

Campaign to make a documentary film about almost-extinct Boers in Argentina

A documentary feature film about a century-old community of Boers in a remote region of Patagonia has just launched a crowd-funding campaign to start production. Titled *The Boers at the End of the World*, the film tells the story of up to 800 Boer families who left South Africa between 1903 and 1908, escaping a recently lost war, concentration camps, and a government they didn't want. The Boers headed into the arid heart of Patagonia where they found a land that reminded them of their beloved Karoo desert. There, they started a new life.



Today, this outpost still exists in the Chubut province. Despite a fierce pride in their roots, the descendants of the Boer settlers have become largely assimilated with the Argentine population over time, to the point where only a handful still speak archaic Afrikaans as their first language. While the taste of melktert and the strains of Sarie Marais can still be heard in the town, within a few years there will be few remnants of this culture left.

Documentary filmmaker Richard Finn Gregory has been researching the film for over a year. "I'm fascinated by our true South African stories - so when I heard about this community, I immediately wanted to know more. I couldn't believe that so few people knew that this community still existed. This is a story that really needs to be told - and soon," he said.

It's time to start shooting

"I'm in close contact with some of the very few people who still speak Afrikaans as their native tongue and they've welcomed me into their homes. With everything in place, it's time to start shooting."

Produced by The Good Work Picture Company, the film's first steps are being funded through popular crowd-funding platform Indiegogo. They are looking for USD6000 to film an initial short documentary, which will then be used to secure funding for the feature-length version.

"The outpouring of support has been amazing. Within the first three days of the campaign, we had already had over

USD2000 pledged. Clearly the story is resonating with a lot of people. We now need more people to kick in further, to ensure that this film becomes a reality."

Contributors to the campaign are offered various perks, depending on their level of involvement, including DVDs of the film and even production credits.

This is Gregory's second feature film as director. The first, Crumbs: Toppling the Bread Cartel, recently won a Bronze Loerie award and is due for international festival release in 2014. Gregory believes that The Boers at the End of the World is a film that could have international appeal.

A parallel world without the intervention of apartheid

"Being an English-speaking South African, I'm able to approach this documentary with no cultural or political agenda and simply present the most honest and respectful tale that I can. It's definitely a story that people find intriguing internationally - the community is seen as a time capsule of what present-day Afrikaans society may have been, on the far side of the world - a parallel world without the intervention of apartheid in South African society."

The crowdfunding campaign will be running until 16 November 2013, and can be found at:

<http://igg.me/at/boersattheendoftheworld>

People can also join the Facebook page to stay up to date with the production, which has gained hundreds of followers in the last week: www.facebook.com/boersattheendoftheworld

With surnames like Van der Merwe, Kruger, Visser, Botha, Myburgh and Venter to be found in Argentina, this is a story to which many South Africans are connected.

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