

Gone With the Wind

Gone With the Wind is perhaps the most famous book ever written about the American Civil War. And in 1987, the American Film Institute voted the movie made from the book the greatest American film ever made. Margaret Mitchell was the author of the 1936 book, which told the story of Scarlett O'Hara, a wealthy Southern belle who had to come to terms with life in the South both during and after the Civil War.

Mitchell spent 10 years writing the book. Before she wrote *Gone With the Wind*, the only thing she had ever published was an article that was printed in a local magazine. She didn't publish any other books after finishing *Gone With the Wind*. The book has sold more than 25 million copies. It has been translated into 27 languages.

The film version of *Gone With the Wind* premiered in Atlanta in 1939. The movie starred some of the most famous performers of all time. There is a famous scene in *Gone With the Wind* that shows Scarlett kneeling in the dirt of her family's devastated plantation following a Civil War battle. It was a moment of truth for the pampered Scarlett, who was not used to hardship. She had to deal with the effects of the war and the fact that she was no longer the carefree girl she once was. As she has to dig for roots in the vegetable garden, trying to find food for what is left of her family, she utters one of the movie's most famous lines: "As God is my witness, I'll never be hungry again!"

Gone With the Wind was nominated for 13 Academy Awards and received 8 during the 1940 awards ceremony. That was quite an accomplishment, considering the fact that other films made during the same year are some of the most honored movies of all time: *The Wizard of Oz*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *Stagecoach*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *Wuthering Heights*.

Unit 4

- The making of *Gone With the Wind* involved elaborate sets and direction, for the scenes of both peace and war. Think of a movie that you've seen that would be considered elaborate in this regard and tell why.

- Given what you know about the Civil War, how significant do you think Scarlett's sacrifices were compared with the sacrifices of others who were affected?

- Civil wars always place an enormous strain on nations. What are some of the strains and how do countries deal with them?