



With this new year, we celebrate the 60th anniversary of what is arguably the best, but certainly the most popular, movie ever made—*Gone With The Wind*. Based on Margaret Mitchell's best-selling novel, the film made history in every respect: it made an international celebrity of its star, Vivien Leigh, it won a then-unprecedented ten Academy Awards, including Best Picture, and it developed a huge following that so far has lasted six decades. The total cost was a phenomenal \$4.25 million - equivalent to \$50 million today; at 3 hours and 52 minutes it had the longest running time of its day, and when it premiered in Atlanta on December 15, 1939, over one million people poured into the city. After three days of parades and celebrations, a select audience of 2500 people finally saw this most eagerly awaited film.

Their reaction reflected that of the millions who were to see it over the years - they loved it. *Gone With the Wind* quickly became a worldwide critical and box-office success and went on beyond cinema history into that special category few films ever achieve: it became a Hollywood legend. The novel, itself, has sold more than 250 million copies in 27 languages and still sells almost 50,000

hard cover and 250,000 paperback copies a year. Ticket sales, foreign rights, and rentals of the GWTW videocassette have earned more than \$840 million. In May, 1985 when GWTW debuted as an \$89.95 double videocassette, it marched toward the top of sales charts, claiming second behind Star Trek III. In 1986, at the novel's fiftieth anniversary celebration, held in Atlanta, collectors and GWTW fans bought 50,000 Margaret Mitchell commemorative postage stamps. Last year, the film was re-released.

David O. Selznick, the movie's producer, bought the movie rights in 1936, but he was unable to begin shooting until 1939. When principal shooting began in January of 1939, the production was beset by difficulties. There were countless problems with the script. Other troubles concerned the directing and casting. The search for Scarlet, especially, became a nationwide search. Louise Platt, Tallulah Bankhead, Linda Watkins, Adele Longmire, Haila Stoddard, Diana Forrest, Edith Marriner, Paulette Goddard, Margaret Tallichet, Frances Dee, Nancy Coleman, Shiley Logan, Marcella Martin, Lana Turner, plus hundreds of unknowns were auditioned before Vivien Leigh finally got the part. Clark Gable only reluctantly signed on as the leading man.

