

= Gone with the Wind ( film ) =

Gone with the Wind is a 1939 American epic @-@ historical romance film adapted from Margaret Mitchell 's 1936 novel Gone with the Wind . It was produced by David O. Selznick of Selznick International Pictures and directed by Victor Fleming . Set in the American South against the backdrop of the American Civil War and Reconstruction era , the film tells the story of Scarlett O 'Hara , the strong @-@ willed daughter of a Georgia plantation owner , from her romantic pursuit of Ashley Wilkes , who is married to his cousin , Melanie Hamilton , to her marriage to Rhett Butler . The leading roles are portrayed by Vivien Leigh ( Scarlett ) , Clark Gable ( Rhett ) , Leslie Howard ( Ashley ) , and Olivia de Havilland ( Melanie ) .

The production of the film was difficult from the start . Filming was delayed for two years due to Selznick 's determination to secure Gable for the role of Rhett Butler , and the " search for Scarlett " led to 1 @,@ 400 women being interviewed for the part . The original screenplay was written by Sidney Howard , but underwent many revisions by several writers in an attempt to get it down to a suitable length . The original director , George Cukor , was fired shortly after filming had begun and was replaced by Fleming , who in turn was briefly replaced by Sam Wood while Fleming took some time off due to exhaustion .

The film received positive reviews upon its release in December 1939 , although some reviewers found it dramatically lacking and bloated . The casting was widely praised and many reviewers found Leigh especially suited to her role as Scarlett . At the 12th Academy Awards , it received ten Academy Awards ( eight competitive , two honorary ) from thirteen nominations , including wins for Best Picture , Best Director ( Fleming ) , Best Adapted Screenplay ( posthumously awarded to Sidney Howard ) , Best Actress ( Leigh ) and Best Supporting Actress ( Hattie McDaniel , becoming the first African @-@ American to win an Academy Award ) . It set records for the total number of wins and nominations at the time . The film was immensely popular , becoming the highest @-@ earning film made up to that point , and retained the record for over a quarter of a century . When adjusted for monetary inflation , it is still the most successful film in box @-@ office history .

The film has been criticized as historical revisionism glorifying slavery , but nevertheless , it has been credited for triggering changes to the way African @-@ Americans are depicted on film . It was re @-@ released periodically throughout the 20th century and became ingrained in popular culture . The film is regarded as one of the greatest films of all time ; it has placed in the top ten of the American Film Institute 's list of top 100 American films since the list 's inception in 1998 , and in 1989 , the United States Library of Congress selected it for preservation in the National Film Registry .

= = Plot = =

## Part 1

On the eve of the American Civil War in 1861 , Scarlett O 'Hara lives at Tara , her family 's cotton plantation in Georgia , with her parents and two sisters . Scarlett learns that Ashley Wilkes ? whom she secretly loves ? is to be married to his cousin , Melanie Hamilton , and the engagement is to be announced the next day at a barbecue at Ashley 's home , the nearby plantation Twelve Oaks .

At the Twelve Oaks party , Scarlett secretly declares her feelings to Ashley , but he rebuffs her by responding that he and Melanie are more compatible . Scarlett is incensed when she discovers another guest , Rhett Butler , has overheard their conversation ; a smitten Rhett promises Scarlett he will keep her secret . The barbecue is disrupted by the declaration of war and the men rush to enlist . As Scarlett watches Ashley kiss Melanie goodbye , Melanie 's younger brother Charles proposes to her . Although she does not love him , Scarlett consents and they are married before he leaves to fight .

Scarlett is widowed when Charles dies from a bout of pneumonia and measles while serving in the Confederate Army . Scarlett 's mother sends her to the Hamilton home in Atlanta to cheer her up , although the O 'Haras ' outspoken housemaid Mammy tells Scarlett she knows she is going there only to wait for Ashley 's return . Scarlett , who should not attend a party while in mourning , attends

a charity bazaar in Atlanta with Melanie where she runs into Rhett again , now a blockade runner for the Confederacy . Celebrating a Confederate victory and to raise money for the Confederate war effort , gentlemen are invited to bid for ladies to dance with them . Rhett makes an inordinately large bid for Scarlett and , to the disapproval of the guests , she agrees to dance with him .

The tide of war turns against the Confederacy after the Battle of Gettysburg in which many of the men of Scarlett 's town are killed . Scarlett makes another unsuccessful appeal to Ashley while he is visiting on Christmas furlough , although they do share a private and passionate kiss in the parlor on Christmas Day , just before he returns to war .

Eight months later , as the city is besieged by the Union Army in the Atlanta Campaign , Scarlett and her young house servant Prissy must deliver Melanie 's baby without medical assistance after she goes into premature labor . Afterwards , Scarlett calls upon Rhett to take her home to Tara with Melanie , her baby , and Prissy ; he collects them in a horse and wagon , but once out of the city chooses to go off to fight , leaving Scarlett and the group to make their own way back to Tara . Upon her return home , Scarlett finds Tara deserted , except for her father , her sisters , and two servants : Mammy and Pork . Scarlett learns that her mother has just died of typhoid fever and her father has become incompetent . With Tara pillaged by Union troops and the fields untended , Scarlett vows she will do anything for the survival of her family and herself .

## Part 2

As the O 'Haras and their servants work in the cotton fields , Scarlett 's father is killed after he is thrown from his horse in an attempt to chase away a scalawag from his land . With the defeat of the Confederacy Ashley also returns , but finds he is of little help at Tara . When Scarlett begs him to run away with her , he confesses his desire for her and kisses her passionately , but says he cannot leave Melanie . Unable to pay the taxes on Tara implemented by Reconstructionists , Scarlett dupes her younger sister Suellen 's fiancé , the middle @-@ aged and wealthy mill owner Frank Kennedy , into marrying her , by saying Suellen got tired of waiting and married another beau .

Frank , Ashley , Rhett and several other accomplices make a night raid on a shanty town after Scarlett is attacked while driving through it alone , resulting in Frank 's death . With Frank 's funeral barely over , Rhett proposes to Scarlett and she accepts . They have a daughter whom Rhett names Bonnie Blue , but Scarlett , still pining for Ashley and chagrined at the perceived ruin of her figure , lets Rhett know that she wants no more children and that they will no longer share a bed .

One day at Frank 's mill , Scarlett and Ashley are seen embracing by Ashley 's sister , India , and harboring an intense dislike of Scarlett she eagerly spreads rumors . Later that evening , Rhett , having heard the rumors , forces Scarlett to attend a birthday party for Ashley ; incapable of believing anything bad of her beloved sister @-@ in @-@ law , Melanie stands by Scarlett 's side so that all know that she believes the gossip to be false . After returning home from the party , Scarlett finds Rhett downstairs drunk , and they argue about Ashley . Rhett kisses Scarlett against her will , stating his intent to have sex with her that night , and carries the struggling Scarlett to the bedroom . The next day , Rhett apologizes for his behavior and offers Scarlett a divorce , which she rejects , saying that it would be a disgrace . When Rhett returns from an extended trip to London Scarlett informs him that she is pregnant , but an argument ensues which results in her falling down a flight of stairs and suffering a miscarriage . As she is recovering , tragedy strikes when Bonnie dies while attempting to jump a fence with her pony .

Scarlett and Rhett visit Melanie , who has suffered complications arising from a new pregnancy , on her deathbed . As Scarlett consoles Ashley , Rhett returns to Tara ; realizing that Ashley only ever truly loved Melanie , Scarlett dashes after Rhett to find him preparing to leave for good . She pleads with him , telling him she realizes now that she has loved him all along and that she never really loved Ashley , but Rhett says that with Bonnie 's death went any chance of reconciliation . Scarlett begs him to stay but Rhett rebuffs her and walks out the door and into the early morning fog , leaving her weeping on the staircase and vowing to one day win back his love .

= = Cast = =

Despite receiving top @-@ billing in the opening credits , Gable ? along with Leigh , Howard , and

de Havilland who receive second , third and fourth billing respectively ? has a relatively low placing in the cast list , due to its unusual structure . Rather than ordered by conventional billing , the cast is broken down into three sections : the Tara plantation , Twelve Oaks , and Atlanta . The cast 's names are ordered according to the social rank of the characters ; therefore Thomas Mitchell , who plays Gerald O 'Hara , leads the cast list as the head of the O 'Hara family , while Barbara O 'Neil as his wife receives the second credit and Vivien Leigh as the eldest daughter the third credit , despite having the most screen time . Similarly , Howard C. Hickman as John Wilkes is credited over Leslie Howard who plays his son , and Clark Gable , who plays only a visitor at Twelve Oaks , receives a relatively low credit in the cast list , despite being presented as the " star " of the film in all the promotional literature . Following the death of Mary Anderson ? who played Maybelle Merriwether ? in April 2014 , there are only two surviving credited cast members from the film : Olivia de Havilland who played Melanie Wilkes and Mickey Kuhn , who played her son Beau Wilkes .

= = Production = =

Before publication of the novel , several Hollywood executives and studios declined to create a film based on it , including Louis B. Mayer and Irving Thalberg at Metro @-@ Goldwyn @-@ Mayer ( MGM ) , Pandro Berman at RKO Pictures , and David O. Selznick of Selznick International Pictures . Jack L. Warner liked the story , but Warner Bros. ' s biggest star Bette Davis was uninterested , and Darryl Zanuck of 20th Century @-@ Fox did not offer enough money . Selznick changed his mind after his story editor Kay Brown and business partner John Hay Whitney urged him to buy the film rights . In July 1936 ? a month after it was published ? Selznick bought the rights for \$ 50 @,@ 000 .

= = = Casting = = =

The casting of the two lead roles became a complex , two @-@ year endeavor . For the role of Rhett Butler , Selznick wanted Clark Gable from the start , but Gable was under contract to MGM , who never loaned him to other studios . Gary Cooper was considered , but Samuel Goldwyn ? to whom Cooper was under contract ? refused to loan him out . Warner offered a package of Bette Davis , Errol Flynn , and Olivia de Havilland for lead roles in return for the distribution rights . By this time , Selznick was determined to get Gable and eventually struck a deal with MGM . Selznick 's father @-@ in @-@ law , MGM chief Louis B. Mayer , offered in August 1938 to provide Gable and \$ 1 @,@ 250 @,@ 000 for half of the film 's budget but for a high price : Selznick would have to pay Gable 's weekly salary , and half the profits would go to MGM while Loew 's , Inc ? MGM 's parent company ? would release the film .

The arrangement to release through MGM meant delaying the start of production until the end of 1938 , when Selznick 's distribution deal with United Artists concluded . Selznick used the delay to continue to revise the script and , more importantly , build publicity for the film by searching for the role of Scarlett . Selznick began a nationwide casting call that interviewed 1 @,@ 400 unknowns . The effort cost \$ 100 @,@ 000 and was useless for the film , but created " priceless " publicity . Early frontrunners included Miriam Hopkins and Tallulah Bankhead , who were regarded as possibilities by Selznick prior to the purchase of the film rights ; Joan Crawford , who was signed to MGM , was also considered as a potential pairing with Gable . After a deal was struck with MGM , Selznick held discussions with Norma Shearer ? who was MGM 's top female star at the time ? but she withdrew herself from consideration . Katharine Hepburn lobbied hard for the role with the support of her friend , George Cukor , who had been hired to direct , but she was vetoed by Selznick who felt she was not right for the part .

Many famous ? or soon @-@ to @-@ be @-@ famous ? actresses were considered , but only thirty @-@ one women were actually screen @-@ tested for Scarlett including Ardis Ankersen , Jean Arthur , Tallulah Bankhead , Diana Barrymore , Joan Bennett , Nancy Coleman , Frances Dee , Ellen Drew ( as Terry Ray ) , Paulette Goddard , Susan Hayward ( under her real name of Edythe Marrenner ) , Vivien Leigh , Anita Louise , Haila Stoddard , Margaret Tallichet , Lana Turner and

Linda Watkins . Although Margaret Mitchell refused to publicly name her choice , the actress who came closest to winning her approval was Miriam Hopkins , who Mitchell felt was just the right type of actress to play Scarlett as written in the book . However , Hopkins was in her mid @-@ thirties at the time and was considered too old for the part . Four actresses , including Jean Arthur and Joan Bennett , were still under consideration by December 1938 ; however , only two finalists , Paulette Goddard and Vivien Leigh , were tested in Technicolor , both on December 20 . Goddard almost won the role , but controversy over her marriage with Charlie Chaplin caused Selznick to change his mind .

Selznick had been quietly considering Vivien Leigh , a young English actress who was still little known in America , for the role of Scarlett since February 1938 when Selznick saw her in *Fire Over England* and *A Yank at Oxford* . Leigh 's American agent was the London representative of the Myron Selznick talent agency ( headed by David Selznick 's brother , one of the owners of Selznick International ) , and she had requested in February that her name be submitted for consideration as Scarlett . By the summer of 1938 the Selznicks were negotiating with Alexander Korda , to whom Leigh was under contract , for her services later that year . Selznick 's brother arranged for them to meet for the first time on the night of December 10 , 1938 , when the burning of Atlanta was filmed . In a letter to his wife two days later , Selznick admitted that Leigh was " the Scarlett dark horse " , and after a series of screen tests , her casting was announced on January 13 , 1939 . Just before the shooting of the film , Selznick informed newspaper columnist Ed Sullivan : " Scarlett O 'Hara 's parents were French and Irish . Identically , Miss Leigh 's parents are French and Irish . "

= = = Screenplay = = =

Of original screenplay writer Sidney Howard , film historian Joanne Yeck writes , " reducing the intricacies of *Gone with the Wind* 's epic dimensions was a herculean task ... and Howard 's first submission was far too long , and would have required at least six hours of film ; ... [ producer ] Selznick wanted Howard to remain on the set to make revisions ... but Howard refused to leave New England [ and ] as a result , revisions were handled by a host of local writers " . Selznick dismissed director George Cukor three weeks into filming and sought out Victor Fleming , who was directing *The Wizard of Oz* at the time . Fleming was dissatisfied with the script , so Selznick brought in famed writer Ben Hecht to rewrite the entire screenplay within five days . Hecht returned to Howard 's original draft and by the end of the week had succeeded in revising the entire first half of the script . Selznick undertook rewriting the second half himself but fell behind schedule , so Howard returned to work on the script for one week , reworking several key scenes in part two .

" By the time of the film 's release in 1939 , there was some question as to who should receive screen credit , " writes Yeck . " But despite the number of writers and changes , the final script was remarkably close to Howard 's version . The fact that Howard 's name alone appears on the credits may have been as much a gesture to his memory as to his writing , for in 1939 Sidney Howard died at age 48 in a farm @-@ tractor accident , and before the movie 's premiere . " Selznick , in a memo written in October 1939 , discussed the film 's writing credits : " [ Y ] ou can say frankly that of the comparatively small amount of material in the picture which is not from the book , most is my own personally , and the only original lines of dialog which are not my own are a few from Sidney Howard and a few from Ben Hecht and a couple more from John Van Druten . Offhand I doubt that there are ten original words of [ Oliver ] Garrett 's in the whole script . As to construction , this is about eighty per cent my own , and the rest divided between Jo Swerling and Sidney Howard , with Hecht having contributed materially to the construction of one sequence . "

According to Hecht biographer , William MacAdams , " At dawn on Sunday , February 20 , 1939 , David Selznick ... and director Victor Fleming shook Hecht awake to inform him he was on loan from MGM and must come with them immediately and go to work on *Gone with the Wind* , which Selznick had begun shooting five weeks before . It was costing Selznick \$ 50 @, @ 000 each day the film was on hold waiting for a final screenplay rewrite and time was of the essence . Hecht was in the middle of working on the film *At the Circus* for the Marx Brothers . Recalling the episode in a letter to screenwriter friend Gene Fowler , he said he hadn 't read the novel but Selznick and director

Fleming could not wait for him to read it . They would act out scenes based on Sidney Howard 's original script which needed to be rewritten in a hurry . Hecht wrote , " After each scene had been performed and discussed , I sat down at the typewriter and wrote it out . Selznick and Fleming , eager to continue with their acting , kept hurrying me . We worked in this fashion for seven days , putting in eighteen to twenty hours a day . Selznick refused to let us eat lunch , arguing that food would slow us up . He provided bananas and salted peanuts ... thus on the seventh day I had completed , unscathed , the first nine reels of the Civil War epic . "

MacAdams writes , " It is impossible to determine exactly how much Hecht scripted ... In the official credits filed with the Screen Writers Guild , Sidney Howard was of course awarded the sole screen credit , but four other writers were appended ... Jo Swerling for contributing to the treatment , Oliver H. P. Garrett and Barbara Keon to screenplay construction , and Hecht , to dialogue ... "

= = = Filming = = =

Principal photography began January 26 , 1939 , and ended on July 1 , with post @-@ production work continuing until November 11 , 1939 . Director George Cukor , with whom Selznick had a long working relationship , and who had spent almost two years in pre @-@ production on *Gone with the Wind* , was replaced after less than three weeks of shooting . Selznick and Cukor had already disagreed over the pace of filming and the script , but other explanations put Cukor 's departure down to Gable 's discomfort at working with him . Emanuel Levy , Cukor 's biographer , claimed that Clark Gable had worked Hollywood 's gay circuit as a hustler and that Cukor knew of his past , so Gable used his influence to have him discharged . Vivien Leigh and Olivia de Havilland learned of Cukor 's firing on the day the Atlanta bazaar scene was filmed , and the pair went to Selznick 's office in full costume and implored him to change his mind . Victor Fleming , who was directing *The Wizard of Oz* , was called in from MGM to complete the picture , although Cukor continued privately to coach Leigh and De Havilland . Another MGM director , Sam Wood , worked for two weeks in May when Fleming temporarily left the production due to exhaustion . Although some of Cukor 's scenes were later reshot , Selznick estimated that " three solid reels " of his work remained in the picture . As of the end of principal photography , Cukor had undertaken eighteen days of filming , Fleming ninety @-@ three , and Wood twenty @-@ four .

Cinematographer Lee Garmes began the production , but on March 11 , 1939 ? after a month of shooting footage that Selznick and his associates regarded as " too dark " ? was replaced with Ernest Haller , working with Technicolor cinematographer Ray Rennahan . Garmes completed the first third of the film ? mostly everything prior to Melanie having the baby ? but did not receive a credit . Most of the filming was done on " the back forty " of Selznick International with all the location scenes being photographed in California , mostly in Los Angeles County or neighboring Ventura County . Tara , the fictional Southern plantation house , existed only as a plywood and papier @-@ mâché facade built on the Selznick studio lot . For the burning of Atlanta , new false facades were built in front of the Selznick backlot 's many old abandoned sets , and Selznick himself operated the controls for the explosives that burned them down . Sources at the time put the estimated production costs at \$ 3 @. @ 85 million , making it the second most expensive film made up to that point , with only Ben @-@ Hur ( 1925 ) having cost more .

Although legend persists that the Hays Office fined Selznick \$ 5 @, @ 000 for using the word " damn " in Butler 's exit line , in fact the Motion Picture Association board passed an amendment to the Production Code on November 1 , 1939 , that forbade use of the words " hell " or " damn " except when their use " shall be essential and required for portrayal , in proper historical context , of any scene or dialogue based upon historical fact or folklore ... or a quotation from a literary work , provided that no such use shall be permitted which is intrinsically objectionable or offends good taste . " With that amendment , the Production Code Administration had no further objection to Rhett 's closing line .

= = = Music = = =

To compose the score , Selznick chose Max Steiner , with whom he had worked at RKO Pictures in the early 1930s . Warner Bros. ? who had contracted Steiner in 1936 ? agreed to lend him to Selznick . Steiner spent twelve weeks working on the score , the longest period that he had ever spent writing one , and at two hours and thirty @-@ six minutes long it was also the longest that he had ever written . Five orchestrators were hired , including Hugo Friedhofer , Maurice de Packh , Bernard Kaun , Adolph Deutsch and Reginald Bassett . The score is characterized by two love themes , one for Ashley 's and Melanie 's sweet love and another that evokes Scarlett 's passion for Ashley , though notably there is no Scarlett and Rhett love theme . Steiner drew considerably on folk and patriotic music , which included Stephen Foster tunes such as " Louisiana Belle , " " Dolly Day , " " Ringo De Banjo , " " Beautiful Dreamer , " " Old Folks at Home , " and " Katie Belle , " which formed the basis of Scarlett 's theme ; other tunes that feature prominently are : " Marching through Georgia " by Henry Clay Work , " Dixie , " " Garryowen " and " The Bonnie Blue Flag . " The theme that is most associated with the film today is the melody that accompanies Tara , the O 'Hara plantation ; in the early 1940s , " Tara 's Theme " formed the musical basis of the song " My Own True Love " by Mack David . In all , there are ninety @-@ nine separate pieces of music featured in the score . Due to the pressure of completing on time , Steiner received some assistance in composing from Friedhofer , Deutsch and Heinz Roemheld , and in addition , two short cues ? by Franz Waxman and William Axt ? were taken from scores in the MGM library .

= = Release = =

= = = Preview , premiere and initial release = = =

On September 9 , 1939 , Selznick , his wife , Irene , investor John " Jock " Whitney and film editor Hal Kern drove out to Riverside , California to preview it at the Fox Theatre . The film was still a rough cut at this stage , missing completed titles and lacking special optical effects . It ran for four hours and twenty @-@ five minutes , but would later be cut down to under four hours for its proper release . A double bill of Hawaiian Nights and Beau Geste was playing , and after the first feature it was announced that the theater would be screening a preview ; the audience were informed they could leave but would not be readmitted once the film had begun , nor would phone calls be allowed once the theater had been sealed . When the title appeared on the screen the audience cheered , and after it had finished it received a standing ovation . In his biography of Selznick , David Thomson wrote that the audience 's response before the film had even started " was the greatest moment of [ Selznick 's ] life , the greatest victory and redemption of all his failings " , with Selznick describing the preview cards as " probably the most amazing any picture has ever had . " When Selznick was asked by the press in early September how he felt about the film , he said : " At noon I think it 's divine , at midnight I think it 's lousy . Sometimes I think it 's the greatest picture ever made . But if it 's only a great picture , I 'll still be satisfied . "

About 300 @,@ 000 people came out in Atlanta for the film 's premiere at the Loew 's Grand Theatre on December 15 , 1939 . It was the climax of three days of festivities hosted by Mayor William B. Hartsfield , which included a parade of limousines featuring stars from the film , receptions , thousands of Confederate flags and a costume ball . Eurith D. Rivers , the governor of Georgia , declared December 15 a state holiday . An estimated three hundred thousand residents and visitors to Atlanta lined the streets for up to seven miles to watch a procession of limousines bring the stars from the airport . Only Leslie Howard and Victor Fleming chose not to attend : Howard had returned to England due to the outbreak of World War II , and Fleming had fallen out with Selznick and declined to attend any of the premieres . Hattie McDaniel was also absent , as she and the other black cast members were prevented from attending the premiere due to Georgia 's Jim Crow laws , which would have kept them from sitting with their white colleagues . Upon learning that McDaniel had been barred from the premiere , Clark Gable threatened to boycott the event , but McDaniel convinced him to attend . President Jimmy Carter would later recall it as " the biggest event to happen in the South in my lifetime . " Premieres in New York and Los Angeles followed ,

the latter attended by some of the actresses that had been considered for the part of Scarlett , among them Paulette Goddard , Norma Shearer and Joan Crawford .

From December 1939 to July 1940 , the film played only advance @-@ ticket road show engagements at a limited number of theaters at prices upwards of \$ 1 ? more than double the price of a regular first @-@ run feature ? with MGM collecting an unprecedented 70 percent of the box office receipts ( as opposed to the typical 30 ? 35 percent of the period ) . After reaching saturation as a roadshow , MGM revised its terms to a 50 percent cut and halved the prices , before it finally entered general release in 1941 at " popular " prices . Along with its distribution and advertising costs , total expenditure on the film was as high as \$ 7 million .

= = = Later releases = = =

In 1942 , Selznick liquidated his company for tax reasons , and sold his share in *Gone with the Wind* to his business partner , John Whitney , for \$ 500 @,@ 000 . In turn , Whitney sold it on to MGM for \$ 2 @.@ 8 million , so that the studio owned the film outright . MGM immediately re @-@ released the film in spring 1942 , and again in 1947 and 1954 ; the 1954 reissue was the first time the film was shown in widescreen , compromising the original Academy ratio and cropping the top and bottom to an aspect ratio of 1 @.@ 75 : 1 . In doing so , a number of shots were optically re @-@ framed and cut into the three @-@ strip camera negatives , forever altering five shots in the film . A 1961 release commemorated the centennial anniversary of the start of the Civil War , and included a gala " premiere " at the Loew 's Grand Theater . It was attended by Selznick and many other stars of the film , including Vivien Leigh and Olivia de Havilland ; Clark Gable had died the previous year . For its 1967 re @-@ release , it was blown up to 70mm , and issued with updated poster artwork featuring Gable ? with his white shirt ripped open ? holding Leigh against a backdrop of orange flames . There were further re @-@ releases in 1971 , 1974 and 1989 ; for the fiftieth anniversary reissue in 1989 , it was given a complete audio and video restoration . It was released theatrically one more time in the United States , in 1998 . In 2013 , a 4K digital restoration was released in the United Kingdom to coincide with Vivien Leigh 's centenary . In 2014 , special screenings were scheduled over a two @-@ day period at theaters across the United States to coincide with the film 's 75th anniversary .

= = = Television and home video = = =

The film received its world television premiere on the HBO cable network on June 11 , 1976 , and played on the channel for a total of fourteen times throughout the rest of the month . It made its network television debut in November later that year : NBC paid \$ 5 million for a one @-@ off airing , and it was broadcast in two parts on successive evenings . It became at that time the highest @-@ rated television program ever presented on a single network , watched by 47 @.@ 5 percent of the households sampled in America , and 65 percent of television viewers , still the record for the highest rated film to ever air on television . In 1978 , CBS signed a deal worth \$ 35 million to broadcast the film twenty times over as many years . Turner Entertainment acquired the MGM film library in 1986 , but the deal did not include the television rights to *Gone with the Wind* , which were still held by CBS . A deal was struck in which the rights were returned to Turner Entertainment and CBS 's broadcast rights to *The Wizard of Oz* were extended . It was used to launch two cable channels owned by Turner Broadcasting System : Turner Network Television ( 1988 ) and Turner Classic Movies ( 1994 ) . It debuted on videocassette in March 1985 , where it placed second in the sales charts , and has since been released on DVD and Blu @-@ ray Disc formats .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical response = = =

Gone with the Wind was well received upon its release , with most consumer magazines and newspapers generally giving it excellent reviews . However , while its production values , technical achievements , and scale of ambition were universally recognized , some of the more notable reviewers of the time found the film to be dramatically lacking . Frank S. Nugent for The New York Times best summed up the general sentiment by acknowledging that while it was the most ambitious film production made up to that point , it probably was not the greatest film ever made , but he nevertheless found it to be an " interesting story beautifully told " . Franz Hoellering of The Nation was of the same opinion : " The result is a film which is a major event in the history of the industry but only a minor achievement in motion @-@ picture art . There are moments when the two categories meet on good terms , but the long stretches between are filled with mere spectacular efficiency . "

While the film was praised for its fidelity to the novel , this aspect was also singled out as the main factor in contributing to the bloated running time , which many critics felt was to the detriment of the overall dramatic impact . John C. Flinn wrote for Variety that Selznick had " left too much in " , and that as entertainment , the film would have benefited if repetitious scenes and dialog from the latter part of the story had been trimmed . The Manchester Guardian felt that the film 's one serious drawback was that the story lacked the epic quality to justify the outlay of time and found the second half , which focuses on Scarlett 's " irrelevant marriages " and " domestic squabbles , " mostly superfluous , and the sole reason for their inclusion had been " simply because Margaret Mitchell wrote it that way " . The Guardian believed that if " the story had been cut short and tidied up at the point marked by the interval , and if the personal drama had been made subservient to a cinematic treatment of the central theme ? the collapse and devastation of the Old South ? then Gone With the Wind might have been a really great film . " Likewise , Hoellering also found the second half of the film to be weaker than the first half : identifying the Civil War to be the driving force of the first part while the characters dominate in the second part , he concluded this is where the main fault of the picture lay , commenting that " the characters alone do not suffice " . Despite many excellent scenes , he considered the drama to be unconvincing and that the " psychological development " had been neglected .

Much of the praise was reserved for the casting , with Vivien Leigh in particular being singled out for her performance as Scarlett . Nugent described her as the " pivot of the picture " and believed her to be " so perfectly designed for the part by art and nature that any other actress in the role would be inconceivable " . Similarly , Hoellering found her " perfect " in " appearance and movements " ; he felt her acting best when she was allowed to " accentuate the split personality she portrays " and thought she was particularly effective in such moments of characterization like the morning after the marital rape scene . Flinn also found Leigh suited to the role physically and felt she was best in the scenes where she displays courage and determination , such as the escape from Atlanta and when Scarlett kills a Yankee deserter . Leigh won in the Best Actress category for her performance at the 1939 New York Film Critics Circle Awards . Of Clark Gable 's performance as Rhett Butler , Flinn felt the characterization was " as close to Miss Mitchell 's conception ? and the audience 's ? as might be imagined " , a view which Nugent concurred with , although Hoellering felt that Gable didn 't quite convince in the closing scenes , as Rhett walks out on Scarlett in disgust . Of the other principal cast members , both Hoellering and Flinn found Leslie Howard to be " convincing " as the weak @-@ willed Ashley , with Flinn identifying Olivia de Havilland as a " standout " as Melanie ; Nugent was also especially taken with de Havilland 's performance , describing it as a " gracious , dignified , tender gem of characterization " . Hattie McDaniel 's performance as Mammy was singled out for praise by many critics : Nugent believed she gave the best performance in the film after Vivien Leigh , with Flinn placing it third after Leigh 's and Gable 's performances .

= = = Academy Awards = = =

At the 12th Academy Awards , Gone with the Wind set a record for Academy Award wins and nominations , winning in eight of the competitive categories it was nominated in , from a total of thirteen nominations . It won for Best Picture , Best Actress , Best Supporting Actress , Best Director



, Best Screenplay , Best Cinematography , Best Interior Decoration , and Best Editing , and received two further honorary awards for its use of equipment and color ( it also became the first color film to win Best Picture ) . Its record of eight competitive wins stood until *Gigi* ( 1958 ) won nine , and its overall record of ten was broken by *Ben Hur* ( 1959 ) which won eleven . *Gone with the Wind* also held the record for most nominations until *All About Eve* ( 1950 ) secured fourteen . It was the longest American sound film made up to that point , and may still hold the record of the longest Best Picture winner depending on how it is interpreted . The running time for *Gone with the Wind* is just under 221 minutes , while *Lawrence of Arabia* ( 1962 ) runs for just over 222 minutes ; however , including the overture , intermission , entr 'acte , and exit music , *Gone with the Wind* lasts for 234 minutes ( although some sources put its full length at 238 minutes ) while *Lawrence of Arabia* comes in slightly shorter at 232 minutes with its additional components .

Hattie McDaniel became the first African @-@ American to win an Academy Award ? beating out her co @-@ star Olivia de Havilland who was also nominated in the same category ? but was racially segregated from her co @-@ stars at the awards ceremony at the Coconut Grove ; she and her escort were made to sit at a separate table at the back of the room . Meanwhile , screenwriter Sidney Howard became the first posthumous Oscar winner and Selznick personally received the Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award for his career achievements .

= = = African @-@ American reaction = = =

Black commentators criticised the film for its depiction of black people and as a glorification of slavery . Carlton Moss , a black dramatist , complained in an open letter that whereas *The Birth of a Nation* was a " frontal attack on American history and the Negro people " , *Gone with the Wind* was a " rear attack on the same " . He went on to dismiss it as a " nostalgic plea for sympathy for a still living cause of Southern reaction " . Moss further criticized the stereotypical black characterizations , such as the " shiftless and dull @-@ witted Pork " , the " indolent and thoroughly irresponsible Prissy " , Big Sam 's " radiant acceptance of slavery " , and Mammy with her " constant haranguing and doting on every wish of Scarlett " . Following Hattie McDaniel 's Oscar win , Walter Francis White , leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People , accused her of being an Uncle Tom . McDaniel responded that she would " rather make seven hundred dollars a week playing a maid than seven dollars being one " ; she further questioned White 's qualification to speak on behalf of blacks , since he was light @-@ skinned and only one @-@ eighth black .

Opinion in the black community was generally divided upon release , with the film being called by some a " weapon of terror against black America " and an insult to black audiences , and demonstrations were held in various cities . Even so , some sections of the black community recognized McDaniel 's achievements to be representative of progression : some African @-@ Americans crossed picket lines and praised McDaniel 's warm and witty characterization , while others hoped that the industry 's recognition of her work would lead to increased visibility on screen for other black actors . In its editorial congratulation to McDaniel on winning her Academy Award , *Opportunity : A Journal of Negro Life* used the film as reminder of the " limit " put on black aspiration by old prejudices . Malcolm X would later recall that " when Butterfly McQueen went into her act , I felt like crawling under the rug " .

= = = Audience response = = =

Upon its release , *Gone with the Wind* broke attendance records everywhere . At the Capitol Theatre in New York alone , it was averaging eleven thousand admissions per day in late December , and within four years of its release had sold an estimated sixty million tickets across the United States ? sales equivalent to just under half the population at the time . It repeated its success overseas , and was a sensational hit during the Blitz in London , opening in April 1940 and playing for four years . By the time MGM withdrew it from circulation at the end of 1943 its worldwide distribution had returned a gross rental ( the studio 's share of the box office gross ) of \$ 32 million , making it the most profitable film ever made up to that point .

Even though it earned its investors roughly twice as much as the previous record @-@ holder , The Birth of a Nation , the box @-@ office performances of the two films were likely much closer . The bulk of the earnings from Gone with the Wind came from its roadshow and first @-@ run engagements , which represented 70 percent and 50 percent of the box @-@ office gross respectively , before entering general release ( which at the time typically saw the distributor 's share set at 30 ? 35 percent of the gross ) . In the case of The Birth of a Nation , its distributor , Epoch , sold off many of its distribution territories on a " states rights " basis ? which typically amounted to 10 percent of the box @-@ office gross ? and Epoch 's accounts are only indicative of its own profits from the film , and not the local distributors . Carl E. Milliken , secretary of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association , estimated that The Birth of a Nation had been seen by fifty million people by 1930 .

When it was re @-@ released in 1947 , it earned an impressive \$ 5 million rental in the United States and Canada , and was one of the top ten releases of the year . Successful re @-@ releases in 1954 and 1961 enabled it to retain its position as the industry 's top earner , despite strong challenges from more recent films such as Ben @-@ Hur , but it was finally overtaken by The Sound of Music in 1966 . The 1967 reissue was unusual in that MGM opted to roadshow it , a decision that turned it into the most successful re @-@ release in the history of the industry . It generated a box @-@ office gross of \$ 68 million , making it MGM 's most lucrative picture after Doctor Zhivago from the latter half of the decade . MGM earned a rental of \$ 41 million from the release , with the U.S. and Canadian share amounting to over \$ 30 million , placing it second only to The Graduate for that year . Including its \$ 6 @.@ 7 million rental from the 1961 reissue , it was the fourth highest @-@ earner of the decade in the North American market , with only The Sound of Music , The Graduate and Doctor Zhivago making more for their distributors . A further re @-@ release in 1971 allowed it to briefly recapture the record from The Sound of Music , bringing its total worldwide gross rental to about \$ 116 million by the end of 1971 ? more than trebling its earnings from its initial release ? before losing the record again the following year to The Godfather .

Across all releases , it is estimated that Gone with the Wind has sold over 200 million tickets in the United States and Canada , and 35 million tickets in the United Kingdom , generating more theater admissions in those territories than any other film . In total , Gone with the Wind has grossed over \$ 390 million globally at the box office ; in 2007 Turner Entertainment estimated the gross to be equivalent to approximately \$ 3 @.@ 3 billion when adjusted for inflation to current prices , while Guinness World Records arrived at a figure of \$ 3 @.@ 44 billion in 2014 , making it the most successful film in cinema history .

The film remains immensely popular with audiences into the 21st century , having been voted the most popular film in two nationwide polls of Americans undertaken by Harris Interactive in 2008 , and again in 2014 . The market research firm surveyed over two thousand U.S. adults , with the results weighted by age , sex , race / ethnicity , education , region and household income so their proportions matched the composition of the adult population .

= = = Critical re @-@ evaluation = = =

In revisiting the film in the 1970s , Arthur Schlesinger noted that Hollywood films generally age well , revealing an unexpected depth or integrity , but in the case of Gone with the Wind time has not treated it kindly . Richard Schickel posits that one measure of a film 's quality is to ask what you can remember of it , and the film falls down in this regard : unforgettable imagery and dialogue are simply not present . Stanley Kauffmann , likewise , also found the film to be a largely forgettable experience , claiming he could only remember two scenes vividly . Both Schickel and Schlesinger put this down to it being " badly written " , in turn describing the dialogue as " flowery " and possessing a " picture postcard " sensibility . Schickel also believes the film fails as popular art , in that it has limited rewatch value ? a sentiment that Kauffmann also concurs with , stating that having watched it twice he hopes " never to see it again : twice is twice as much as any lifetime needs " . Both Schickel and Andrew Sarris identify the film 's main failing is in possessing a producer 's sensibility rather than an artistic one : having gone through so many directors and writers the film

does not carry a sense of being " created " or " directed " , but rather having emerged " steaming from the crowded kitchen " , where the main creative force was a producer 's obsession in making the film as literally faithful to the novel as possible .

Sarris concedes that despite its artistic failings , the film does hold a mandate around the world as the " single most beloved entertainment ever produced " . Judith Crist observes that , kitsch aside , the film is " undoubtedly still the best and most durable piece of popular entertainment to have come off the Hollywood assembly lines " , the product of a showman with " taste and intelligence " . Schlesinger notes that the first half of the film does have a " sweep and vigor " that aspire to its epic theme , but ? finding agreement with the film 's contemporary criticisms ? the personal lives take over in the second half , and it ends up losing its theme in unconvincing sentimentality . Kauffmann also finds interesting parallels with *The Godfather* , which had just replaced *Gone with the Wind* as the highest @-@ grosser at the time : both were produced from " ultra @-@ American " best @-@ selling novels , both live within codes of honor that are romanticized , and both in essence offer cultural fabrication or revisionism .

The critical perception of the film has shifted in the intervening years , which resulted in it being ranked 235th in *Sight & Sound* 's prestigious decennial critics poll in 2012 , and in 2015 sixty @-@ two international film critics polled by the BBC voted it the 97th best American film .

= = = Industry recognition = = =

The film has featured in several high @-@ profile industry polls : in 1977 it was voted the most popular film by the American Film Institute ( AFI ) , in a poll of the organization 's membership ; the AFI also ranked the film fourth on its " 100 Greatest Movies " list in 1998 , with it slipping down to sixth place in the tenth anniversary edition in 2007 . Film directors ranked it 322nd in the 2012 edition of the decennial *Sight & Sound* poll , and in 2016 it was selected as the ninth best " directorial achievement " in a Directors Guild of America members poll . In 2014 , it placed fifteenth in an extensive poll undertaken by *The Hollywood Reporter* , which balloted every studio , agency , publicity firm and production house in the Hollywood region . *Gone with the Wind* was selected for preservation in the U.S. National Film Registry in 1989 .

= = Analysis = =

= = = Racial criticism = = =

*Gone with the Wind* has been criticized as having perpetuated Civil War myths and black stereotypes . David Reynolds writes that " The white women are elegant , their menfolk noble or at least dashing . And , in the background , the black slaves are mostly dutiful and content , clearly incapable of an independent existence . " Reynolds likened *Gone with the Wind* to *The Birth of a Nation* and other re @-@ imaginings of the South during the era of segregation , in which white Southerners are portrayed as defending traditional values and the issue of slavery is largely ignored . The film has been described as a " regression " that promotes the myth of the black rapist and the honourable and defensive role of the Ku Klux Klan during Reconstruction , and as a " social propaganda " film offering a " white supremacist " view of the past . From 1972 to 1996 , the Atlanta Historical Society held a number of *Gone with the Wind* exhibits , among them a 1994 exhibit titled , " Disputed Territories : *Gone with the Wind* and Southern Myths " . One of the questions explored by the exhibit was " How True to Life Were the Slaves in GWTW ? " This section showed slave experiences were diverse and concluded that the " happy ducky " was a myth , as was the belief that all slaves experienced violence and brutality .

Despite factual inaccuracies in its depiction of the Reconstruction period , it nevertheless reflects contemporary interpretations common throughout the early 20th century . One pervasive viewpoint argued by academics is reflected in a brief scene in which Mammy fends off a leering freedman : a government official can be heard offering bribes to the emancipated slaves for their votes . The clear

inference is that freedmen are ignorant about politics and unprepared for freedom , unwittingly becoming the tools of corrupt Reconstruction officials . While perpetuating some Lost Cause myths , the film makes concessions in regards to others . After the attack on Scarlett in the shanty town , a group of men including Scarlett 's husband Frank , Rhett Butler and Ashley raid the town ; in the novel they belong to the Ku Klux Klan , representing the common trope of protecting the white woman 's virtue , but the filmmakers consciously neutralize the presence of the Klan in the film by referring to it only as a " political meeting " .

Thomas Cripps has argued that the film in some respects undercuts racial stereotypes ; in particular , the film created greater engagement between Hollywood and black audiences , with dozens of movies making small gestures in recognition of the emerging trend . Only a few weeks after its initial run , a story editor at Warner wrote a memo to Walter Wanger about Mississippi Belle , a script that contained the worst excesses of plantation films , suggesting that *Gone with the Wind* had made the film " unproducible " . More than any film since *The Birth of a Nation* , it unleashed a variety of social forces that foreshadowed an alliance of white liberals and blacks who encouraged the expectation that blacks would one day achieve equality . According to Cripps , the film eventually became a template for measuring social change .

= = = Depiction of marital rape = = =

One of the most notorious and widely condemned scenes in *Gone with the Wind* depicts what is now legally defined as " marital rape " . The scene begins with Scarlett and Rhett at the bottom of the staircase , where he begins to kiss her , refusing to be told ' no ' by the struggling and frightened Scarlett ; Rhett overcomes her resistance and carries her up the stairs to the bedroom , where the audience is left in no doubt that she will " get what 's coming to her " . The next scene , the following morning , shows Scarlett glowing with barely suppressed sexual satisfaction ; Rhett apologizes for his behavior , blaming it on his drinking . The scene has been accused of combining romance and rape by making them indistinguishable from each other , and of reinforcing a notion about forced sex : that women secretly enjoy it , and it is an acceptable way for a man to treat his wife .

Molly Haskell has argued that nevertheless , women are mostly uncritical of the scene , and that by and large it is consistent with what women have in mind when they fantasize about being raped . Their fantasies revolve around love and romance rather than forced sex ; they assume that Scarlett was not an unwilling sexual partner and wanted Rhett to take the initiative and insist on having sexual intercourse .

= = Legacy = =

= = = In popular culture = = =

*Gone with the Wind* and its production have been explicitly referenced , satirized , dramatized and analyzed on numerous occasions across a range of media , from contemporaneous works such as *Second Fiddle* ? a 1939 film spoofing the " search for Scarlett " ? to current television shows , such as *The Simpsons* . The *Scarlett O'Hara War* ( a 1980 television dramatization of the casting of Scarlett ) , *Moonlight and Magnolias* ( a 2007 play by Ron Hutchinson that dramatizes Ben Hecht 's five @-@ day re @-@ write of the script ) , and " *Went with the Wind !* " ( a sketch on *The Carol Burnett Show* that parodied the film in the aftermath of its television debut in 1976 ) are among the more noteworthy examples of its enduring presence in popular culture . It was also the subject of a 1988 documentary , *The Making of a Legend : Gone with the Wind* , detailing the film 's difficult production history . In 1990 , the United States Postal Service issued a stamp depicting Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh embracing in a scene from the film .

= = = Sequel = = =

Following publication of her novel , Margaret Mitchell was inundated with requests for a sequel but claimed to not have a notion of what happened to Scarlett and Rhett , and that she had " left them to their ultimate fate " . Mitchell continued to resist pressure from Selznick and MGM to write a sequel until her death in 1949 . In 1975 , her brother , Stephens Mitchell ( who assumed control of her estate ) , authorized a sequel to be jointly produced by MGM and Universal Studios on a budget of \$ 12 million . Anne Edwards was commissioned to write the sequel as a novel which would then be adapted into a screenplay , and published in conjunction with the film 's release . Edwards submitted a 775 @-@ page manuscript entitled Tara , The Continuation of Gone with the Wind , set between 1872 and 1882 focusing on Scarlett 's divorce from Rhett ; MGM was not satisfied with the story and the deal collapsed .

The idea was revived in the 1990s , when a sequel was finally produced in 1994 , in the form of a television miniseries . Scarlett was based upon the novel by Alexandra Ripley , itself a sequel to Mitchell 's book . British actors Joanne Whalley and Timothy Dalton were cast as Scarlett and Rhett , and the series follows Scarlett 's relocation to Ireland after again becoming pregnant by Rhett .