

Director's statement

What impact does immigration have on descendants four generations later? Is there a benefit to searching for answers from the past when memories have faded, and stories are lost? I grew up knowing little family history beyond that of my settler great-grandparents. A decision to find out more about their lives in Ireland led ultimately to this film project. I wanted to tell this story about the Davoren farmers who have inhabited this region for 1200+ years.

The search for my own past brought both innumerable gifts - and a hard reckoning with history and its traumas. Best of all, I found people who share both my name and a medieval legacy. Thanks to archaeologists, historians, researchers and family members studying the stories buried under stone in north Clare, we know now that members of our clan played a small but significant part in the preservation of Gaelic culture when it was under vicious attack by invaders.

I came away with new insights about myself and my family, new friends, and a deeper understanding of the culture my Irish grandmother left behind. The newfound relatives and I are now reconnecting branches of our family scattered to the winds by forces of conquest and colonization.

Those of us who uncover our own deep history will find both heroes and villains. Finding and facing it all is a great – and ultimately healing – adventure. These important stories of the past must be preserved and passed on. They hold insights that can help us deal with the challenges of our own times, especially regarding respect for indigenous peoples, for their culture and language, and a rejection of imperialism. Family history research is worth doing!