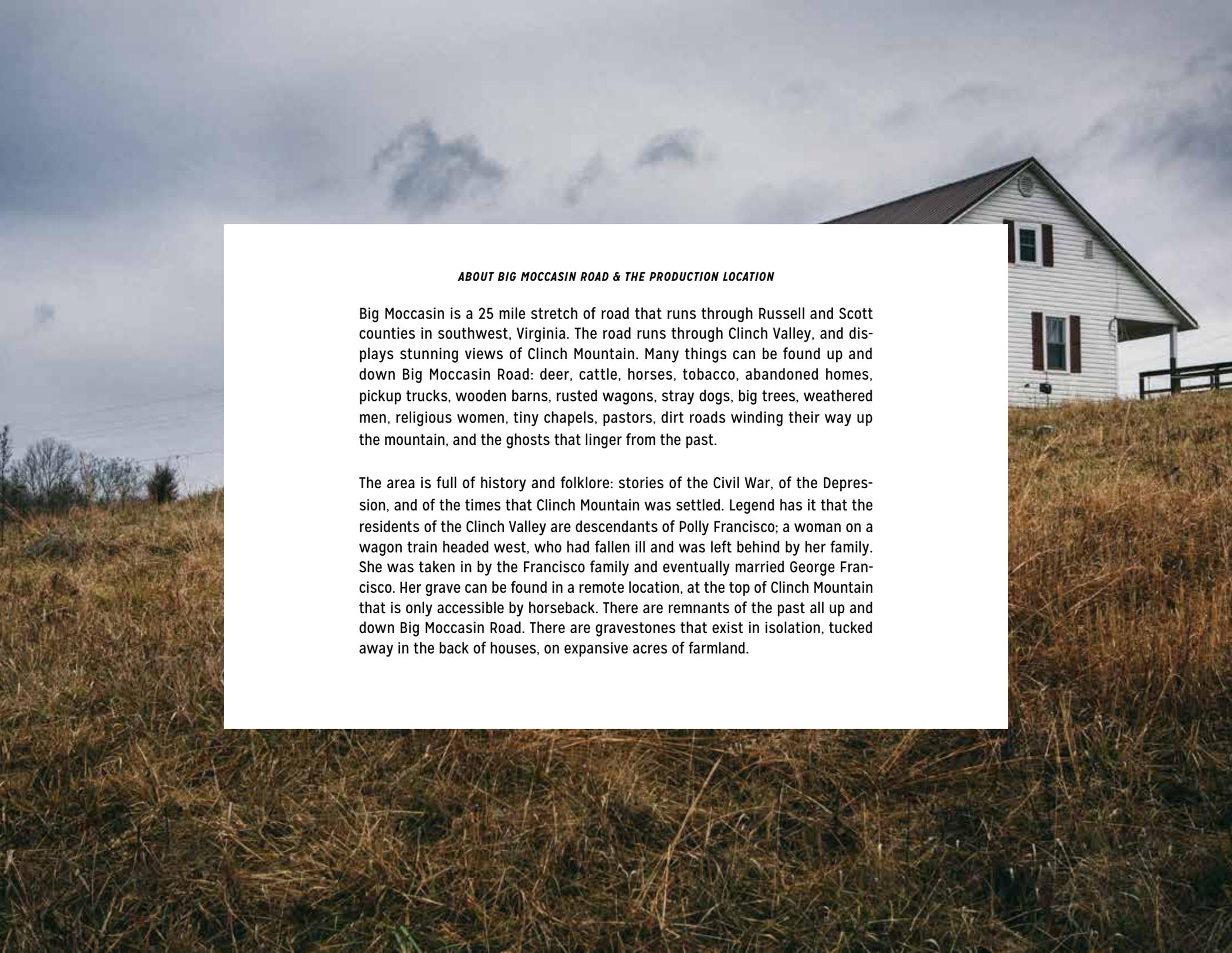
Andrew was immediately connected to the character-based storytelling to which I had proposed. I was a fan of his work that had, in some ways, mirrored this project and its intent. So, we became partners in this endeavor. Andrew and I packed up all of our stuff, and headed down to the mountains to make the film.

When we first arrived on Big Moccasin Road, we were completely unsure as to who would become our characters, how we were going to develop them, or where our story would lie. We were convinced that there was something to tell. Big Moccasin Road is a place that is full of stories, life philosophies, haunting memories, and deep tradition. We wanted to create a portrait of this.

We were regularly visiting Geraldine, Polo, Steve and Mouse, the protagonists of the film. They were very open with us and willing to share all with the camera. Our presence was almost nonexistent when the camera was there. They opened up to us, let us into their homes, and told us intimate details about life and death.

Big Moccasin is a preservation of Appalachian life. A majority of the people featured in the film, are of the older generation, though there is a small presence of youth that exists helping to illustrate the circular chain of life and its events. Big Moccasin sets these characters in this timeless backdrop, and through its patient way of looking at a region, it aims to tell a way of Appalachia as subtly and unique as the area and its people.

Chelsea Moynihan
2014



ABOUT BIG MOCCASIN ROAD & THE PRODUCTION LOCATION

Big Moccasin is a 25 mile stretch of road that runs through Russell and Scott counties in southwest, Virginia. The road runs through Clinch Valley, and displays stunning views of Clinch Mountain. Many things can be found up and down Big Moccasin Road: deer, cattle, horses, tobacco, abandoned homes, pickup trucks, wooden barns, rusted wagons, stray dogs, big trees, weathered men, religious women, tiny chapels, pastors, dirt roads winding their way up the mountain, and the ghosts that linger from the past.

The area is full of history and folklore: stories of the Civil War, of the Depression, and of the times that Clinch Mountain was settled. Legend has it that the residents of the Clinch Valley are descendants of Polly Francisco; a woman on a wagon train headed west, who had fallen ill and was left behind by her family. She was taken in by the Francisco family and eventually married George Francisco. Her grave can be found in a remote location, at the top of Clinch Mountain that is only accessible by horseback. There are remnants of the past all up and down Big Moccasin Road. There are gravestones that exist in isolation, tucked away in the back of houses, on expansive acres of farmland.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS



ANDREW MOYNEHAN is a filmmaker, film editor and artist. His work has been shown worldwide in places including the Tate Modern, London and The New York Photo Festival. In 2011, Moynehan was awarded the Presidential Scholarship award a year-long residency from the School of Visual Arts, New York, he also holds a B.A from the University of the Arts London. He is from Bradford, England and lives in Brooklyn with his wife Chelsea.



CHELSEA MOYNEHAN is a director, cinematographer, and film editor. She previously directed the documentary short, *THE SQUARE CIRCLE*, which premiered at the Boxing International Film Festival in New York and is featured on *NOWNESS*. She is a nominee of the prestigious Tierney Fellowship for photography, and a graduate from the School of Visual Arts. *Big Moccasin* is her first feature endeavor. She is from Long Island, New York and lives in Brooklyn with her husband Andrew.



FOLK SOUL REVIVAL - COMPOSERS (also known as FSR) is an American country music group. It's current members include Daniel Davis (guitar and vocals,) Justin Venable (banjo, harmonica, and vocals,) Daniel Vanover (guitar, harmonica, and vocals,) Brandon Sturgill (bass and vocals,) and Dan Witt (percussion.) 'Prompting the Dapperness' reached #12 on the iTunes country charts and #99 on the overall charts on the day of it's release. It was charted on Billboard Magazine's Heatseekers Charts at #10. In 2011, the Virginia tourism board awarded FSR the 'Virginia Band of the Year Award.'

Folk Soul Revival has an incredible following and fan base. Their fans are often referred to as "the Congregation," due to their loyalty and support to the band. While filming *Big Moccasin*, Chelsea and Andrew Moynehan were fortunate enough to see FSR perform at the Carter Fold. They are the first band in history to ever play with percussion at the Carter Fold, marking their performance legendary in the history of country music. Their rootsy, rowdy, Americana music comes from a place of innovation and re-creation, while still adhering to the traditional roots of country and bluegrass.

THE FOUR CHARACTERS



GERALDINE FRAZIER

Geraldine Frazier is a woman of strong religious faith. Her faith aids her through her dying days of bed-ridden monotony. A devout baptist, her vision of the afterlife has allowed her an acceptance of her fate, and with each fading day, she awaits her time to join her husband in the family cemetery located in the back yard.



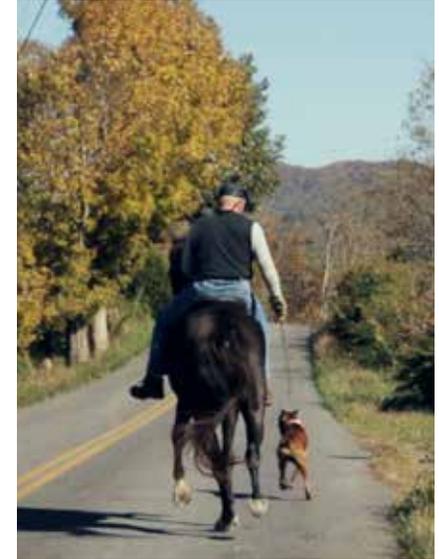
MOUSE

Mouse is a small man of incredible strength, mentally and physically. Mouse has instructed himself through life with his strong morals, beliefs, and philosophies that suggest appreciation for the land. He is afraid of the future, of technology, greediness, processed foods, and the inability to survive that people demonstrate today. His words are very wise, his shot is very precise, and his love is as big and vast as the valley to which he has made a modest home for himself. Mouse is a character who champions through life. He is an ideal representative of mountain culture, a culture that is rapidly dwindling.



POLO

For many years, Polo has struggled. He has struggled with his health, his relationships, and with his financial matters. Polo was born and raised on Big Moccasin road, and has stayed true to his Appalachian roots. He enjoys hunting, drinking beer, and smoking cigarettes. It's the sensitivity and love that he displays for his family and friends, his genuine sense of humor, and his ability to survive big on very little, that make him a noteworthy character.



STEVE BURKE

Steve Burke is a Navy man who comes from a legacy of bad reputation. Also born and raised on Big Moccasin, Steve has always lived with the "Burke" reputation, one that has never had the good graces from the people of the valley. Despite the negative connotation surrounding his family name, Steve made a suitable life for himself. He is a man of adventure, but not in the traditional sense. Like his best friend, Polo, Steve's sense of humor and unconventional ways of seeing the world allowed him to live his life as an outlaw of sorts. His passions are: collecting things from the past, backcountry horseback riding, his dog Mickey, and the old stories of his childhood.

CREDITS

Directed, produced, photographed and edited by
CHELSEA & ANDREW MOYNEHAN

Original Score by
FOLK SOUL REVIVAL

Additional musicians
***DAVID CATE, KEVIN JACKSON,
AND THE MAJESTIC HEIGHTS QUARTET***

Location sound by
ANTHONY SLOANE

Color-Grading & Motion Graphics by
TAMINO CASTRO

Titles by
NATHANIEL MILTON

Sound Design by
MATT NELSON & GRANT ELDER

Recorded at
MAGGARD SOUNDS, BIG STONE, VA

Music Mixed by
JBEAM

Portrait of Chelsea and Andrew Moynehan by
EMILY WINIKER

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