PRODUCERS STATEMENT

There have been a number of books and scholarly papers written about Charles Alexander Eastman based primarily upon his books and other resource materials without consulting family descendants or other relatives. In May of 2007, HBO Films released the docudrama “Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee” based upon the book by Dee Brown which chronicled the history of Native Americans being driven from their lands depicting both military intervention and congressional legislation. The film weaved in a story of Charles Alexander Eastman as a central character along with his wife Elaine Goodale Eastman but with inaccurate historical material throughout the script. This Eastman story was developed again without consulting family members. It became clear that a story about Charles Eastman developed and told from the perspective of family members was needed to help set the record straight. It was also possible to develop a documentary film from the Eastman Dakota family perspective with a group of family professionals familiar with the history, storytelling and the filmmaking process. The family group involved in making this film includes: Syd Beane, William Beane, Kate Beane and Carly Eastman Bad Heart Bull, direct descendants of John Eastman and Gail Johnsen and Ginny Risk, direct descendants of Charles Eastman. This film is their story.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Kate Beane holds a BA in American Indian Studies and a PhD in American Studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. With an employment history rooted in education, she has worked in the Twin Cities as an after school mentor for American Indian youth, an early childhood Dakota language immersion teacher, a local public history consultant, and as a community college instructor. Previously, she served as a Charles A. Eastman Pre-doctoral Fellow at Dartmouth College, and as a President’s Post-doctoral Fellow at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Currently, she is the Dakota Program and Outreach Manager for Native American Initiatives at the Minnesota Historical Society.

Syd Beane (Flandreau Santee Sioux and Muskogee Creek)

Executive Producer

Educator, community organizer, and documentary filmmaker. Syd Beane’s great-grandfather was Rev. John Eastman, the older brother and mentor of Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa). Syd served as Project Manager of The Dakota Land Study in Minnesota Before 1862 Research/Book Project which was completed with the publishing of the book “Mni Sota Makoce: The Land of the Dakota.” This book was awarded Minnesota History Book of the year for 2012. He was writer and co-producer of the documentary film “Native Nations: Standing Together for Civil Rights” shown nationally on ABC, NBC, and the Hallmark Channel. He is Executive Producer/Producer of “Ohiyesa: The Soul of an Indian.”
LONG SYNOPSIS

Ohiyesa: The Soul of an Indian is a deeply personal family film that follows Kate Beane, an urban, Dakota scholar, and her family as they retrace the footsteps of their celebrated relative, Ohiyesa, recounting his remarkable life. On this journey, they seek to return the legacy of their grandfather back to their ancestral homeland, while also searching for what their own legacy will be.

Ohiyesa, also known as Charles Eastman, lived an extraordinary life during a tumultuous time for the Dakota Oyate (nation). Born in 1858, Ohiyesa was part of the last generation of his family to inherit and be raised with the full knowledge of traditional Dakota life in Minnesota. As a child he was forced out of the state with his community following the Dakota War of 1862. He grew up to become the second Native American physician in the United States and an important author, social activist, and lecturer on the international stage, all before his people were considered American citizens in their own land. Ohiyesa’s memoirs relate his journey from a pre-reservation, Dakota boyhood to the ivy halls of Dartmouth and beyond.

In Ohiyesa, the Soul of an Indian, the Beanes correct inaccuracies about Ohiyesa’s life and consider many challenges he faced, looking at this history through an indigenous and personal family perspective. They reflect on questions their grandfather posed more than a century ago, such as how can indigenous people retain their cultural traditions and worldviews, while also working within institutions and a society that was created to oppress them? Along the way, Kate Beane uncovers uncanny parallels between their lives, though they were born more than 100 years apart.

In the words of Eastman scholar and professor David Martinez, “When somebody like Eastman asserts himself as an Indian person, he is doing so in defiance of that fundamental belief in the United States that Indian people are going to fade into the sunset. He refused to fade.”

Photo Courtesy of Stephanie Mosher

Photo Courtesy of Stephanie Mosher

MEDIUM SYNOPSIS

Ohiyesa: The Soul of an Indian is a deeply personal family film that follows Kate Beane, an urban, Dakota scholar, and her family as they trace the remarkable life of their celebrated relative, Ohiyesa (Charles Eastman), an important author, activist, lecturer and one of the first Native American doctors. Along the way, Beane uncovers uncanny parallels between their lives, though they were born more than 100 years apart.

For the first time, Beane and other relatives reunite to share Ohiyesa’s story through an indigenous perspective, considering questions their grandfather posed more than a century ago, such as how can indigenous people retain their cultural traditions and worldviews, while also working within institutions and a society that was created to oppress them?

In the words of Eastman scholar and professor David Martinez, “When somebody like Eastman asserts himself as an Indian person, he is doing so in defiance of that fundamental belief in the United States that Indian people are going to fade into the sunset. He refused to fade.”

Beane and her family search for the legacy of Ohiyesa, while trying to determine what their own legacy will be.
FOOTAGE & STILL IMAGES
American Swedish Institute
William L Beane
Boston University Alumni Medical Library Archives
Kautz Family YMCA Archives
University of Minnesota Archives
Gail Johnson
Minnesota Historical Society
National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution
Northern Star Council
Boy Scout of America
National Gallery of Art
Northwest Minnesota Historical Center

MUSIC
Grandfather’s Calling
Written and Performed by Douglass Spotted Eagle
Published by Firedrum Music (ASCAP)
Courtesy of The Soar Corporation

Creation
Written and Performed by Douglass Spotted Eagle
Published by Firedrum Music (ASCAP)
Courtesy of The Soar Corporation

Celebration of Life
Written and Performed by Douglass Spotted Eagle
Published by Firedrum Music (ASCAP)
Courtesy of The Soar Corporation

The Beauty Way
Written and Performed by Douglass Spotted Eagle
Published by Firedrum Music (ASCAP)
Courtesy of The Soar Corporation

Kee’ta Kee’ta Matt Sin
Written by D. Norman
Performed by Norman & Kramer
Published by Firedrum Music (ASCAP)
Courtesy of The Soar Corporation

Voices on the Wind
Written by Robby Bee
Performed by Santee
Published by Firedrum Music (ASCAP)
Courtesy of The Soar Corporation

MUSIC (continued)

Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC, Art Resource, NY
Shutterstock
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The Johnes Library, Inc., Amherst, MA
Library of Congress
The National Archives
National Anthropological Archives,
Smithsonian Institution
Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA

The Newberry Library, Chicago
Virginia Risk
The Sophia Smith Collection,
Smith College
South Dakota State Historical Society
Videoblocks
Walter P. Reuther Library, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University

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WEB SITE: https://www.visionmakermedia.org/films/ohiyesa-soul-indian
TRAILER: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqRWzBnRSEs