Telling Stories: *Gone With the Wind* and American Memory

Section 1 – Apartment Entrance

Intro Panel 0.1
The Stories We Tell

Welcome to The Dump...

Margaret Mitchell and her husband John Marsh lived in this small two-room apartment you are about to enter from 1925 to 1932. During that time, Mitchell wrote most of what became *Gone With the Wind*. She derisively dubbed their apartment "The Dump."[1]

The Atlanta that comes alive through her storytelling, and later through the work of filmmaker David O. Selznick, is an image of the city that has endured for decades. *Gone With the Wind*—both book and film—shaped the way that millions of people understand the history of the most consequential conflict in American history, the Civil War. Mitchell's novel is complex, and it conveys a history that Mitchell understood to be accurate—but that wasn't always the case, especially in moments where she writes about the experiences of African Americans, slavery, and the meaning of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Atlanta History Center continues to present this story because examining Mitchell's work and legacy illustrates how historical fiction influences our understanding of history—in ways that are profound and surprising.

Section 2.1 – Apartment Living Room

Text Panel 2.1.2
Living in the Dump

After a brief and unhappy marriage to Berrien "Red" Upshaw from September 1922 to October 1924, Mitchell wed John Marsh in 1925. A mild-mannered public relations officer for Georgia Power, Marsh had been the best man at Mitchell's first wedding. The couple spent the first seven years of their marriage in this apartment.

Midtown at the time was a vibrant neighborhood with numerous shops and businesses clustered near the intersection of Peachtree and 10th Streets. The Jazz Age was in full swing and Mitchell and Marsh had a lively social life, frequently entertaining friends and newspaper colleagues in The Dump.[2]

Embedded Image-G12
Margaret Mitchell and Berrien Upshaw Wedding, September 2, 1922

Mitchell (fifth from right) stands arm-in-arm with her groom, Berrien "Red" Upshaw, at their wedding celebration. Upshaw abandoned her four months later and the marriage ended in divorce in October 1924. On July 4, 1925, Mitchell married Upshaw's best man, John Marsh (second from the left).

Margaret Mitchell House Museum Visual Arts Collection, VIS 140, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

---

[1] Lois Cole to John Marsh, 4 January 1938, Box 95, Call number *ZL-403, Macmillan Company Records Author Files, New York Public Library Archives.

[2] Anne Edwards, *Road to Tara: The Life of Margaret Mitchell* (Lanham: Taylor Trade Publishing, 1983), 120.

AFPG-A1 & A3
Margaret Mitchell's Typing Desk and Ladderback Chair

An intensely private person, Mitchell tried to keep her book a secret while she worked on it, stuffing completed chapters into Manilla envelopes and hiding them under towels or seat cushions when friends dropped by.

The wooden folding typewriter table and ladderback chair were gifts to Atlanta History Center from Mitchell's brother and his wife. They included a brass plaque noting that Mitchell used this table and chair when writing *Gone With the Wind*.

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stephens Mitchell, 1956

AFPG-A2
Margaret Mitchell's Editing Clipboard
With reproduction typescript page from *Gone With the Wind*

At Mitchell's prior request, her husband destroyed most of her *Gone With the Wind* manuscript after her death in 1949. He preserved a few chapters—contained in a package in an Atlanta bank vault—in case of future disputes over authorship (i.e., claims of using a ghostwriter), an accusation that was sometimes leveled against female authors at the time.

Gift of Margaret Mitchell Marsh, 1937

AFPG-A4
Typewriter
Remington Portable No. 3

Mitchell's "study" was wherever she chose to set up her tiny desk and portable typewriter. She often sat by this window to work on her novel, with stacks of books beside her. This typewriter is the same model used by Mitchell when working on the novel. Her actual typewriter is located at the main branch of the Fulton County Library System.

Atlanta History Center Collections, Margaret Mitchell House Museum, 1997

Text Panel 2.0
Setting the Scene

Gone With the Wind is a work of fiction written more than half a century after the period in which it is set. Like all works of fiction, it is an artifact of the time and place in which it was created.

Margaret Mitchell's novel is the story of one white Southern family's struggle during the Civil War and Reconstruction, from roughly 1861 to 1873. She created the characters, events, and relationships from her own imagination and experience.

Mitchell wrote most of the novel between 1926 and 1929 while living in this apartment. She was influenced by family lore, popular stories, as well as the literature and historical interpretation of the period. In crafting the story, she drew on historical sources at the Atlanta Historical Society (now known as Atlanta History Center), State of

Georgia Archives, and Atlanta public library.[3] All of this she blended with her own experience growing up in Atlanta during the first quarter of the 20th century.

Text Panel 2.1

A Southern Girl in the Jazz Age

Margaret Mitchell was born in Atlanta in 1900, on the cusp of the new century. An adventurous child and avid reader, Mitchell spent her earliest years with her parents and brother Stephens Mitchell in the affluent neighborhood of Jackson Hill, east of downtown, in a house located on Jackson Street north of Irwin Street and south of Highland Avenue. In 1912, her family moved to Peachtree Street north of 17th Street. She was often in the company of members of their large extended family. Margaret's father Eugene was a noted attorney who helped found the Atlanta Historical Society (now Atlanta History Center) in 1926.

Her mother Mary Isabel "Maybelle" was known for her intelligence, charm, and activism on behalf of women's suffrage.[4]

After high school, Margaret—or "Peggy" as she came to call herself—enrolled at Smith College in Massachusetts. Her mother's death in 1919 led her to cut her studies short and return to Atlanta. Typical of a young woman of her class and status, Mitchell entered the debutante circuit in 1920. Her independent and rebellious spirit ultimately set her on a different path.

Embedded Image-G6

Margaret, Maybelle, and Stephens Mitchell, circa 1903

Purchase in support of Margaret Mitchell House, 2023

Embedded Image-G7

Margaret Mitchell, circa 1920

Mitchell embraced the 1920s "flapper" culture. Here, she poses in the doorway of her family's home at 1401 Peachtree Street, seven blocks north of The Dump. Her brother Stephens Mitchell demolished the house in the 1950s.

Margaret Mitchell House Museum Visual Arts Collection, VIS 140, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Embedded Image-G8

Margaret Mitchell Performing the Apache Dance, 1921

At a debutante ball in 1921, Mitchell performed the risqué Apache Dance—said to be the latest craze in Paris—with Sigmund Weil, a student at Georgia Tech. Her provocative performance caused a stir among polite society and allegedly led the Junior League to blackball her membership.[5]

Fulton County Library System

AFPG Facsimile mounted on text panel – G9

---

[3] Darden Asbury Pyron, *Southern Daughter: The Life of Margaret Mitchell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 240, 289.

[4] Darden Asbury Pyron, *Southern Daughter*, 38, 40.

[5] Darden Asbury Pyron, *Southern Daughter*, 107, 109.

When We Were Shipwrecked

As a child, Mitchell filled copybooks and homemade booklets, such as this, with stories and plays.

Margaret Mitchell House Archives, MSS 978, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Text Panel 2.1.1

A Born Writer

Though she published only one book during her life-time, Margaret Mitchell was a writer and teller of tales from her earliest days. As a child, she penned numerous stories and plays. She often staged backyard productions of her work with the help of neighborhood children.

At age 22, with no journalism experience and just one year of college, Mitchell talked her way into a job in the male-dominated newspaper field, as a writer for the Sunday magazine of the *Atlanta Journal*.

Embedded Image G11

"'Honest Man' Wakes Up to Find Himself a Thief"
Peggy Mitchell, author
Sunday magazine, *Atlanta Journal*, July 19, 1925

Mitchell worked for four years at *the Journal* at a time when few Southern white women pursued careers. She wrote approximately 120 pieces, dozens of unsigned articles, numerous book reviews, and sometimes the gossip column.

Margaret Mitchell House Archives, MSS 978, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Embedded Image G10

Margaret Mitchell Interviewing College Students, 1920s

The puckish Peggy Mitchell could hold her own with her sometimes-coarse male newspaper colleagues—smoking cigarettes, using impolite language, and holding her liquor as necessary.[6]

Margaret Mitchell House Museum Visual Arts Collection, VIS 140, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Text Panel 2.1.4

Southern Roots

Margaret Mitchell was a fourth-generation Atlantan. Her grandfathers both fought for the Confederacy in the Civil War. Growing up, she often spent Sunday afternoons with older relatives and family friends who entertained her with stories of the war and its many hardships.

Mitchell was instilled with Confederate sympathies from an early age. She later noted, perhaps only partly in jest, "I heard everything in the world except that the Confederates lost the war. When I was 10 years old, it was a violent shock to learn that General Lee had been defeated."[7]

AFPG (4) – G16, G17, G18, G19

John Stephens, circa 1865

---

[6] Darden Asbury Pyron, *Southern Daughter*, 152, 155.

[7] Margaret Mitchell, interview by Medora Perkerson, *The Atlanta Journal*, WSB Atlanta, 3 July 1936.

Margaret Mitchell's maternal grandfather

John Stephens grew up in Ireland and left for Augusta, Georgia, as a young man. During the Civil War, he joined the 9th Georgia Infantry Regiment, Confederate States Army, and rose to the rank of captain. He spent much of the war in the vicinity of Atlanta. He settled in the city after the war and became a prosperous merchant and real estate developer.

Margaret Mitchell House Museum Visual Arts Collection, VIS 140, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Annie Elizabeth Fitzgerald Stephens, circa 1890
Margaret Mitchell's maternal grandmother

Annie Fitzgerald of Clayton County, Georgia, was born in 1844, one year before *Gone With the Wind's* fictional heroine Scarlett O'Hara. She married John Stephens in April 1863. Like Scarlett, she was a successful businesswoman in the postwar period and was known to ride on horseback to personally collect her tenants' rent.

Margaret Mitchell House Museum Visual Arts Collection, VIS 140, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Deborah Margaret Sweet Mitchell, circa 1865
Margaret Mitchell's paternal grandmother

Margaret Mitchell never knew her paternal grandmother, an austere and often sickly woman who succumbed to tuberculosis in 1887 at the age of 40. Deborah Sweet's grandmother was Anne Munnerlyn Sweet—it is from her that Margaret Mitchell received her middle name—Munnerlyn.

Margaret Mitchell House Museum Visual Arts Collection, VIS 140, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Russell Crawford Mitchell, circa 1865
Margaret Mitchell's paternal grandfather

Born in 1837, Russell Mitchell was a child when he moved with his family to the town of Marthasville—later renamed Atlanta. A secessionist, he fought for the Confederacy at Antietam, where he survived two bullets to the skull. After the war, Mitchell opened a lumber mill, supplying lumber to the rapidly growing city of Atlanta, and made a name for himself in business and local politics.

Margaret Mitchell House Museum Visual Arts Collection, VIS 140, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

AFPG
Margaret Mitchell
Circa 1936

Fulton County Library System

AFPG
Margaret Mitchell to C. Mildred Thompson, 1937

"Miss Thompson" in this letter was C. Mildred Thompson, a historian from Columbia University's Dunning School who wrote *Reconstruction in Georgia*. Though the Dunning School's findings are now disputed, Margaret Mitchell used Thompson's book extensively when researching. Thompson praised *Gone With the Wind* and even named her puppy "Georgia Scarlett."

Gone With the Wind Literary Estate Papers, MS3366, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, The University of Georgia Libraries

Section 2.2 – Apartment Bedroom

Text Panel 2.2

Margaret Mitchell's Atlanta

Mitchell lived her whole life in Atlanta. The city helped shape her work and her novel helped form the city's identity. In many ways, *Gone With the Wind* and modern Atlanta are inseparably linked. About the book's main character Scarlett O'Hara, she later noted: "I thought I would write a story of a girl who was somewhat like Atlanta—[part old South; part new South]; [how] she rose with Atlanta and fell with it, and how she rose again."[8]

Atlanta flourished economically in the decades after the Civil War. By the late 19th century, the city was promoted as the center of the "New South." Proponents of the New South believed the region had left the stigma of defeat and slavery behind and was primed for economic development.

Atlanta grew rapidly and its educational and employment opportunities attracted many from across the South, including a large African American population.

Black communities in Atlanta established premier Black higher educational institutions following the Civil War. This included member institutions of today's Atlanta University Center, which provided educational opportunities never before available.[9] As a result, the city's young Black professionals made up a growing middle class. But as the city's Black community grew, white city leaders systematically erased their rights, especially the right to vote.[10]

Embedded Image – G21

"Cotton States and International Exposition, Atlanta, Georgia"
G.W. Peters, artist
Harper's Weekly, September 21, 1895

The Cotton States and International Exposition of 1895 aimed to showcase Atlanta as the economic engine of the New South. Equivalent to a world's fair, the exposition highlighted the resources and products of Georgia and the South to the nation and the world. Open for 100 days, nearly 800,000 people attended.

Cotton States and International Exposition Collection, MSS 1022, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Embedded Image – G22

---

[8] Margaret Mitchell, Letter to Norman Berg. October 22, 1936. Anne Edwards papers, MSS 524, box 3, folder 6, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center.

[9] Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, *America's Black Capital: How African Americans Remade Atlanta in the Shadow of the Confederacy* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2023), 207.

[10] Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, *America's Black Capital: How African Americans Remade Atlanta in the Shadow of the Confederacy* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2023), 222-223.

"Professor Booker T. Washington"
New York Herald, October 20, 1895

At the Cotton States exposition, African American scholar Booker T. Washington delivered his famous "Atlanta Compromise" speech. He advocated economic opportunity for African Americans over immediate social and political equality, a position that delayed an immediate challenge to racial segregation and disturbed many Black leaders.

Cotton States and International Exposition Collection, MSS 1022, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Text Panel 2.2.1
Confederate Memory

The Confederacy was a tangible presence in Margaret Mitchell's Atlanta. Some monuments, such as the Confederate Obelisk in Oakland Cemetery, were erected shortly after the Civil War to honor dead soldiers. Ladies Memorial Associations were founded across the South and focused on relocating battlefield graves of Confederate soldiers and erecting monuments to the dead, mostly within cemeteries. Large-scale efforts to memorialize the Confederacy began with the founding of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) in the 1890s. The UDC's efforts continued well into the 20th century.

Through fundraising for Confederate monuments and the distribution of pro-Confederate pamphlets, artwork, and textbooks, the UDC successfully promoted Lost Cause ideology. That view claimed that secession was lawful, slavery was benevolent, and the Confederate cause was noble and just.[11]

Most importantly, Lost Cause ideology denied slavery as the single most important cause of the Civil War.

Embedded Image – G24
John Brown Gordon Monument
Solon Hannibal de la Mothe Borglum, artist, 1907

The statue of Confederate general and Ku Klux Klan leader John Brown Gordon on the grounds of the Georgia State Capitol is one of more than 60 Confederate monuments erected in Georgia between 1900 and 1920.[12] The sculptor Solon Borglum was the brother of Gutzon Borglum, the first sculptor to work on the Stone Mountain Confederate Memorial in the early 1920s and the carver of Mount Rushmore.

Atlanta History Photograph Collection, VIS 170.2752.001, Kenneth G. Rogers, photographer, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

AFPG – G23a
Catechism on the History of the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865
Memphis: Mrs. Harry Davis Allen, 1962

---

[11] Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, *America's Black Capital: How African Americans Remade Atlanta in the Shadow of the Confederacy* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2023), 244-245, 320.

[12] "Whose Heritage Master Sheet," *Southern Poverty Law Center*, June 28, 2024, https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17ps4aqRyaIfpu7KdGsy2HRZaaQiXUfLrpUbaR9yS51E/edit?gid=400111512#gid=400111512.

The United Daughters of the Confederacy used a simple question-and-answer format to teach children their version of Southern history. The first branch of the Children of the Confederacy was organized in 1896 and the first catechism was published as early as 1904.

United Daughters of the Confederacy Collection, MSS 765, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

AFPG – A23

Peace Monument Maquette

Erected in Piedmont Park in 1911, the Peace Monument reflected the Reconciliation Movement. Reconciliation proponents advocated for forgiving differences between North and South and unifying the nation, making a point to emphasize equal valor on both sides of the conflict. Reconciliation also ignored the issue of slavery altogether as the main cause of the Civil War and minimized or erased the contributions of African Americans—leading to an incomplete reconciliation that allowed the rights of Black Americans, especially in the South, to be curtailed.[13]

Gift of the Old Guard of the Gate City Guard, 2010

Text Panel 2.2.2

Jim Crow

In the years following Reconstruction, white residents across the South sought to reassert white supremacy. The U.S. Supreme Court's 1896 decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* approving "separate but equal" accommodations lent legal support to their efforts.

In Atlanta, a range of discriminatory measures known as Jim Crow laws forced African Americans into separate—and typically unequal—facilities in the early 20th century. By the 1910s, Atlanta's parks, restaurants, streetcars, and other public facilities were segregated, and most African Americans were denied the right to vote.[14]

Embedded Image – G25a

Ponce de Leon Amusement Park,
Atlanta, Georgia, circa 1915

Atlanta's Ponce de Leon Park was a popular destination in the early 20th century. The sign reads:

"Ponce de Leon is a private park under city police regulations. No disorderly characters tolerated. Colored persons admitted as servants only."

In 1926, Sears, Roebuck & Company built a warehouse and distribution building on the park site. The building is now Ponce City Market.

Atlanta History Photograph Collection, VIS 170.3006.001, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

AFPG – A5

"Authorized Agents for Home Owners Loan Corp."
J.H. Ewing & Sons, circa 1939

Despite building a thriving community of businesses, colleges, churches, and civic institutions, segregation applied to virtually every aspect of African American life, including housing. This sign enabled realtors to clearly distinguish between homes that were available to white and Black clients.

---

[13] David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American History* (Cambridge: Belnap Press, 2001), 42.

[14] Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, *America's Black Capital: How African Americans Remade Atlanta in the Shadow of the Confederacy* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2023), 199.

Gift of Healey Building Associates, 1986

Text Panel 2.2.4
Forward Black Atlanta

Atlanta's population tripled between 1900 and 1930, from about 90,000 to more than 270,000. The city also expanded as a regional business and transportation center. Electric streetcars shuttled busy urban residents around and through the swelling neighborhoods of the growing metropolis.

Atlanta's Black population grew as well, despite ongoing social, economic, and geographic segregation. Guided by the higher education institutions of the Atlanta University Center and the city's thriving Black churches, Black residents developed a national reputation for cultural and intellectual leadership. After the 1906 Race Massacre, a vibrant Black business hub on Atlanta's east side, known as "Sweet Auburn," blossomed along Auburn Avenue, becoming known as "the richest Negro street in the world."[15]

Embedded Image – G29
"Welcome to Atlanta/A City Worth Seeing"
Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, 1930

In 1925, the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce initiated the "Forward Atlanta" campaign to attract business to the already booming metropolis. The campaign successfully drew more than 750 new companies to the city, creating thousands of jobs.

Atlanta History Photograph Collection, VIS 170.3938.001, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Embedded Image – G29a
Staff of Atlanta Life Insurance Company, circa 1925

Entrepreneur Alonzo Herndon, who began life enslaved, built the Atlanta Life Insurance Company into one of the most prosperous Black-owned companies in Atlanta's Sweet Auburn district.

Courtesy Herndon Home

Text Panel 2.3
"In a Weak Moment I Have Written a Book."[16]

Margaret Mitchell left her newspaper job with the *Atlanta Journal* in the spring of 1926 while recovering from an ankle injury. Cooped up in the tiny apartment, she spent her time reading anything she could get her hands on. Eventually, she began writing a book of her own.

The Civil War stories on which Mitchell was reared offered a ready backdrop for her novel. She later noted, "It didn't take me any time to get my plot and characters. They were there and I took them and set them against the background, which I knew as well as I did my own background."[17]

---

[15] Wilma Dykeman, James Stokely, "New Southerner: The Middle-Class Negro; His emergence, while its greatest impact is in the South, has meaning for the nation." *The New York Times* (New York, NY), Aug. 9, 1959.

[16] Margaret Mitchell, in a letter to Wilbur Kurtz, dated November 19, 1935. Quoted in Wendy Hamand Venet, *Gone But Not Forgotten: Atlantans Commemorate the Civil War* (Athens: of Georgia Press, 2020), 110.

[17] Margaret Mitchell, letter to Norman Berg. October 22, 1936. Anne Edwards papers, MSS 524, box 3, folder 6, Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta History Center.

As Mitchell wove the narrative strands of her novel, she drew heavily on family lore and on the characters and stories of 19th-century plantation romance novels—reinforcing some stereotypes even as she challenged others.

AFPG – G30
Margaret Mitchell, 1937

According to a popular legend (possibly invented by the author herself)[18], Mitchell's husband John Marsh brought books home daily from the public library to feed her voracious reading habit. After she finished what he claimed was every book in the library, he bought her a ream of paper and suggested she write her own.

Kenneth Rogers Photographs, VIS 82.121.28, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

AFPG – A7
Gone With the Wind
1st edition, 32nd printing, 1937

Mitchells' novel was first published in 1936. It told the story of Scarlett O'Hara, the spoiled daughter of a Clayton County plantation owner who comes of age during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Scarlett struggles to provide for her family and save their home by any means necessary as her world is upended by war and its aftermath.

Purchase with funds in support of "Telling Stories"

Text Panel 2.3.2
Mitchell's Bookshelf

By 1929, Mitchell had essentially completed a full draft of her novel. She spent the next several years revising, rewriting, and checking her facts. She researched old newspapers in the *Atlanta Journal* archives.[19] She scoured historical maps and memoirs at the Atlanta public library, Atlanta Historical Society (where her father was vice president)[20], and the State of Georgia archives then at Rhodes Hall. She also visited the sites of several Atlanta-area Civil War battles.[21]

Mitchell also consulted her extensive home library. Although she was diligent in her research, her sources drew mainly from pro-Confederate writers and historians sympathetic to white Southerners' viewpoints. Her novel was noted for its historical accuracy in references to actual Civil War events and local geography, such as troop movements, Atlanta street and location names, and other factual details. Yet the book's characterization of people's attitudes—particularly the Black characters in the novel—and its depiction of the institution of slavery was influenced by Lost Cause ideology and inaccurate views of Reconstruction.

---

[18] Pyron, *Southern Daughter*, 226.

[19] Darden Asbury Pyron, *Southern Daughter*, 226.

[20] Margaret Mitchell, letter to Arthur H. Morse, in *Margaret Mitchell's Gone With the Wind Letters: 1936-1949*, ed. Richard Harwell (New York: Macmillan, 1976.

[21] Pyron, *Southern Daughter*, 289.

ATLANTA HISTORY CENTER

AFPG – A9
Margaret Mitchell's Library

Margaret Mitchell used many of these books while she was writing *Gone With the Wind.* Displayed here are the same editions that Margaret Mitchell would have owned. Most focus on Southern history, the Civil War, and Reconstruction, and reflect the now-discredited Lost Cause ideology or hostility toward Reconstruction. Books like Myrta Lockett Avary's *Dixie After the War* (1906) were particularly influential for Mitchell – anecdotes from that book also appear in *Gone With the Wind.*

Mitchell Family Collection, Atlanta History Center, 2022

AFPG – G32
Margaret Mitchell to Thomas Dixon, 1936

White supremacist Thomas Dixon wrote several racist novels, including *The Clansman*, which was made into the film *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915. In this letter to Dixon, Mitchell notes that she was "practically raised on" his books.

Gone With the Wind Literary Estate Papers, MS3366, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, The University of Georgia Libraries

AFPG – G33
Margaret Mitchell, 1916

Released in 1915, the wildly popular and influential silent film *The Birth of a Nation* was based on Thomas Dixon's racist novel *The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*. The second book in a trilogy, Dixon told the story of the Civil War and Reconstruction from a pro-Confederate viewpoint. The following year, a teenage Mitchell put on a backyard production of his sequel, *The Traitor*, dressing herself in the role of Klansman Steve Hoyle.[22]

Margaret Mitchell House Museum Visual Arts Collection, VIS 140, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Text Panel 2.3.1
Mr. Latham Comes to Town

In April 1935, Harold Latham, an editor for the publishing company Macmillan, came to Atlanta in search of fresh book manuscripts. A friend of Mitchell's suggested that he talk to her. After denying that any manuscript existed, Mitchell appeared at Latham's hotel on the eve of his departure with two enormous stacks of typed pages.

The next day, overcome by regret, Mitchell dispatched a telegram: "Send it back, I've changed my mind."[23] But it was too late. Latham had already read the pages and recognized Mitchell's talent. By July, Mitchell had a book contract in hand.

AFPG – G31
Margaret Mitchell and Harold Latham, circa 1936

[22] Pyron, *Southern Daughter*, 56.

[23] Harold S. Latham, *My Life in Publishing* (New York: Dutton, 1965), p. 52.

Mitchell gave Latham credit for much of the novel's success and for his contribution to Southern literature as a whole. "You have done so very much for writing people here in the South," she wrote to Latham in 1938.[24]

Margaret Mitchell House Museum Visual Arts Collection, VIS 140, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

AFPG – A8
Harold Latham's Suitcase, 1936

The manuscript Mitchell presented to Harold Latham was so bulky that he purchased this extra suitcase to transport it to New York.

Gift of Ernest Latham, 2002

Text Panel 2.3.3
A Powerful Bestseller

Gone With the Wind appeared on bookstore shelves on June 30, 1936.

It became an instant phenomenon, the fastest-selling novel of its time. More than 1,000,000 copies sold in the first six months; 1.7 million within the first year. In May 1937, Margaret Mitchell was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. *Gone With the Wind* was soon translated into multiple languages and drew a massive international audience. To date, more than 30 million copies have been printed worldwide and there are 27 authorized translations published in 37 countries.

The book's massive popularity upended life for Mitchell—a private person who avoided attention—thrusting her uncomfortably into the international spotlight.

Embedded Photo – G34
Margaret Mitchell Opening Fan Mail in Her Home, 1948

Mitchell initially agreed to appearances and interviews but soon withdrew from the spotlight, pleading poor health. She remained a diligent correspondent, however, personally answering every letter she received.

AJCNS1948-01-22a, Atlanta Journal-Constitution Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library

AFPG – G35
Margaret Mitchell With Foreign Editions of *Gone With the Wind*, 1947

[24] Margaret Mitchell to Harold Latham, September 9, 1938. Margaret Mitchell Files, Macmillan Company Records, New York Public Library, New York, New York.

Along with numerous official translations came many unauthorized versions of *Gone With the Wind*. Mitchell and her family spent years asserting copyright to block international pirated copies of the book.

Margaret Mitchell Personality File, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

AFPG – G36
Margaret Mitchell to Harold Latham, 1939

"For months," Mitchell wrote to Harold Latham in 1939, "I have been aroused every morning at five by telegrams and special deliverys (sic) and long distance phone calls. … Loving quiet and privacy as we do, this has not been very pleasant. …"

Gone with the Wind Literary Estate Papers, MS3366, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, The University of Georgia Libraries

Section 2.3 – Apartment Kitchen

Text Panel
Margaret Mitchell After the Novel

Margaret Mitchell was shocked when her book became a bestseller. Despite her dislike of fame, she answered every fan letter.[25] She also spent her time organizing for the Red Cross during World War II[26] and working alongside her husband and brother to pursue numerous copyright lawsuits related to the book.[27]

On August 11, 1949, Margaret Mitchell and John Marsh were crossing Peachtree Street when a car struck Mitchell near the 13th street intersection. She died on August 16, 1949 at Grady Memorial Hospital at 48 years old. She is buried at Oakland Cemetery.

Her death shocked Atlanta and the world. Tributes to Margaret Mitchell in her home city include Margaret Mitchell Square and Margaret Mitchell Elementary School, which was dedicated in 1954. The school housed the portrait of Scarlett seen in the 1939 film in the Butler's mansion on Peachtree Street. Today, the school is known as Morris Brandon Elementary School.

AFPG – G160A

---

[25] Darden Asbury Pyron, *Southern Daughter: The Life of Margaret Mitchell*, 340, 350.

[26] Letter from Margaret Mitchell to Richard B. Harwell, March 23, 1945, in *Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With the Wind" Letters 1936-1949,* ed. Richard Harwell, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), 386, 387.

[27] Letter from Margaret Mitchell to Wallace McClure, August 8, 1940, in *Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With the Wind" Letters 1936-1949*, ed. Richard Harwell, 311-313.

Margaret Mitchell Square
Kit-Yin Snyder, sculptor
City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs Public Art Program, 1986

Located on Peachtree Street, Margaret Mitchell Square is near the former site of Loew's Grand Theatre, where *Gone With the Wind* premiered in 1939. The square was rededicated in 1986 on the 50th anniversary of the book's publication.

RGB Ventures / SuperStock / Alamy Stock Photo

AFPG
Margaret Mitchell's Wallet and Driver License
1949

Mitchell Family Collection, Atlanta History Center, 2022

Text Panel
The Preservation of 979 Crescent Avenue

Single Family Residence, 1899 to 1919
Cornelius Sheehan constructed the original residence as a single-family home on Peachtree Street. The house was moved to the back of the lot and a third floor added.

Apartments, 1919 to 1977
The house is converted into Crescent Apartments (later, Windsor Apartments). Its most famous tenants, Margaret Mitchell and John Marsh, occupied Apartment No. 1 from 1925-1932, during which time Mitchell wrote the majority of *Gone With the Wind*.[28] By 1977, the last tenants moved out and the building became dilapidated.

Preservation, 1980 to 1997
Two non-profits organized by community activists aimed to save the property and pay tribute to Margaret Mitchell. The greatest threat came in 1988 when property developers sought a demolition permit. Mayor Andrew Young denied the permit and the City later defended its decision in court. Well-known journalist and community activist Mary Rose Taylor led the effort formally beginning in 1991 after years of significant behind-the-scenes involvement. She steered the project to completion, despite two devastating arson fires in 1994 and 1996. Margaret Mitchell House & Museum opened in 1997.

AFPG
Mary Rose Taylor after fire at 979 Crescent Ave

Many doubted the survival of the Margaret Mitchell House's preservation after the fires. Mary Rose Taylor became the public face of the effort to save the house and ultimately led the project to its successful completion. "I'm not a quitter." Taylor said simply to a reporter in a 1998 Atlanta Magazine article following the museum's opening.

Atlanta Journal Constitution

AFPG
Dr. Otis Smith and Mary Rose Taylor
1997

[28] Pyron, *Southern Daughter*, 225.

After becoming aware of the poor condition of medical care for Black Atlantans, Margaret Mitchell donated funds to create tuition scholarships at Morehouse College. Dr. Otis Smith, the first recipient of Mitchell's scholarship and the first Black pediatrician in Georgia, smiles with Mary Rose Taylor in front of the fully-restored Margaret Mitchell House.

Atlanta Journal Constitution

Section 3.1 – Gallery Area

AFPG (2)

Advertisements for *Gone With the Wind*, 1936-37

Gone With the Wind Literary Estate Papers, MS3366, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, The University of Georgia Libraries

David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Margaret Mitchell Personality File, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Bookstore Displays, circa 1936

Gone With the Wind Literary Estate Papers, MS3366, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, The University of Georgia Libraries

AFPG

Telegrams Tracking *Gone With the Wind* Book Sales, 1936

After Hollywood producer David O. Selznick purchased the film rights to *Gone With the Wind*, his team monitored the book's growing sales. Telegrams flew back and forth within his organization as sales ballooned in late 1936.

David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Text Panel 3.0

***Gone With the Wind* in Its Time**

Margaret Mitchell's novel became a popular sensation in 1936. Its theme of resilience in the face of adversity resonated powerfully with Depression-era readers in the U.S. and abroad.

The movie version, produced by David O. Selznick in 1939, expanded the story's cultural footprint. The press hailed it as an instant classic. Its characters, images, and dialogue became standard parts of American popular culture.

At the time of its release, some critics recognized *Gone With the Wind's* historical distortions and use of racial stereotyping prevalent in American society. Most of the critiques leveled at *Gone With the Wind*, however, went unheard or unheeded at the time, overwhelmed by the immense popularity of the book and film.[29]

[29] Earl J. Morris, "'Gone With the Wind' Put On Spot by Earl Morris: Predicts Picture Will Be Worse Than 'Birth of a Nation," *The Pittsburgh Courier* (Pittsburgh, PA), Feb. 4, 1939.

AFPG – G62
***Gone With the Wind* Dustjacket Illustration, 1939**

The book's cover illustration featured a placid panorama of hoop skirts and courtly gentlemen—complete with a Confederate flag on the spine. The imagery foretold an escapist fantasy that Depression-era audiences were thrilled to buy, even at the going rate of $3 a copy, equal to approximately $65 in 2024.

David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Text Panel 3.1.1
Striking A Chord

Gone With the Wind struck a chord with many 1930s readers. For those enduring the Great Depression, the fantasy of idealized plantation life offered escape from dreary reality. Mitchell's story of surviving hard times provided hope that determination and hard work brought better days.

For some Americans as well as readers across Europe and the world, the ravages of the Civil War evoked World War I, in which they had lost fathers, sons, husbands, and brothers. Many women found inspiration in Scarlett's strength and independence.

Recognizing the public response to Scarlett, David O. Selznick embarked on a two-year nation-wide search to find the person to portray the Southern heroine. As he screen-tested Hollywood actresses, Selznick also sent talent scouts across the nation in search of Scarlett—with a great deal of publicity to build excitement for the upcoming motion picture. Selznick finally discovered his Scarlett, British actress Vivien Leigh, on December 10, 1938, as filming began.

Embedded Image
Vivien Leigh Screen Test
December 21, 1938

The multiple-scene screen test for Vivien Leigh included Hattie McDaniel as Mammy, Leslie Howard as Ashley Wilkes, and MGM contract actor Douglass Montgomery as a stand-in for Howard as Ashley.

https://i.pinimg.com/originals/25/d0/4c/25d04c97fd66c4f538b17881ff2625d3.jpg

Text Panel 3.1
"I Feel There Is An Excellent Picture In It"[30]

Hollywood producer David O. Selznick purchased film rights to *Gone With the Wind* one month after its publication. It took three years, five directors, 13 writers, thousands of auditions, and a record-breaking $4.25 million to bring it to the screen.

Selznick's needs included reducing a 1,037-page novel to a filmable length and casting characters in which there was deep public interest. As the search for Scarlett held the nation's attention, Selznick filled the other main white characters with known Hollywood actors. For most of the novel's readers, Clark Gable seemed a unanimous choice for Rhett and by mid-1938 Selznick had also settled on Olivia de Havilland as Melanie Hamilton and Leslie Howard as Ashley Wilkes.

[30] Memo from David O. Selznick to Kay Brown, May 26, 1936, in *Memo From David O. Selznick,* ed. Rudy Behlmer (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 151-152.

The result was an unprecedented movie. The film's immense popularity, technical innovation, commercial tie-ins, and star-studded cast helped lift Hollywood's notion of what a movie could be and paved the way for future blockbusters.

Embedded Image

***Gone With the Wind* Author, Producer, and Cast**
Vivien Leigh, Clark Gable, Margaret Mitchell, David O. Selznick, and Olivia de Havilland at a Piedmont Driving Club press party.
Atlanta, December 15, 1939

Producer David O. Selznick was running his own studio, Selznick International Pictures, by the age of 33. Before *Gone With the Wind*, he had backed *King Kong, Dinner at Eight*, and other successful movies during Hollywood's Golden Age. Though he later received the Best Picture Oscar for *Rebecca*, he never matched the artistic and financial success of *Gone With the Wind*.

Kenneth Rogers Photographs, VIS 82, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

AFPG – G56
Katherine "Kay" Brown and John Hay "Jock" Whitney
Leo Lieb, photographer
Daily Mirror, London, 1937

After scrutinizing an early proof of *Gone With the Wind* in May 1936, Kay Brown dashed off a synopsis to her boss David O. Selznick along with a note: "Drop everything and buy it." John Whitney was a founding investor in Selznick International Pictures and its chairman of the board. He put up half the money to buy the film rights to the novel before the book was even published.

David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

AFPG – G143
Walter White to David O. Selznick, 1938

In 1938, NAACP head Walter White wrote to Selznick, concerned that the film would paint a negative and inaccurate picture of African Americans. White suggested that Selznick hire an African American advisor to help him navigate the challenges of bringing Mitchell's story and characters to the screen.

David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin
AFPG – G70
David O. Selznick to Walter White, 1938

Selznick at first welcomed White's suggestion to hire an African American advisor, but ultimately decided against it, concerned he would lose narrative control and be forced to compromise his artistic vision. Instead, he hired two white technical and historical advisors at Mitchell's recommendation: Georgia-born journalist Susan Myrick for Southern dialect and illustrator Wilbur Kurtz for the look of Civil War Atlanta and Georgia.

David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Text Label 3.1.2
Criticism and Opposition

Mitchell's novel received its share of criticism, particularly in press serving Black communities. Critics condemned Mitchell's use of derogatory terms, such as "gorilla" and "ape," to describe Black characters. They also disapproved

of her positive portrayal of the Ku Klux Klan and her romanticized version of plantation life featuring enslaved characters who happily bore their servitude.[31] In September 1936, Malcolm Cowley in *The New Republic* called it a veritable "encyclopedia of the plantation legend."[32]

The film version drew strong opinions before it was even released. Selznick received letters denouncing the planned production.[33] As a result, he tried to soften some of the novel's more provocative elements[34]. Selznick deleted the use of the N-word, changed the race of Scarlett's Shantytown attacker from Black to white, and removed explicit references to the KKK, though its presence was still strongly implied.

Embedded Image
"Not Gone With the Wind"
George S. Schuyler, author
The Crisis, July 1937

Columnist and commentator George Schuyler published a scathing review of Mitchell's novel in the July 1937 edition of *The Crisis*, a leading Black journal published by the NAACP. *Gone With the Wind*, Schuyler wrote, is "an effective argument against according the Negro his citizenship rights and privileges and sings Halleluja for white supremacy."

Gift of Josh Feinberg/Museum Consulting

Embedded Image
Central Conference of American Rabbis to David O. Selznick, 1938

Cognizant of rising antisemitism and racist ideology worldwide, especially in Nazi Germany, the Central Conference of American Rabbis implored Selznick to exercise caution: "Surely, at this time you would want to do nothing that might tend even in the slightest way to arouse anti-racial feeling."

David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Text Panel 3.1.3
Casting About

For about two years leading up to the start of filming in January 1939, a nationwide search for the actress to play Scarlett captured press attention. Vivien Leigh, a British actress, eventually won the part. No such public search was conducted for any of the Black characters. Despite the film's use of racist tropes, accomplished Black actors were eager to land a role in the production and showcase their talents in a significant Hollywood production.[35]

---

[31] July 27, 1935 Letter from Margaret Mitchell to Harold Latham, Macmillan Company Records, New York Public Library, MssCol 1830, *ZL-403, Box 95, Microfilm Reel 1.

[32] Malcom Cowley, "Going with the Wind," *The New Republic*, September 16, 1936: 161-162.

[33] Steve Wilson, *The Making of Gone With the Wind*, (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2014), 18.

[34] Leonard J. Leff, "'Gone With the Wind' and Hollywood's Racial Politics," *The Atlantic*, December 1999, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1999/12/gone-with-the-wind-and-hollywoods-racial-politics/377919/

[35] Leonard J. Leff, "'Gone With the Wind' and Hollywood's Racial Politics," *The Atlantic*, December 1999, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1999/12/gone-with-the-wind-and-hollywoods-racial-politics/377919/

Nevertheless, the film's Black actors faced backlash for agreeing to portray stereotypical Black roles. *The Pittsburgh Courier*, a leading Black newspaper, admonished African Americans who auditioned for the film, saying "their years of racial pride [were] being wafted away on the wings of a gust of 'Wind.'"[36]

In coordination with the studio's publicity office, some of those actors published articles in Black community newspapers that defended their decisions. One article by Oscar Polk who portrayed Pork asserted that actors "… should be glad to portray ourselves as we once were" to show "how far we have come."[37]

Embedded Image – G71
Hattie McDaniel, 1939

Hattie McDaniel expressed gratitude for the opportunity to play Mammy. "This is an opportunity to glorify negro womanhood," she wrote in a 1939 newspaper column, "... the brave, efficient type of womanhood which, building a race, mothered Booker T. Washington, George Carver, Robert Moton and Mary McLeod Bethune."[38]

Getty Images

Embedded Image – G72
Thelma "Butterfly" McQueen, 1939

Actress Butterfly McQueen hated the role of Prissy. Years later, she recalled: "I didn't like being a slave. … I did everything they asked me to, except I wouldn't let them slap me and I wouldn't eat the watermelon."[39]

Margaret Mitchell House Museum Visual Arts Collection, VIS 140, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Embedded Image – G73
Oscar Polk
Carl Van Vechten, photographer, 1934

Broadway actor Oscar Polk first appeared in films in 1935 and continued in small parts until his final appearance on screen in *Cabin in the Sky*, a 1943 folk musical film with an all-Black cast.

Van Vechten Collection, Library of Congress (LC-USZ62-114456)

AFPG – G74
Eleanor Roosevelt to Kay Brown, 1937

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt recommended her maid, Elizabeth "Lizzie" McDuffie, for the part of Mammy. A graduate of Morris Brown College, McDuffie was an early civil rights advocate and President Roosevelt's unofficial liaison to the African American community. She previously worked for Edward and Emily Inman at Atlanta's Swan House, now owned by Atlanta History Center.

---

[36] Leonard J. Leff, "'Gone With the Wind' and Hollywood's Racial Politics"

[37] Oscar Polk, "letter to the editor," *The Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), Apr. 8, 1939.

[38] Hattie McDaniel, "Woman Who Plays Role of Mammy Tells of Opportunity to Aid Race," *The Atlanta Constitution*, December 14, 1939.

[39] Thelma "Butterfly" McQueen, interview by Gary Swint, December 12, 1989, Saving the Voices from Augusta's Past, "Oral Memoirs of Augusta's Citizens," Augusta Richmond County Public Library.

David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

AFPG – G74B
Jezebel
Warner Bros., 1938

Bette Davis won her second Oscar for her performance as a spoiled headstrong Southern belle in the 1938 antebellum drama *Jezebel*. Based on a 1933 play, some critics considered the film role to be Davis's compensation for failing to win the part of Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind*—though Selznick stated that Bette Davis was never considered for Scarlett.[40]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jezebel_(1938_film)#/media/File:Jezebel_(1938_film_poster).jpg

Text Panel 3.1.4
The "Old South" on the Big Screen

Gone With the Wind's technology and production values were enhancements on earlier "Old South" movies filmed in black-and-white, including D.W. Griffith's pioneering, but controversial, *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915, *So Red the Rose* in 1935, and *Jezebel* in 1938. Despite Selznick's efforts to soften the racial material in the film, in the end *Gone With the Wind* provided a deeply sympathetic portrait of the white South, perpetuating both the ideology of the Lost Cause and racist myths about the alleged evils of Reconstruction.

Embedded Image – G74A
So Red the Rose
Paramount Pictures, 1935

Based on Stark Young's best-selling Civil War novel of the same name, the film *So Red the Rose* performed so poorly financially that Civil War films were considered "box-office poison." But the incredible success of the novel *Gone With the Wind* only one year later quickly led to other Civil War movies.

www.imdb.com/title/tt0027018/mediaviewer/rm318047232/?ref_=tt_md_11

Embedded Image
The General
Clyde Bruckman and Buster Keaton, directors Joseph M. Schenck Productions, 1927

The silent film *The General* recreates the Civil War's Great Locomotive Chase of 1862 and presents a version of history that favors the Confederacy. The chase involved a military raid in North Georgia aboard two locomotives, the *General* and the *Texas*. Comedian Buster Keaton appears as the Southern engineer hero, Johnny Gray, a would-be Confederate soldier whose enemies are Union troops. The approach shows how entrenched the romanticization of the Confederacy was in American culture: it was unremarkable for Northern audiences to watch a Confederate hero—for Southern audiences it was admirable.

The locomotive *Texas* is included in Atlanta History Center's exhibition, *Locomotion: Railroads and the Making of Atlanta*, at the Center's Buckhead location.

https://dustonthevcr.substack.com/p/thegeneral

[40] Memo from David O. Selznick to Harry M. Warner, December 1, 1937 in *Memo from David O. Selznick*, 158-159.

Text Panel 3.1.5
Praise

When the film version of *Gone With the Wind* was released in December 1939, the *New York Times* asked, "Is it the greatest motion picture ever made?" Answering its own question, the newspaper responded: "Probably not, although it is the greatest motion mural we have seen and the most ambitious film-making venture in Hollywood's spectacular history."[41]

The film was wildly popular. By many accounts, when adjusted for inflation, it remains today the highest-grossing movie in cinema history.[42]

Embedded Image – G75
State Theatre
Tallahassee, Florida, 1940

Long lines at theaters were a common sight in the months following *Gone With the Wind's* release. During its initial four-year run, the film sold about 60 million tickets in the U.S. alone.[43]

David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

AFPG – G76
"'*Gone With Wind*' Enthralls Audience With Magnificence"
Atlanta Constitution, December 16, 1939

The *Atlanta Constitution* didn't hold back in its admiration for the movie. Film critic Lee Rogers hailed its epochal impact: "'*Gone With the Wind*' opens a new film era. It has everything a great picture could have."

https://www.newspapers.com/article/40620759/gtw

AFPG – G78
Picketers Outside Lincoln Theatre
Washington, D.C., 1940

Protests against the film occurred amid the early stirrings of the Civil Rights Movement. This demonstration in Washington, D.C., was held a few months after Marian Anderson's historic 1939 performance at the Lincoln Memorial.

Scurlock Studio Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History. Smithsonian Institution

AFPG – G79
Flag, Announcing Lynching, Flown From the Window of the NAACP Headquarters
New York City, 1936

---

[41] Frank S. Nugent, "The Screen in Review," *The New York Times*, December 20, 1939.

[42] "Highest Grossing Blockbusters of All Time Adjusted for Inflation," IMDb, accessed July 16, 2024, https://www.imdb.com/list/ls026442468/.

[43] Roland Flamini, *Scarlett, Rhett, and a Cast of Thousands: The Filming of Gone With the Wind,* (New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1975), 333-336.

The NAACP advocated for anti-lynching legislation throughout the 1920s and 1930s. NAACP head Walter White expressed concern that *Gone With the Wind* mania was hampering their efforts in the South.

Visual Materials from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Records, Library of Congress (LC-DIG-ppmsca-09705)

Text Panel 3.1.6
Condemnation

Despite Selznick's attempts to minimize some of the blatantly offensive depictions and characterizations of the novel, critics—particularly in the Black press—denounced the film's racial stereotypes and its treatment of slavery. Some even called for a boycott[44]. Protesters picketed outside theaters in Chicago, Washington, D.C., and other cities. A reviewer for the *Chicago Defender* called the film a "weapon of terror against Black America."[45]

Response within the Black press, however, was not monolithic. Some reviewers felt that Selznick had effectively neutralized the offensive material. The *Atlanta Daily World* headlined a review of the film with "Nothing Offensive Is Discovered In GWTW" and commented that "Margaret Mitchell's much-used opprobrious terms in referring to Negroes have 'gone with the wind' in the screen version." In praising Hattie McDaniel's performance, the newspaper observed positively on the movie's other Black actors as a "Who's Who of Negro theatredom."[46]

Embedded Image
"'Gone With the Wind'"
The Chicago Defender, January 13, 1940

"It is anti-Negro propaganda of the most vicious character." That's how *Gone With the Wind* is described in this 1940 column in the *Chicago Defender*, one of the country's most influential Black newspapers. The article concludes by urging its readers to "organize our indignation."

ProQuest Historical Newspapers

Text Panel 3.1.7
Making Movie History

Presented in lush Technicolor, *Gone With the Wind* was a technical marvel that set a new standard for future epics and blockbusters. The movie won 10 Academy Awards, including Best Picture, in a banner year for Hollywood that included such classic films as *Stagecoach*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Wuthering Heights*.

Recognized for her nuanced portrayal of Mammy, Hattie McDaniel became the first African American to win an Oscar. The award ceremony was held at the Cocoanut Grove nightclub in Los Angeles' whites-only Ambassador Hotel. McDaniel and her date were seated at a small table at the edge of the room, apart from her white castmates.

Embedded Image – G82B

[44] John D. Stevens, "The Black Reaction to Gone With the Wind," *Journal of Popular Film*, Vol. 2, num. 4, 1973: 367.

[45] William L. Patterson, "'Gone With The Wind' Lies About The Civil War, It Glorifies Slavery, Sons of Rebels Cheer It, A Farce On Democracy," *The Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), Jan. 6, 1940.

[46] Cliff MacKay, "Nothing Offensive Is Discovered In GWTW," *Atlanta Daily World,* May 1, 1940.

Scene From *Gone With the Wind*
Selznick International Pictures and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939

While not the first film shot in Technicolor, *Gone With the Wind's* evocative use of color—from the red clay of Georgia and green fields of Tara to the fiery destruction of Atlanta—showcased the new technology's narrative potential.

Getty Images, MGM Studios/Handout

Embedded Image – G78A
Hattie McDaniel and Fay Bainter
Academy Awards Dinner Cocoanut Grove, Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles, 1940
Pat Clark, photographer

Hattie McDaniel is presented the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress at the 1940 Academy Awards by Fay Bainter, recipient of the award the previous year for *Jezebel*. It would be 50 years before another African American woman would win an Oscar for acting.

Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

Section 3.2 – Gallery Room

Text Panel 3.2
The Premiere

For Atlanta Mayor William B. Hartsfield and other civic boosters, the premiere of *Gone With the Wind* was the biggest thing to ever happen to the city outside of the war itself—and a chance for Atlanta to shine on the national stage.

The three-day event featured a star-studded parade through the downtown streets, a lavish Junior League hoop-skirt costume ball, a reception at the governor's mansion, VIP tours of *The Battle of Atlanta* cyclorama, and, of course, the world premiere screening of *Gone With the Wind*.

While white Hollywood celebrities descended on the city, the film's Black actors were not invited to join the festivities. Black and white Atlantans lined the parade route to catch a glimpse of the stars, though the city's African American residents were not allowed inside Loew's Grand Theatre. Black Atlantans had to wait four months until the film opened at the Black community's Bailey Royal Theatre on Auburn Avenue.

Embedded Image – G86
Mayor William B. Hartsfield to David O. Selznick, 1939

Mayor William B. Hartsfield began pushing for an Atlanta premiere as early as 1937. Selznick was initially hesitant, writing to a colleague, "… the idea of a town receiving us as though we had just licked the Germans is something that I for one will not go through with."[47] But Selznick ultimately went through with it.

Along with his good wishes and appreciation, Mayor Hartsfield sent Selznick and his team a box of locally grown magnolia blooms in advance of the premiere.

[47] Memo from David O. Selznick to Katharine Brown, Nov. 28, 1939, in *Memo from David O. Selznick*, ed. Rudy Behlmer (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 244.

David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin
AFPG – G85
***Gone With the Wind* Premiere Promotion**
Rich's Department Store, 1939

Local businesses sought to capitalize on *Gone With the Wind* mania with a range of promotional tie-ins, including clothing, jewelry, books, and collectibles. This poster was sponsored by the Atlanta-based department store Rich's.

Purchase with funds from Kenan Research Center for Gone With the Wind Collection, MSS 724

AFPG
Vivien Leigh
Photographer John Springer, 1939

Getty Images

AFPG
Clark Gable, 1934

Getty Images

AFPG
Hattie McDaniel
Photographer Ben Polin, ca. 1945

Getty Images

AFPG
Leslie Howard, 1935

Getty Images

AFPG
Olivia de Havilland, ca. 1935

Getty Images

Text Panel 3.2.1
A Big Night for Atlanta

On the evening of December 15, 1939, searchlights stabbed the sky outside Loew's Grand Theatre in downtown Atlanta. Cameras flashed as the stars stepped onto the red carpet.

The theater's marquee was covered with a façade resembling the film's fictional Twelve Oaks plantation. On the building above, a giant portrait of Scarlett and Rhett spanned nearly two full stories. Red, white, and blue bunting hung from the windows—alongside a Confederate battle flag. Some of the 2,000 audience members came in period costume. The faux hoop skirts and Confederate uniforms reflected an enduring enthusiasm for the Old South, while the film itself did more than anything to popularize Confederate iconography and make it a regular part of broader American culture.

Embedded Image – G91
Junior League Ball
Atlanta Municipal Auditorium, December 14, 1939

Kenneth Rogers Photographs, VIS 82.121.22, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center

Embedded Image – G93
Confederate Veterans
Gone With the Wind premiere, December 15, 1939

Four Confederate veterans in their 90s received a standing ovation from the crowd inside Loew's Grand Theatre.

LBMPE1-019g, Lane Brothers Commercial Photographers Photographic Collection, 1920-1976. Photographic Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library

AFPG – G94
Invitation, *Gone With the Wind Premiere*, 1939

Mayor William Hartsfield sent engraved invitations for the premiere to dignitaries and celebrities across the country.

Fulton County Library System

KAFPG – G97
"Junior League Gone With the Wind World Premiere Ball" Program
Atlanta Municipal Auditorium, December 14, 1939

Margaret Mitchell said she was ill and unable to attend the Junior League ball the evening before the premiere. Many people believe it was her payback for the Junior League denying her membership following her Apache Dance 18 years earlier.[48]

Margaret Mitchell Personality File, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

AFPG
Button and Ribbon
Gone With the Wind parade, December 14, 1939

Gift of Annie Pye Kurtz, 1977

AFPG – G95
Ticket Stubs
Gone With the Wind premiere, 1939

Tickets for the premiere at the 2,000-seat Loew's Grand Theatre went for $10—at a time when movie tickets averaged just under a quarter. That is the equivalent of more than $200 in 2024.

Gone With the Wind Collection, MSS 724, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

[48] Pyron, *Southern Daughter*, 377.

AFPG – G96

"Rhett Butler at Five Points"

Atlanta Constitution, December 15, 1939

For days before and after the premiere, local papers detailed the preparations and reported on the festivities. Often, news of the World War in Europe was relegated to second-tier headlines.

Gone With the Wind Collection, MSS 724, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Text Panel 3.2.2

A Segregated City

Proud of the work of the film's Black actors, David Selznick initially protested the whites-only premiere. Yet he eventually consented to the advice of his Atlanta-based consultants, who cautioned against challenging local segregation.

The Black public was also barred from the Junior League ball the evening before. An exception was made for members of the Ebenezer Baptist Church choir. Dressed as "pickaninnies"—what was considered to be slave attire—the choir performed spirituals on the steps of a recreated plantation house.

Included among them was the 10-year-old Martin Luther King Jr. His father, senior pastor at Ebenezer Baptist, came under criticism from the Atlanta Baptist Ministers' Union for allowing his church to participate in the performance. On December 20, 1939, the *Atlanta Daily World* published the article "Atlanta Baptists Rap Segregation, Dancing; Criticize GWTW Affair."

The Reverend John Clarence Wright of the First Congregational Church of Atlanta and author of the "From My Study Window" column in the *Atlanta Daily World*, wrote about *Gone With the Wind* just days after the premiere on December 16, 1939. He entitled the column "Gone Mad With the Wind," and his comments were printed in newspapers throughout the country. He wrote:

The celebration of the past three days and the preparations made for it, tend to confirm what thousands have firmly believed, that at heart the South is still the Confederacy…As Atlanta goes mad with the Wind one hundred thousand of her citizens should become more thoughtful than ever of the course that must be pursued to gain their rights as free men and citizens in a land where the spirit of secession and slavery still lives.

Text Panel 3.2.4

Race and Stereotype

In both the book and film, *Gone With the Wind's* Black characters are not explored outside of the white characters' stories. The readers and viewers learn little about the culture, personal history, feelings, or motivations of Mammy, Pork, Prissy, and other Black characters. They are reduced to one-dimensional stereotypes: the happy slave, the docile servant, the simple-minded clown. These caricatures were already familiar clichés by the 1930s.

Gone With the Wind also depicts Southern white stereotypes—the belle, the lady, the Southern gentleman—that reinforce a romantic image of the plantation South.

Text Panel 3.2.5

Demeaning Dialects

In her novel, Margaret Mitchell rendered the speech patterns of Black characters in phonetic dialect, as was common in white Southern literature of the time. As example, "for" became "fo'," "something" became "sumpin'," and "was" became "wuz."

By transcribing the speech of Black characters in nonstandard and often misspelled form, Mitchell was not merely highlighting cultural differences. The "incorrectness" of the dialect portrayed the Black characters as unintelligible and unintelligent. Some lower-class white characters were also portrayed with demeaning "country" dialect. In contrast, Mitchell generally presented the dialogue of the white plantation class in proper standard English rather than phonetically transcribing distinctive Southern accents and pronunciations. An exception is the Irish brogue of Scarlett's immigrant father, Gerald O'Hara.

Embedded Image – G156
Scene From *Gone With the Wind*
Selznick International Pictures and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939

Of the Black characters in the film, Butterfly McQueen as Prissy is probably the most-often quoted for her scenes in which Atlanta is besieged by the U.S. Army as Melanie gives birth. Highlighted for amusing effect, the portrayal was a common comic typecast for African American actors in the 1930s.

PictureLux/The Hollywood Archive/Alamy Stock Photo

Text Panel 3.2.6
Perpetuating Stereotypes – The Case of Mammy

The Mammy character is among the most persistent stereotypes of African American women. With her wide grin and matronly manner, Mammy was the epitome of loyal domestic servitude.

The Mammy stereotype appeared throughout the 19th and 20th centuries in literature, music, art, advertising, movies, and television. Hattie McDaniel's character in *Gone With the Wind* was part of this demeaning tradition. It was McDaniel's talent that enabled her to elevate the role above pure stereotype and instill the character with dignity, intelligence, wit, and charm.

Embedded Image – G154
Scene From *Gone With the Wind*
Selznick International Pictures and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939

Following *Gone With the Wind*, Hattie McDaniel's career continued through the 1940s. Her last film was released in 1949, and she died of breast cancer three years later. McDaniel hoped to be buried in Hollywood Memorial Park (today Hollywood Forever Cemetery), but the cemetery was segregated for whites only at the time. She is buried at Rosedale Cemetery in Los Angeles.[49]

Allstar Picture Library Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

AFPG – G98
Ebenezer Baptist Church Choir
Junior League Ball, Atlanta Municipal Auditorium, December 14, 1939

[49] "Hattie McDaniel 1895-1952," Hollywood Forever, July 17, 2024, https://hollywoodforever.com/story/hattie-mcdaniel/

African American leaders were outraged that Martin Luther King Sr. had allowed the Ebenezer Baptist Church choir to sing at the ball. The Atlanta Baptist Ministers Union censured King for performing at a segregated event that also included dancing.

Atlanta History Photograph Collection, VIS 170.3899.001, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

AFPG – G99
Atlanta Women Dressed as Southern Belles Driven by Carriage to the Movie Premiere, 1939

Black Atlanta residents were not allowed to participate in most of the premiere's festivities, except in service roles, such as ushers, waiters, and chauffeurs in period re-creations.

Bill Wilson Photographs, VIS 99.257.10, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Text Panel 3.2.3
Loew's Grand Theatre

Loew's Grand Theatre opened in 1893 as the DeGive Grand Opera House at 157 Peachtree Street. It was purchased by the Loew's corporation in 1927 and converted into an elegant movie palace.

As with other public institutions in Atlanta, the theater was segregated at the time of the *Gone With the Wind* premiere. Atlanta's theaters remained segregated until 1963, by which time the NAACP and other civil rights groups had successfully pressured business owners to integrate their establishments.

By the mid-1970s, Loew's theater had fallen into disrepair. It closed in 1977, and a devastating fire led to its demolition the following year.

Embedded Image – G103A
DeGive Grand Opera House, 1893

This interior view from the stage shows the DeGive Grand Opera House (later Loew's Grand Theatre), as it looked when it opened in 1893.

Atlanta History Photograph Collection, VIS 170.1639.001, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

AFPG
Theater Seats
Loew's Grand Theatre, circa 1927

Courtesy Carol V. Clark

AFPG – A12
Exit Sign
Loew's Grand Theatre, circa 1927

Gift of Eugenia MacBean, 2004

AFPG – A13
Aisle 4 Sign
Loew's Grand Theatre, circa 1927

Gift of Eugenia MacBean, 2004

AFPG – A14
Building Brick
Loew's Grand Theatre, circa 1893

Gift of Eugenia MacBean, 2004

AFPG – G102
***Gone With the Wind* Premiere Program with Hattie McDaniel, 1939**

Every guest at the premiere received an 18-page full-color program. The version printed for the openings in most U.S. cities included all the major players on the back, including Hattie McDaniel.

David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

AFPG – G101
***Gone With the Wind* Premiere Program without Hattie McDaniel, 1939**

The program distributed at the Atlanta premiere showed only the white actors on the back. **AFPG – G97**
"Junior League Gone With the Wind World Premiere Ball" Program
Atlanta Municipal Auditorium, December 14, 1939

Margaret Mitchell said she was ill and unable to attend the Junior League ball the evening before the premiere. Many people believe it was her payback for the Junior League denying her membership following her Apache Dance 18 years earlier.

Margaret Mitchell Personality File, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

AFPG
Button and Ribbon
Gone With the Wind parade, December 14, 1939

Gift of Annie Pye Kurtz, 1977

AFPG – G95
Ticket Stubs
Gone With the Wind premiere, 1939

Tickets for the premiere at the 2,000-seat Loew's Grand Theatre went for $10—at a time when movie tickets averaged just under a quarter. That is the equivalent of more than $200 in 2024.

Gone With the Wind Collection, MSS 724, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

AFPG – G96
"Rhett Butler at Five Points"
Atlanta Constitution, December 15, 1939

For days before and after the premiere, local papers detailed the preparations and reported on the festivities. Often, news of the World War in Europe was relegated to second-tier headlines.

Gone With the Wind Collection, MSS 724, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Loew's Grand Theatre Fire, 1978

Fire broke out in the Loew's Grand Theatre on January 30, 1978. Many suspected arson, but the allegation was never proven.[50] Today, the site of the former movie palace is home to Georgia-Pacific Tower at 133 Peachtree Street.

Atlanta History Photograph Collection, VIS 170.3832.001, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Section 3.3 – Gallery Area

Text Panel 3.3

***Gone With the Wind* in Popular Culture**

Despite its critics, *Gone With the Wind* remained extraordinarily popular in the decades following its release. Famous characters, scenes, and bits of dialogue are ubiquitous in pop culture.

The epic scale of the movie had something to do with its popularity, as did its themes of survival and resilience. The
sharply drawn characters and romantic (and romanticized) elements of the story contributed as well. Cinematically, *Gone With the Wind* was a technical masterpiece—the music, costumes, vivid color, and camera effects all worked together to create an immersive, emotionally engaging experience.

Importantly, *Gone With the Wind* also tapped into existing cultural narratives—stories we tell ourselves and each other—about race, history, and the South. Many people came to see *Gone With the Wind* as a quintessentially American story, on par with Washington at Valley Forge, Lincoln at Gettysburg, the "winning" of the American West, and other national epics.

AFPG – G110C

The Simpsons
Mark Kirkland, director
David M. Stern, writer

The 14th episode of season 2 of *The Simpsons*, "Principal Charming," originally aired February 14, 1991. In the episode, Principal Skinner declares that he won't let his broken relationship phase him: "Because, after all, tomorrow is another school day!" It recalls the famous scene in *Gone With the Wind* in which Scarlett O'Hara quotes nearly the same line, shot against a similar red background.

AFPG – A30

"Went With the Wind"
The Carol Burnett Show Doll
Mattel, El Segundo, California, 2008

Nearly as unforgettable as the original film, comedian Carol Burnett's parody sketch "Went With the Wind" features Burnett as Southern belle Starlet O'Hara. When Starlet appears wearing a dress made from window drapes—complete with curtain rod—she quips, "I saw it in the window and just couldn't resist it!"

[50] Hyde Post and Raleigh Bryans, "Loew's Fire Set?" *The Atlanta Journal*, (Atlanta, GA), January 31, 1978.

Purchase with funds in support of "Telling Stories"

AFPG – A34
Barbie as Scarlett O'Hara
Hollywood Legends Collection
Timeless Creations of Mattel
El Segundo, California, 1994

Among the many personifications of Barbie, Timeless Creations, a division of Mattel, released a series of Scarlett dolls in 1994. With the tagline, "Starring Barbie as Scarlett O'Hara," the group included four separate dolls in costumes from the film version of *Gone With the Wind*. The set also comprised a Ken doll as Rhett Butler. Twenty years later, Mattel released a new series of Scarlett and Rhett dolls for the 75th anniversary of the motion picture.

AFPG – A33
"Groan With the Wind"
Mad, January 1991

Purchase with funds in support of "Telling Stories"

AFPG – A35
Superman / Wonder Woman
Gene Ha, artist, movie poster variant cover
DC Comics, Issue 17, May 2015

In 2013, DC Comics launched a 29-issue series featuring a romance between its most powerful superheroes. The use of one of *Gone With the Wind's* most iconic poster images displays the impact of the film's pop culture influence, even among young readers.

AFPG – A31
"Retired Muppets Will Move to Atlanta"
Miss Piggie and Kermit as Scarlett and Rhett
Brenda Goodman, author
New York Times, July 25, 2007

The Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta is currently home to 500 Jim Henson creations, making it the largest collection of his work in the country. Henson cut the ribbon at the center's opening in 1978, alongside Kermit and Miss Piggy—dressed as Rhett and Scarlett.

Purchase with funds in support of "Telling Stories"

AFPG – A36
"*Gone With the Wind*" Cook Book: Famous Southern Recipes
Bloomfield, N.J.: Lehn & Fink Products, 1939

Purchase with funds in support of "Telling Stories"

AFPG – A19
Dinner Menu
Pittypat's Porch, circa 2005

Named for Scarlett O'Hara's scatterbrained aunt, Atlanta's Pittypat's Porch Restaurant opened in 1967 in a former funeral parlor. The restaurant, famous for its mint juleps and Old South décor, closed in 2021.

Purchase with funds in support of "Telling Stories"

AFPG – G128
"Summer Party in Charlotte, N.C."
Life, 1951

According to *Life* magazine, these 1950s debutantes looked "as gracious as any ante-bellum belles."

Gift of Josh Feinberg/Museum Consulting

Text Panel 3.3.5
Plantation Legend

Gone With the Wind ignited a Dixie craze built on an idealized view of Southern life. Over the years, devotees have set out to find the fictitious plantation Tara that exemplifies their vision of the Old South. Atlanta businesses adopted *Gone With the Wind*-based names and advertising to cash in on the film's popularity. The use of "Tara" and "Twelve Oaks" became widespread in subdivisions and residential neighborhoods.

The white columns of Tara and Twelve Oaks created for the film inspired university sororities and fraternities to build houses resembling plantation homes. "Old South" and "Dixie" balls, in which students wore hoop-skirt gowns and replica Confederate uniforms, became popular. Not until the first decades of the 21st century were these practices challenged and many abandoned.[51]

The Southern mystique helped generate an industry of plantation tourism, including plantation weddings and Scarlett O'Hara look-alikes. Only in recent years have historic sites started to more fully acknowledge the perspectives of the enslaved people on former plantations. This includes information on the Atlantic slave trade, the lives of the enslaved people who lived there, and evidence of their resistance.[52]

Embedded Image – G127
"Life on the Old Plantation"
Plantation Whiskey, 1946

Gift of Josh Feinberg/Museum Consulting

Text Panel 3.3.2
Global Impact

A global phenomenon, the novel *Gone With the Wind* has been translated into 27 languages, and the film has been screened in thousands of movie houses across the globe.

Released the same year that the Second World War began in Europe, *Gone With the Wind's* tale of resilience and perseverance resonated in communities affected by war and strife. During and after World War II, Scarlett served as a symbol of survival across Europe, offering reassurance of a better future.

---

[51] "Old South 2011 – Kappa Alpha Order Formal," Life as a Southern Belle, accessed June 21, 2024, https://kileybp.blogspot.com/2011/07/old-south-2011-kappa-alpha-order-formal.html, Sharon Rosen Leib, "Like Ralph Northam, I made a shameful costume in my youth: Confederate dress-up," *The Los Angeles Times,* February 18, 2019, https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-leib-dixie-northam-race-20190218-story.html.

[52] "Welcome Page," Whitney Plantation, accessed June 21, 2024, https://whitneyplantation.org/, "Home," Boone Hall Plantation & Gardens, accessed June 21, 2024, https://boonehallplantation.com/.

The book and movie also acquired popularity beyond the U.S. and Europe. The story of a once-proud family suffering defeat and hunger resonated especially in Japan after the war.

Embedded Image – G116
Cosmopolitan
Tokyo: Hearst Fujingaho, 1992

Gone With the Wind has had a strong following in Japan and was especially popular during Japan's period of reconstruction following World War II.

Margaret Mitchell Personality File, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Text Panel (9)
Foreign Editions of *Gone With the Wind*
Over the decades, the book became a rite of passage for many, especially legions of young women throughout the world who saw their own sense of independence and empowerment reflected in Scarlett's character. In many foreign countries, *Gone With the Wind* was seen as American history.

On viewing a copy of the film seized at the opening of World War II, Japanese leaders feared they could not defeat a nation of such technical skill. The film was released in Japan in 1952 and was a great success, as viewers drew comparisons between their lives and those of Scarlett and other characters. Many were especially affected by scenes of the burning of Atlanta, seeing in it parallels to the destruction of their cities.[53]

In Germany before World War II, the novel sold nearly 300,000 copies through 16 printings, reminding many of hardships and loss in World War I. Adolf Hitler and Joseph Goebbels watched the film several times—even as they banned it from the general public.[54]

風と共に去りぬ
Volume 1 of 6
Tokyo: Mikasa Shobo, 1951

Lo que el viento se llevó
Novela Semanal Cinematográfica, Numero Extraordinario
Barcelona: Ediciones Bistagne, 1941

Autant en emport le vent
Volume 1 of 2
Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1938

Elfújta a szél
Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1986

حيرلا عم بهذ ةياور

[53] Michael Schaller, "'Gone With the Wind' viewed in 1939 Brookly, Berlin & Tokyo, *Arizona Daily Star,* November 3, 2019, https://tucson.com/opinion/local/ua-prof-michael-schaller-gone-with-the-wind-viewed-in-1939-brooklyn-berlin-tokyo/article_f6dd3a0d-8bc6-54c7-bbe6-3fd53014e4aa.html, Tony Horowitz, *Confederates in the Attic* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 293-296, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cwm/reader.action?docID=5336606&ppg=294.

[54] John Haag, "*Gone With the Wind* in Nazi Germany," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly,* Vol. 73, No. 2 (Summer 1989): 279, 294.

Beirut-New York: House of Culture [Lebanon]; Published inAssociation with Franklin Printing and Publishing, 1958

Tuulen viemää
Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otava, 1939

風と共に去りぬ
Volume 1 of 2
Tokyo: Mikasa Shobo, 1966

亂世佳人
Beijing: Longman United Books, 1950

Vom Winde Verweht
Berlin: Buchgemeinschafts-Ausgabe, 1937

Gifts of Woodruff Library, Emory University, 2009

AFPG (7) B1-B7
Scarlett
Alexandra Ripley, author
New York: Warner Books, 1991

Authorized sequels, such as *Scarlett*, *Rhett Butler's People*, and *Ruth's Journey*, achieved only moderate success in recapturing the magic (and profits) of the original.

Today Is Another Tomorrow: The Epic Parody of Gone with the Wind
Missy D'Urberville, author
New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991

D'Urberville's parody updates the original story, relocating Mitchell's characters to late-20th-century New York City.

The Private Diary of Scarlett O'Hara
Cathy Crimmins and Tom Maeder
Beijing: Newstar Press, 1996

Rhett Butler's People
Donald McCaig, author
New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007

The Winds of Tara: The Saga Lives On
Katherine Pinotti, author
Fremantle, Western Australia: Fontaine Press, 2008

Initially blocked by Mitchell's estate, Katherine Pinotti eventually published her unauthorized sequel in Australia, where *Gone With the Wind's* copyright expired in 1999.

Ruth's Journey
Donald McCaig, author

New York: Atria Books, 2014

Gone With the Wind
Pierre Alary, author
Paris: Rue de Sèvres, 2023

Purchases with funds in support of "Telling Stories"

AFPG (3) Foreign Posters G59-G60
Autant en emporte le vent
France, 1951-1953

This film was released in France in 1951 and re-released in 1953.

Purchase with funds from Mary Rose Taylor, 2015

Lo que el viento se llevó
Argentina, 1939

The Argentine version of the movie poster is always printed within a floral frame.

Purchase with funds from Mary Rose Taylor, 2015

Borte med blaesten
Denmark, 1939

Purchase with funds from Mary Rose Taylor, 2015

Section 4 – Gallery Area

Text Panel 4.0
Challenging the Story Within *Gone With the Wind*

Gone With the Wind maintains a powerful influence today, not only in pop culture, but in how many people conceive of the South, its history, and its people.

In their works, both Mitchell and Selznick drew on popular histories of their time about the nature of slavery, racial characteristics, Southern history, and the Civil War and Reconstruction. Both versions of the story were built on historical inaccuracies, faulty analysis, and prejudiced assumptions. Nevertheless, many people accept *Gone With the Wind's* depiction of the past as historical fact.

In recent decades, historians have increasingly challenged *Gone With the Wind* by comparing the details of the novel and film to historical fact.

Embedded Image – G118
"Hey HBO, 'GWTW' Has To Go"
John Ridley, author
Los Angeles Times, June 10, 2020

This op-ed, written by Black filmmaker John Ridley, sparked a debate about the place of classic Hollywood films in contemporary culture, especially *Gone With the Wind*. Ridley won an Academy Award in 2014 for adapted screenplay for *12 Years a Slave*.

Text Panel 4.1
The Old South and Slavery

Among the lasting legacies of *Gone With the Wind* is a nostalgic image of the Old South. It is a South that never existed—written for the film as a pretty world of cavaliers and Southern belles, grand plantations, benevolent masters, and happy slaves. In the antebellum South, the reality was very different.

The nostalgic view of plantation life in the South was already widely accepted by most white Americans in the late 1930s. Its appeal was, in part, a reaction to industrialization, urbanization, technological change, and immigration. Books, movies, and music all trafficked in images of a supposedly simpler and nobler time. Pastoral and often racialized images of the Old South were used to sell all manner of modern goods and services.

Gone With the Wind was not the first or last attempt to promote this fictitious vision of the South, but it remains the most influential.

Embedded Image – G118A
Sale Notice
Augusta: *Daily Constitutionalist and Republic*, February 1859

The harsh reality of Old South slavery contradicts the benign, idealized depictions in *Gone With the Wind*. Slavery was unforgiving, cruel, and violent.

In 1859, Pierce Butler auctioned half of his 900 enslaved people at the nation's largest slave auction in Savannah. It was held at a racetrack because of the sheer number of enslaved persons offered for sale. Butler made more than $11 million in 2023 dollars. Known as The Weeping Time, the sale separated brothers, sisters, parents, and children of mature age, and severed "all other relations and the ties of home and long association."[55]

www.geriwalton.com/the-largest-slave-auction-in-u-s-history

Text Panel 4.1.1
Cavaliers and Cotton Fields

Margaret Mitchell presented a sanitized and idealized picture of plantation life. Yet her novel also conveyed some of the intricacies of the white Southern class structure, like how the coastal elite considered themselves superior to the "backcountry" families that lived further inland and how planters looked down on poor whites. Producer David Selznick, however, wasn't interested in subtleties. He wanted to portray the glamorized vision of the Old South that 1930s audiences had come to expect. Selznick's lavish film production amplified the grandeur and beauty of Scarlett's world, losing whatever subtlety and gentle critique of the Southern class structure that the novel possessed.

[55] Sidney George Fisher, "Diary, 1859-1860." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography,* Vol. 76, No. 2, (April 1963): 193.

Selznick's amplification of the novel's romantic themes starts with the film's opening text. These were not the words of Margaret Mitchell. They were written by Hollywood screenwriter Ben Hecht at Selznick's request.

There was a land of Cavaliers and Cotton Fields called the Old South ... Here in this pretty world Gallantry took its last bow ... Here was the last ever to be seen of Knights and their Ladies Fair, of Master and of Slave ... Look for it only in books, for it is no more than a dream remembered, a Civilization gone with the wind.

Selznick's vision was powerful. The film depicts the South as a picturesque lost paradise. Thanks to the power of the Technicolor motion picture, Mitchell's Old South and Selznick's Moonlight and Magnolias imagery is embedded in the American consciousness.

AFPG – G120
Scene From *Gone With the Wind*

Margaret Mitchell cast the O'Hara family as an upland Georgia immigrant family, living in a rambling country home. Selznick transformed them into Southern aristocracy and turned the modest house into a grand, white-columned estate.

Getty Images from John Spring Collection/Contributer

AFPG – 118B
Scene From *Gone With the Wind*
Selznick International Pictures and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939

In both the book and film, the characters of Ashley and Melanie Wilkes serve as personifications of the Old South. But even as their characters are diminished by the end of the story, their mythical Southern lifestyle retains its romance.

Pictorial Press Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo

AFPG – G123
Margaret Mitchell to Susan Myrick, 1939

Mitchell was disappointed when she learned how grandly the Georgia farms she described in her book were being portrayed in the film, including Tara and Twelve Oaks. About Twelve Oaks, she wrote, "I did not know whether to laugh or to throw up at the two staircases."[56]

Gone With the Wind Literary Estate Papers, MS3366, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, The University of Georgia Libraries

AFPG – G124
David O. Selznick to Members of His Film Production, 1939

Selznick was explicit about his desire to paint a beautiful picture of the South, even at the expense of authenticity, writing to his director and designers: "… we have seriously hurt the beauty of our production by letting authenticity dominate theatrical effects."

David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

[56] Letter from Margaret Mitchell to Susan Myrick, February 10, 1939, in *Margaret Mitchell's 'Gone With the Wind' Letters 1936-1949* edited by Richard Harwell, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1976), 249.

AFPG – Three pages G124A, G124B, G124C

An Impartial Enquiry into the State and Utility of the Province of Georgia

Benjamin Martyn

London: W. Meadows, 1741

Benjamin Martyn was an English writer who supported the establishment of Georgia and later served as its royal agent. In 1741, he published *An Impartial Enquiry* … to respond to the colony's critics. Among the criticisms was that Georgia's value was "impractical" without the use of enslaved workers. Through a series of arguments, Martyn illustrates why the introduction of enslaved labor was neither "necessary or expedient."

Rare Book Collection, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Text Panel 4.1.2

Georgia and Slavery

Unlike other British colonies in North America, slavery was banned in the new colony of Georgia when it was founded in 1735. This decision was grounded in the original concept of Georgia as a social and economic refuge for small landholders and tradesmen.

Over time, opposition to the ban increased and colonists petitioned the colony's trustees, claiming that enslaved labor was the only means to achieve prosperity. Ultimately, the ban was seen as harmful to the colony's economic potential and was lifted in 1751. In the mid-1760s, Georgia began to import captive labor from Africa. By 1775, the number of enslaved people in the colony grew to 18,000.[57]

Text Panel 4.1.3

Steal Yourself: Slave No More

The enslaved and later freed people depicted in *Gone With the Wind* seem willing contributors to their bondage. Yet significant numbers of enslaved people freed themselves or participated in other forms of personal or group resistance. Escape—self liberation—by way of the Underground Railroad was but one path to freedom. Others who became free people of color received freedom through legal documents issued by their slaveholders, payments to buy their freedom, or revolt. At the time of the Civil War out of a population of 466,000 Black Georgians only 1,400 were free.[58]

To counter such attempts at freedom, in 1818 Georgia legislators had made it "null and void" if slaveholders personally freed enslaved people. Law also established that enslaved persons could not work for freedom or profit from labor.[59]

As early as 1755, the colonial legislature of Georgia commanded that "all negroes, Indians, mulattoes, or mestizos [except those already free] … and all their issue and offspring born, or to be born, shall be … and remain for ever hereafter absolute slaves."[60]

---

[57] "Slavery in Colonial Georgia" New Georgia Encyclopedia, accessed July 1, 2024, https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/slavery-in-colonial-georgia/.

[58] "Georgia in 1860" New Georgia Encyclopedia, accessed July 1, 2024, https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/georgia-in-1860/.

[59] "Slave Laws of Georgia, 1755-1860," Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, accessed July 1, 2024, https://www.georgiaarchives.org/assets/documents/Slave_Laws_of_Georgia_1755-1860.pdf.

[60] https://www.georgiaarchives.org/assets/documents/Slave_Laws_of_Georgia_1755-1860.pdf

Embedded Image – G134C & G134D
Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom
William and Ellen Craft | London: William Tweedie, 1860

In 1848, William and Ellen Craft achieved a daring and remarkable escape. With fair-skinned Ellen in the guise of a white male planter and William posing as her enslaved servant, the Crafts traveled by rail and ship – in plain sight and relative luxury – from bondage in Macon, Georgia, to freedom in Philadelphia, then Boston, and ultimately England.[61]

www.archive.org/details/runningthousandm00craf/page/n5/mode/2up

AFPG – G134E
"A Chart Map of Georgia, Showing the Percentage of Slaves in Each County"
New York: *Harper's Weekly*, December 14, 1861

Gift of Sheffield Hale

AFPG – A20A & A20B
Slave Tag
Charleston, 1840-1865

Enslaved people in Charleston were required to wear identifying tags when leased out for labor by their slaveholders.

Thomas Swift Dickey Civil War Ordnance Collection, Atlanta History Center

AFPG – G134
Receipt
DeKalb County, Georgia, March 1861

The receipt is for "a negro girl by name Lucy about seven years old … valued at … six hundred dollars." Historical documents like this confront us with the stark realities of slavery, an institution that often tore families apart and treated children as objects to be owned, bought, and sold.

United Daughters of the Confederacy Collection, MSS 765, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

Text Panel 4.2.1
Slavery: The Cause of the Civil War

Gone With the Wind minimizes the importance of slavery as a cause of war. In both the novel and film, Ashley Wilkes declares that he would have freed his family's slaves had the war not come: "... I'd have freed them all when Father died if the war hadn't already freed them. ..."[62]

[61] William Craft, *Running A Thousand Miles for Freedom; or, the Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery* (London: William Tweedie, 377, Strand, 1860).

[62] Margaret Mitchell, Gone With the Wind (New York: Scribner, 1996), 906.

The implication is that slavery was on the wane and that it would have gone away if meddling abolitionists had not provoked the South. That was hardly the case. The documents establishing the Confederate States of America along with the words of its leaders make clear that slavery was the primary reason for secession, and its protection was central to Confederate ideology.

Embedded Image – 138A
The Myth of the Black Confederate

Black men participated in the Confederate war effort—as enslaved individuals who had to accompany their masters. Most of these men served as stewards, cooks, stable hands, or laborers. Despite some claims to the contrary, there is no evidence that "Black Confederates" carried weapons and served in battle. Conversely, nearly 180,000 African Americans fought for freedom in the Union Army. In fact, U.S. Colored troops constituted 10% of the U.S. Army.[63]

www.let.rug.nl/usa/essays/1801-1900/the-black-lost-cause/introduction.php

Embedded Image
"The Dis-United States – A Black Business"
John Leech, artist
London: *Punch*, July-December 1856

There is no ambiguity about the cause of the approaching Civil War in this British cartoon published in 1856.

www.searchablemuseum.com/1820-1861-the-coming-of-war-2

AFPG – G140
Ordinance of Secession
Milledgeville, Georgia, January 19, 1861

Following the election of Abraham Lincoln as president in November 1860, a Georgia state secession convention voted to leave the United States. The delegates wrote a new state constitution, declaring Georgia an independent republic.

The accompanying declaration of secession mentions slavery or anti-slavery 26 times and concludes that secession was necessary because opponents of slavery sought "… to subvert our society and subject us not only to the loss of our property [enslaved people] but the destruction of ourselves, our wives, and our children."

The ordinance passed with 60% support of the delegates. Secession itself was never put to popular vote of the enfranchised white male voters.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ordinance_of_Secession#/media/File:Ordinance_of_Secession_Milledgeville,_Georgia_1861.png

Text Panel 4.2.2
The Myth of the "War of Northern Aggression"

[63] Kevin M. Levin, *Searching for Black Confederates: The Civil War's Most Persistent Myth* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021) 1-4, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469653280_levin?saml_data=eyJzYW1sVG9rZW4iOiJkMWZjZDA1ZC1kZmI4LTQyYjEtOTFmZS00YTNjZTZiMDk0ZWEiLCJpbnN0aXR1dGlvbklkcyI6WyIwYWQ3YTllZC1jOGIzLTRkM2ItYTdlMy1kZGNkMDk1YzYyYzMiXX0.

One brief, yet effective, film montage casts U.S. General William T. Sherman as "the Great Invader"—the words emblazoned across the screen against a swirling hellscape of flames and shadowy warriors.

To Split the Confederacy, to leave it crippled and forever humbled, the Great Invader marched … leaving behind him a path of destruction sixty miles wide, from Atlanta to the sea. …

According to *Gone With the Wind*, secession was a legal right and the war was a result of Northern invasion; the South merely sought to retain a gentler and more harmonious way of life.

Sherman's scorched-earth "March to the Sea" from Atlanta to Savannah was a fatal blow to the Confederacy. The film ascribes the march to Sherman's "evil intent," thus demonizing U.S. soldiers. By contrasting alleged Union barbarism with Confederate nobility, *Gone With the Wind* reinforces the false belief that the war resulted from Northern aggression, rather than the existence of slavery.

Embedded Image – 142A

Guard House and Guard, 107th U.S. Colored Infantry Fort Corcoran near Washington, D.C.
Alexander Gardner, photographer, 1865

Along with white Southerners who fought for the Union, Southern Black men also fought for the North, serving in the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT). In fact, about 75% of the 180,000 men fighting with the USCT were Southerners. These men were former slaves from the South who fled North to join the army or who joined U.S. regiments in captured Southern territories.[64]

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (LC-DIG-ppmsca-34584)

Text Panel 4.3

Reconstruction

Gone With the Wind depicts the post-war period as a time of chaos and fear for its white characters, as political power passed to "uncivilized" formerly enslaved Black people, their white Southern allies (known as "scallywags"), and unscrupulous Northerners or "carpetbaggers." Both the book and movie caricature freed Black people as lazy and simple-minded, suggesting that Southern society was better when African Americans were kept in bondage.[65]

These depictions reflect the views of many professional historians of the early 1900s, especially William A. Dunning of Columbia University. Dunning saw Reconstruction as an overbearing Federal government attempting to impose naïve ideals of racial equality on the South. His views helped justify Jim Crow segregation and influenced popular views of Reconstruction across the country.

---

[64] "Black Soldiers in the Civil War: Preserving the Legacy of the United States Colored Troops," United States National Archives, Educator Resources, accessed June 24, 2024, https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/blacks-civil-war/article.html#:~:text=The%20compiled%20military%20service%20records,who%20were%20not%20African%20American, "Union Army Data – USCT" National Bureau of Economic Research, accessed July 5, 2024, https://www.nber.org/research/data/union-army-data-usct.

[65] Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind,* (New York: The Macmillan Publishing Company, 1936), 364-366.

Historian and civil rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois effectively refuted Dunning's analysis in his 1935 book *Black Reconstruction* in America. But Dunning's historical interpretation remained dominant in both academic and popular circles well into the 20th century.[66] During a time when African Americans struggled to change racist laws, *Gone With the Wind* suggested to white people that such change would bring back the chaos and fear Margaret Mitchell described.[67]

W.E.B. Du Bois
Photographer Carl Van Vechten, 1946

Gift of Sheffield Hale

AFPG – G143A & G143B
Walter White to David O. Selznick, June 1938

At the same time that he recommended that Selznick hire a Black advisor for the film production, NAACP executive officer Walter White recommended that Selznick's screenwriter read W.E.B. Du Bois' *Black Reconstruction*. He also noted "how biased Miss Mitchell's presentation of the Reconstruction Era is in many instances." Selznick passed the suggestion on to writer Sidney Howard, offering to send a copy of the book and the reviews mentioned in White's letter.

David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Text Panel
The Myth of the Happy Slave

Enslaved characters in *Gone with the Wind* are content with their lives and loyal to their masters. There is no hint of resentment or ill-will, no indication that their labor was forced, much less the most brutal aspects of southern slavery: the internal slave trade, physical and sexual abuse, family separation, humiliation, and violence that accompanied Black bondage.[68]

However, historical documents, authentic artifacts, and the voices of enslaved people reveal the horrors of slavery.

Embedded Image
The Old Plantation Home
New York: Currier & Ives, 1872

Gone with the Wind perpetuated distorted narratives about slavery that some white Americans had already been telling for years—chiefly, that enslaved African Americans were content in their servitude and their lives were "better then."[69]

---

[66] *The Dunning School: Historians, Race, and the Meaning of Reconstruction* ed. John David Smith and J. Vincent Lowery, (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2013), xi, 2, 6.

[67] Nina Silber, "How the new monument to lynching unravels a historical lie," *The Washington Post*, May 2, 2018 https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2018/05/02/how-the-new-monument-to-lynching-unravels-a-historical-lie/.

[68] Walter Johnson, *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas,* (Yale University Press, 2005), IX; "On Slaveholders' Sexual Abuse of Slaves: Selections from 19th- & 20th-Century Slave Narratives," National Humanities Center, accessed May 30, 2025, https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/enslavement/text6/masterslavesexualabuse.pdf; Edward E. Baptist, "Toward a Political Economy of Slave Labor: Hands, Whipping-Machines, and Modern Power," in *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development*, ed. Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 31–61.

[69] Laura Green, "Negative Racial Stereotypes and Their Effect on Attitudes Toward African-Americans," Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, Ferris State University, accessed May 30, 2025, https://jimcrowmuseum.ferris.edu/links/essays/vcu.htm.

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (LC-USZ62-23797)

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself
Harriet Jacobs, author
Boston: Published for the Author, 1861

Harriet Jacob's powerful memoir provides a chilling first-person account of the vulnerability of enslaved Black women and the sexual brutality that was common in the antebellum South.

http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/jacobs.html

Frederick Douglass
Unidentified photographer, 1856

I have often been utterly astonished, since I came to the north, to find persons who could speak of the singing, among slaves, as evidence of their contentment and happiness. It is impossible to conceive of a greater mistake. Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy. The songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears.

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave …*, 1845

In the account of his own life, Frederick Douglass' narrative dispels the myth of the happy slave. Douglass criticizes those who defend slavery and portray a romanticized version of the pain, humiliation, and brutality of the "horrible character of slavery."

National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, acquired through the generosity of an anonymous donor, Object number NPG.74.75

AFPG – B17
Black Reconstruction in America
W.E.B. Du Bois, author
New York: Russell & Russell, 1935

Through careful research, Black historian and civil rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois demonstrated the many successes of Reconstruction, including initiatives in public health, education, and infrastructure. He emphasized the important contributions of African Americans, arguing that the loyalty and votes of the formerly enslaved alone "restored the South to the Union; established the new democracy, both for white and black, and instituted the public schools."[70]

During two tenures at Atlanta University, Du Bois taught history and sociology and directed research on Black life. In a chapter titled "The Propaganda of History," he evaluated the historical interpretation of Reconstruction. He observed that "White historians have ascribed the faults and failures … to Negro ignorance and corruption."[71]

---

[70] W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America; An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880.* (Cleveland, Ohio: Meridian Publishing, 1964), 713, https://archive.org/details/blackreconstruct00dubo/page/n7/mode/2up?q=%22the+new+democracy%22.

[71] Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction, 713,* *https://archive.org/details/blackreconstruct00dubo/page/n7/mode/2up?q=%22the+new+democracy%22*.

Further criticizing historians, he noted a deliberate attempt to propagate history as "lies agreed upon" and "to change the facts of history that the story will make pleasant reading for Americans."[72]

Purchase with funds in support of "Telling Stories"

AFPG – B18
Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction
William A. Dunning, author
New York: Macmillan, 1902

William Dunning's writings influenced generations of American historians. He described Reconstruction as an unmitigated disaster, blaming vindictive white Northerners and inferior Black people for its failure.[73] His introduction notes, "As to the Reconstruction, the term is to most people merely a synonym for bad government…"[74]

Perhaps his most disapproving analysis is his criticism of Black freedom and civil rights. "Enfranchisement of the blacks," he reasoned, "was to be accompanied by disenfranchisement of the whites." Dunning expressed concern about the "establishment of black rule," while criticizing efforts to limit votes by Southerners who had been "engaged in rebellion" against the United States government.[75]

Purchase with funds in support of "Telling Stories"

AFPG – G148
The First Vote
Alfred R. Waud, artist
New York: *Harper's Weekly*, November 16, 1867

African American men throughout the South enthusiastically embraced their new political agency after the Civil War. In 1867, some 75% of Georgia's registered Black male voters cast a ballot in the state's first multiracial election.[76]

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (LC-DIG-ppmsca-37947)

Text Panel – A22
The Ongoing Legacy of the Lost Cause

---

[72] W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880 (New York: Russell & Russell, 1935), 711-729.

[73] Jennifer Dickey, *A Tough Little Patch of History: Gone with the Wind and the Politics of Memory* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2014), 13.

[74] William Archibald Dunning, *Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1898), vii-viii.

[75] Dunning, *Essays*, 176-183.

[76] Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 314.

Elements of *Gone With the Wind* promote tenets of Lost Cause ideology, including that secession was about something more noble than the right to enslave others and that Reconstruction was a failure.[77] Ultimately, the novel and subsequent film solidified Lost Cause imagery that continues to shape public understanding of the Civil War and Southern history.

Stone Mountain, the world's largest monument to Lost Cause ideology, wasn't completed until 1972. The ongoing controversy over Confederate monuments attests to the continuing impact of such stories and images on our lives today.

AFPG
Plaster Study for Stone Mountain Memorial
Steffen Thomas, artist, circa 1945

One of the many artists vying for the opportunity to complete the work in the mid-20th century was German-born sculptor Steffen Thomas, who created this study in 1945.

Gift of Steffen Thomas, 1971

Text Panel 4.3.1
The Truth About the KKK

In one of *Gone With the Wind's* most dramatic scenes, Scarlett is attacked while riding alone on the outskirts of Atlanta in an area sheltering freedmen, poor whites, and petty criminals. Afterward, a posse of white men sets out ostensibly to defend her honor, bring the perpetrators to justice, and restore law and order. While the posse is not named in the movie, the book makes it very clear: it is the Ku Klux Klan.

As in *The Birth of a Nation*, this incident perpetuates a false claim about the KKK: that its presence was needed to protect white women from dangerous Black men. In fact, the KKK's primary function during Reconstruction was to try to restore white supremacy by terrorizing African Americans and their Northern supporters.[78]

In the novel, the narrator calls the Klan a "tragic necessity."[79] Mitchell's sympathetic treatment of the KKK reflects the influence of popular books and movies, especially the works of Thomas Dixon, along with similar flawed historical interpretations of Reconstruction by historians and non-historians alike.

Embedded Image – G144
Scene From *Gone With the Wind*

While the posse goes unnamed in the film, Mitchell clearly identifies it as the KKK. In the book, Scarlett is shocked to learn that nearly every white gentleman she knows is in the Klan. No one else seems surprised. Even Rhett Butler does his part to protect the vigilantes from official retribution after their violent raid.

Moviestore Collection Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo

Embedded Image – G146
The Union as It Was / The Lost Cause / Worse Than Slavery
Thomas Nast, artist

---

[77] Smith and Lowery, *The Dunning School,* 77-78 Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, eds., The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 30-31.

[78] Foner, *Reconstruction,* 342-343, 425-426, 430.

[79] Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind*, 613.

New York: Harper's Weekly, November 24, 1874

In *Gone With the Wind*, the narrator calls the Ku Klux Klan a "tragic necessity,"[80] reinforcing a misconception that the first formation of the KKK was different from later versions and somehow justified due to the supposed evils of Reconstruction. In fact, as this image suggests, the Klan was part of a coordinated effort to subdue African Americans throughout the South. The first formation of the Klan was organized in late 1865 and by 1871 had been suppressed by the federal government.[81]

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (LC-USZ62-128619)

AFPG – G145A & 145B
Report of the Joint Select Committee on the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States
Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1872

After the 13th Amendment abolished slavery in 1865, those opposed to freedom for African Americans found other means of control. Southern states implemented restrictive laws known as Black Codes, and armed vigilantes formed the Ku Klux Klan to intimidate African Americans through violence.

In the early 1870s, Congress conducted a widespread investigation into violence in the South. The 13,000-page report, incorporating testimony from nearly 600 witnesses, placed blame for Southern unrest squarely on the KKK. Exposing the Klan's tactics hastened a decline that lasted until the resurrection of the Klan on Stone Mountain in 1915. Information about the early existence and operations of the Klan in Georgia appear on page 20 of the report.

https://archive.org/details/reportofjointsel01unit/page/20/mode/2up[82]

Text Panel 4.2.3
Black Militias

One way that Black Georgians protected their citizenship, autonomy, and political power in the 1870s was by forming local companies in the state militia, which was funded by the U.S. government. In 1878, there were 42 Black companies in Georgia, comprising nearly one fifth of the state militia.[83]

Each company of 50-60 men was commanded by Black officers. The militiamen practiced military drill, held shooting competitions, and participated in parades and celebrations, such as Emancipation Day and the anniversaries of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments.

In the 1880s and 1890s, the white-dominated Georgia legislature enacted laws to fund, regulate, and train its state militia. These laws enabled the state to support white companies and restrict or disband Black companies. The last Black company was disbanded in 1905.[84]

Embedded Image – G146B
6th Virginia Volunteers
Unidentified photographer, 1898

---

[80] Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind*, 613.

[81] Foner, *Reconstruction,* 342, 454.

[82] *Report of the Joint Select Committee to Enquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1872), 20-21, https://archive.org/details/reportofjointsel01unit/page/n5/mode/2up.

[83] Gregory Mixon, *Show Thyself a Man: Georgia State Troops, Colored, 1865-1905* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 92-93.

[84] Mixon, *Show Thyself a Man,* 186-248, 296-336.

Like Georgia, the state of Virginia also maintained Black militias, from 1870 to 1899. The Black militia units pictured here came from across Virginia to attend a drill competition at Fort Monroe. The event was attended by large crowds and senior military officials.

Battalion on Parade, Major Henry William Johnson Papers, Acc.# 0057-3, Box 12: Folder 406. Virginia State University Special Collections and Archives, Johnston Memorial Library

Text Panel 4.3.2
Reconsidering Reconstruction

Like most white Americans of her time, Margaret Mitchell accepted historian William A. Dunning's view that Reconstruction failed largely because of African Americans' innate inability to govern themselves.[85]

The historical record shows otherwise.[86] During Reconstruction African American men turned out in large numbers to exercise their vote. Their elected representatives proposed and enacted many political, educational, and economic reforms.

In July 1870, Georgia became the last former Confederate state to be re-admitted to the U.S. Congress. Within a few years, violent reprisals against Black voters and office holders re-imposed all-white rule in Georgia and throughout the South. The era of Reconstruction reform was over. The era of Jim Crow was just beginning.

Text Panel 4.4
Building A Black Community

After the Civil War, many formerly enslaved residents established themselves in business—for example, as grocers, blacksmiths, barbers, or shoemakers. Such entrepreneurship helped build Black communities. Others gained employment as cooks, waiters, and personal servants.[87]

African Americans had a long history of educating themselves and their children during slavery. Free Black residents in Savannah and Augusta had founded private academies in 1829. In Atlanta, two formerly enslaved men, James Tate and Grandison Daniels had already opened a school for the Black community when the American Missionary Society opened Storrs School in 1865 and Atlanta University in 1867.[88]

Atlanta's 1868 charter allowed African Americans the right to vote and Atlanta's Black residents organized politically both at the city and state level.[89] In 1868, 33 Black men were elected to the Georgia General Assembly. Outraged by Black electoral success, white state legislators voted to expel the newly elected lawmakers from state government. [90] The expelled legislators petitioned the federal government, forcing their reinstatement. In 1870,

---

[85] Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind,* 596-597, 697.

[86] Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction,* 664, Foner, *Reconstruction,* 314.

[87] Lucy Rucker Aiken, "Rucker Sisters" Interview by the Black Women Oral History Project, April 14, 1977, https://mps.lib.harvard.edu/sds/audio/443793398.

[88] Rev. James Tate, "Legacy of Ex-Slave James Tate: City's First Black Businessman, Founded First Black School," *The Atlanta Daily World,* February 15, 1977.

[89] "The Postponement Question Considered: The Municipal Election" *The Atlanta Constitution,* November 29, 1868, 2; "Shall the Negroes Vote?" *The Atlanta Constitution,* December 1, 1868, 2.

[90] "The Initiative" The Original 33, Accessed July 18, 2024, https://original33.com/home/.

William Finch and George Graham were elected to Atlanta City Council, but by 1871, the establishment of city-wide elections reduced the impact that Black votes had within separate wards.[91]

Embedded Image – G148B
Expelled Because of Color
John Riddle, artist, 1978

In late 1867, Georgia held its first election under Reconstruction, choosing delegates to a state Constitutional Convention. This was the first time Black residents voted in the state. Thirty-three African American men—now known as The Original 33—were elected to the Georgia General Assembly.

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9e/Expelled_Because_of_Color.jpg

AFPG – G148A
The First Colored Senator and Representatives in the 41st and 42nd Congress of the United States
New York: Currier & Ives,1872

Jefferson Franklin Long, standing at right, was Georgia's first Black congressman. He was sworn into office in January 1871. He served one term but was not a candidate for reelection due to the anti-Reconstruction efforts of the white-majority Republican Party.

As the first African American to give a speech on the floor of the House, Long argued against the Amnesty Bill, which restored political rights to most former Confederates. Asking his colleagues to acknowledge the atrocities committed by white supremacists in Georgia, he opposed a bill that exempted former Confederates from swearing allegiance to the Constitution. The bill passed in May 1872, supplying amnesty to over 150,000 Confederate troops who had fought against the U.S.

Long, Rucker, and Aiken Family Papers, Gift of Ms. Lucy Aiken

AFPG – G4b
Insurance Maps of Atlanta, Georgia
Volume two, page 206
New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1932

The intersection of Peachtree and 10th Streets shows an assortment of retail and residential buildings. Crescent Apartments is marked at lower left as "Apts." The pink and yellow colors indicate wood frame construction with brick veneer on the exterior. Originally located closer to Peachtree Street, the building was moved to the rear of the lot in 1913 as the Peachtree corridor was commercialized. Over the years, businesses along the block included beauty shops, shoe repair, dry cleaners, restaurants and a delicatessen, plumbers, hosiery, an ice cream parlor, and a movie theater.

The base map was printed in 1932 and was updated through 1954 as indicated by the fire-proof office building next door to Crescent Apartments.

Gift of Yesteryear Book Shop, 1992

Section 5

[91] Chet Fuller, "William Finch: His Election to Atlanta City Council Provided Leverage to Open Public School Doors to Blacks" *The Atlanta Journal,* February 6, 1974; Eugene J. Watts, "Black Political Progress in Atlanta: 1868-1895" *The Journal of Negro History* Vol. 59, No. 3, (July 1974): 272-273.

ATLANTA HISTORY CENTER

Text Panel 5.0
Confronting the Myth

Evaluating the story of *Gone With the Wind* through the lens of historic fact adds to our understanding of the past and makes clearer the novel's distortion of history. But is that awareness enough to address *Gone With the Wind's* significant cultural impact?

Completely ignoring the novel and film is one strategy to weaken that cultural impact and many film festivals have taken this route in the last decades. Some artists, on the other hand, have looked at ways to counter the myth by creating emotionally resonant stories of their own grounded in historical fact.

Text Panel 4.4.4
Black Filmmaking

Three decades before *Gone With the Wind* premiered, pioneering Black filmmakers established their own film production companies recognizing Black audiences and talent. These companies challenged Black marginalization as well as the narrow, stereotypical representations of African Americans. In 1910, William Foster founded the first Black film production company, Foster Photoplay in Chicago. Brothers Noble and George Johnson established the Lincoln Motion Picture Co. and in 1916 launched with their first film production*, The Realization of a Negro's Ambition.*

The Lincoln film company later sought to adapt the novel *The Homesteader* by the young Black author Oscar Micheaux. Instead, Micheaux became his own filmmaker, producing his own adaptation and releasing *The Homesteader*—the first feature-length motion picture with an all-black cast—in 1919.

He released his last feature film, *The Betrayal*, also an adaptation of one of his books, in 1948. The son of formerly enslaved parents, Micheaux brought a variety of complex Black characters to the screen during his long career, often depicting the struggles of everyday African Americans. Many later filmmakers, including Spike Lee, John Singleton, and Melvin Van Peebles, have named Micheaux as a primary influence on their work.[92]

AFPG – G157
Oscar Micheaux
Oscar Micheaux (center) with a crew member and an actor
Simms' Blue Book and National Negro Business and Professional Directory
Chicago: James N. Simms, 1923

With his debut feature, *The Homesteader*, in 1919, Oscar Micheaux launched Black cinema. It was the first feature film written and directed by an African American. Over the next 30 years, Micheaux made more than 40 films, often as writer, director, and producer. His company was unique in releasing one or more Black motion pictures – commonly known as "race films"—each year between 1919 and 1940. Of his total work—the exact number of which is not known—only 15 films survive, most now incomplete.

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division

AFPG – B19
The Homesteader
Oscar Micheaux, author

[92] Tambay Obenson, "Why Has Hollywood Still Not Given Pioneering Black Filmmaker Oscar Micheaux His Due?", *Indie Wire,* May 12, 2021, https://www.indiewire.com/features/general/oscar-micheaux-pioneering-black-filmmaker-1234636108/
"Micheaux, Oscar" Sioux City Public Museum, accessed June 25, 2024, https://www.siouxcitymuseum.org/history-website/micheaux-oscar.

Sioux City: Western Book Supply Company, 1917

Oscar Micheaux's movies featured predominantly Black casts, playing characters who pushed back against the caricatures of Black Americans seen in popular films, including *The Birth of a Nation*. His first film was based on his novel about his experience as a Black homesteader in South Dakota.

Micheaux was approached by Lincoln Motion Picture Company of Omaha, which was interested in filming his novel. Founded in 1916, Lincoln was the first all-Black production company established to serve Black audiences, who were essentially ignored by major studios. Micheaux decided to film the novel himself, despite the lack of financing, equipment, or a studio. As a result, he produced the first full-length film made with a Black cast and crew for a Black audience.[93]

Purchase with funds in support of "Telling Stories"

Text Panel 4.4.3
Alternative Narratives

In 1977, the television series *Roots* created a cultural phenomenon when it brought new images of enslaved people to the American public. More than 28 million viewers watched the first episode; as word spread, the finale garnered more than 100 million viewers. *Roots* introduced millions of people to African American history and encouraged more people to engage seriously with the history of slavery than anything before or since.[94]

Since that time, many filmmakers have presented an increasingly honest look at America's history and legacy of slavery.

Embedded Image – G159
Roots
Alex Haley, screenplay
Wolper Productions, 1977

Embedded Image – G159B
Selma
Ava Duvernay, director
Paramount Pictures, Pathe, and Harpo Films, 2014

Working at the vanguard of contemporary Black filmmaking, director Ava Duvernay hopes "to further and foster the Black cinematic image in an organized and consistent way, and to not have to defer and ask permission to traffic our films: to be self-determining."[95]

She has received awards from the African-American Film Critics Association and British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) for both film and for television. Other honors include Black Reel Awards, NAACP Image Award, Primetime Emmy Awards, and Sundance Film Festival. She is an Academy Award and Golden Globe award nominee. In 2013, Duvernay received the Josephine Baker Award from the Women Film Critics Circle.

---

[93] Richard Trenholm, "How Oscar Micheaux Defied Hollywood to Make the First All-Black Feature Film", *CNET,* February 5, 2021, https://www.cnet.com/culture/entertainment/black-history-month-2021-how-oscar-micheaux-defied-hollywood-to-make-the-homesteader/.

[94] Sabrina Clay, "How 'Roots' made television history and changed American culture" *CNN,* July 23, 2023, How 'Roots' made television history and changed American culture | CNN.

[95] Michael T. Martin, "Conversations with Ava DuVernay – 'A Call to Action': Organizing Principles of an Activist Cinematic Practice," *Black Camera: An International Film Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1 (Fall 2014).

AJ Pics / Alamy Stock Photo

AFPG – G159A
12 Years a Slave
Plan B Entertainment, River Road Entertainment, Film4, Regency Enterprises, 2013

Steve McQueen became the first Black producer to win an Oscar for Best Picture when *12 Years a Slave* won the award in 2014. Based on a harrowing true story, the film offers an unflinching portrayal of slavery rarely seen on screen and a more candid depiction of life for some in the Old South.

The film is based on the 1853 memoir by Solomon Northrop, who was born a free Black man in New York, kidnapped in 1841, and sold into slavery. His story recounts the dehumanizing life of an enslaved person, which included beatings, harsh work, and other cruelties. After 12 years, he was located by his Northern family and regained his freedom.[96]

BFA / Fox Searchlight Pictures

Text Panel 5.0.2
Flipping the Script

Stories have the power to shape the way we think, feel, and act. But an artist can subvert, or even usurp, the power of a story or a cultural icon by depicting it in a new way.

In the case of *Gone With the Wind*, some artists have sought to challenge the original story's negative depiction of African Americans and its sanitized version of slavery. Many have focused instead on Black characters, imbuing them with greater humanity and complexity.

Embedded Image – G161A
Rumors of War
Kehinde Wiley, artist
Bronze with stone pedestal, 2019
Richmond, Virginia

Inspired by a statue of Confederate Army General J.E.B. Stuart from 1907, Wiley replaces the general with an African American youth depicted in the same heroic pose. "In these toxic times," says Wiley, "art can help us transform and give us a sense of purpose. This story begins with my seeing the Confederate monuments. What does it feel like if you are black and walking beneath this? We come from a beautiful, fractured situation. Let's take these fractured pieces and put them back together."[97]

Randy Duchaine / Alamy Stock Photo

Embedded Image – G161

[96] Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years A Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup, A Citizen of New-York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853, From a Cotton Plantation Near the Red River in Louisiana*, (New York: C.M. Saxton, 25 Park Row, 1859).

[97] "Sculpture Created by Kehinde Wiley for VMFA" About VMFA, accessed June 26, 2024, https://vmfa.museum/about/rumors-of-war/.

Gone: An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred b'tween the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart
Kara Walker, artist, 1994
Museum of Modern Art, New York

First exhibited in Walker's 1994 New York debut, *Gone* inaugurated the artist's signature medium: black caricature silhouettes of antebellum figures arranged on a white wall. By using the word "Gone" the work's elaborate title, the artist explicitly refers to *Gone With the Wind* in her critique of slavery and the perpetuation of ethnic stereotypes.

"The history of America is built on … inequality, this foundation of a racial inequality and a social inequality," the artist has said. "And we buy into it. I mean, whiteness is just as artificial a construct as blackness is."[98]

Gift of The Speyer Family Foundation in honor of Marie-Josée Kravis, © 2023 Kara Walker

AFPG – G161B
Alice Randall, author of *The Wind Done Gone*
Margaret Mitchell House & Museum, April 2001

Photo by Erik S. Lesser/Getty Images

AFPG
The Wind Done Gone
Alice Randall, author
New York, Houghton Mifflin, 2001

Randall's parody revisits *Gone With the Wind* through the eyes of a new character, Scarlett's formerly enslaved half-sister Cynara. Cynara's alternative perspective upends many of the stereotypes and biases of the original narrative. The character's name is derived from the source of Mitchell's title, a line from the English poet Ernest Dowson: "I have forgot much, Cynara! gone with the wind."

The estate of Margaret Mitchell sued Randall and Houghton Mifflin for copyright infringement, contending the content was too similar to that of *Gone With the Wind*.[99] The case was settled after Houghton Mifflin agreed to donate to Morehouse College. In April 2001, Margaret Mitchell House & Museum hosted Randall for a dinner, lecture, and book signing.

Purchase with funds in support of "Telling Stories"

Text Panel 5.0.1a
The Story of a City

Gone With the Wind created an image of Atlanta in the minds of many around the nation and the world – an image of Moonlight and Magnolias, a fantasy of the Old South. For decades, this belief fed the city's tourist industry and helped shape Atlantans' view of themselves.

---

[98] "Kara Walker. Gone: An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred b'tween the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart" MoMa, Art and Artists, accessed July 5, 2024, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/110565?artist_id=7679&page=1&sov_referrer=artist.

[99] Cheryl Corley, "'Gone With the Wind' Lawsuit", *NPR,* April 13, 2001, https://www.npr.org/2001/04/13/1121412/gone-with-the-wind-lawsuit, "'Wind Done Gone' copyright case settled", *Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press,* May 29, 2002, https://www.rcfp.org/wind-done-gone-copyright-case-settled/#:~:text=The%20settlement%2C%20announced%20May%209,request%20of%20the%20Mitchell%20estate..

In this same period, the city was also the home to leaders of the Civil Rights Movement and the world's oldest and largest association of Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

While tourists came looking for Scarlett O'Hara, Black Atlantans increased their political and economic power beyond their segregated neighborhoods and business districts. By the early 1970s, Ebony magazine even recognized Atlanta as the Southern Black Mecca and "America's Black Capital."

Today, Atlanta is a major destination of the New Great Migration – the movement of the nation's Black population to the South – particularly among young college-educated Black Americans. The worldwide cultural significance of Atlanta has moved well beyond the myth of the Old South and is embodied in what we wear, what we listen to, what we watch and the way we think about American history.

AFPG – A101

Atlanta of Gone With the Wind

Based on *Bird's Eye View of the City of Atlanta*, *the Capital of Georgia*
St. Louis: Alber Ruger, 1871

Atlanta's identification with *Gone With the Wind* appears as a mashup of history and historical fiction in a map of city sights created in 1946. Margaret Mitchell insisted that her characters were created by her and not based on historical figures.[100] She also took pride in her own research into the historical exactness of her writing regarding places and events. Nevertheless, among the historical places identified on the bird's-eye view, the scene incorporates fictitious places from the book, including Aunt Pittypat's house, Rhett Butler's residence, and Belle Watling's "establishment."

Purchase with funds in support of "Telling Stories"

Text Panel 5.0.4

The Story and American Memory

Gone With the Wind, as both novel and film, presents a story that, through its immense popularity and widespread influence, has overwhelmed other stories of the Civil War Era and become part of American cultural memory. It is a story about the past that has itself became part of history.

Studying *Gone With the Wind* as an artifact of its time allows us to explore the origins and continuing influence of racial myths and stereotypes, helping us understand how such misconceptions still exert a powerful influence on Americans today.

Historical fiction is a powerful tool that can be an important way to uncover and understand the past. It helps us connect with distant events, empathize with the experiences of others, and make sense of complexity. It entertains, engages, and teaches. But historical fiction can also disguise, embellish, and mislead readers about what actually happened.

It is always important to remember that fiction is not fact. *Gone With the Wind* is historical fiction. It is not history.

[100] Letter, [Margaret Mitchell Marsh] to Franklin [M. Garrett], February 23, 1939, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center, Margaret Mitchell Papers, MSS 146, Box 1, Folder 16.

Final Image – G170 & G171
Lenticular graphic that contains image of Confederate battle flag over wounded soldiers in GWTW and USCT soldiers carrying US Flag in the film Glory
Scene from *Gone With the Wind*
Credit, 1939

Selznick International Pictures and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939

Scene from *Glory*
Columbia/TriStar Pictures, 1989

In the late 1930s, the novel *Gone With the Wind* and its movie adaptation gave Americans a sympathetic understanding of the Confederacy through the power of storytelling. That vision is symbolized in the film by the tattered Confederate flag flying over wounded soldiers during the Battle of Atlanta, epitomizing Lost Cause ideology.

Fifty years later, the movie *Glory*, with its memorable scenes of bravery, introduced audiences to the almost forgotten story of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment comprised of Black soldiers. For many Americans, it was their first time learning the true history that nearly 180,000 Black soldiers fought for the United States during the conflict, personifying Black resistance and the resilience of almost 4,000,000 enslaved people.

Atlanta History Center's collection contains both the Atlanta Confederate garrison flag that was flown during the Siege of Atlanta and a large number of artifacts from United States Colored Troops.

AFPG
Atlanta Influences Everything hoodie
2024

Founded in 2015 by Ian Ford, Bem Joiner and Tory Edwards, Atlanta Influences Everything is a "creative consultancy, focused on combining corporate and cultural understanding to harness the influence of Atlanta's culture to do good and connect communities."[101]

Purchase with funds in support of "Telling Stories"

AFPG – A102 (2 copies one showing cover and one showing article inside folded)
"Atlanta: Black Mecca of the South"
Phyl [Phyllis] Garland, author
Ebony, August 1971

This 1971 *Ebony* article declared Atlanta to be the South's Black Mecca. The author touted the growth of Black politics—the previous year, Maynard Jackson had been elected vice-mayor—Black-owned businesses, and Atlanta's upwardly-mobile Black middle-class homeowners.

The Black "New Great Migration" reversal has given Southern metro areas a demographic boost over the past 50 years. Symbolic of this change is the 500% increase of metropolitan Atlanta's Black population from 1970 to 2020.

[101] "Atlanta Influences Everything" Atlanta Influences Everything, accessed June 26, 2024, https://aie.life/

As of 2022, Atlanta has led all other metro areas in Black in-migration for the past four decades. In 1970, Atlanta had the nation's 13th-largest Black population. In 2023, it ranked second after New York.[102]

Text Panel 6.0

Producing *Telling Stories*

Academic Advisors

Matthew Bernstein
Goodrich C. White Professor, Film and Media
Emory University, Atlanta

Robert Burgoyne
Film Studies
University of St Andrews, St Andrews, United Kingdom

Patricia Davis
Associate Professor of Communications Studies
Northeastern University, Boston

Stephane Dunn
Co-founder and Academic Director, Cinema, Television & Emerging Media Studies Program
Morehouse College, Atlanta

Jerome de Groot
Professor of Literature and Culture, English and American Studies
University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom

Kevin Levin
Civil War Historian and Educator
Civil War Memory: https://kevinmlevin.substack.com

Charlene Register
Associate Professor, African, African American, and Diaspora Studies
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Nina Silber
Jon Westling Professor of History
Boston University, Boston

Melvyn Stokes
Professor of Film History
University College London, London, United Kingdom

Helen Taylor
Emeritus Professor of English
University of Exeter, Exeter, United Kingdom

Stephanie Yuhl

[102] "Facts About the U.S. Black Population" Pew Research Center, accessed June 26, 2024, https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/facts-about-the-us-black-population/#:~:text=Among%20metropolitan%20areas%2C%20the%20New,Washington%2C%20D.C.%3B%20and%20Dallas.

W. Arthur Garrity, Sr. Professor in Human Nature, Ethics and Society, and Professor of History
College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts

Selected Archival Resources

Fulton County Library System
Special Collections Department

Georgia State University Library
Digital Collections

Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries
Gone With the Wind Literary Estate Papers

Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin
David O. Selznick Collection

Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center
Margaret Mitchell House Museum Collection