



EAST TORRENS HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

Newsletter

Issue 159 Volume 42 No 2
APRIL 2020

P O Box 169
Norton Summit S A 5136
www.eths.ws



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EAST TORRENS HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETINGS

Everyone is invited to attend Society meetings, which are usually held on the second Wednesday of February, April, June, August, and October mostly at the Community Centre at Norton Summit.

Committee meetings are generally held 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 9.30am, as required.

Deadline for Newsletter articles — 3rd week in January, March, May, July and September. Newsletter Committee:- Dr G Bishop, L Richards, J Kerwood.

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From the Management Committee

During this difficult and challenging period, it is important for us to remember that we are still an integral part of the ETHS community. While we are unable to hold meetings and other gatherings, our members remain in our thoughts. Please keep in touch with each one another by telephone, email, texting, etc.

We intend to keep in contact by our Newsletter and occasional emails. Although Historical Societies and such groups have cancelled meetings and SA History Festival has been postponed, you are encouraged to keep up any research you might be doing (or commence some) and reading of books about our history which you can share with others via the Newsletter. Write a review or comment about what you have been reading.

We encourage members to renew your membership for 2020 (if you've not already done so) as we largely depend on membership fees to operate the society, which includes printing and posting the Newsletter to members..

Please send payments to:-

The Treasurer

East Torrens Historical Society Inc.

P O Box 169

Norton Summit S A 5136

Or by

Direct transfer payment to:-

BSB 633 000

Account No 167087535

Account Name: East Torrens Historical Society

Please include your NAME and M-Fees as a reference.

FEBRUARY 2020 MEETING REPORT

Geoffrey Bishop entertained a small number of our members with an interesting presentation **A celebration of philately: Liechtenstein – a celebration of a nation's history in beautiful stamps.**

The alpine Principality of Liechtenstein is one of Europe's smallest nations (160 sq kms, population 35,000) but is noted for its robust economy producing high-tech equipment and is one of the world's wealthiest nations per capita. It is also noted for its high-quality postage stamps. In this talk its postal history was discussed and over 100 years of stamps were on view. Come and discover this interesting nation.

The year 2019 marked the 300th anniversary of the Principality.

Spend a few minutes looking at the website below showcasing Liechtenstein's beautiful stamps some of which I have re-produced for you.

<https://www.stampworld.com/stamps/Liechtenstein/Postage%20stamps/1912-2020?page=33>





Dear President Jon and members.

On behalf of the Uraidla Show Management Committee, our thoughts go out to everyone who has been directly impacted by the COVID-19 virus.

Firstly, we hope you and your families are healthy and well. These are challenging times, and we know that many of you are feeling the impact of the virus and measures taken to reduce the rate of growth and 'flatten the curve'. Hopefully, with everyone following directives of social distancing and the medical advice, the disruptions will ease and we can get back to our normal lives.

With this hope, the Uraidla Show's Committee continues to meet (via video conferencing) and plan towards a **Show Day on Sunday, 1 November**. We know that, should the Show proceed, it is sure to draw large crowds looking to celebrate the end of a challenging year and the beginning of better times ahead.

We understand if, at this time, you cannot commit to sponsoring the Uraidla Show in 2020 and will continue to keep you informed on our progress so that, closer to the time, you can make a more informed decision.

Fingers crossed, we will have moved past the worst of it and the Show will go on. We hope you are looking forward to Show Day as much as we are.

Keep safe and well,

All the best,
The Uraidla Show Management Committee.

Mignonette Eve May Possingham

This story was written to be included in an oral history story telling event on 25th May 2019 as part of the 125th celebration of women's achievements since achieving the vote in South Australia. This is one woman's writing about a woman I have only known through reading her diaries and understanding (a little!) of the special place she called home in the Adelaide Hills. I ask that her grandchildren and friends of her friends forgive me for the gaps that are inevitably left in the vignette of her life and my interpretation of Nettie's writing.

Erica Womersley 2019

Mignonette Eva May Possingham (Nettie) was born 9/8/1894 at Inglewood and died 26/4/1976.

Nettie was born on the 9th of August 1894 and named Mignonette Eva May Possingham. This beautiful name became shortened to the familial 'Nettie'. Nettie, like so many women of her time was married to a young man who had served in the 1st World War and returned to make his living as a farmer. Nettie married Charles Thomas Sparnon on the 21st April 1920 and so carried the two family names of Sparnon and Possingham, names that have been associated with Montacute in the Adelaide Hills for a century or more and are still Montacute families today.

History has recorded that Montacute where Nettie lived and raised her family was a picturesque and productive area for flower production, market gardening and orchards. Her life as she recorded it in her diaries revolved around the routines of gardening, food preparation and preserving and caring for a family. The photo on the right shows rows of flowers, probably stocks, gladioli or violets and these were picked and sold at market as part of the family business.



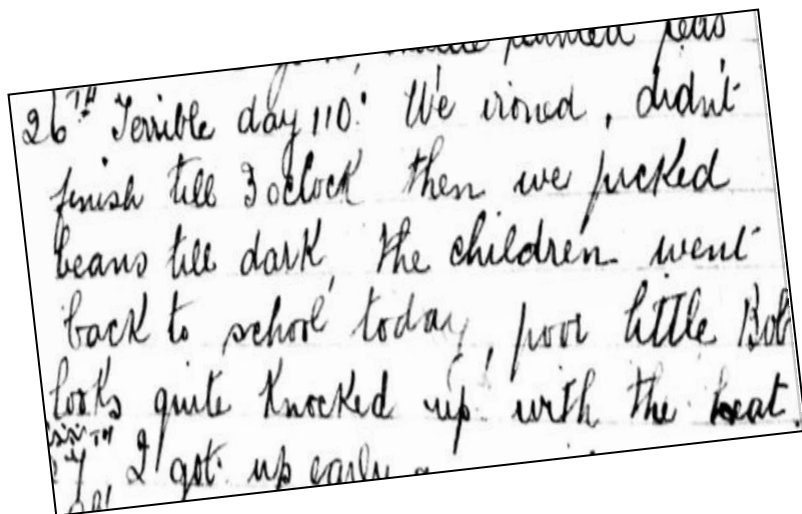
Every day Nettie recorded this sort of work along with ironing or washing, visits to friends, outings to church or the school and trips on a weekend in her diaries. Naturally reading her entries made from the 1930's through to the 1950s can be repetitive and more of the same and yet every day she would record what she had completed and was working on. It was common for women of that era to keep a diary with entries of what they had 'done' and I could not help but wonder what motivated them to maintain this daily discipline? For a woman whose work all revolved around her family, neighbours and chores at home or activities for the community, was it a way of maintaining and using the literacy skills she had acquired in her schooling? Perhaps for Nettie this was exactly what inspired her as she clearly loved telling stories and regularly scripted and organised productions to be performed at the Montacute Institute for community events. Perhaps the act of maintaining a diary also legitimised and gave weight and worth to the chores of a housewife.

Nettie and her husband Charles had four sons John, Joseph, Bob and Arthur. As Nettie wrote she often referred to them as a group and 'the boys' were involved in many of the household responsibilities, "the boys (good kids) did nearly all the work this morning, gave me a spell". Nettie often wrote specifically about the jobs her sons helped with, "Arthur helped me get the flowers and make the butter, seemed to be fairly busy all day" however, as I read her diaries, it was a stark reminder that parents did not have time to be 'helicopter parents' in the 1930's and 40's and life was largely week after week of household and farming chores for this family.



It was not unusual for families to take in children from a sister or brother, cousin or friend if the need arose and at one stage Nettie's family swelled to 12 people she was cooking and caring for, making clothes for the extra children and looking after their wellbeing by taking them to concerts and making sure there were some special outings for them.

Like farming throughout the ages Charlie, Nettie and their boys were challenged by the weather extremes. Heatwaves with temperatures reaching 110 Celsius did not stop them getting on with the work but rather it extended their days with early starts and late finishes.



26th Terrible day 110! We rived, didn't finish till 3 o'clock then we picked beans till dark. The children went back to school today, poor little Bob looks quite knocked up with the heat. I got up early a

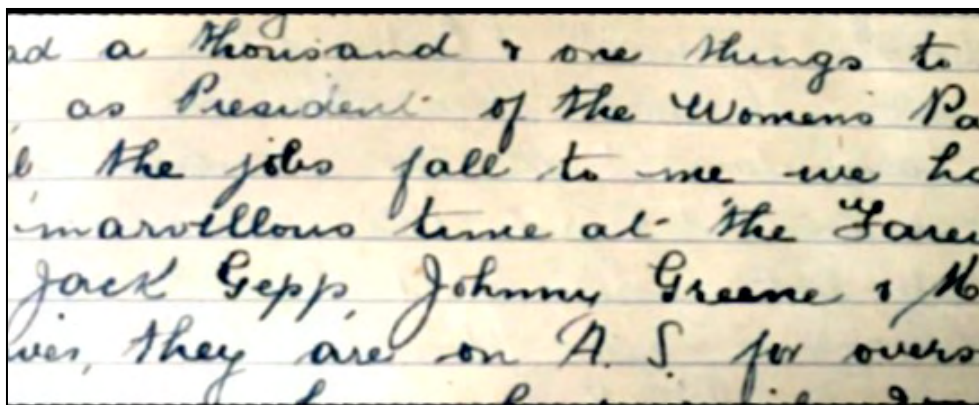
Life certainly was not easy!

A severe storm and flooding in April 1940 was the subject of Nettie's diary entries for many days and weeks. It is easy to imagine the long hours of laboring with limited mechanical help that was required to repair the broken fences and damaged growing fields, not to mention the huge loss of income that would have resulted from crop loss.

A cloudburst along the foothills between Magill and the Torrens Gorge did damage to gardens estimated at thousands of pounds. Water to a depth of nearly two feet rushed through some of the properties and carried away growing vegetables and the top soil. The Gorge road and the Montacute road were blocked in several places by landslides, and the Highways Department sent gangs of men with motor lorries to clear away the debris.

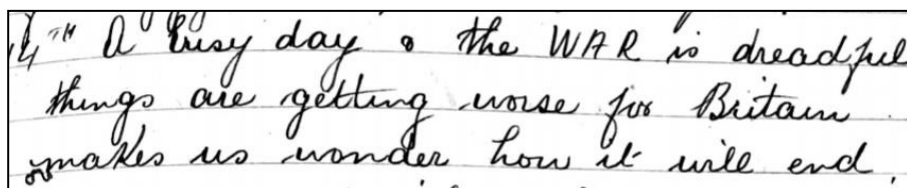
finis up, today
us at present, we had lovely patches
of cabbages 15000 ready for marketing
they are all gone, as well as the
young cabbage plants ready for planting
there are thousands of gutters & weeds
in the property, such a loss of soil
will never be replaced, Hitler &
his bullets couldn't have done more
damage.

For many years the backdrop of war made Nettie's emotions run the roller coaster of sadness, worry, anger at the terrible things reported from Europe and surely the concern that her very own boys may also join the young men traveling to foreign shores to serve their country. Her diaries make reference to the War on numerous occasions and as a woman who clearly had leadership skills within her family it is not surprising to read about her role as President of the Women's Patriotic Club.



ad a thousand & one things to
as President of the Women's Pa
b the jobs fall to me we ha
marvellous time at the Fare
Jack Gepp, Johnny Greene & Ho
vis, they are on A. S. for overs

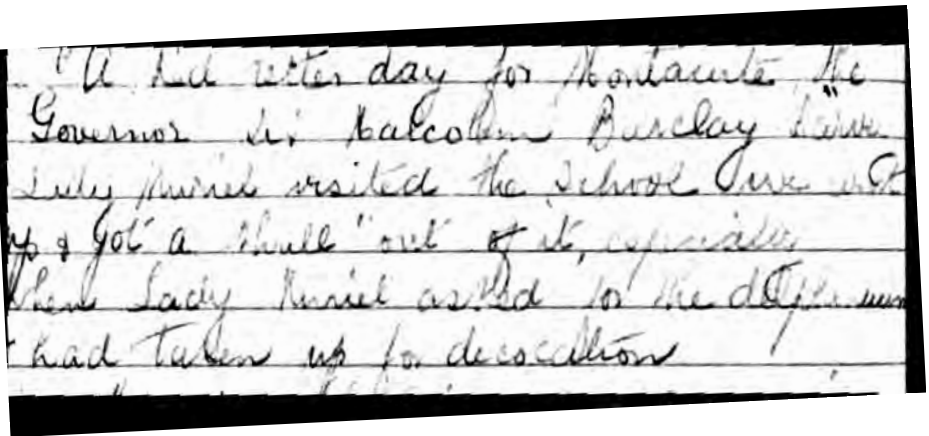
Although women's suffrage brought about major change in the late 1800s with women being granted the right to vote in South Australia in 1894, World War I had created the opportunity for more women to participate in what has been called "public activism" at a level that had not been seen like this before in Australia.



14th A busy day & the WAR is dreadful
things are getting worse for Britain
makes us wonder how it will end.

The opportunity for Australian women to take part in the war effort, either by joining military organisations (as nurses or aids) or becoming involved in war work, such as munitions factories, was limited. Therefore, Australian women looked to patriotic fundraising groups as one way for them to play a part and contribute to the war. The Women's Patriotic Club, fund raised knitted and also as her diary shows provided community farewells for the soldiers going off to active service.

However, it was not all gloom and the stamina and fortitude of women from Nettie's era is to be admired and held in awe. Nettie's writing highlights the joy and fun found in small things from listening to Don Bradman taking wickets to a visit from the Governor to the local school which was topped off by a request to have the delphinium flowers she had grown, picked and arranged as a floral decoration. A real red letter day!



Nettie was a leader and producer of many concerts for community events that provided fun and an opportunity to socialise for all those living in the area. Her ability to script and adapt familiar songs, create and make costumes and bring people together was a quality of the women from those years who provided an anchor for communities. She was rightly proud of the creativity that she encouraged.



Nettie is seen here as the Mandarin Yen How and His Six Little Wives.



The personal experiences and history of Mignonette Eva May Possingham has a place in helping us to understand the significant social impact of women in growing strong communities where women can and do take equal roles as leaders.

Erica Womersley 2109

29th It was a beautiful day & perfect night for our concert. I only did a little baking after dinner, Rene, Lily, Nellie, Mollie & I decorated the Institute, our stage looked lovely, we had kerosene tins covered with red paper & japs crettone, six on the stage filled with blue gum & two by the side curtains filled with plum blossom, we nailed our paper flowered boards along the front of the stage & had bowls of daffodils & tulips & camellias standing about, the girls came home to tea with me, & we hurried back, & then the fun & chaos started we dressed in the back room for our items started our programme by all members singing the Stein Song, Busy bees singing play, by Harry, Frank & Helen Treblcock, Jack & Betty Ford, Jean Smith, Joe, John, Bebbie & Arthur, Arthur & Betty sang "Where are you going my pretty maid" they looked dars in their costumes & they sang so nicely, Ginger, Blaine, Winter & Frank, sang, Get under de bella, dressed as gins, Rhonda, Eva & Mollie gave a dialogue, Rene, Joe, Frank & Jean gave "old Sammys" red nose, it went off good.

A page from the diaries.

BONFIRES FOR A NEW ERA

In the years 1900 to 1902, my great-grandfather Charles Henry Bishop was Chairman of the District Council of East Torrens. These were significant years in World history – the 65th anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign, the death of the Queen and the accession of King Edward VII, the Boer War, the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia and the opening of the first Federal Parliament in Melbourne by H.R.H. the Duke of Cornwall and York.

How did East Torrens mark these notable events? Sadly, the only DCET records for this period that still exist are the account books. The Minutes of Council meetings, and the Rate Assessment Books, went 'missing' when the then newly formed Adelaide Hills Council decided to move all such records to a central repository at Woodside. Despite many attempts to trace their whereabouts, they have not since been seen! An appalling travesty.

The ETHS has copies of some of the Rate Assessment Books but nothing of the Minute Books. On inspection, the Account Books for the period do reveal a few interesting payments but do not provide any details of what was being planned. The only useful payments that could be researched were payments for the construction of bonfire pyres during 1900.

What was the purpose of the bonfires, you might well ask? A search of newspapers of the period revealed that a local resident and member of the first Federal Parliament, Sir Richard Chaffey Baker of Morialta, was behind the staging of the bonfires.

In May 1900, it was proposed that the Australia's provinces should celebrate the pending end of the Boer War and the expected declaration of peace by lighting bonfires around South Australia. The Government advanced £80 for the purpose to be administered by the so-called Peace Demonstration Committee. However, things did not go according to plan and a year later, peace had still not been declared. Not to be deterred, Baker suggested the celebration should go ahead and would mark the opening of the first Federal Parliament in May 1901.

The DCET Account Books reveal some of the planning during the closing months of 1900. There appears to have been three bonfires planned for East Torrens and all were located on the hilltops that overlooked Adelaide.

The location of only one of them is certain, namely Greenhill (now Greenhill Recreation Park) and the others were at an unspecified site at Fifth Creek and Muller's Hill, presumably near Marble Hill Road, Norton's Summit, on the Mueller's property. There was also a bonfire sited at Beacon Hill near Burnside in the District Council, of Burnside. Payments were made to Mr F. Anderson (for the construction of a bonfire at Fifth Creek), Messrs George H. Storey [sic Story] and Mr A. Sheill (Norton's Summit) and Mr W.E. Slape (Greenhill). The payments were quite considerable, namely £1/17/6, £4/10/- and £3/4/- respectively. The pyres were mainly of wood but other highly combustible (non-environmentally sound!) materials were added.

A report preceding the events noted that 'The South Australian Gas Company presented a large number of tar barrels some months ago to the peace demonstration committee, and the Railway Department carried them free of charge to such towns as asked for them. These will be used for fires tonight [Thursday 9 May 1901], and while some of the country towns will have their one big bonfire the residents of Adelaide will have the opportunity of seeing several, for the piles of wood, tar, and other combustibles have been so placed that the fires in the hills will be plainly visible from the city.'

The fires were lit at the appointed hour of 8 pm but some were lit earlier 'in order that the children will see the conflagrations'. The night was Moon-less and dark, as the Sun set before 6 pm. The plan was that 'the bonfires will make an effective showing on the circle of noble hills with make such a fine arena for the purpose. Adelaide will appear ringed in flame. This has often occurred before when bush fires have been raging, but on this occasion, there will be none of the terrible destruction which accompanies a summer outbreak of fire. Great care will, of course, be taken to prevent any danger from the flames, and even if the weather should continue to be dry and warm – which is not likely – there will be no danger of the fires spreading to the surrounding country.'

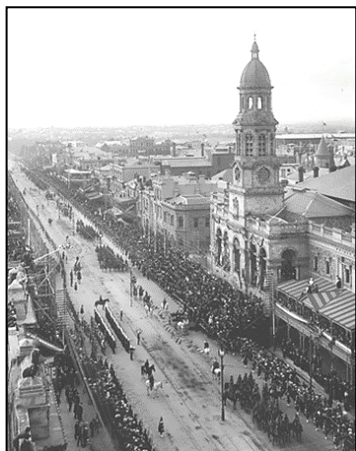
All did go well. 'After 7 o'clock the Mount Lofty Ranges presented a fine sight, as the heaps of wood, tar barrels, and other combustibles placed at intervals on prominent points sent up a glare that was reflected on the heavy clouds overhanging the hills. The fires were visible until a late hour.' The night was dark and well-suited for the occasion, and some scattered showers of rain were not heavy enough to extinguish the flames.

The Federal Parliament was officially opened by H.R.H. the Duke of Cornwall and York (later King George V), Heir Apparent to the British throne, and he read a message of congratulations from King Edward VII. The event was marked in Adelaide by the ringing of the Albert bells in the Town Hall tower and at 11.30 am, corresponding to 12 noon, Melbourne time, when the Duke of Cornwall was arriving at the Melbourne Exhibition Building, they pealed forth in their full strength'. The firing of a Royal Salute of 21 guns on the Parade Ground by A Battery, under Lieutenant Whittle, occurred at the same time.

Flags were hoisted on many of the large buildings in King William Street and other city streets, and at the offices of various Consuls. At the new Government buildings in Victoria Square, some army officers assembled on the roof at noon and raised loud cheers as the Union Jack was pulled to the top of the flagpole. Celebrations also occurred at Port Adelaide and in country towns.

The school children of South Australia celebrated the event the following week when the Union Jack was hoisted at a special assembly. Following the opening in Melbourne, the Duke and Duchess of York toured Australia and visited Adelaide to great acclaim in July 1901.

Geoffrey Bishop



Welcoming procession in King William Street for the Duke and Duchess of York's visit to Adelaide, 9-15 July 1901

[SLSA PRG631/2/50]

References: 'Federal Bonfires' *Advertiser* 9/5/1901 p.4; 'The Federal Parliament' *Advertiser* 9/5/1901 p. 4; *Advertiser* 'Illuminating the Hills' 3/5/1901 p.4; *Express and Telegraph* 9/5/1901; *Register* 10/5/1901 p.4; *Advertiser* 10/5/1901 p.4 .



Official Programme

Of Functions
and Displays

to Celebrate the

A PRESAGE.

Lo, o'er his wide domain, as well becomes
The Crown that holds her simple of the sea,
To us, full-hearted with expectancy,
He comes to ope the temple of our dreams.
Bright o'er his head his Royal banner gleams,
Nor can Australia gaze unmoved since she
Hath for that flag her children's blood poured free
To soak far plains and redden distant streams.

But now this fane of Austral brotherhood
Which loving hands have toiled without surcease
To build foursquare 'gainst every storm and flood
Shall stand more steadfast as the years increase
For with his banner, crimsoned as with blood,
The Prince hath brought the sweet White Rose of peace.

JOHN SANDES.

Opening

of the

First Parliament

of the

Commonwealth

of

Australia,

By His Royal Highness the
Duke of Cornwall and York,



At Melbourne.

6th MAY to
17th MAY, 1901.

A PRESAGE

The poem included on the invitation to the opening of the first Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia is 'A Presage' by John Sandes (1863-1938), an Irish-born Australian journalist and author. He came to Victoria in 1887 and joined *The Argus*. The ADB entry states that 'he was an excellent journalist with a special talent for writing occasional verse.' During his lifetime, his most famous work was the poignant poem 'With Death's Prophetic Ear', concerning the last day of life of an Australian soldier in the Boer War. The blood references in 'The Presage' also refer to Australians serving in the South African conflict. The 'occasional piece' is directed at the visit of the Duke of Cornwall and York.

A Presage

Lo, o'er his wide domain, as well becomes
The Crown that holds fee simple of the sea,
To us, full-hearted with expectancy,
He comes to open the temple of our dreams.
Bright o'er his head his Royal banner gleams,
Nor can Australia gaze unmoved since she
Hath for that flag her children's blood poured free
To soak far plains and redden distant streams.

But now this fane of Austral brotherhood
Which loving hands have toiled without surcease
To build foursquare 'gainst every storm and flood
Shall stand more steadfast as the years increase
For with his banner, crimsoned as with blood,
The Prince has brought the sweet White Rose of Peace.

John Sandes

Gone With the Wind is 80 years old

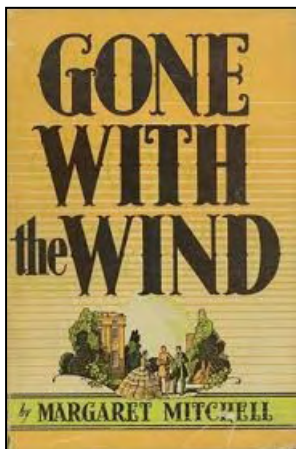
Scarlett is a woman who can deal with a nation at war, Atlanta burning, the Union Army carrying off everything from her beloved home, *Tara*, the carpetbaggers who arrive after the war. Scarlett is beautiful. She has vitality. But Ashley, the man she has wanted for so long, is going to marry his placid cousin, Melanie. Mammy warns Scarlett to behave herself at the party at *Twelve Oaks*. There is a new man there that day, the day the Civil War begins. Rhett Butler. Scarlett does not know he is in the room when she pleads with Ashley to choose her instead of Melanie.



This flyer is from ETHS Collection – Basford Papers.

A few notes about the author **Margaret Mitchell** and the film that followed.

Published in 1936, *Gone with the Wind* caused a sensation in Atlanta and went on to sell millions of copies in the United States and throughout the world. While the book drew some criticism for its romanticised view of the Old South and its slaveholding elite, its epic tale of war, passion and loss captivated readers far and wide. By the time Mitchell won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1937, a movie project was already in the works. The film was produced by Hollywood giant David O. Selznick, who paid Mitchell a record-high \$50,000 for the film rights to her book.



In tracing Pansy's tumultuous life from the antebellum South through the Civil War and into the Reconstruction era, Mitchell drew on the tales she had heard from her parents and other relatives, as well as from Confederate war veterans she had met as a young girl. While she was extremely secretive about her work, Mitchell eventually gave the manuscript to Harold Latham, an editor from New York's MacMillan Publishing. Latham encouraged Mitchell to complete the novel, with one important change: the heroine's name. Mitchell agreed to change it to Scarlett, now one of the most memorable names in the history of literature .

After testing hundreds of unknowns and big-name stars to play Scarlett, Selznick hired British actress Vivien Leigh days after filming began. Clark Gable was also on board as Rhett Butler, Scarlett's dashing love interest. Plagued with problems on set, *Gone with the Wind* nonetheless became one of the highest-grossing and most acclaimed movies of all time, breaking box office records and winning nine Academy Awards out of 13 nominations.