

MASARYK UNIVERSITY

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**Gone with the Wind: Changes in the Southern Society
Brought by the Civil War, especially Changing the
Role and Status of Women**

Diploma Thesis

Brno 2010

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I declare that I have worked on this thesis independently,
using only the sources listed in the bibliography.

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Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my supervisor Mgr. Pavla Buchtová for her valuable advice and comments. I would also like to thank my family and friends for providing priceless moral support and encouragement.

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1. Introduction

The novel *Gone with the Wind* by the American writer Margaret Mitchell and especially the film of the same name are world-famous. The book was published in 1936 and Margaret Mitchell was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction a year later. The book is a perennial bestseller with thousands of copies sold every year, making it one of the most successful novels of all time, even though critics are ambivalent about the literary merits of Margaret Mitchell's historical saga.¹

The film *Gone with the Wind* was released in 1939, starring Clark Gable, Vivien Leigh, Leslie Howard and Olivia de Havilland, and it won ten Academy Rewards. The ending phrase “Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn” is very well known to cinemagoers all over the world.

The book *Gone with the Wind* is primarily regarded as a romantic story focusing on the love between the two main characters, Scarlet O'Hara and Rhett Butler, taking place during the American Civil War and Reconstruction. The American Civil War and its consequences echo in the background of the doomed love affair. However, it can be claimed that alongside the great love story, Mitchell in her historical saga provides a very detail description of life in the South covering the years 1861 to 1874, depicts the character of the “aristocratic” society and above all carefully portrays the main characters.

As stated above, the novel constantly draws people's attention and for many readers it is an excellent romantic story. Nevertheless, according to Margaret Mitchell, her novel is not about love but about survival. “Margaret Mitchell admired people who had gumption, people who fought their way through hard times triumphantly and came out survivors. She said that if her novel, *Gone with the Wind*, had a theme it was survival, 'I wrote about the people who had gumption and the people who didn't'.” (Lewis). Therefore,

¹ See Chapter 2

Mitchell compares Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler with Melanie and Ashley Wilkes. Scarlett and Rhett represent people who are not afraid of breaking conventions, people being capable to survive due to their nature. On the contrary, Melanie and Ashley are representatives of the traditional society unable to adapt to the changing conditions being attached to the old times and therefore not able to survive.

Furthermore, the novel is regarded as feminist, because it is written from women's point of view and portrays lives of women focusing on white women from the rich planter class. The author also expresses criticism of the patriarchal society of the Antebellum South and shows how a historical event affects women's lives and how women perceive it.

It is indisputable that any war brings drastic changes in a society, for both men and women of all social positions. In my diploma thesis, I focus on the way the American Civil War changed the patriarchal society of the Antebellum South paying my attention to white women in high society, because the women characters in Margaret Mitchell's novel are in their ranks. The narrowing of the focus is also necessary because of the length of the thesis. Another reason for concentrating on the above-mentioned group is that there are many works dealing with the stated group of women of the particular period. Plantation mistresses had education and time to keep diaries, personal records, memories, and letters. Works based on the above-mentioned materials are used as secondary sources. The most famous diary is that of Mary Boykin Chesnut. She was born in 1823 near Camden in South Carolina in a prominent family. She was very intelligent and well educated. She attended Madame Talvande's French school for Young Ladies in Charleston. Her husband James Chesnut, Jr. was a lawyer and helped found the new Confederate government. Owing to the fact, Mary met a lot of important southerners, such as General Lee or President Davis and his wife. She also spent some time running a plantation. She kept an extensive diary intermittently during the years of the Confederacy.

The aim of this thesis is to discuss how Margaret Mitchell presents life, status and roles of southern women of high society before the American Civil War and in subsequent years in her novel *Gone with the Wind*; and compare her view with facts gained from historical sources to prove that her novel portrays the life truthfully. I will also present the impact that the American Civil War had on the lives of these women and how women perceived the War and its consequences focussing on the characters of Melanie and Scarlett and analysing their different attitudes and therefore their abilities to survive.

My work is divided into several chapters. In Chapter 2, I provide a brief autobiography of Margaret Mitchell, concentrating on the factors that directly influenced her writing, choice of the topic and point of view.

Chapter 3 presents an analysis of the Antebellum South. I focus on important issues having impact on women highlighting the differences between the North and the South, because the differences led into the Civil War, which dramatically changed life in the South. Firstly, I characterise the southern society. Secondly, I concentrate on the economy. Then I provide some facts about education, which certainly played its role in women's lives. The greatest part of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of aspects of a typical plantation mistress' life. It is important to understand the specific conditions of the South. It will help us to comprehend how difficult the Civil War was for southern women and how it altered the society.

In chapter 4, focusing on the era of the American Civil War and Reconstruction, I present how lives of wealthy southern women were transformed during the War and in the subsequent years, what new roles women had to adopt and how they coped with the changed situation. I analyse Melanie and Scarlett's abilities to survive.

The final chapter is devoted to a summary of the established facts.

2. Margaret Mitchell – her Life and Work

Margaret Munnerlyn Mitchell was born on 8 November 1900 in Atlanta, Georgia, as a second child in a family with aristocracy ancestry. From her father's side, she was the fourth generation living in Atlanta and she spent her whole life in the area. The relatives who experienced the Civil War (her grandfather Russell Mitchell was injured when fighting at Antietam) and Confederate veterans told little Margaret stories about the American Civil War, which really fascinated her. Her father, Eugene, who was a prominent lawyer and a historian (the president of the Atlanta Historical Society), attracted her interest in the history of the South and he taught her to love the South. Margaret and Stephen, her younger brother, spent a lot of time in their childhood in Clayton County, the part of Georgia where their ancestors settled and were part of wealthy planter elite. These are very probably the reasons why she set the story of her only published novel, *Gone with the Wind*, in the town of Atlanta and rural Clayton County in Georgia, during the Civil War and Reconstruction and why the story is presented from the point of view of the South.

Since the novel was published, critics have been ambivalent about its literary value. Some critics praise it for its historical accuracy, characterization of its protagonists and sense of dialogues. The book has often been compared to William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* and Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Both the novels were written before *Gone with the Wind*, therefore it is presumable that Mitchell, being fond of reading, was familiar with the books, but she denied reading any of them and being inspired by them. Paul Pickrel in his work *Vanity Fair in America: the House of Mirth and Gone with the Wind* analyses how the two novels, *Vanity Fair* and *Gone with the Wind*, are similar. I am not able to confirm similarities owing to the fact I have read neither Thackeray nor Tolstoy's novels and their comparison is not the aim of the thesis. One of the people who was impressed with the novel *Gone with the Wind* and saw similarities with *War and*

Peace by Tolstoy was Edwin Phillips Granberry. He worked as a reviewer for the New York Sun and was Mitchell's close friend. Another reviewer who considered the novel to be one of the best works about the Civil War and Reconstruction was Herschell Brickell of the *New York Post*. On the other hand, according to many critics, the novel has no literary merit being too romantic and banal and even misrepresenting the truth. Bernard DeVoto, *Saturday Review of Literature*, shares this opinion, for instance (*Gone with the Wind: Critical Overview*).

Moreover, because of Mitchell's way of portraying Afro-Americans or sentimental view on plantation life, the novel is thought to be rather controversial and even racist. According to *Encyclopaedia of World Biography* on Margaret Mitchell, "It romanticises the slave-owning class, and, except perhaps for D.W.Griffith's classic *Birth of a Nation*², no work has done more to misrepresent Reconstruction as a cruelty visited upon an innocent white South—whereas today historians generally agree that it was an honest, if flawed, attempt to bring real democracy to a region that had never known it" (*Encyclopedia of World Biography* on Margaret Mitchell). It is also claimed that "Racist it unquestionably is—almost inevitably so, given the time and place of its composition. Beyond that, it gives powerful support to damaging stereo-types that for long helped sustain racial segregation" (*Encyclopedia of World Biography* on Margaret Mitchell). According to Jennifer Word Dickey, opinions of the novel *Gone with the Wind* are directly related to how the Southern history is viewed. In 1936, when the book was published, white historians and critics assumed it to be "the greatest historical novel ever written by an American" (Dickey 9). Glenwood Clark claims that Mitchell's portrait of the South is based on historical facts. On the contrary, Afro-American scholars such as L. D. Reddick had opposite opinion. Civil Rights Movement in 1950's and 1960's brought more criticism

² D. W. Griffith is a director and producer of the film *Birth of a Nation* (1915), which is considered controversial and racist because for its portrayal of Afro-Americans, support of slavery and also its positive attitude to Ku Klux Klan.

(Dickey 9, 11). Mitchell herself resolutely refused being a racist referring to her charity and pointing out that using the terms “Nigger” and “darkey” had a historical basis.

According to contemporary moral rules, *Gone with the Wind* can be considered racist. Racism in the novel is connected not only with Afro-Americans, but also with negative attitudes and prejudices against people from the North and poor people. Melanie is very happy when Scarlett offers Ashley to work for her in Atlanta. In this case, they do not have to move to the North and “live with Yankees!” If they went to the North, they “couldn't let him [their son] go to school and associate with Yankee children and have pickaninnies in his class!” (Mitchell 712). However, the novel is considered racist mainly because of how Afro-Americans are portrayed. Firstly, it is the usage of words referring to them, such as niggers or darkies. Using them nowadays is unacceptable. One of the Tarleton twins says: “I swear, darkies are more trouble (Mitchell 23). Another example is Scarlett's thought: “How stupid negroes were! They never thought of anything unless they were told” (Mitchell 400). Especially Prissy, Scarlett's servant and Wade's nanny, is described as very incapable and Scarlett often shouts at her and threatens her with whipping and she sometimes even uses corporal punishment such as pinching. We can also find some racial references in the text: “Mammy's victories over Scarlett were hard-won and represented guile unknown to the white mind” (Mitchell 78). The most controversial part is that dealing with the era of Reconstruction, when former slaves are given freedom and the right to vote for them is under discussion:

Aided by the unscrupulous adventurers who operated the Freedmen's Bureau and urged on by a fervour of Northern hatred almost religious in its fanaticism, the former field hands found themselves suddenly elevated to the seats of the mighty. There they conducted themselves as creatures of small intelligence might naturally be expected to do. Like monkeys or small children turned loose among treasured objects whose value is beyond their comprehension, they ran

wild--either from perverse pleasure in destruction or simply because of their ignorance. (Mitchell 638)

Afro-Americans are very often likened to animals, such as monkeys. They are considered stupid and lazy; they need to be supervised all the time.

Foundation of the Ku Klux Klan and defence of its activity is also very controversial. The Ku Klux Klan is nowadays regarded to be one of the most racist organizations and is still active. In the novel, Mitchell justifies its existence by the necessity to defend white women against acts of violence committed by former slaves who were protected by the government in those days:

It was the large number of outrages on women and the ever-present fear for the safety of their wives and daughters that drove Southern men to cold and trembling fury and caused the Ku Klux Klan to spring up overnight. And it was against this nocturnal organization that the newspapers of the North cried out most loudly, never realizing the tragic necessity that brought it into being. (Mitchell 640)

The members of this secret organization were noble men including Ashley Wilkes and Frank Kennedy, Scarlett's second husband.

On the contrary, the relationship between masters and slaves is described as very friendly. Scarlett has a very nice relationship with Mummy and Dilcey, she appreciates their loyalty and help when working at destroyed Tara. When meeting slaves from Tara on their way to strengthen the fortifications of Atlanta, Scarlett recognises them, speaks to them politely and offers help:

“Oh, Captain Randall, don't scold them! They are our people. This is Big Sam our foreman, and Elijah and Apostle and Prophet from Tara. Of course, they had to speak to me. How are you, boys?” ...

“Good-by, boys. Now, if you get sick or hurt or in trouble, let me know. I live right down Peachtree Street, down there in almost the last house at the end of town. Wait a minute—” She fumbled in her reticule. “Oh, dear, I haven't a cent. Rhett, give me a few shinplasters. Here, Big Sam, buy some tobacco for yourself and the boys.” (Mitchell 299, 231)

Mitchell emphasises loyalty of slaves to their masters very often. Mummy is “devoted to her last drop of blood to the O'Haras” (Mitchell 24). Another example is Uncle Peter, who is aunt Pittypat's coach driver. He is considered a member of the family.

White southerners during the Civil War and Reconstruction very often saw Afro-Americans as intellectually inferior, subordinate and not capable to make decisions on their own. Even Mary Boykin Chesnut, an intelligent woman regarding slavery as a great evil, did not appreciate Negroes very much:

Of Negroes in general, Mary had a very low opinion. In March 1862, she wrote: “The best way to take Negroes to your heart is to get as far away from them as possible. . . . People can't love things dirty, ugly, repulsive simply because they ought.” More than once she referred to the blacks as animals; in August 1864, she wrote: “It takes but one moment for these creatures to go back to their naked savage, animal nature.” (Wiley 26)

Taking into consideration that Mitchell did vast research about life in the South and used information obtained from people living through the era, and if we assume that the author did not present her views on Afro-Americans and just wanted to portray the history as it was, the novel then does not provoke racism. Therefore, we can agree with the above-mentioned claim from *Encyclopedia of World Biography* on Margaret Mitchell that it is important to take into consideration the period when the novel was written and historical facts. In spite of the controversy, the novel is still very popular all around the world and I

suppose that it is mainly because of the strongly defined personality of the heroine, Scarlett O'Hara.

Another issue appearing in *Gone with the Wind* alongside the positive view of the South is feminism. According to Tel Asiado "It has been praised as the first novel to tell the story of the Civil War from a Southern woman's point of view" (Asiado). Mitchell's mother, Maybelle, who was of Irish Catholic origin and supported women's suffrage (she was the president of the South's militant suffrage groups), influenced her significantly. "Margaret's mother was a devout Catholic with proud Irish roots and she instilled that pride in her children. Mrs. Mitchell was one of the founders of the League of Women Voters in Georgia; she was very outspoken about women's rights and would often take Margaret to suffragette rallies. Her argument for women's rights was based on economic justice. Mrs. Stephens had inherited some property and she objected to paying taxes if she was not given the right to vote on how the money should be spent" (Lewis). Nevertheless, it is important to realise that when talking about women in connection with *Gone with the Wind* we mean white women from the planter society. The novel is written from their point of view and portrays primarily how the Civil War and Reconstruction project in their lives.

Mitchell drew inspiration not only from the stories, told her by people who remembered the Civil War and Reconstruction, stories which enraptured her as a child, but also from historical books, newspapers and other sources, from which she obtained encyclopaedic knowledge of the Civil War. Her own life was also her source of inspiration. Firstly, it is the setting of the novel - Atlanta, a town she really loved, and Clayton County, where she spent her childhood. Furthermore, Margaret Mitchell was employed as a feature writer for the Atlanta Journal for four years using a pseudonym Peggy Mitchell, a nickname from the college. She is regarded as the first female columnists working for the newspaper. She wrote articles, interviews, sketches and book reviews. It was a great experience for her acquiring more writing skills and learning about her hometown Atlanta

and its history. She worked on a series of articles about eminent women in Georgia history and another series was devoted to portraits of Confederate generals. When working on the article about General Henry Benning³, she became interested in the life of his wife, who had to run the family plantation during the war and look after her family, and later Mitchell used the acquired knowledge in her novel.

Secondly, the main characters are based on people from her life. According to Elizabeth Evans, in the portrait of Scarlett we can see the author herself (Evans. "Chapter 2: A Young Woman, Alone and Ambivalent"). Scarlett as well as Margaret had to sacrifice her dreams and had to look after her father and the whole family. Mitchell left Smith College after a few months of studying medicine there (started in autumn 1918 and left in 1919) because her mother died of influenza in January 1919 and Mitchell went back to Atlanta to care of her father and older brother, Stephens. Mitchell's mother became ill when taking care of her diseased husband and did not want her daughter to come back home to prevent her from catching the influenza. Margaret therefore came home after her death. We can find the parallel in the novel where during the war Scarlett desires to go back home, to see her mother. She needs her help and support, but when she finally manages to get home, it is too late. Her mother has become infected with typhoid and has died before Scarlett's arrival.

Mitchell, likewise Scarlett, was forced to work to earn money after she married her first husband, Berrien Kinnard Upshaw, in 1922. However, taking a job as a writer was a pleasure for her because writing had been Margaret's passion since her childhood. In the time she could not write, she used to dictate her stories to her mother. In addition, she used her friends, relatives and even herself as characters in her stories. Little Margaret directed her friends to perform in her own plays. Like Scarlett, Mitchell was free-spirited,

³ Confederate general during the American Civil War

provoked, and shocked the society in Atlanta, which she officially entered when she returned from Smith College in Massachusetts and spent the following year as a débutante without her mother's help, support, sensible guidance and careful control. "During the last charity ball of the season, Mitchell created a scandal by performing a sensuous dance [Apache dance] popular in the nightclubs of Paris, France" (Thomas). Christina Lewis claims: "Much like her heroine Scarlett O'Hara, Margaret enjoyed social events and being the center of attention. She was a lively and spirited girl with a great sense of humor. She was flirtatious and charming and always had a long string of beaux" (Lewis). Because of her behaviour she was ignored by the Junior League. Likewise Scarlett she was not approved by the society. The reasons for her alienation were very probably "jealousy over Margaret's prettiness and popularity among young men, her sharp evaluation of everything around her, her unwillingness to be controlled by others" (Evans. "Chapter 2: A Young Woman, Alone and Ambivalent"). Another thing was that Margaret made no secrets of her smoking and drinking. After she got married, she chose to keep her maiden name, for supposedly business reasons, an uncommon act for the time.

Some researchers also claim that Mitchell's grandmother Annie Stephens, who lived in northern Georgia during the Civil War, was more like Scarlett than Mitchell herself was. "She [Annie Stephens] too was well known for her stubbornness, ruthlessness, and explosive temper. Annie became involved in business during the Reconstruction era, when such activities were not regarded as fashionable pursuit for a lady; these actions are also undertaken by Scarlett" (Overview: *Gone with the Wind*).

Although Margaret claimed that characters in her novel *Gone with the Wind* were fictitious, it has been proved that the main male characters share similarities with real people from her life. Rhett Butler is supposed to be based on her first husband Berrien Kinnard Upshaw. This good-looking and romantic ex-football player had problems with alcohol and was fierce-tempered. Their marriage lasted only 3 months because he

physically and sexually abused his wife; they divorced in 1924. It is also claimed that George Trenholm, a prominent politician in the Confederate States of America, may have served as a prototype of Rhett Butler (Rosen). Apparently, real as well as historical people served Mitchell to portray not only Rhett Butler but also other characters in the novel.

Another male character, Ashley Wilkes, is probably based on a real person too. Before Margaret started studying at Smith College, she fell in love with Clifford Henry, a rich and important man from New York, a man similar to Ashley Wilkes. They were engaged but Clifford was killed during World War I in 1918.

After her marriage with Upshaw was annulled, Margaret Mitchell married her second husband John Marsh in 1925 and her life became more peaceful. She abandoned her job to become a good wife for John. However, she sometimes contributed to the newspaper. They did not have any children. After Margaret had injured her ankle and left her job completely to recover, she, encouraged by her husband, started working on her novel *Gone with the Wind*, which was published in June 1936 by the Macmillan Publishing company. The book became soon very popular and it has not lost anything from its popularity until today. Jane Thomas in her article claims that “Approximately 250,000 copies are still sold each year” (Thomas). Mitchell was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in May 1937. Very soon after its publication, the novel was made into a very successful film starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable. Mitchell, however, refused to cooperate on the film script. The film, which won ten Academy Awards in 1940, had its première in Atlanta on 15 December 1939.

Mitchell was very strict with herself as far as her work is concerned. When studying at Smith she was not satisfied with her results. She was an average student and the only subject she excelled at was English composition. She maintained an opinion that if she could not be the first, it would be better to be nothing. Therefore leaving the college was actually a relief for her. She also kept her manuscript of *Gone with the Wind* a secret.

Only her husband knew about it. At first, when Harold Latham, an editor for MacMillan, asked her to show him her work, she denied to have any. Only a sarcastic remark of one of her friends about her abilities to produce something valuable made her hand over many manila envelopes containing the novel. After publishing the novel, the original manuscript was destroyed on her request as well as her other works which she did not find satisfactory. She never published or wrote another book. One reason why she did not continue in her writing was presumably lack of time or a feeling that she would not be able to write anything good. She devoted most of her time to correspondence with her fans and to protection of the copyright of the book abroad.

Mitchell used the money she earned from the book and film to support medical scholarship for Afro-American students at Morehouse College and social service organizations in Atlanta during World War II. She also helped to obtain money to rebuild the U.S.S Atlanta, which sank during the battle in Guadalcanal.

Margaret Mitchell died on August 16, 1949, five days after she was hit by a car when going to the cinema with her husband. The apartment in Peachtree Street, she used to live in and where she wrote *Gone with the Wind*, houses the Margaret Mitchell House and Museum.

3. The South before the Civil War

The novel *Gone with the Wind* takes place in Clayton County, in northern Georgia, one of the southern states during the American Civil War and Reconstruction.⁴ In this chapter, I would like to introduce the South before the war. I will concentrate on explanation of specific conditions of the South, hierarchy of its society and I would like to compare it to the North. I will analyse how Mitchell presents the pre-war South in her novel with the focus on the position and roles of white women from upper class. I consider the introduction very important because it can help us to understand the distinct situation of the region and the aim is to provide a true portrait of the Antebellum South.

For most Americans and especially for Southerners themselves, the South is a special region with distinct culture, language, way of life, values, and history. Nowadays the South is represented by the following states, defined by United States Census Bureau – Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas.⁵ However, when talking about the Antebellum South, it is rather difficult to name the states; it depends on the criteria applied. From the economic point of view, the South was formed by the 15 slave states. With regard to politics, in 1861 the Confederacy was formed by 11 states favouring slavery - South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee. The original Southern colonies, usually called the Old South were Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, Georgia, and the Carolinas.

Many people, when mentioning the Antebellum American South, visualise an image of chivalrous gentlemen and belles in hoop skirts sitting on a porch of a beautiful white mansion, usually under a magnolia in moonlight. A picture of beautiful Scarlett

⁴ See Appendix 1

⁵ See Appendix 2

O'Hara⁶ comes into people's minds very often in connection with the era and region. The above stated vision of the South stems primarily from David O. Selznick's film version of *Gone with the Wind*. The image is based on a part of the South myth, called the plantation legend. A portrait of a very kind old white man watching small children, black and white, playing in a yard represents another part of the legend. In the background, a group of healthy and happy slaves is coming back home from the cotton fields singing a song. Plantation mistresses are assumed to be decorations of plantations. There also exists another, rather dark, myth where "Gentle old massa became the arrogant, haughty, imperious potentate, the very embodiment of sin, the central target of antislavery attack. He kept a mistress in the slave quarter; he bred Negroes like cattle and sold them 'down the river' to certain death in the sugar mills, separating families if that suited his purpose, while southern women suffered in silence the guilty knowledge of their men's infidelity" (Tindall and Shi, *America: A Narrative History*. 353,354). It is obvious that real life differentiated from both the myths, although myths are usually based at least partly on reality. The aim of the following chapters is to ascertain how Margaret Mitchell presents life of white women from the upper class in the Antebellum South, to what extent the portrait of the society is based on the reality.

⁶ See Appendix 4

3.1 Society

Society of the Antebellum South differentiated from the rest of the United States very much. In 1861, about 9 million people lived there from which about 40% were slaves. In comparison, the population of the North was 22 million. After the Revolution, not many immigrants, with the exception of those from Ireland, settled in the South; partly because the main shipping routes ended in ports in the North and partly because there were not many possibilities to find paid work. Another and very important reason was that original residents did not trust people from elsewhere. The above-mentioned small number of immigrants also caused slower growth of population in the South comparing to the North and the proportion of native population was very high (Tindall and Shi, *America: A Narrative History*. 355).

Margaret Mitchell's novel is set in the county of Clayton, in the north of Georgia, and focuses on a particular social class, the planter society, and the members of the same class living in Atlanta. Mitchell describes the residents of the County as different types of people coming from various parts not only of the States, other parts of Georgia, Southern and Northern Carolinas or Virginia, but also from Europe, especially from Ireland. People's reasons for settling there were various. Some of them wanted to become rich, some were members of old families and came to Georgia seeking new places and some came without any particular reasons. The migration of people from other parts of the States was caused by development of plantations and moving the "Cotton Kingdom" to southwestern regions of America as cotton became a highly profitable farming product⁷ at the beginning of the 19th century. The residents' background gave life in Clayton County its originality. The region was very rich thanks to cotton boom, so people there had time and money to entertain themselves. They really liked meeting their neighbours, therefore they

⁷ It was caused by development of English textile mills and the invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793.

organized balls, barbecues, hunting, or horseracing, and their relationships was based on respect. It is necessary to emphasise that only people from the same social class were treated with respect.

Gerald O'Hara came to America from Ireland at the age of 21 and without proper education. He had to leave his country, because he killed a British tax collector. He was not the first member of his family who had to start new life in America. His two brothers had settled in Savannah before and ran a shop there. They employed Gerald and helped their younger brother even when he was looking for a wife. Gerald liked the South and people there and very soon became a Southerner, but only in his opinion. "There was much about the South—and Southerners—that he would never comprehend: but, with the whole-heartedness that was his nature, he adopted its ideas and customs, as he understood them, for his own—poker and horse racing, red-hot politics and the code duello, States' Rights and damnation to all Yankees, slavery and King Cotton, contempt for white trash and exaggerated courtesy to women. He even learned to chew tobacco. There was no need for him to acquire a good head for whisky, he had been born with one" (Mitchell 46). Mitchell provides an accurate description of the society highlighting the most distinct features, such as aversion to people from the North and poor white people as well as chivalry. But Gerald did not realise that it took him ten years since he bought the plantation Tara until people started to trust him. On the other hand, he was aware of not being a good match for his neighbours' daughters. He considered himself a Southerner, and he was conscious that people liked him. Still, when he was looking for a wife he knew that his neighbours would not consent to marry one of their daughters. He was "new" for them, nobody knew his family and it was unlikely to marry off their daughters to someone who had not lived in the South for more than twenty-two years. People were distrustful to foreigners, but most of all Southerners hated people from the North, Yankees, because of their negative attitude to slavery and their business spirit.

Society of the Antebellum South, excluding slaves, can be divided into three basic classes. The first social class, the most powerful although the least numerous, is represented by big planters, those who owned more than 20 slaves. They belonged to the wealthiest Americans. In 1860, they comprised about 25% of the white population⁸. Being a rich planter was a southern social ideal and even small farmers wished to be one of them and therefore supported them. Wealthy planters often led life as described at the beginning of the novel, *Gone with the Wind*, when they had enough money and free time to be able to “cultivate the arts of hospitality, good manners, learning, and politics” (Tindall and Shi, *America: A Narrative History*. 358). Men were cavaliers preoccupied with honour, very nationalistic and indifferent to money. It is important to explain that life of big planters and their wives was not only entertainment, whereas in fact running such big plantations required a lot of work from both men and women. This is where the plantation legend differs from the reality. Plantation mistresses did not only sit on a porch being attended by their slaves but had to work hard. Although *Gone with the Wind* is very often considered to be an “encyclopaedia of the plantation legend” (Adams 59), Mitchell does not portray lives of southern women as easy and full of entertainment. On the contrary, she criticises the patriarchal society and depicts all the duties the plantation mistresses have to carry out. The duties are discussed in detail in 3.4.

Poor white families owning no land and little other possession represented another 10% of the population. They lived in hills, caves and were considered descendants of dismissed servants or convicts. For an outside observer it was sometimes quite difficult to distinguish between small farmers, yeomen, and the true “poor whites”. Mitchell uses the Slaterry family as an example of “white trash”, even though in the novel, they own some land and therefore they should be regarded as self-working farmers. But especially

⁸ The number of big planter differentiates according to the source quoted. According to the Tindal and Shi, p. 358, in 1860 there were only 46,274 planters (owning at least twenty slaves), about 8,000 owning 50 or more slaves (Digital History states 11,000), about 2,292 with over 100 slaves (Digital History – 2,358), only 11 planters with 500 and 1 with 1,000 slaves

the physical appearance of the Slatterys corresponds with the description of “white trash” given in *America: A Narrative History*, where they are “characterized by a pronounced lankness and sallowness” (Tindall and Shi, *America: A Narrative History*. 359):

The Slatterys were another affair. Being poor white, they were not even accorded the grudging respect that Angus MacIntosh's dour independence wrung from neighbouring families. Old Slattery, who clung persistently to his few acres, in spite of repeated offers from Gerald and John Wilkes, was shiftless and whining. His wife was a snarly-haired woman, sickly and washed-out of appearance, the mother of a brood of sullen and rabbit-looking children -- a brood which was increased regularly every year. Tom Slattery owned no slaves, and he and his two oldest boys spasmodically worked their few acres of cotton, while the wife and younger children tended what was supposed to be a vegetable garden. But, somehow, the cotton always failed, and the garden, due to Mrs. Slattery's constant childbearing, seldom furnished enough to feed her flock.

The sight of Tom Slattery dawdling on his neighbours' porches, begging cotton seed for planting or a side of bacon to 'tide him over', was a familiar one. Slattery hated his neighbours with what little energy he possessed, sensing their contempt beneath their courtesy, and especially did he hate 'rich folks' uppity niggers'. The house negroes of the County considered themselves superior to white trash, and their unconcealed scorn stung him, while their more secure position in life stirred his envy. By contrast with his own miserable existence, they were well-fed, well-clothed and looked after in sickness and old age. They were proud of the good names of their owners and, for the most part, proud to belong to people who were quality, while he was despised by all.

Tom Slattery could have sold his farm for three times its value to any of the

planters in the County. They would have considered it money well spent to rid the community of an eyesore, but he was well satisfied to remain and to subsist miserably on the proceeds of a bale of cotton a year and the charity of his neighbours. (Mitchell 50,51)

The above excerpt shows that very poor white people were treated without any respect and were regarded to be a stain on the society living only on the generosity of rich planters. Even house slaves led more comfortable life, therefore considered poor whites more inferior than slaves. The Slaterry family play an important role in the novel. We first meet them when Scarlett desperately needs to talk to her mother about her love for Ashley, but she is not at home because of helping Emmie Slaterry to baptise her newborn baby that is dying. During the war, Ellen O'Hara becomes infected with typhoid when looking after sick Emmie. Scarlett tries hard to get home longing to meet her mother from whom she hopes to get help and support, but it is too late. Ellen has died before Scarlett's return to Tara. Before the war, the Slaterry's are "white trash" and every planter would pay anything to purchase their land and get rid of them. However, after the war, we meet Emmie again. Her social status has changed. She is married to the former overseer at Tara, Jonas Wilkerson, Yankee, and even tries to buy Tara when Scarlett has difficulties to pay taxes. Wilkerson is in charge of the Freedmen's Bureau and therefore he has the power and money. Scarlett does anything to prevent "the lousy, trashy poor whites" (Mitchell 525) from buying Tara. She offers herself to Rhett in order to get money from him and being refused marries Frank, her sister's fiancé. The above stated proves how radical changes the war brought to the southern society and that the former aristocracy retained their pride despite their poverty, as well as Scarlett's desire to maintain Tara at all costs.

The most numerous class was that of small farmers, yeomen, who possessed land and a few or none slaves. The farmers usually worked in fields together with their slaves. They mainly grew food crops and very little cotton or tobacco to earn some money.

These farmers are those who were appreciated by Jefferson and Jackson.⁹ A very good example of a member of the class is Able Wynder in *Gone with the Wind*. He is described as a very big, illiterate small farmer with good manners. Men respect him for his qualities and therefore elect him second lieutenant of the troop of cavalry. "But the planters' ladies and the planters' slaves could not overlook the fact that he was not born a gentleman, even if their men folks could" (Mitchell 20). Stuart Tarleton defends Able when his servant Jeems calls him "white trash":

"Don't you call Abel Wynder 'po' white.' Sure he's poor, but he ain't trash; and I'm damned if I'll have any man, darky or white, throwing off on him. There ain't a better man in this County, or why else did the Troop elect him lieutenant?" . . .

Do you mean to compare him with real white trash like the Slatterys? Able just ain't rich. He's a small farmer, not a big planter, and if the boys thought enough of him to elect him lieutenant, then it's not for any darky to talk impudent about him. The Troop knows what it's doing." (Mitchell 19)

As stated above, sometimes it was quite difficult to distinguish between "white trash" and yeomen. The only difference between them was the ownership of land. Therefore, it can be claimed that Mitchell's portrait of small farmers and poor whites is not completely correct. On the other hand, in her novel, she focuses on the planter class and she manages to describe it accurately.

Besides the distinction among social classes, Mitchell in her novel also highlights the distinction between the quite young county of Clayton and old coastal towns, such as Savannah and Charleston. The distinction is not only in natural conditions, but also in people's characterization that helps the author to depict views on various issues. Older

⁹ Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the USA, author of the Declaration of independence. Andrew Jackson, the seventh president of the United States, supporter of free trade.

coastal Georgia, represented by Savannah and Charleston, symbolises traditional values, peaceful life bound by moral rules. Scarlett when visiting her relatives living in the towns finds life there boring. She does not like the people either, due to their behaviour, traditions and emphasis on family. On the contrary, Clayton County is described as a “savagely red land” (Mitchell 10), country of contrasts where we can find cultivated land on plantations, as well as deep forests, where even furrows are not long and straight like in coastal areas due to the hilly country. It is a region where people are new, hard working, a little crude, sharp, ready to change and obstinate. Ellen O'Hara coming to Clayton County from Savannah “found herself in a world that was as strange and different as if she had crossed a continent (Mitchell 56).

Relations between people having different backgrounds and their comparison when dealing with the circumstances brought by the Civil War and Reconstruction, especially their abilities to adjust to new conditions is the main subject of the novel. According to Lauren S. Cardon the marriage between Gerald O'Hara and Ellen Robillard represents a significant element in *Gone with the Wind*. Firstly, the marriage itself helped Gerald to enhance his social status, to become a member of the southern aristocracy. When he comes from Ireland, he recognises that “Coastal Georgia was too firmly held by an entrenched aristocracy for him ever to hope to win the place he intended to have” (Mitchell 47). He is very lucky to win Tara, a plantation in the northern Georgia. Nevertheless, owning a prosperous plantation does not secure him the desired position. Only a marriage enables him to blend into the southern planter class and he knows that: “His wife must be a lady and a lady of blood, with as many airs and graces as Mrs. Wilkes and the ability to manage Tara as well as Mrs. Wilkes ordered her own domain (Mitchell 53). The Robillard family do not approve the marriage and they do not comprehend how Ellen, a delicate woman, a daughter of the noble family of Robillard, could marry Gerald, a stubborn Irishman without proper education.

Besides enhancing Gerald's social status, the marriage brought birth of Scarlett. The Robillards consider Ellen and Gerald's daughter Scarlett to be “a child of a *mésalliance*” (Mitchell 136). And this aspect of incorporating new blood into southern society is, according to Cardon, “necessary for Americans to survive the modern world” (Cardon). Scarlett O'Hara is the main character of the novel, from whose perspective all the events are viewed. She is the representative of the “new” South, she bears the ability to survive and it is owing to his father's origin. Her full name is Katie Scarlett O'Hara Hamilton Kennedy Butler and at the beginning of the novel, she is only sixteen years old and lives with her parents and two younger sisters, Susan Elinor (Suellen) and Caroline Irene (Carreen) at the plantation Tara, in Clayton County. From the first line of the novel, it is obvious that Scarlett O'Hara differs from an ordinary southern belle, an archetype for a young woman of the American Old South's upper class. According to the plantation legend, every southern woman was beautiful and decorated the plantation. However, “Scarlett O'Hara was not beautiful, but men seldom realised it when caught by her charm as the Tarleton twins were. In her face were too sharply blended the delicate features of her mother, a Coast aristocrat of French descent, and the heavy ones of her florid Irish father” (Mitchell 5). Not only in her appearance, but primarily in her character and behaviour the features of her father and her mother's influence reflect. Margaret Mitchell emphasizes that frequently throughout the novel. “But for all the modesty of her spreading skirts, the demureness of hair netted smoothly into a chignon and the quietness of small white hands folded in her lap, her true self was poorly concealed. The green eyes in the carefully sweet face were turbulent, wilful, lusty with life, distinctly at variance with her decorous demeanour. Her manners had been imposed upon her by her mother's gentle admonitions and the sterner discipline of her mammy; her eyes were her own” (Mitchell 5). Scarlett very often undergoes inner struggle between lady-like behaviour indoctrinated by her mother and Mammy and her true self, which is the strong will inherited from her father.

Scarlett wants to be a real lady like her mother, who was “the best-loved neighbour in the County. She was a thrifty and kind mistress, a good mother and a devoted wife” (Mitchell 58). Scarlett realises that Ellen is fair-minded, truthful, kind and unselfish. Nevertheless, being like mother would deprive her of “most of the joys of life, and certainly many beaux” (Mitchell 62). Therefore, selfish Scarlett decides to postpone becoming a lady until some day when she gets everything she wants, when she has time for being a lady. The more she suppresses what she has learned from her mother, the more her father's qualities present in her childish tantrums or rejection of the bonds of the patriarchal society. These qualities help her during the Civil War and Reconstruction to adapt to new conditions and save Tara as well as members of her family.

On the other hand, there are the members of the Wilkes who tend to marry within the family:

“Our people and the Wilkes are different,” he [Gerald] went on slowly, fumbling for words. “The Wilkes are different from any of our neighbours--different from any family I ever knew. They are queer folk, and it's best that they marry their cousins and keep their queerness to themselves. ...

The whole family is that way, and they've always been that way. And probably always will. I tell you they're born queer. Look at the way they go tearing up to New York and Boston to hear operas and see oil paintings. And ordering French and German books by the crate from the Yankees! And there they sit reading and dreaming the dear God knows what, when they'd be better spending their time hunting and playing poker as proper men should.” (Mitchell 36,37)

Scarlett's father, pointing out how different the Wilkes are, claims that Scarlett would not be happy if married Ashley and that he would not approve such a marriage. He explains

that by Ashley's queerness and Scarlett's inability to understand him. He suggests Scarlett to marry someone similar to her, like Ashley who will marry his cousin Melanie, a girl much alike him. Such a marriage would bring happiness. On the contrary, Mrs. Tarleton on the journey to a barbecue at the Wilkes plantation talks to Gerald about Ashley and his engagement to Melanie:

Cousins shouldn't marry, even second cousins. It weakens the strain. It isn't like horses. You can breed a mare to a brother or a sire to a daughter and get good results if you know your blood strains, but in people it just doesn't work. You get good lines, perhaps, but no stamina. (Mitchell 90)

Instead of marrying his cousin, she suggests to marry someone like Scarlett or one of her daughters, which would bring new blood into their family. Her opinion is very probably right, because during the War and Reconstruction, Melanie and Ashley are weak and not able to adjust and survive, which is confirmed by Melanie having problems with reproducing and at last her death. Also Scarlett's marriage with Rhett, who is alike her, is not happy. In their case, due to their strong personalities they are able to survive, but not to live together (Cardon). We can agree with the claim that incorporating new blood into traditional southern families is very important for Mitchell. The author refers to Scarlett's father's origin very often and she highlights its importance for Scarlett's survival. In the description of the two unhappy marriages, Mitchell disagrees with Gerald's idea of marring alike people.

The above stated facts and excerpts from the novel confirm that Margaret Mitchell is quite well acquainted with the structure of the antebellum southern society and with the exception of the yeoman class manages to portray it accurately and vividly. Her novel deals mainly with the planter class, which she succeeds to depict precisely emphasising the distinctiveness of the region, and refinement as well as distrustfulness of its wealthy residents. In her novel dealing with the theme of survival, she highlights the

necessity of strong characters and she explains that the “old” South can survive only if mixing with newcomers.

3.2 Economy

Since the first British settlement, in the Jamestown Colony in Virginia in 1607, the South had developed very differently from the North. Owing to its climate, the colonists started to grow tobacco and rice, and trade in them. Later these commodities were replaced by cotton, which was required mainly in England. The colonists brought first black slaves to help them in plantations in the 17th century and slavery was one of the most important factors influencing society of the South.

The economy of the southern part of America was thus based on agriculture, which later led to dependence on imports especially from the North, a region where big towns were founded and due to mineral resources (iron, coal) industries and trade developed, which required free labour instead of slaves.

After the War of Independence (1775-1783) and especially after the war in 1812¹⁰ it became evident that it was necessary to secure more economic independence of the South. But at the beginning of the 19th century cotton became a really profitable farming product¹¹ which led to development of plantations instead of development of industry and moving the “Cotton Kingdom” to south-western regions of America – Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas and thereby spread of slave labour which planters considered the most economical means to cultivate cotton. “Demand for cotton continued strong through the 1850s, and southern cotton fed the world's textile mills. During the 1850s, the South exported more than \$100 million worth

¹⁰ 1812-1815 – the war against the British Empire to confirm American independence, there were several related causes of the war – maritime, economic and political.

¹¹ It was caused by development of English textile mills and the invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793.

of cotton per year, comprising more than fifty percent in value of U.S. Exports” (Owen, Fitzgerald). In *Gone with the Wind*, Mitchell also depicts how people trust implicitly cotton production and its future. They believe that if one generation could make money from cultivating cotton why another would not be able to. Even Scarlett O'Hara, at the war's end, believes in cotton and profit from its cultivation “Cotton ought to go sky high this fall” (Mitchell 479).

The Antebellum South was not only plantations and cotton fields. Actually, there were many parts with no plantations or slaves. The production did not focus on cotton only but also on food crops and livestock.

On the contrary, the Industrial Revolution started in the North. Comparing to the South, the North progressed economically, manufacturing developed, more railways were built. Factories were not widespread, but in 1822, a new textile factory was founded in Lowell, Massachusetts, which very soon became a model for other factories. I mention it because it is important from the point of view of women's employment. A lot of young unmarried girls worked there because many men moved to the West and labour was needed¹² and women also saw a possibility to change their lives and earn some money to support their families. The women lived in boarding houses and both at work and at home, they were under careful control. Great emphasis was laid on moral life, cultural and educational possibilities. At the beginning, the idea of fatherlike system worked well even though the girls had to work long hours, but later production became more important than social welfare. In addition, what the founders wanted to avoid - dirty, smelling centres of industry with decline in morality, became the reality. Many women joined in organizations and demonstrated against the working conditions and even organised strikes. Women in the South did not have such opportunities to get employment.

¹² Farm girls and young women were recruited to work in the factory, high wages were promised to them and excellent working and living conditions.

Orientation in industry was also one of the factors that gave the North an advantage during the Civil War. Margaret Mitchell being knowledgeable about the economy of the South demonstrates that southern gentlemen really wanted the war to defeat slavery and States' rights without taking their possibilities into account. Rhett Butler, the main male character in the novel, points that out at the discussion about the war during the Twelve Oaks barbecue, at Wilkes's, where all the men are looking forward to fighting Yankees and predict a quick end of the war:

“Has any one of you gentlemen ever thought that there's not a cannon factory south of the Mason-Dixon Line? Or how few iron foundries there are in the South? Or woollen mills or cotton factories or tanneries? Have you thought that we would not have a single warship and that the Yankee fleet could bottle up our harbours in a week, so that we could not sell our cotton abroad? . . . I have seen many things that you all have not seen. The thousands of immigrants who'd be glad to fight for the Yankees for food and a few dollars, the factories, the foundries, the shipyards, the iron and coal mines--all the things we haven't got. Why, all we have is cotton and slaves and arrogance. They'd lick us in a month.” (Mitchell 111,112)

Rhett Butler is neither afraid nor ashamed when pointing out the weaknesses of the South even if other men and women see him as a traitor because of his opinions and negative attitude to the war.

Certainly, it is impossible to claim that there was no industry in the South, but it developed more slowly than in the North.¹³ At the beginning of the war, the capacity of manufacturing was five times bigger in the North, where they also grew more food crops.

I paid such attention to the question of economy, because the orientation in

¹³ See appendix 3

agriculture had direct impact on women's lives. Life on plantations tied women to the household and isolated them from outside world as well as from other women. The position and status of women is discussed in detail in chapter 1.6.

3.3 Education

Due to the origin home of most of the first settlers in the 17th century, which was Britain, education was based on the English model, which meant that lower classes obtained minimal education. On the other hand, children from wealthy families could attend secondary schools and colleges.¹⁴ At the beginning of the colonial era, settlers did not pay much attention to higher education due to their everyday worries. It was a family and the church that were responsible for basic education – reading, writing, arithmetic and traditional social habits. Therefore, children were mainly educated at home using a bible and a hornbook.¹⁵ Another possibility for primary education was a “Dame” school, which was usually set in the kitchen in a house of a woman in the colony. Dame schools were very often the only possibility for girls to obtain formal education.

The South differentiated from the North even in its attitude to education. In the North (New England), the Puritans promoted learning and establishment of schools, mainly because it was essential for them to be able to read the Bible and they considered education very important to be able to understand all the written codes applied in the colonies. The conditions for schools foundation were better there than in the South where it was rather difficult to found schools due to spread homesteads, while in the North there were more big towns concentrating schools, public and private. In 1647 there was a law claiming foundation of grammar schools in towns with more than 100 families to prepare

¹⁴ The first private university in the USA was Harvard University, established in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1636.

¹⁵ a wooden board with a handle

students for Harvard University. Even though the law was not observed everywhere, it was a serious attempt to develop secondary public education. The situation for girls was very different because they were not allowed to attend grammar schools.

In the South, rich planters hired tutors to teach boys maths, classical languages, science, geography, history, etiquette, and plantation management or sent them to boarding schools in England to obtain higher education. On the other hand, girls were usually taught by a governess. They learned only enough reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as needlework, spinning, weaving, cooking, and nursing and social skills to attract a husband. They were not sent to England to complete their studies because education was not considered important for them.

The 18th century, age of Enlightenment,¹⁶ brought more emphasis on education, security of literacy, and colleges, academies and universities were founded not only in the North, but also in the South. Public school system was required. The growth of middle-class businesses, especially in the North, brought a request for practical secondary education preparing students for business not for colleges, and therefore English Grammar Schools were founded, where students were taught mainly commercial subjects such as navigation, engineering or bookkeeping. It is very important that these schools also accepted female students, who were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, dancing, French, and social skills a lady needed. Another type of secondary school that accepted female students were private secondary schools called Academies; in 1792, the Litchfield Female Academy was founded.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the scope of literacy was very high. Most children were educated at church or private schools or at home. After 1830, mainly the working class demanded a public school system. Reformers also believed that educated

¹⁶ a period in European history, in the 18th century, when educated people thought that beliefs should depend on reason and scientific proof (Longman Exams Coach).

people were more productive and schools were used to “Americanize” immigrants. Therefore, the common school system started to be created and education then became available to masses. While the North managed to progress in establishment of public school, the situation in the South was again quite different (Tindall and Shi, *Dějiny Spojených Států Amerických*, 247). Firstly, there was not a tradition of public schools so there was nothing to follow up. Secondly, the Southerners believed that education was a private matter. It was the family, who was responsible for education and passing down the traditions and customs of the social group children belonged to. Lastly, it was the absence of middle class. Rich planters could afford private tutors and thus were not interested in public education unlike poor people whose children did not obtain proper education. Slaves learned only what was necessary for their jobs.

Initially only men were employed as public school teachers but later, when the number of schools increased and the school attendance was lengthened, more and more women became to teach. While mentioning job possibilities, teaching together with nursing professions were the only jobs determined for women.

It was believed that basic education was sufficient for women due to their roles in society, although some women, for instance Abigail Adams¹⁷, claimed that educated women could be better wives and mothers. The 19th century brought changes in this field, academies and seminaries that accepted female students were founded, even though classes for girls differentiated from those for boys. Girls were taught more bon ton, music and art (Tindall and Shi, *Dějiny Spojených Států Amerických*, 248).

Considering women, Catherine Clinton claims that “Elite women North and South had identical educational opportunities during the early years of the Republic, but because society in the North provided greater opportunities for educated women, it has wrongly been assumed that women received little or no academic training in the Old

¹⁷ Abigail Adams was the wife of John Adams, who was the second President of the United States.

[Antebellum] South” (Clinton XV). Most sons as well as daughters of rich planters were sent to boarding schools. As mentioned above, after the Revolution there was a shift in attitudes towards education, especially female education. Southerners as well as people from the north of the US promoted female education, but their motives were not to improve women's political and economical status but to stress their importance as women, mothers – the cult of “true womanhood”. Obtaining higher education was connected with maintaining upper-class status. In addition, higher education of women gave them an advantage on the marriage market. As Clinton states, everything was done “to improve women in their roles as wives and mothers” (Clinton 125). As stated above, upper class women in the Antebellum South had access to higher education as well as women from the North, although women from both the parts of the States did not have the same possibilities as men. There were also differences in educational programmes for women in the North and in the South, where more time was devoted to improving ladylike manners, and what is more important, after marriage southern women did not have opportunities to continue in their personal development for which time in a college was devoted because most of them were bound to household. After marriage women had to assume full responsibility for household management and there was no use of intellectual and artistic accomplishments.

Margaret Mitchell in her novel also mentions education of the main characters. It plays a significant role considering people's ability to survive. As stated above, there is a difference between old coastal South and north Georgia. The difference is not only geographical, but most of all in people's attitudes to various things, one of which is education. “The more sedate and older sections of the South looked down their noses at the up-country Georgians, but here in north Georgia, a lack of the niceties of classical education carried no shame, provided a man was smart in the things that mattered” (Mitchell 6). In the opening chapter, we learn that the Tarleton twins, Stuart and Brent, have just come back from the University of Georgia, respectively they were expelled. They

are from a very rich family and the university was the fourth one they have attended. However, they do not consider education important for their lives; they are more interested in the forthcoming war, and “had less grammar than most of their poor Cracker neighbours” (Mitchell 6). Scarlett O'Hara, who attended the Fayetteville Female Academy,¹⁸ does not assume formal education important either. The only subject she was good at was mathematics, which later proves to be very useful when running her own business. She admires her father for what he has managed to achieve in his life using his common sense, not knowledge obtained at school. On the other hand, Ashley Wilkes and other members of his family, representatives of the old, traditional South, are well educated, intellectual and therefore considered different. Ashley participates in the same activities, hunting, gambling or dancing, as any other young men from the County and he is accomplished, but unlike them, he does not put his heart and soul into it. He attracts Scarlett, although she does not understand him:

For Ashley was born of a line of men who used their leisure for thinking, not doing, for spinning brightly coloured dreams that had in them no touch of reality. He moved in an inner world that was more beautiful than Georgia and came back to reality with reluctance. He looked on people, and he neither liked nor disliked them. He looked on life and was neither heartened nor saddened. He accepted the universe and his place in it for what they were and, shrugging, turned to his music and books and his better world.

Why he should have captivated Scarlett when his mind was a stranger to hers she did not know. The very mystery of him excited her curiosity like a door that had neither lock nor key. (Mitchell 28)

Gerald considers the Wilkes very impractical focussing rather on intellectual matters than

¹⁸ It is a fictional school, although there was a school Fayetteville, the seat of Fayette County, twenty miles south of Atlanta, which served as the model. It was housed in the Holliday-Dorsey-Fife home, established in 1855.

those of ordinary life. That proves during the war, when Ashley, having lost his antebellum dream world, is unable to adapt to changing circumstances and is dependent on Scarlett's charity. And due to his intelligence he is aware of his hopeless situation which makes his suffering in the new world even worse. Throughout the novel, Mitchell emphasises Scarlett's inability to understand Ashley and her poor academic education mainly by Rhett's comments. On the other hand, Scarlett, having common sense, is a strong personality that enables her to adapt. According to Mitchell, practical education as well as common sense is more important for survival in hard conditions than classical education.

3.4 Social Status of Women

When settled in the New World people established a way of living very similar to that they knew from home. The colonists also brought with them a traditional view on women, treated as subordinate. Women were considered naturally weak and therefore supposed to be submissive. Their role was to obey their husbands, give birth to children and take care of households. According to John Winthrop, a "true woman" was satisfied with the role and regarded it as her freedom. The law and social habits supported the subordinated role of women. Women did not have the right to vote, preach, hold office, attend public schools and colleges, bring legal actions, make contracts and own a property (Tindall and Shi, *Dějiny Spojených Států Amerických*, 36, 37). Catherine Clinton in her book *The Plantation Mistress* states that in the time of early settlement, women, better said the right to marry them, were even sold like other commodities and therefore they were brought to the New World like stock (Clinton 3,4). However, their position in the society was better than in Europe due to the lack of women at the beginning of colonization as well as the free spirited environment of the New World, (Tindall and Shi, *Dějiny Spojených Států Amerických*, 37). Moreover, despite their dependent status, "females in early

America were highly valued by the male authorities” (Clinton 4).

The Enlightenment together with Great Awakening¹⁹ brought to American society a spirit and encouragement of individualism, toleration and aversion to authorities, which later led to the War of Independence (1775-1782). During the war women had to adopt new male jobs, they also followed their husbands to army camps, took care of injured soldiers, cooked and when needed actively participated in fights. The Revolution brought changes both social and economical, which led to partial improvements in women's lives. Even though women did not gain any political power, the revolution offered women new possibilities like access to higher education. First women colleges were established and some other offered education for both men and women. There were also more job opportunities particularly in the North. Women were employed as teachers, “mill girls”, novelists, or editors. Increased willingness to question women's social status and their rights was the most important contribution of the Revolution (Tindall and Shi, *Dějiny Spojených Států Amerických*, 114). In northern colonies, which were not dependent on slave labour, the theories about freedom resulted in anti-slavery movement and women's rights movement.

Unfortunately, the changes brought by the Revolution were not significant. Women still remained bound to domestic sphere, only a few of them reached formal education, they did not have any political and economical power and control over their possessions. It was nearly impossible to get divorced. Men even did not suppose that women could be interested in something else than household. Thus, when Scarlett talks to Stuart and Brent and they mention the forthcoming war she is bored and refuses to listen to such things. She is not bored because of the political issue the boys discuss, but because she prefers being in the centre of attention. However, her refusal to talk about politics awakens the boys' interest: “The boys were enchanted, as she had intended them to be, and

¹⁹ Great Awakening - period of rapid and dramatic religious revival in American colonies, 1730s- 1740s.

they hastened to apologize for boring her. They thought none the less of her for her lack of interest. Indeed, they thought more. War was men's business, not ladies', and they took her attitude as evidence of her femininity” (Mitchell 8). The above passage is not only the evidence that women were highly valued for their womanliness which, besides being delicate, meant lack of interest in men's issues and very often pretended ignorance. It shows Scarlett's ability to manipulate people to get her way. She uses her charms and lady-like manners to attract attention and benefit from that, which proves to be very important when adapting to new conditions brought by the war and helps her to survive.

In the 19th century, the society in the whole United States was patriarchal and women were subordinate to men and according to the American law, a wife had no legal identity from her husband. After all, lives of southern women differentiated from that of women in the North. The differences were closely related to the factors mentioned in previous sub-chapters. The South was rural, big towns were not built – rather isolated farms or plantations could be found there. Rich planters led life similar to that of English rural noblemen. Women were closely tied to household, because agricultural production was bound to homes. Clinton compares women to islands: “Every woman was an island” (Clinton 164). Very often a plantation mistress was the only white women on the estate. There were fewer opportunities for socializing with other women, not only because of the distance but also because the amount of work. Mitchell criticises that in her novel too. When Gerald O'Hara and their daughters go to the Twelve Oaks barbecue, Ellen has to stay at home to go over the accounts, because Gerald has just dismissed their overseer. “He [Gerald] had shoved the responsibility onto Ellen, and her disappointment at missing the barbecue and the gathering of her friends did not enter his mind” (Mitchell 82). There were fewer opportunities for independent careers and paid jobs than in the North. Women in the South usually married earlier and had more children. Moreover, it was especially slaveholding that influenced the status of women as well as their lives. “Slavery is a social

system, and not merely as one institution among many, left an indelible mark on the lives-the relations, roles, and identities-of both slaveholding and slave women. Ownership of slaves relieved slaveholding women of many forms of domestic labor while it imposed upon them the responsibility of slave management” (Fox-Genovese. *Within the Plantation Household*. 29, 30). On the other hand, white women did not complain about hard work and isolation very often and only a few of them actively participated in antislavery movement. Women mostly enjoyed special respect and their role in the society, which was strongly given.

In 1830s women suddenly started to protest against the Victorian, patriarchal, society but again mainly in the North. It is very often assumed that the rise of women's movement was caused by the Industrial revolution and development of capitalism. Causes are also seen in French and American revolutions, which brought new feelings into people's lives such as demands for equal rights or importance of individuals. O'Neill claims that the above-mentioned events cannot fully explain the beginnings of women's rights movement. And according to him, it was the Victorian conception of a family, which emerged quite recently, that caused the protests. He assumes that “the conjugal family system with its great demands upon women was a fairly recent development and became general only in the nineteenth century, then the feminists response becomes explicable. In completing the transformation of the family from a loosely organized, if indispensable, adjunct of Western society into a strictly defined nuclear unit at the very center of social life, the Victorians laid a burden on women which many of them could or would not bear”(O'Neill 4). Men set women's positions at home and justified that by their higher position in society, delicacy and therefore a necessity of permanent protection against the outside world, which actually meant isolation. Feminism is then a reaction to such a pressure put on women.

Women started to participate in various reform movements, such as movement

to improve conditions for the mentally ill, where Dorothea Dix was the leading person, or movement against alcoholism, and certainly antislavery movement, which played crucial role in establishing the women's rights movement, because women abolitionists faced a big problem when lecturing to audience where men and women were present. It is very interesting that the first women who brought the restriction and gave lectures before mixed audience were the Grimké sisters, Angelina and Sarah, from a wealthy slaveholding family from Charleston, South Carolina. At the beginning, the same women who participated in the antislavery movement actively fought for women's rights mainly focused on economic rights, such as the right to earn, inherit and hold property. In 1860, the right to vote was not the primary demand. It occurred later when after the war the Fifteenth Amendment, ratified in 1870, gave the vote to all male citizens regardless of colour and previous condition of servitude. Women being active in antislavery movement were not given the same right.²⁰

O'Neill summarizes the view on women in the antebellum period: "Woman, it was believed, was morally and spiritually superior to man because of her highly developed intuition, refined sensibilities, and especially because of her life-giving maternal powers which defied man's comprehension. But woman was also physically weaker than man, inferior to him in cognitive ability, and wholly unsuited to the rough world outside the home" (O'Neill 7). Margaret Mitchell quite ironically refers to women's delicacy. First of all, it is her character of Miss Pittypat, a sixty year old spinster living in Atlanta with Melanie Wilkes and later also with Scarlett, because Pitty was an aunt of Scarlett's first husband, Charles Hamilton. "She [Aunt Pitty] had a heart which fluttered at any excitement and she pampered it shamelessly, fainting at any provocation. Everyone knew that her swoons were generally mere ladylike pretences but they loved her enough to refrain from saying so" (Mitchell 154). Aunt Pitty uses her pretended delicacy to overcome every difficult situation, such as when Gerald O'Hara comes to Atlanta to talk to his

²⁰ 19th Amendment ratified in 1920 ensured women the right to vote.

daughter about her unbecoming behaviour at the bazaar and the ball, where she danced with Rhett Butler in spite of being a widow and widows are not allowed to amuse themselves. Therefore, Aunt Pitty pretends an illness to avoid meeting Gerald and admitting responsibility for Scarlett's behaviour. Scarlett considers Aunt Pitty very stupid and finds her outpourings irritating. Pitty's behaviour is compared to that of a child. Scarlett, on the contrary, is not delicate and she hates pretending delicacy; she never lapses into unconsciousness even Mammy advises her: "Well, 'twouldn' do no harm ef you wuz ter faint now an' den" (Mitchell 79). Scarlett supposes that even without fainting she would be able to find a husband. Mummy also reproaches Scarlett for having no problems when being pregnant and giving birth to her first son Wade. "Mammy told her privately it was downright common—ladies should suffer more" (Mitchell 133). We can assume it Mitchell's criticism of women's roles. Scarlett's strong character is the object of disapproval. But when dealing with difficulties during the war and the following years, it proves to be crucial to be able to save her life, lives of their relatives and Tara. Everybody depends on Scarlett and believes that she will resolve their problems.

Secondly, Mitchell also finds ladylike behaviour rather unhealthy. Scarlett is forced by Mummy to eat at home before going to the barbecue at Twelve Oaks, because a real young lady before marriage does not eat in public. The clothes ladies wore were uncomfortable even dangerous; bustles, hoops, corsets, long and trailing skirts were very heavy and difficult to wear. Aunt Pitty is always too tightly laced so she has difficulties to breathe. Mummy using a whalebone girdle has to lace Scarlett to be able to wear a dress with seventeen inches about the waist. All the above-mentioned means that women were considered weak and delicate and sometimes even had to pretend weakness to comply with the cult of delicacy, but in reality plantation mistresses had to work very hard within their household and they had suppress their nature to respect moral principles.

Comparing *Gone with the Wind* with the works dealing with slaveholding

society of the Antebellum South, such as *The Plantation Mistress* by Catherine Clinton or *Within the Plantation Household* written by E. Fox-Genovese, it can be claimed that Margaret Mitchell was well informed about the position and roles of women of the period. In her novel, she colourfully depicts everyday life of plantation mistresses and according to how she does that, it is evident that she explicitly criticises the women's position in Southern society:

Ellen's life was not easy, nor was it happy, but she did not expect life to be easy, and, if it was not happy, that was woman's lot. It was a man's world, and she accepted it as such. The man owned the property, and the woman managed it. The man took the credit for the management, and the woman praised his cleverness. The man roared like a bull when a splinter was in his finger, and the woman muffled the moans of childbirth, lest she disturb him. Men were rough of speech and often drunk. Women ignored the lapses of speech and put the drunkards to bed without bitter words. Men were rude and outspoken, women were always kind, gracious and forgiving. (Mitchell 59,60)

From the extract, it is obvious that Mitchell does not consider life of the most privileged white women to be as romantic and happy as presented in the plantation legend. Women were subordinate to men and were expected to behave according to given rules. They had to obey their husbands, provide them with heirs and manage their households. The criticism is mainly expressed via Scarlett. She often rebels against the prescribed role – wearing unsuitable dress at the barbecue, having fun and dancing when in mourning, drinking alcohol secretly, running business and being successful, expressing her opinions openly, even refusing to be a mother. She finds the moral bonds too tight that they even prevent her from saving Tara and her family; therefore, she considers it more practical to ignore them. Because of such behaviour, she is alienated from the society.

Since they were born, girls in the South were raised to be able to hold their

position and role in the society and cope with their duties. At the end of the 18th century, a family was very important and the role of motherhood was uplifted. Mothers were responsible for their children's raising, education as well as morality. Although fathers represented the authority, a mother usually punished the children. In *Gone with the Wind*, we learn that Mrs. Tarleton even beats her sons, which was relatively usual. "She was hot-tempered and easily plagued by the frequent scrapes of her four sons, and while no one was permitted to whip a horse or a slave, she felt that a lick now and then didn't do the boys any harm"(Mitchell 9). Clinton claims that in the South, where the hierarchy and determination of roles were crucial, it was really important to prepare the children for their roles in the society (Clinton 48). Ellen with the help of Mummy tries hard to form Scarlett into a proper lady.

In rich families, usually an Afro-American Mummy helped the mistress with her children. Wet nurses were also engaged, so as a mistress had enough time and energy to look after the household. According to Clinton, it was not as usual, as we might learn from the Southern folklore because planters were worried about the influence the slaves could have on their children. "The mistress presumably maintained house slaves to mitigate the burdens of child supervision, but most mothers still fretted about trusting even older children to the care of black servants . . . Mothers on plantations considered themselves doubly plagued by the 'slave problem.' Not only were planter wives worried about the negligence of slave servants, but their children's slave playmates, they believed, set poor examples. Warned from an early age about their contact with slaves, white children were indoctrinated with a sense of suspicion toward blacks and a demeanor of superiority"(Clinton 48,49) According to the above-mentioned, it is possible to claim that Margaret Mitchell describes the relationship between Scarlett and her Mummy, and between aunt Pittypat and her servant Uncle Peter, or how Scarlett leaves her son Wade in care of Prissy from a rather romantic point of view. Mummy always supervises Scarlett

and is very strict with her when concerning her behaviour, for example wearing suitable clothes, avoid tanning, eating at home before a party because a real lady never eats in public. Scarlet must make use of all her cunning to achieve what she wants. Mummy also oversees Ellen. It is explained by her love and devotion to the whole family. Uncle Peter, who is aunt Pittypat's coach driver, also watchfully supervises observation of moral rules. Their behaviour could lead to assumption that they are not slaves, servants, but rather equal members of the family.

Mothers were responsible for their children's early education. Because women were occupied with the work within the household they found it difficult to educate their children properly at home, they hired governesses. They were usually girls who were young, not married, educated and born in the North. As mentioned in the sub-chapter dealing with education, after the Revolution there was a shift in attitudes towards education, especially female education. Nevertheless, unlike the North, southern women after marriage did not have opportunities to continue in their personal development for which the time in a college was devoted. Alongside the obtained education, there was another important aspect for southern women and it was meeting other girls and making friends during their studies. Such friendships usually lasted the whole life and played important roles in women's lives though after marriage they were very often isolated on their plantations. Exchanging letters “kept women in touch with the outside world and bound friends together” (Clinton 174). In *Gone with the Wind*, Mitchell does not focus on such a friendship among women. Scarlett, the main character, despite studying at the Fayetteville Female Academy, has never had a girl friend, she does not lack one, and she claims that she does not like other women. First, she considers many of them not very clever owing to their behaviour that is exactly in accord with southern traditions and moral rules. Secondly, she regards them as her rivals, enemies, in pursuit of a suitable man. She does not trust women and finds them boring. Another and even more important reason is

that Scarlett does not understand other women. "If she knew little about men's minds, she knew even less about the minds of women, for they interested her less. She had never had a girl friend, and she never felt any lack on that account. To her, all women, including her two sisters, were natural enemies in pursuit of the same prey—man. All women with the one exception of her mother" (Mitchell 62). The only woman Scarlett respects and admires is her mother. Scarlett wishes to be like her but there is one big problem and it is Scarlett's nature, her desire for life. Being like her mother means to be kind, fair-minded and not selfish and to abnegate most of the enjoyment of life and also admirers.

On the other hand, Melanie Wilkes, another female character from the novel, has a lot of girl friends because she differs considerably from Scarlett:

Melanie was like her aunt in many ways. She had her shyness, her sudden blushes, her modesty, but she did have common sense--"Of a sort, I'll admit that," Scarlett thought grudgingly. Like Aunt Pitty, Melanie had the face of a sheltered child who had never known anything but simplicity and kindness, truth and love, a child who had never looked upon harshness or evil and would not recognize them if she saw them. Because she had always been happy, she wanted everyone about her to be happy or, at least, pleased with themselves. To this end, she always saw the best in everyone and remarked kindly upon it. There was no servant so stupid that she did not find some redeeming trait of loyalty and kind-heartedness, no girl so ugly and disagreeable that she could not discover grace of form or nobility of character in her, and no man so worthless or so boring that she did not view him in the light of his possibilities rather than his actualities.

Because of these qualities that came sincerely and spontaneously from a generous heart, everyone flocked about her, for who can resist the charm of one who discovers in others admirable qualities undreamed of even by

himself? She had more girl friends than anyone in town and more men friends too, though she had few beaux for she lacked the wilfulness and selfishness that go far toward trapping men's hearts.

What Melanie did was no more than all Southern girls were taught to do--to make those about them feel at ease and pleased with themselves. It was this happy feminine conspiracy which made Southern society so pleasant. Women knew that a land where men were contented, uncontradicted and safe in possession of unpunctured vanity was likely to be a very pleasant place for women to live. So, from the cradle to the grave, women strove to make men pleased with themselves, and the satisfied men repaid lavishly with gallantry and adoration. In fact, men willingly gave the ladies everything in the world except credit for having intelligence. Scarlett exercised the same charms as Melanie but with a studied artistry and consummate skill. The difference between the two girls lay in the fact that Melanie spoke kind and flattering words from a desire to make people happy, if only temporarily, and Scarlett never did it except to further her own aims. (Mitchell 154,155)

The above-quoted excerpt from the novel serves not only to compare the two girls, Melanie and Scarlett, pointing out the crucial differences between them, but also to demonstrate how women had to suppress their personalities to fulfil their roles in the society. Besides, they did it intentionally to secure their privileged position. As Clinton states “The cult of the lady may have been in part a collaboration: southern gentlemen enshrined and adorned their females, while women were willing to exemplify these 'ladylike' virtues” (Clinton 97).

Becoming a wife and a mother meant fulfilling a woman's destiny. Comparing to the North, marriage did not differ a lot concerning upper class women. However, girls in the South married considerably earlier than in the North, possession of a girl's family

played a crucial role when courting and mainly due to property marriages between cousins were very frequent. In the novel, Mitchell also mentioned the above-stated. Ellen was only fifteen when she married Gerald and everybody pities India Wilkes for being twenty and a spinster. The habit of marrying cousins is applied in case of the Wilkes and Hamilton families. In this case the marriage is not only because of the property but also because the people understand each other.

Clinton declares that “These few years between puberty and marriage were closest that most women came to freedom. The great decision of their lives – the choice of when and who to marry – lay ahead, and their time to choose was filled with fun and frivolity. This period – when women were most carefree, most hopeful – was therefore cherished by planter-class females. Young girls anticipated being a belle. Belles themselves conveyed a sense of exhilaration” (Clinton 62). Flirtation and amorous intrigues were common, although girls were supervised by not only their parents but also by the rest of the society during social contacts with men. Scarlett O'Hara is very talented in flirtation and she knows perfectly how to enchant a man. After becoming a widow, she finds it unjust that she learned all the trick girls use to attract a man but was allowed to utilize them for a very short time. Mitchell criticises the position of widows not only via Scarlett and her attempt to break free from the moral bonds. She is not allowed to wear clothes she would like to or enjoy herself and make decisions concerning her life. On the other hand, being a widow enables her to take care of wounded soldiers in hospital, which is not suitable for unmarried girls of the same age. It is only her status of a widow that is decisive. Mitchell employs the character of Rhett Butler to express her disapproval with the conditions of widows and it is Rhett who helps Scarlett to break free from her widowhood.

Marriage entailed an absolute change in a woman's life. After a few years of dancing, flirting, having beaux and wearing nice dresses without real duties unless

behaving lady-like, a married woman had to cope with a lot of work because she was responsible for running the whole plantation. As mentioned above, Margaret Mitchell when writing her novel was thoroughly acquainted with the scope of women's everyday tasks. Therefore, we can illustrate life of a common plantation mistress using the example of Ellen O'Hara.

Since her childhood, Ellen had been prepared to be able to run the whole household consisting of not only members of the family but also a great number of slaves. In the sub-chapter dealing with education, we learn that girls in the South were not taught enough skills to be able to keep a house. Therefore, for a newly married lady keeping a house could be a problem (Clinton 19). When Ellen was fifteen, she married Gerald who was desperately looking for a wife because he needed a lady of the house at his plantation Tara. Although slaves undertake all the hard labour, she is responsible for the whole range of domestic actions whose extent depends on the size of a plantation. Gerald, likewise other men, has no idea that his wife is occupied since the early morning to late night because of all the things she has to supervise. He only sees the result - always clean and neat lady, not showing exhaustion or strain, and a well functioning plantation. Ellen keeps the keys to the whole household, supervises the supplies in the pantry and smokehouse, and distributes them. She also has to ensure cooking, housecleaning, production of cloth and clothes supply. She keeps detailed records of the plantation as well as account books. Nursing and treatment of sick members of a family and slaves is another of her duties. Plantation mistresses were also responsible for growing food in their gardens, preserving food, candle making and soap making, or furnishing and maintaining their homes.

In this chapter, I have attempted to analyse life in the South focusing on a typical antebellum plantation mistress with all her duties and opportunities she had during her life. Comparing the region with the North, we can claim that it differentiated in many aspects, such as politics, economy, education and culture. The feature that mostly affected

the whole society was the institution of chattel slavery. Life of rich planters' wives varied form that portrayed in the plantation legend. Even though they were relieved of hard work in fields, there was still a lot of work they had to cope with and therefore their life was not easy. Margaret Mitchell in *Gone with the Wind* portrays privileged white women truthfully, which I proved by comparing her novel with historical facts. She criticises the patriarchal society, especially the subordinate position of women and tight social bonds. Scarlett, who very often rebels against the prescribed women's role, presents her criticism. Mitchell claims that the theme of her novel is survival and she determines it by strong personality that Scarlett inherits from her father.

4. The South during the American Civil War and Reconstruction

Dixie

**I wish I was in the land of cotton,
old times there are not forgotten,
Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land.
In Dixie land where I was born in, early on a frosty mornin',
Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land.**

Chorus:

**Then I wish I was in Dixie, hooray! Hooray!
In Dixie land I'll take my stand, to live and die in Dixie,
Away, away, away down south in Dixie,
Away, away, away down south in Dixie.**

**Old Missus marry Will de Weaber, Will-yum was a gay deceaber,
Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land.
But when he put his arm around her,
smiled as fierce as a forty pounder.
Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land. (Chorus)**

**Dars buckwheat cakes an' ingen batter, makes you fat or a little
fatter,
Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land.
Den hoe it down and scratch your grabble to Dixie's land
I'm bound to travel,
Look away, look away, look away Dixie land. (Chorus) 21**

The American Civil War started on April 12, 1861 when Fort Sumter was attacked by Confederate forces. It was a war between the North (Union) and the South (Confederacy), and the main cause of the war was slavery and control of the government.²² The war itself and the subsequent years of Reconstruction radically changed the South. The main consequence of the war was abolition of slavery, the cornerstone not only of the southern economy, but the whole society, as discussed in the previous chapter dealing with the South before the Civil War. During the era of Reconstruction,²³ the government attempted

²¹ Very popular son in the South during the Civil war, a sort of national anthem, played at the inauguration of Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederate States of America, 1861 to 1865. It evokes the old times that should not be forgotten. Retrieved from <http://www.civilwarhome.com/dixie.htm>

²² See Appendix 5: American Civil War Timeline

²³ See Appendix 6: Reconstruction Timeline

to establish the “new” postbellum South free from the planter slaveholding system and to guarantee the civil and political rights of former slaves.

The war was not only men’s business, but it is possible to assert that it was a women’s war too, because women played a significant role during the wartime. While men were fighting and suffering, women were working hard, mourning and making sacrifices. This chapter explores what roles women had to adopt and how life of white women from the upper class changed during the period. I will discuss how Margaret Mitchell presents women’s views on the war and how they cope with the changed situation focusing on Melanie and Scarlett and the main theme of the novel, which is survival.

Lives of the most privileged white women during the years of the Civil War are relatively well documented. Women from the upper class were educated and had spare time to write their lives in diaries, exchanged letter with their beloved, and kept various personal records. During the war, they especially considered it important to write down momentous historical events. In addition, the era of Reconstruction is preserved in their diaries, because while the “new” South was being shaped, women wanted to record memories of the better times before the war and evidence of sacrifices and heroism.

According to Catherine Clinton, during the American Civil War it was not for the first time when southern women had to adopt new roles when their husbands were far away at war. Actually, women’s roles firstly transformed during the American Revolution, when worrying about British troops invasion and losing sources of food and other supplies women had to manage plantations on their own and become self-sufficient. Moreover, even during post-Revolutionary era many planters had to leave their plantations for quite a long time due to political or business reasons leaving their plantations under the management of their wives and overseers. In addition, widows had to cope with plantations control without men helping them (Clinton 29–35). The above-stated means that women were not unprepared or incapable of running estates. But owing to the “patriarchal”

establishment of southern society women had no legal power and were not allowed to vote, sign documents or make decisions concerning finances, which limited them considerably and therefore they were still totally dependent on men, namely not only in the political and legal spheres, but also during ordinary activities, such as travelling. Women were not allowed to travel without a male escort. Therefore Scarlett is absolutely horrified when, on their escape from burning Atlanta, Rhett Butler leaves her alone in the outskirts of the town with sick Melanie, Melanie's new born baby and Prissy on their way to Tara, because he wants to join the Army. She accuses him of not being a gentleman. A gentleman would escort them and ensure their safe passage home. Rhett is not considered a gentleman and it is highlighted in the novel many times, particularly by Rhett himself. What is more important, he is confident that Scarlett will manage to get home safely, because she is really determined and selfish and people like that are not helpless.

It is also very important to take into consideration that many years had passed since the American Revolution; the situation was diametrically different. First, the Civil War was a war within a nation. Then cotton boom brought wealth into the South especially to big planters' families therefore young people were raised in affluence, as Mitchell states in her novel: "Although born to the ease of plantation life, waited on hand and foot since infancy . . ." (Mitchell 6). Women born into wealth had their exceptional position within the society and could expect safety and security, even though they had to work hard and did not have any legal power. Southerners believed that this kind of life would last forever. But it would change during the Civil War significantly.

In *Gone with the Wind*, Margaret Mitchell thoroughly depicts lives of the upper class women from Atlanta during the wartimes. At the beginning of the conflict, the author concentrates on the situation in the town, where Melanie and Scarlett live with Aunt Pitty. We learn about the situation in the country only from scarce letters and reports the women get. Later, after Atlanta is seized by Sherman's troops, Scarlett and Melanie escape from

the town to Tara and stay there isolated until the end of the war. Mitchell introduces two possible views on the war. The first is through eyes of Melanie, a representative of a loyal Confederate woman, who believes in the Cause²⁴ and supports it without any doubts. Elite southern women like Melanie were exceptional women totally devoted to the Cause and they have been authenticated and celebrated by many historians (Antolini). Stories of such women are often used to illustrate how brave and loyal women were during the Civil War. The other view on the war is through Scarlett's eyes. She pretends her loyalty because she fears alienation from the society, but she disagrees with the war, considers it unnecessary evil and she is not willing to sacrifice herself for the Cause. Scarlett is a woman who absolutely differs from the ideal model of Confederate womanhood. According to Antolini, existence of such women has been proved by historical researches. However, “scholars who have revisited the historical roles of southern women in the Civil War era and GWTW's cinematic portrayal of them are still unwilling to give Scarlett her due. They reveal the truth that women frequently diverged from the romanticized image of the self-sacrificing southern women, yet they still prefer to celebrate the minority of women who fit the stereotype” (Antolini). Therefore, it is easy to find a lot of materials dealing with women like Melanie, but hardly any dealing with women being critical of the war. The above-mentioned attitudes to the war are in the novel tightly connected with the ways the women cope with the consequences of the war. Throughout the novel, Mitchell confronts Melanie and Scarlett, their attitudes, opinions and abilities to accommodate to the changing world and to survive.

²⁴ The Cause – people often used the term the Cause meaning the war and fight for the southern rights.

4.1 Women's Roles during the Civil War

When studying lives of women during the Civil War, you always encounter a lot of stories about patriotic women and their active participation in the defence of the Confederacy, about women who joined the army and really fought for the Cause, women who worked as spies, nurses or Vivandières²⁵. Other women worked hard at home to be able to meet the Army's demands for food and other supplies. These women were very brave and are often used as examples of "Confederate Women," women who served the Confederacy by intensive labour, sacrificed their husbands, brothers and sons, and supported the Cause. When talking about upper class white women during the American Civil War, their enthusiasm for the Cause, for Confederacy, is emphasized. Melanie and other ladies from Atlanta, such as Mrs. Merriwether, Mrs. Meade or Mrs. Elsing, are typical examples.

During the Civil War, women were forced to do what male counterparts had done before the War. They did not only keep things going at home while their husbands, brothers or sons were fighting for the Cause, but they also ran farms, grew food crops, produced livestock, bought and sold goods and supply the Army. "Ellen [was] busy night and day, doubling the productiveness of Tara to aid the Confederacy" (Mitchell 136). Women in the cities were employed in factories, which were founded very quickly to manufacture goods that could not be imported from other countries due to the blockade. Women also found jobs within state administration. In the novel, Mitchell does not deal with such roles women had to accept. She focuses on women from southern aristocracy and discusses their struggle for survival during the wartimes within the scopes of common life. In addition, Mitchell mentions poor white women and their suffering, although only marginally. Their lives during the Civil War are not documented well owing to the fact they did not keep diaries and personal records and not many letters have been preserved to

²⁵ Women who travelled with soldiers for little or no pay as sutlers, mascots or nurses.

be able to examine them:

“We air hungry” “There won't be no crop this year--there ain't nobody to plow.” “We air hungry.” “The commissary took the shoats, and we ain't had no money from you in months. We air livin' on dried peas.” . . . “We are hungry, your wife, your babies, your parents. When will it be over? When will you come home? We are hungry, hungry.” (Mitchell 287, 288)

From such letters we learn that situation of poor families was horrible. They starved and there was nobody to help them. Many Confederate soldiers, having received such a letter from home begging them to return to help, deserted. The main task of poor white women was to support their families and therefore they did not gain such emancipation. Transformation of lives of Afro-American women during the Civil War and Reconstruction is another issue because slavery was abolished and it caused a radical change in their lives.

In the following section, I would like to provide some facts about those roles women adopted that are not mentioned in the novel, such as women soldiers, nurses or spies. Then I will discuss how ordinary women such as Melanie and other ladies from Atlanta support the Confederacy and I compare their attitude with that of Scarlett.

During the Civil war, women under pressure abandoned their traditional roles and some of them in the patriotic fervour even joined the Army and fought alongside their husbands. Although it was forbidden to enlist women on both the sides, Confederacy and Union, some succeed. Since enlisted under male names, it is rather difficult to state a number of women who disguised themselves as men and defended the Confederacy taking up arms. Women soldiers were forced not only to change their names, clothes but they also had to behave like men. It was not easy for them and therefore they were very often revealed, mainly when being wounded and examined by a doctor. To illustrate women

soldiers I use a story of Amy Clark, who under a name of Richard Anderson fought in many battles alongside her husband. After his death, she left the cavalry regiment and joined the Infantry. In 1862, she was captured by the Union Army and in the prison, where she was sent, her sex was revealed during medical examination. Amy promised not to wear men clothes any more, and then she was released and sent home. Another example of a woman soldier is Mrs. L. M. Blalock, who was enlisted as Samuel Blalock. More women wanted to serve as soldiers and found it frustrating not being allowed to join the Army (Wiley 142).

Because women were not allowed to fight and still they wanted to do something for the Cause, they became spies and couriers. They used their clothes, baggage and hair to hide papers and goods, such as pistols, medicines, and other rare items. It was very dangerous for them, but they expected that they would be treated as ladies. Belle Boyd and Mrs Rose O. Neal Greenhow used their charms to obtain information to help the South. As the war progressed, these practices were discovered and women started to be searched. Mary Chesnut in her diary, August 29, 1861, writes: “False hair is taken off and searched for papers. . . Not legs but arms are looked for under hoops. . . Then women are used as detectives and searchers to see that no men come over in petticoats. So the poor creatures coming this way are humiliated to the deepest degree” (Chesnut 172). From the diary entry, we deduce that some patriotic women did not hesitate to undergo even such degradation of womanhood to support the Confederacy.

At the beginning of the war, one of the acceptable ways to help was to become Vivandières. They were mainly wives or sisters who companied their husbands or brothers; they worked as nurses, cooked and provided creature comforts.

Another popular image of Confederate women was a nurse. Not many women were employed as full-time nurses or administrators in Confederate hospitals, because these positions were men’s domain. Women, due to their delicacy, were not supposed to

face amputated limbs, mutilated bodies, disease and death. “A few determined and resourceful women, breaking through the barrier of prejudice, made notable contributions to the care of sick and wounded soldiers” (Wiley 144). Mitchell in her novel does not deal with the question of suitability of nursing for women in general. “Every matron, old or young, in Atlanta nursed and did it with an enthusiasm that seemed to Scarlett little short of fanatic” (Mitchell 156). The author considers women’s help in hospitals commonplace. The only restriction is the status of women. Only married women and widows can help surgeons and take care of wounded soldiers. Young unmarried girls cannot care for them; they work only with convalescents. Scarlett hates nursing, the smell of hospital, dirt, agony and death. The only reason she does it is that she cannot avoid it. She finds it strange that Melanie, the most modest and timid woman, does not seem to mind anything even helping Dr. Meade during operations. Melanie is portrayed as an example of the Confederate nurse, an extraordinary woman who selflessly cared about wounded and dying soldiers. In many cases, women had to take sick and wounded soldiers or convalescents home because there was not enough space in hospitals. Melanie insists on having them at home too, even though it is not socially acceptable because they live alone without a man’s protection. However, for a loyal Confederate woman making sacrifices for the Cause is an honour.

Women were very brave and encouraged their husbands, sons, brothers and other male relatives to offer their services for defence of the South. When the soldiers were departing, women showed enthusiastic support for them, even if they knew that many of them would not return. “Of course, there were empty chairs and babies who would never see their fathers' faces and unmarked graves by lonely Virginia creeks and in the still mountains of Tennessee, but was that too great a price to pay for such a Cause?” (Mitchell 169) Melanie is very proud of Ashley and she claims that she would rather see him dead than at home. Women showed disapproval of men who did not right away volunteered for the army, such as young and fit members of the local militia. Scarlett is surprised by

Melanie's sharp criticism of such men. Melanie, as stated above, always tries to find something good about people and their deeds and is portrayed as a very kind and calm person, but when talking about the militia she resolutely manifests that all men “able to tote a rifle“ (Mitchell 175) have to join the army. “Melly's soft dark eyes were flashing angrily” (Mitchell 175). It is the contrast between 'soft' and 'angrily' that makes us sure that this delicate lady is really embittered.

Mitchell deals with fanaticism and loyalty of southern women in the part depicting the charity ball. She describes how Melanie and other women look being proud of the soldiers:

There was a deep, almost fanatic glow in her eyes that for a moment lit up her plain little face and made it beautiful.

The same look was on the faces of all the women as the song ended, tears of pride on cheeks, pink or wrinkled, smiles on lips, a deep hot glow in eyes, as they turned to their men, sweetheart to lover, mother to son, wife to husband. They were all beautiful with the blinding beauty that transfigures even the plainest woman when she is utterly protected and utterly loved and is giving back that love a thousandfold. (Mitchell 168)

The description very clearly shows that these women do not pretend their zealotry that they really believe in the Confederacy, the Cause, and their men. Only real feelings can mirror in their faces. Therefore, Scarlett feels astonished when seeing the shining faces and realises “that she did not share with these women their fierce pride, their desire to sacrifice themselves and everything they had for the Cause” (Mitchell 169,170). She knows that the War means nothing to her. She understands that it only causes trouble, kills men, costs a lot of money, and makes it difficult to get good food and luxuries. She hates taking care of wounded soldiers and fears death. She finds other women who unreservedly support the

Cause stupid and hysterical. She thinks that the war should end, all men should come back home to grow cotton, and that there should be parties, balls, beaux and nice green dresses. She realises how she differs from the other women and feels very lonely. However, she cannot be the same as the women around her devoted to the Cause, because she is O'Hara and has "good hard-headed Irish sense" (Mitchell 170). She is also aware that she must not confess to her real thoughts and that she must be practical and pretend enthusiasm and pride she does not feel.

The war affected all spheres of southerners' lives. Considering plantations, women stayed there alone without their husbands and other male members of their families, who were drafted into the Army. Therefore, mistresses had to manage whole plantations on their own. What is more important, many slaves also went to fight with their masters or escaped. "Hence many women, with or without the help of children, had to plant crops, plow the fields, reap the harvest, kill the hogs, cure the meat, cut the firewood, and perform all the other chores requisite to farming" (Wiley 147). Due to the blockade there was lack of food, clothing and women were forced to secure everything themselves. Their hardships were enhanced by permanent threat of robbery committed by Southern soldiers as well as by the Union Army. When Scarlett finally gets to Tara, she finds only Pork, Dilcey and Mummy; the other slaves have left with the Union Army. There is nothing to eat left because the Army took everything with them. They lack food, candles, and clothes but on the other hand, they are lucky because their plantation was not burned down like many plantations in the neighbourhood. Devastation of plantations had far-reaching impact on the economy of the South. People from the country moved to towns in the hope of starting new life there.

Another aspect of life affected by the war was education. Before the conflict, there were mainly men tutors or Yankee governesses and teachers. During the war, more women were employed as teachers. They were usually from upper class families who due

to circumstances were forced to seek paid jobs. Mothers became more responsible for educating their children, which was demanding for them because of loads of other duties.

The war also brought changes to common aspect of life such as matching. There was lack of men, especially for girls of courting age. Many social rules were broken connected with engagement and marriages. Mitchell points that out when describing Scarlett's first engagement: "Two weeks! So short an engagement would have been impossible in times of peace. Then there would have been a decorous interval of a year or at least six months. But the South was aflame with war, events roared along as swiftly as if carried by a mighty wind and the slow tempo of the old days was gone" (Mitchell 128). Mitchell using the words such as 'aflame' or 'mighty wind' points out what devastating effect the war had on the whole antebellum society, not only love affairs.

Women had to solve problems connected with clothes and food. The South did not produce enough cloth and it had to be imported, which became impossible during the War because of the Yankee blockade on the coast. Not only cloth but also food and luxuries such as silks, tea, coffee, colognes, fashion magazines and books were scarce and therefore dear. Women from the upper class were forced to do without the things easily available before the War. Carding, spinning and weaving became common again and women made dresses from homespun cloth. To overcome shortages in cloth, luxuries and fashion accessories was not easy even for brave Confederate women who proudly wore old dresses and ate simple food. Aunt Pitty is always very happy to get small presents, such as needles, buttons or hairpins, from Rhett. Maybelle Merriwether "was willing, even proud to go without hairpins and buttons and nice shoes and candy and tea for the sake of the Cause, but she wanted a satin wedding dress" (Mitchell 222). She insists on having it, even though her patriotic mother points out "that homespun was the proper bridal attire for a Confederate bride" (Mitchell 222). For Scarlett not sharing enthusiasm for the Cause the situation is even worse. Therefore, she does not hesitate and accepts a nice green velvet

cap from Rhett. It is a brave deed because a lady is not allowed to accept presents like this and what is more, Scarlett being in mourning should not wear such a cap. Her desire to look beautiful wins over moral rules.

Wiley also claims that women started to talk about politics openly, expressed their strong views, even offered advice about military strategy to husbands and officers (Wiley 172, 173). Margaret Mitchell is not so open and uses male characters to help Melanie and Scarlett express their opinions. Mitchell respects women's roles and status and the fact that women were assumed not being able to make decisions and have opinions about such issues as a war or politics at all:

"Ashley wrote me that we should not be fighting the Yankees. And that we have been betrayed into it by statesmen and orators mouthing catchwords and prejudices," said Melly rapidly. "He said nothing in the world was worth what this war was going to do to us. He said here wasn't anything at all to glory--it was just misery and dirt."

"I don't believe it," said Mrs. Merriwether firmly. "You misunderstood his meaning."

"I never misunderstand Ashley," Melanie replied quietly, though her lips were trembling. "I understand him perfectly. He meant exactly what Captain Butler meant, only he didn't say it in a rude way."

"You should be ashamed of yourself, comparing a fine man like Ashley Wilkes to a scoundrel like Captain Butler! I suppose you, too, think the Cause is nothing!"

"I--I don't know what I think," Melanie began uncertainly, her fire deserting her and panic at her outspokenness taking hold of her. "I--I'd die for the Cause, like Ashley would. But--I mean-- I mean, I'll let the men folks do the thinking,

because they are so much smarter.” (Mitchell 229, 230)

Men could think about politics and express their opinions. On the contrary, women were supposed not to show interest in any activities that were not connected with households. Moreover, women themselves respected that. Melanie, when defending Rhett Butler’s opinions about the war talking about how it is not glory but suffering and dirt and how statesmen dragged the South into the war, uses her husband’s ideas. She claims that she understands them, but she adds that she would yield thinking to men. Her social status does not allow her to state what she thinks openly. Nevertheless, presenting her husband's opinion and its approval is a display of Melanie's confidence and her firm attitude.

The excerpt is interesting from another point of view. It shows that both Ashley and Melanie understand that the war is evil. They share Rhett's opinion. However, unlike Rhett, they do anything, even die, for the Cause, because it is what the society expects them to do. Ashley does not fight for States' rights, cotton or slaves. “I am fighting for the old days, the old ways I love so much” (Mitchell 208) Ashley and Melanie, who is the same, who likes the same things, differ radically from Scarlett who is not ready to sacrifice herself for the Cause or the old days. Scarlett secretly reads the letters Melanie receives from Ashley searching for any evidence of Ashley being in love with her, but she does not understand the passages dealing with Ashley's opinions about the war because she never understands him, as stated before. Therefore, Scarlett is shocked when realising “that anyone as absolutely perfect as Ashley could have any thought in common with such a reprobate as Rhett Butler. . . They both see the same unpleasant truth, but Rhett likes to look it in the face and enrage people by talking about it—and Ashley can hardly bear to face it” (Mitchell 231). Scarlett is suddenly aware of the main difference between them – Ashley is ready to die and Rhett is not. She shares Rhett's attitude and considers that a proof of a good sense.

The paragraphs above deal with the new roles women had to undertake and

with women's attitudes to the War. Mitchell criticises women's position in society and supports Scarlett in her effort to break free from the traditional role. It is evident in Rhett's behaviour towards Scarlett. He serves as a guide for her. He encourages her to break social bonds, when he wins the right to lead a reel with her in auction at the charity ball and enables her to dance even when in mourning. He buys her a very nice cap and makes her to wear it even if it is not in accord with clothing prescribed for a widow. He also supports her when she runs her sawmills and gives her advice connected with business. He is always open with Scarlett and requires the same from her. He plays an important role in Scarlett's transformation from a spoiled child into a woman.

Moreover, in her novel, Mitchell manifests disapproval with the war; all the main characters share the opinion that the war is evil. Mitchell confronts Melanie, a representative of a loyal Confederate woman, and Scarlett, who is not willing to sacrifice herself. At the charity ball, women are asked to donate their jewellery, to be able to buy medical supplies. Scarlett decides to give her engagement ring. It does not mean anything for her because she married Charles just to avoid gossiping. Melanie sees that and considering Scarlett's deed manifestation of her bravery donates her ring too, even it means so much to her and she never takes it off. "It came off with difficulty and for a brief instant was clutched tightly in the small palm. Then it was laid gently on the pile of jewellery. The two girls stood looking after the Zouave who was moving toward the group of elderly ladies in the corner, Scarlett defiant, Melanie with a look more pitiful than tears" (Mitchell 184). Rhett Butler notices the scene and the following day he buys the ring back and returns it to Melanie. "Accept, dear Madam, this token of my reverence for your courage" (Mitchell 196). However, he does not buy Scarlett's ring. He understands that giving the ring away means a release from the bond of marriage, better said widowhood. Rhett respects Melanie highly, and even if he does not agree with the war and sacrifice for the Cause, he admires her firm attitude and consistency. He considers her "courageous

little lady” (Mitchell 179). Mitchell expresses his esteem by the way he looks at Melanie and speaks to her. “As he turned and gave Melanie a searching look that went to the bottom of her sweet worries eyes, his expression changed, reluctant respect and gentleness coming over his dark face” (Mitchell 179). However, when looking at Scarlett, his eyes show “cynical amusement” (Mitchell 181), “there was a twinkle of malice in his bold eyes” (Mitchell 177), or “there was a diabolic gleam in his eyes” (Mitchell 568). His eyes always show his real feelings:

It was the bold way his eyes looked out of his swarthy face with a displeasing air of insolence, as if all women were his property to be enjoyed in his own good time. Only with Melanie was this look absent. There was never that cool look of appraisal, never mockery in his eyes, when he looked at Melanie; and there was an especial note in his voice when he spoke to her, courteous, respectful, anxious to be of service. (Mitchell 218)

Rhett appreciates Melanie and always treats her with respects. From the stated above we can deduce that Mitchell shares the same opinion because Rhett is the strongest character in the novel. He is self-confident and he always knows what he wants and how to reach that. He is a straightforward person. He is not ashamed to express his opinions, even though that people regard him a betrayer, fraud and opportunist. Mitchell expresses that when introducing him at the barbecue, at Twelve Oaks. She describes him as a tall man, powerfully build, with such wide shoulders, so heavy with muscles, animal-white teeth, black moustache and bold eyes (Mitchell 97). She does not describe any other character using such expressions – power, wide, heavy. Rhett is the person with gumption, the person who can adapt and survives.

Margaret Mitchell was fascinated by the stories about the Civil War, she listened to as a child, and she once said that she was about ten years old when she realised that the Confederacy lost. She loved the South. In her novel, she expresses disapproval

with the war via all the main characters, Scarlett, Melanie, Rhett and Ashley, because the war ruins lives of the people. Although the characters share the same opinion, they maintain different attitudes. Mitchell emphasises how women were brave, strong and how they coped with the difficulties the war brought. She highlights the necessity to survive and adapt to new condition, which only strong people like Scarlett and Rhett are able to do. For all that, she manifests admiration to women who supported the Cause. Therefore, we can agree with the claim that “Even author Margaret Mitchell felt Melanie Wilkes was her story’s true heroine” (Antolini).

4.2 Reconstruction

The Civil War was a real slaughter and many women became widows, or wives of war invalids and many stayed unmarried, they lost their sons and other members of their families. They faced suffering and death in hospitals during nursing service. They were forced to undertake men’s duties and jobs in factories, public sphere or schools and they were successful. Moreover, they found enough strength to encourage their loved ones via letters. They showed bravery and abilities to cope with problems. All the achievements could not leave their lives unchanged. After the war, men could not ignore what women had managed to deal with during their absence. During the Reconstruction, a lot of men and women started to overcome difficulties together. However, it took a long time until women achieved equal rights, because men very slowly started to recognise women’s new status. Nevertheless, the development could not be stopped, as Bell Irvin Wiley says at the end of his book: “But women did forge ahead. The fact that they made far more progress in the forty-nine years between 1865 and World War I than in the seventy-eight years from the Revolution to 1861, as Mary Elizabeth Massey points out in *Bonnet Brigades*, shows that ‘the Civil War provided a springboard from which they leaped beyond the

circumscribed 'woman's sphere' into that heretofore reserved for men'." (Wiley 178, 179).

The era of Reconstruction has been revised by scholars many times, because it is a very controversial period in the history of the United States. Margaret Mitchell has been criticised for her pro-south view on the period and due to the way she portrays Afro-Americans, her novel is considered racial. Since the aim of the thesis is to analyse primarily roles and status of women altered by the Civil War, I focus on discussing the era of Reconstruction from their point of view.

Historians provide us with two interpretations about the impact the Civil War had on elite southern women. "An earlier generation of historians led by Anne Firor Scott argued that the war provided a springboard from which women leaped into a world heretofore reserved for men. Recent scholarship has revised this interpretation and suggests that the wartime experiences of elite southern women led them to cling to the pre-existing race and class hierarchy as they looked for ways to assert their status in a world without wealth or slaves" (Roberts).

Margaret Mitchell in her novel deals with both the attitudes women had. Scarlett O'Hara represents a woman who profits on the war concerning her release from the bonds set on a woman by moral rules and she is able to adapt to new conditions. When we meet Scarlett for the first time, she is a spoiled, selfish girl having everything she wants. She knows how to attract men's interest, she has a lot of beaux and other girls are jealous of her success. The only thing Scarlett cannot have is Ashley. Because of her selfishness and stubbornness, she frequently acts without proper thinking about possible consequences. To prevent gossiping about her unbecoming behaviour at the barbecue she marries Charles Hamilton without considering the sequel of the marriage. She is punished immediately for her rash decision. She becomes a widow and a mother too. Both the roles mean even tighter moral bonds that Scarlett is not able to bear. On one hand, Scarlett tries to be a real lady like her mother but on the other hand she cannot suppress her nature

inherited from her father. Being unsure of herself, she questions her attitudes and behaviour. During the Civil War, she undergoes a radical change. She transforms into a woman only under the conditions of the war and the years of Reconstruction, when she has to cope with difficulties on her own and has to overcome loss of beloved people and assume full responsibility for her deeds. The following extract gives us a description how Scarlett feels when she realises that everything her mother taught her about life is wrong. It takes place during the war, in 1864, after Scarlett's return to Tara from defeated Atlanta. She has to manage the whole plantation and she is responsible for many people; her father and sisters, Melanie and her son and also a few slaves, who stayed at Tara. She is absolutely exhausted, worried, and unsure of herself. Therefore, her behaviour towards the people is not very nice; she is rather tough with them. She bullies the slaves and offends her sisters, although her mother always taught her to be firm but gentle with inferiors and to love and support her sisters and show tenderness to suffering people:

Nothing her mother had taught her was of any value whatsoever now and Scarlett's heart was sore and puzzled. It did not occur to her that Ellen could not have foreseen the collapse of the civilization in which she raised her daughters, could not have anticipated the disappearing of the places in society for which she trained them so well. It did not occur to her that Ellen had looked down a vista of placid future years, all like the uneventful years of her own life, when she had taught her to be gentle and gracious, honourable and kind, modest and truthful. Life treated women well when they had learned those lessons, said Ellen.

Scarlett thought in despair: "Nothing, no, nothing, she taught me is of any help to me! What good will kindness do me now? What value is gentleness? Better that I'd learned to plough or chop cotton like a darky. Oh, Mother, you were wrong!"

She did not stop to think that Ellen's ordered world was gone and a brutal world had taken its place, a world wherein every standard, every value had changed. She only saw, or thought she saw, that her mother had been wrong, and she changed swiftly to meet this new world for which she was not prepared. (Mitchell 425)

Mitchell in the excerpt manages to describe very well that women were puzzled, did not know what to do, how to deal with the situation that occurred, because they were raised and trained for a completely different way of life. Moreover, everybody supposed that their way of life would remain unchanged. Scarlett blames her mother for not preparing her to be able to deal with the situation arisen. The only thing she understands is that she has to be strong and overcome the difficulties. Because she does not comprehend that Ellen could not anticipate the changes, she supposes that being a lady like her mother will not help her to survive. Therefore, Scarlett decides to postpone ladylike behaviour for later when she is secure and well-off and to do everything to get over hard times and save Tara and her family without regard to traditional values and moral codes.

Tara is the only thing that is worth of fight for Scarlett. In her love for land she resembles her father, her Irishness proves. At the beginning of the novel Scarlett denies that, she wants to be a lady and she wants Ashley. After the war when talking to him about new taxes they have to pay, she realises that she cannot expect help from him. He is too tightly bound to the old times and he really regrets losing them. He is not afraid of poverty and hunger, but he is afraid of living without the beauty, glamour, perfection, completeness, and symmetry of the old life he held. He is not able to face the reality and he is aware of it. He knows that only clever people with courage are able to come through. Scarlett not being able to share his feelings is aware that she has lost him forever. At the moment she feels that there is nothing left being worth to fight for. "But unbidden came the thought of the sea of red dirt which surrounded Tara and how very dear it was and how

hard she had fought to keep it—how hard she was going to have to fight if she wished to keep it hereafter” (Mitchell 521). Scarlett realises that she has the red clay but Ashley and Melanie have nothing to struggle for. The red clay is the powerhouse forcing Scarlett to do something and accommodate to the new world. On the contrary, Ashley and Melanie are doomed to extinct because the happy old times cannot return.

During the war when starving and dealing with difficulties at the plantation, Scarlett in search for something to eat comes to the ruins of Wilkes's plantation and collapses with exhaustion:

When she arose at last and saw again the black ruins of Twelve Oaks, her head was raised high and something that was youth and beauty and potential tenderness had gone out of her face forever. What was past was past. Those who were dead were dead. The lazy luxury of the old days was gone, never to return. And, as Scarlett settled the heavy basket across her arm, she had settled her own mind and her own life.

There was no going back and she was going forward.

Throughout the South for fifty years there would be bitter-eyed women who looked backward, to dead times, to dead men, evoking memories that hurt and were futile, bearing poverty with bitter pride because they had those memories. But Scarlett was never to look back.

She gazed at the blackened stones and, for the last time, she saw Twelve Oaks rise before her eyes as it had once stood, rich and proud, symbol of a race and a way of living. Then she started down the road toward Tara, the heavy basket cutting into her flesh.

Hunger gnawed at her empty stomach again and she said aloud: “As God is my witness, as God is my witness, the Yankees aren't going to lick me. I'm

going to live through this, and when it's over, I'm never going to be hungry again. No, nor any of my folks. If I have to steal or kill--as God is my witness, I'm never going to be hungry again.” (Mitchell 419)

This is, in my opinion, the most crucial moment. Scarlett frees from the past and decides to look ahead. She becomes a firm, determined woman prepared to do anything to save her plantation and support her family. She is aware that everybody relies on her – her son, father and sisters, Ashley and his family, Mummy, Dilcey, Pork and Prissy. To survive Scarlett utilise everything – marriage without love, manslaughter, theft of her sister's fiancé, offering herself for cash to be able to pay taxes, talent for business, employing convicts to work at the mills, and disregards all the traditional rules, such as travelling around Atlanta without escort or showing herself when being pregnant to be able to operate her mills:

That sawmill, for example. It was the shock of his [Frank's] life when she [Scarlett] told him with a sweet smile, in answer to his questions, that she intended to run it herself. “Go into the lumber business myself,” was the way she put it. Frank would never forget the horror of that moment. Go into business for herself! It was unthinkable. There were no women in business in Atlanta. In fact, Frank had never heard of a woman in business anywhere. If women were so unfortunate as to be compelled to make a little money to assist their families in these hard times, they made it in quiet womanly ways--baking as Mrs. Merriwether was doing, or painting china and sewing and keeping boarders, like Mrs. Elsing and Fanny, or teaching school like Mrs. Meade or giving music lessons like Mrs. Bonnell. These ladies made money but they kept themselves at home while they did it, as a woman should. But for a woman to leave the protection of her home and venture out into the rough world of men, competing with them in business, rubbing shoulders with them, being exposed

to insult and gossip. . . . Especially when she wasn't forced to do it, when she had a husband amply able to provide for her! (Mitchell 621)

The excerpt shows how unacceptable and extraordinary Scarlett's behaviour is, not only for her husband but also for the whole society. We learn how other ladies cope with the changed situation. They are also forced to seek paid jobs but their activities are bound to homes, which is tolerable. The difference between them is that Scarlett considers money to be the most important thing to be a proper lady.

Scarlett also socialise with Yankees, the Carpetbaggers²⁶ and newly rich Republicans. She is not able to distinguish between facade and real values. Unlike the other members of the traditional southern society, the Old Guard, she does not consider them enemies. She despises them but also finds them very friendly and amusing. All her deeds separate her from the old society:

Everyone had disapproved of Scarlett since the far-away day when she abandoned the weeds worn for Charlie Hamilton. Their disapproval had grown stronger because of her unwomanly conduct in the matter of the mills, her immodesty in showing herself when she was pregnant and so many other things. But when she brought about the death of Frank and Tommy and jeopardized the lives of a dozen other men, their dislike flamed into public condemnation. (Mitchell 821)

The quotation refers to Scarlett travelling around Atlanta without a man's escort and being attacked. She is definitely condemned for risking her own menfolk because they have to revenge her. Only Melanie and Ashley stand up for her because they realise what she has done for them and how dependent they are on Scarlett's money. They admire her strong

²⁶ a negative term Southerners gave to opportunistic Northerners who moved to the South during the Reconstruction era. They often formed alliances with freed slaves, and scalawags (southern whites who were Republicans). Together they are said to have politically manipulated and controlled former Confederate states for their own financial and power gains.

personality and appreciate her generosity. However, at the end Melanie dies and Scarlett realises what she meant to her and that she lost her only friend who tirelessly protected her and stood beside her. At the same moment, Scarlett becomes aware that she does not love Ashley, that she only loved something she made up and discovers her true love, Rhett. She loses him too, as he has decided to leave her. Scarlett remains alone. She is rich again and lives in luxury, she has time to be a real lady, but she does not have anybody to share all that.

The passage above describes one of the ways women dealt with the changed situation that Mitchell presents in *Gone with the Wind*. The character of Melanie serves the author to express the second attitude:

Around Melanie's tactful and self-effacing person, there rapidly grew up a clique of young and old who represented what was left of the best of Atlanta's ante-bellum society, all poor in purse, all proud in family, diehards of the stoutest variety. It was as if Atlanta society, scattered and wrecked by war, depleted by death, bewildered by change, had found in her an unyielding nucleus about which it could re-form.

Melanie was young but she had in her all the qualities this embattled remnant prized, poverty and pride in poverty, uncomplaining courage, gaiety, hospitality, kindness and, above all, loyalty to all the old traditions. Melanie refused to change, refused even to admit that there was any reason to change in a changing world. Under her roof the old days seemed to come back again and people took heart and felt even more contemptuous of the tide of wild life and high living that was sweeping the Carpetbaggers and newly rich Republicans along. (Mitchell 717)

Other women, such as Melanie and ladies of the Old Guard, cannot comprehend the

changes and are not willing and able to adapt to the new world. On the contrary, they try hard to preserve their social status and the way of life they led before the war with all the rules and traditions. They organise meetings and found various associations. Melanie is the head of the Association for the Beautification of the Graves of Our Glorious Dead and the Sewing Circle for the Widows and Orphans of the Confederacy. Melanie is a real lady. She preserves her virtue even in hard times. She also displays courage, bravery and firm attitude when the people she loves are in danger. She is portrayed as a positive character. Despite all her good qualities, she is doomed. Her inability to survive is represented by her problems with reproduction and her death.

Mitchell uses the main female characters to highlight the danger of extreme attitudes. Melanie represents absolute loyalty and bonds to the old times. Therefore, she is not able to adapt and survive and she dies. Scarlett being practical survives but owing to her ignorance, inability to understand people and their deeds as well as distinguish real values loses everybody. The author admires Scarlett for her bravery and gumption, but also expresses admiration for Melanie being a devoted Southerner. It is proved by Rhett's behaviour. He wants his daughter to socialise with the Old Guard not with Scarlett's new friends.

5. Conclusion

Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell has been criticised for misinterpreting the true and for her pro-South point of view and even racism. The aim of my diploma thesis was to discuss how Margaret Mitchell presents the life, status, and roles of southern women of the high society before the American Civil War and in subsequent years and compare her view with facts gained from historical sources. Comparing the novel especially to works by Clinton and Willey dealing with women before and during the Civil War as well as other sources, we can claim that her portrait of elite women's life is based on reality. The novel has been considered an encyclopaedia of the plantation legend, but unlike the legend Mitchell does not depict plantation mistresses as beautiful women living in affluence and being served by their slaves, but criticises their subordinate position and describes their duties within their households. She employs not only Scarlett to express her criticism, but also other characters, such as Ellen O'Hara or Rhett Butler. Mitchell loved the South and was fascinated by the stories about the Civil War. It is obvious that she was influenced by that and therefore her view is rather pro-south. On the contrary, when working on the novel, she carried out a research about life in the South before the Civil War and in the subsequent years. She was also acquainted with stories told her by people who had lived through the era. Thus, it can be asserted that her novel presents life of the southern aristocracy as it really was and as it was viewed by eyewitnesses.

I also attempted to discuss the impact that the American Civil War had on the lives of elite women and how they perceived the war and its consequences focussing on the characters of Melanie and Scarlett and analysing their different attitudes and therefore their abilities to survive. Before the Civil War, women were bound to households and according to the “cult of domesticity”, they were not assumed to have any other interests than the home. During the war, women were forced to accept several roles of men and performed

them well. The result of their work enhanced women's self-confidence. The war brought opportunities for white elite women to get involved in the public sphere and occupy posts previously reserved for men. The war brought a new woman, a woman like Scarlett, who would never again be bound to the domestic sphere but instead she would run her own business and enter the world of men. In spite of that, after the Civil War many elite women, such as Melanie and the other ladies, wanted a resurgence of the old traditional values that existed before the war to maintain their womanhood.

Mitchell in her novel confronts Scarlett, who represents a woman trying to free herself from the traditional role, with Melanie a symbol of the South, the Confederacy, with the traditions and moral rules. All the main characters condemn the war for their own reasons. Scarlett thinks that it kills men and makes it impossible to grow cotton and have balls, barbecues, and nice dresses. According to Rhett, wars are only "money squabbles" (Mitchell 227). Ashley and Melanie agree with Rhett's opinion that the war is not glory but suffering and dirt and that statesmen dragged the South into the war. They differentiate in the attitudes they hold. Despite their disapproval, Ashley and Melanie support the Cause and are even ready to die for the Confederacy. On the contrary, Rhett tries to take advantage of the empire wrecking and makes a fortune. Scarlett attempts to survive and save her home and family.

Scarlett is indisputably the main character and she is depicted as a strong person with gumption. However, Mitchell is sometimes so ambivalent in portraying Melanie and Scarlett during the Civil War and Reconstruction, therefore it can be claimed that Mitchell admires Scarlett's strong will, desire to stay alive, her bravery and diligence, but at the same time she is fascinated by Melanie's loyalty and resolve to support the Cause and her firmness as well as bravery.

The absolute contrast between the main characters allows Mitchell to express positives as well as negatives of both the extremes. Melanie being so kind, loyal and bound

to the old times is not able to survive and dies owing to her problems with pregnancy. On the contrary, Scarlett is very strong and flexible and therefore she is able to adapt and survives, but because of her selfishness and ignorance, she is alienated from the society and loses people she loves. However, she does not capitulate:

With the spirit of her people who would not know defeat, even when it stared them in the face, she raised her chin. She could get Rhett back. She knew she could. There had never been a man she couldn't get, once she set her mind upon him.

“I'll think of it all tomorrow, at Tara. I can stand it then. Tomorrow, I'll think of some way to get him back. After all, tomorrow is another day.” (Mitchell 1011)

6. Resumé

Diplomová práce se zabývá románem americké spisovatelky Margaret Mitchell *Jih proti Severu*. Román vyšel poprvé v roce 1936. Nabízí pohled na sociální postavení a role žen před a během americké občanské války a v poválečném období. I přes početné nepříznivé kritiky je tento román stále velmi populární a rovněž i stejnojmenný film z roku 1939. Úkolem mé diplomové práce je zjistit, jakým způsobem autorka zobrazuje život žen z vyšší jižanské společnosti, do jaké míry je její literární popis založen na historických faktech, a dále stanovit, jak se válka promítla do životů hlavních hrdinek a jak tyto ženy válku vnímaly. Důraz je kladen na postavy Melanie a Scarlett a je analyzována jejich schopnost přežít a začlenit se do společnosti změněné válkou.

Druhá kapitola práce seznamuje s životopisem Margaret Mitchell, klade důraz na okolnosti, které autorku ovlivnily při psaní románu. Inspirací jí byla především její láska k Jihu a detailní znalost historie. Do literárního textu promítla vliv a názory své matky, která se angažovala v hnutí žen za rovnoprávnost. Pozornost rovněž věnuji autobiografickým prvkům, které lze v knize vyzorovat.

Třetí kapitola je zaměřena na analýzu dobové jižanské společnosti, na prezentaci rozdílů mezi předválečným Jihem a Severem, na odlišností ve všech oblastech života, a to v politice, ekonomii, vzdělání a především v sociálním postavení žen ve společnosti. Ženám je věnována podstatná část celé kapitoly.

Vystihnout změny ve společnosti vyvolané nejenom vojenským konfliktem, ale i poválečnou obnovou země je cílem další kapitoly, která uvádí, jaké nové sociální role musely ženy během války přijmout a jaký byl jejich postoj k válce samotné a jak se se změnami ve společnosti vyrovnaly.

Závěrečná kapitola je věnována shrnutí a analýze zjištěných skutečností.

7. Resume

This diploma thesis deals with the novel *Gone with the Wind*, published in 1936, written by the American writer Margaret Mitchell. It focuses on the social status and roles of women before and during the American Civil War and Reconstruction. Despite numerous negative reviews, the novel is still very popular as well as the film of the same name, which was released in 1939. The aim of the thesis is to ascertain how the author presents life of white women from the upper class, to what extent the portrait of the society is based on the reality. Moreover, it attempts to determine how the war transformed their lives and how the women perceived the war focusing on Melanie and Scarlett and their abilities to adapt to the changed situation.

The second chapter introduces Margaret Mitchell's biography focusing on the facts that influenced her writing. It is primarily her admiration of the South and detailed knowledge of its history. Then it is the influence and opinions of her mother, who was involved in women's rights movement. Attention is also aimed at some autobiographical elements, which can be noticed in the novel.

The third chapter focuses on an analysis of the society of the Antebellum South, highlighting differences between the North and the South, which are evident in all aspects of life such as in politics, economy, education, and especially in status and roles of women. The substantial part of the chapter is devoted to examining women's lives.

The aim of the fourth chapter is to formulate the changes of the society brought not only by the Civil war but also by the Reconstruction era. It presents what new roles women had to adopt during the war and their attitude to the war. It deals with the establishment of the "new" postbellum South free from the planter slaveholding system. It also explores how the changes influenced women's status and roles.

The final chapter is devoted to a summary of the established facts.

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“Census Regions and Divisions of the United States” 5 January 2010

<http://www.census.gov/geo/www/us_regdiv.pdf>

Appendix 3: Industry in the North and in the South in 1860

“Industry & Agriculture in the North & South Map, 1860.” Maps.com. n.d. Web. 14 February 2010

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Appendix 4: Scarlett O'Hara from the film *Gone with the Wind*

<<http://ocdeals.freedomblogging.com/files/2009/05/scarlett-ohara.jpg>> 20 March 2010

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Appendix 5: American Civil War Timeline

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Appendix 1: The American Civil War Map

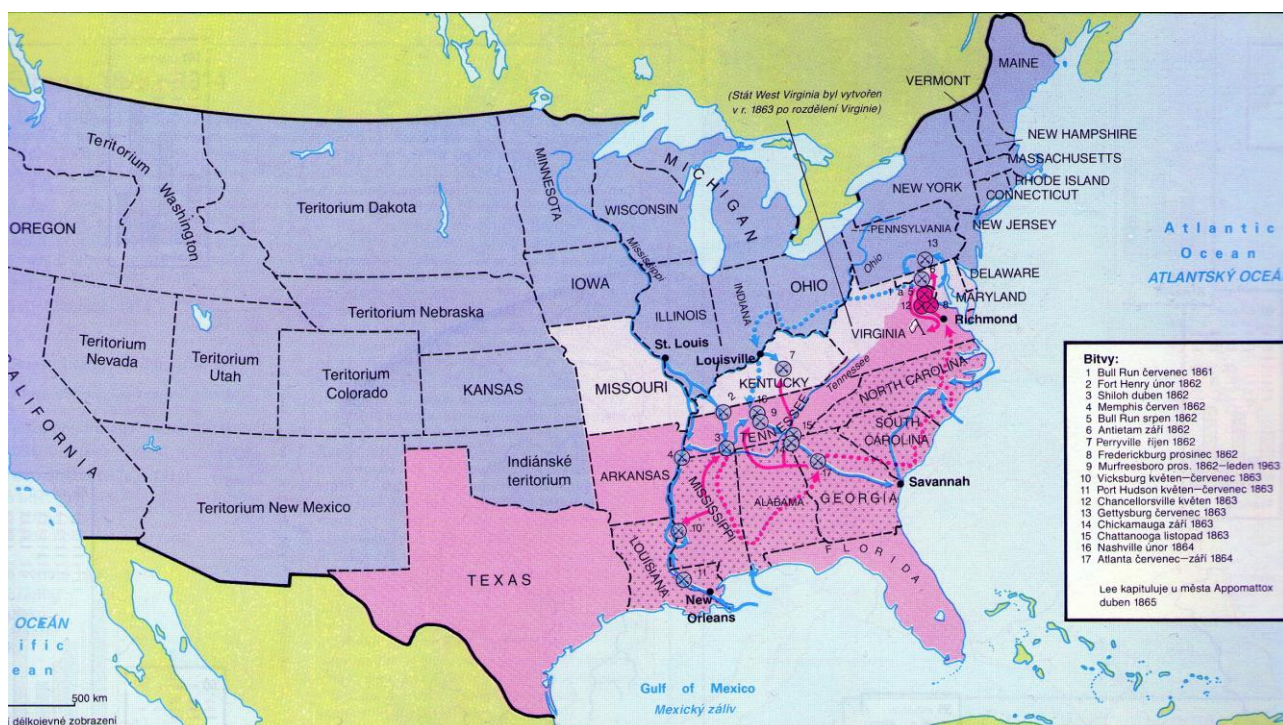
2 Americká občanská válka

Od r. 1861 do r. 1865 vedly ve Spojených státech amerických severní státy (Unie) a jižní státy (Konfederace) nelítostnou válku, ve které ze tří miliónů odvedených vojáků milión zahynulo nebo bylo raněno. Jih požadoval právo vlastnit otroky a odtrhnout se od Unie. Prezident Lincoln chtěl naopak udržet USA a v r. 1863 osvobodil otroky, z nichž většina

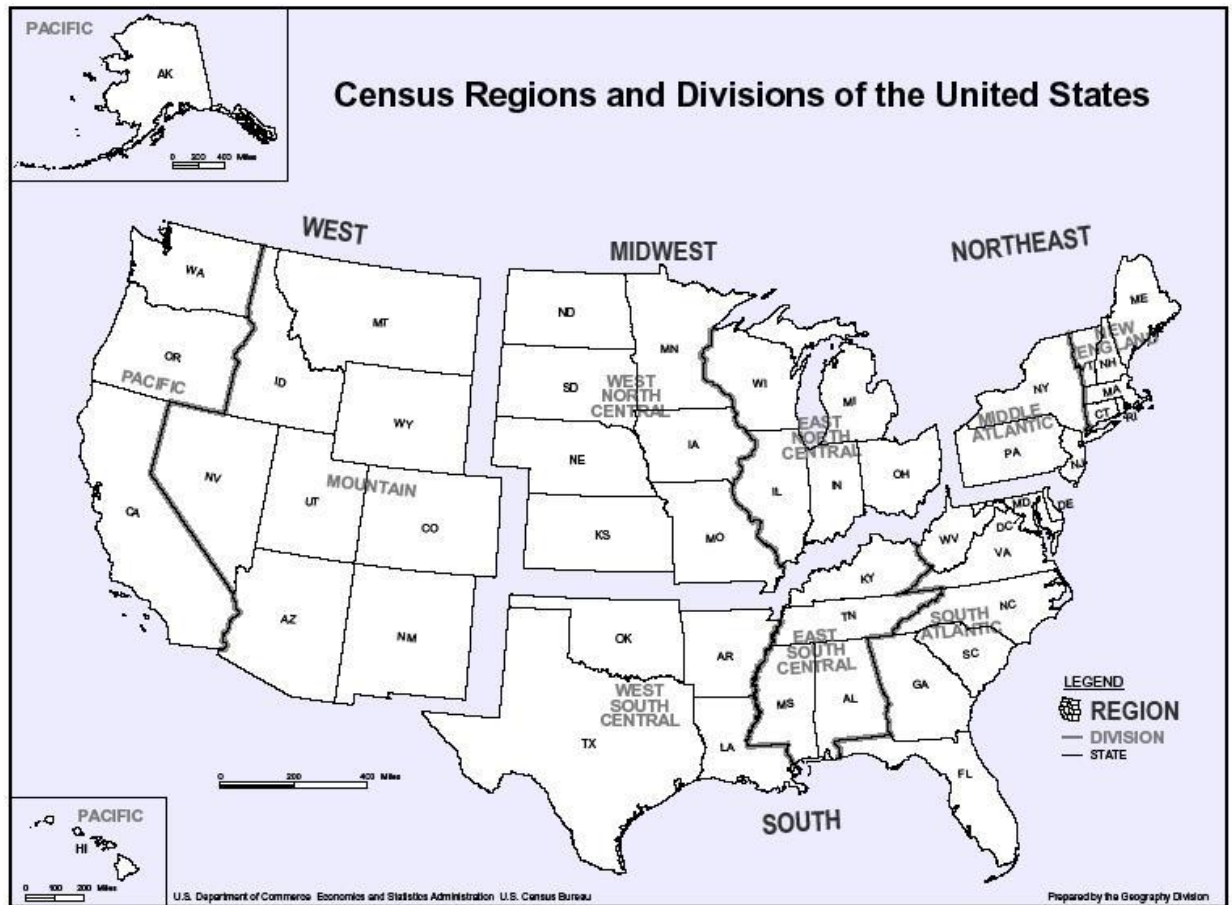
- Státy/území Unie
- Otrokářské státy, které zůstaly v Unii, přestože část obyvatelstva podporovala Konfederaci
- Státy Konfederace
- Hlavní státy, kde se pěstovala bavlna v r. 1861

pracovala na jižních plantážích. Armáda Konfederace byla menší, ale měla dva velmi schopné generály, Roberta E. Lee a Jacksona, zvaného „Stonewall“. Lincoln udržel Unii, ale status černochů zůstal složitým problémem (*Kapitola 22*). Lincoln byl těsně po skončení války zavražděn.

- Tažení Unie
- Tažení Konfederace
- Vítězné bitvy armád Unie
- Vítězné bitvy armád Konfederace
- Pohyby vojsk Unie (po železnici)
- Pohyby vojsk Konfederace (po železnici)



Appendix 2: The South defined by United States Census Bureau



Census Bureau Regions and Divisions with State FIPS Codes

Region 1: Northeast

Division 1: New England

Connecticut (09)
Maine (23)
Massachusetts (25)
New Hampshire (33)
Rhode Island (44)
Vermont (50)

Division 2: Middle Atlantic

New Jersey (34)
New York (36)
Pennsylvania (42)

Region 2: Midwest*

Division 3: East North Central

Indiana (18)
Illinois (17)
Michigan (26)
Ohio (39)
Wisconsin (55)

Division 4: West North Central

Iowa (19) Nebraska (31)
Kansas (20) North Dakota (38)
Minnesota (27) South Dakota (46)
Missouri (29)

Region 3: South

Division 5: South Atlantic

Delaware (10)
District of Columbia (11)
Florida (12)
Georgia (13)
Maryland (24)
North Carolina (37)
South Carolina (45)
Virginia (51)
West Virginia (54)

Division 6: East South Central

Alabama (01)
Kentucky (21)
Mississippi (28)
Tennessee (47)

Division 7: West South Central

Arkansas (05)
Louisiana (22)
Oklahoma (40)
Texas (48)

Region 4: West

Division 8: Mountain

Arizona (04) Montana (30)
Colorado (08) Utah (49)
Idaho (16) Nevada (32)
New Mexico (35) Wyoming (56)

Division 9: Pacific

Alaska (02)
California (06)
Hawaii (15)
Oregon (41)
Washington (53)

**Prior to June 1984, the Midwest Region was designated as the North Central Region.*

Appendix 3: Industry in the North and in the South in 1860



Appendix 4: Scarlett O'Hara from the film *Gone with the Wind*





Vivien Leigh as Scarlett O'Hara surrounded by her admirers at the barbecue at Twelve Oaks

Appendix 5: American Civil War Timeline

1861

February 9 - The Confederate States of America is formed with Jefferson Davis as president.

April 12 - At 4:30 AM Confederates under General Pierre Beauregard open fire with 50 cannons upon Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina. The Civil War begins.

April 17 - Virginia secedes from the Union, followed within 5 weeks by Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina, thus forming an eleven state Confederacy.

April 19 - President Lincoln issues a Proclamation of Blockade against Southern ports. For the duration of the war the blockade limits the ability of the rural South to stay well supplied in its war against the industrialized North.

July 4 - Lincoln, in a speech to Congress, states the war is..."a People's contest... a struggle for maintaining in the world, that form, and substance of government, whose leading object is, to elevate the condition of men..." The Congress authorizes a call for 500,000 men.

July 21 - The Union Army under Gen. Irvin McDowell suffers a defeat at Bull Run 25 miles southwest of Washington. Confederate Gen. Thomas J. Jackson earns the nickname "Stonewall," as his brigade resists Union attacks. Union troops fall back to Washington. President Lincoln realizes the war will be long. "It's damned bad," he comments.

July 27 - President Lincoln appoints George B. McClellan as Commander of the Department of the Potomac, replacing McDowell.

September 11 - President Lincoln revokes Gen. John C. Frémont's unauthorized military proclamation of emancipation in Missouri. Later, the president relieves Gen. Frémont of his command and replaces him with Gen. David Hunter.

November 1 - President Lincoln appoints McClellan as general-in-chief of all Union forces after the resignation of the aged Winfield Scott. Lincoln tells McClellan, "...the supreme command of the Army will entail a vast labor upon you." McClellan responds, "I can do it all."

November 8 - The beginning of an international diplomatic crisis for President Lincoln as two Confederate officials sailing toward England are seized by the U.S. Navy. England, the leading world power, demands their release, threatening war. Lincoln eventually gives in and orders their release in December. "One war at a time," Lincoln remarks.

1862

January 31 - President Lincoln issues General War Order No. 1 calling for all United States naval and land forces to begin a general advance by Feb 22, George Washington's birthday.

February 6 - Victory for Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in Tennessee, capturing Fort Henry, and

ten days later Fort Donelson. Grant earns the nickname "Unconditional Surrender" Grant.

February 20 - President Lincoln is struck with grief as his beloved eleven year old son, Willie, dies from fever, probably caused by polluted drinking water in the White House.

March 8/9 - The Confederate Ironclad 'Merrimac' sinks two wooden Union ships then battles the Union Ironclad 'Monitor' to a draw. Naval warfare is thus changed forever, making wooden ships obsolete. Engraving of the Battle **In March** - The Peninsular Campaign begins as McClellan's Army of the Potomac advances from Washington down the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay to the peninsular south of the Confederate Capital of Richmond, Virginia then begins an advance toward Richmond. President Lincoln temporarily relieves McClellan as general-in-chief and takes direct command of the Union Armies.

April 6/7 - Confederate surprise attack on Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's unprepared troops at Shiloh on the Tennessee River results in a bitter struggle with 13,000 Union killed and wounded and 10,000 Confederates, more men than in all previous American wars combined. The president is then pressured to relieve Grant but resists. "I can't spare this man; he fights," Lincoln says.

April 24 - 17 Union ships under the command of Flag Officer David Farragut move up the Mississippi River then take New Orleans, the South's greatest seaport. Later in the war, sailing through a Rebel mine field Farragut utters the famous phrase "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!"

May 31 - The Battle of Seven Pines as Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's Army attacks McClellan's troops in front of Richmond and nearly defeats them. But Johnston is badly wounded.

June 1 - Gen. Robert E. Lee assumes command, replacing the wounded Johnston. Lee then renames his force the Army of Northern Virginia. McClellan is not impressed, saying Lee is "likely to be timid and irresolute in action."

June 25-July 1 - The Seven Days Battles as Lee attacks McClellan near Richmond, resulting in very heavy losses for both armies. McClellan then begins a withdrawal back toward Washington.

July 11 - After four months as his own general-in-chief, President Lincoln hands over the task to Gen. Henry W. (Old Brains) Halleck.

August 29/30 - 75,000 Federals under Gen. John Pope are defeated by 55,000 Confederates under Gen. Stonewall Jackson and Gen. James Longstreet at the second battle of Bull Run in northern Virginia. Once again the Union Army retreats to Washington. The president then relieves Pope.

September 4-9 - Lee invades the North with 50,000 Confederates and heads for Harpers Ferry, located 50 miles northwest of Washington. The Union Army, 90,000 strong, under the command of McClellan, pursues Lee.

September 17 - The bloodiest day in U.S. military history as Gen. Robert E. Lee and the Confederate Armies are stopped at Antietam in Maryland by McClellan and numerically

superior Union forces. By nightfall 26,000 men are dead, wounded, or missing. Lee then withdraws to Virginia.

September 22 - Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves issued by President Lincoln.

November 7 - The president replaces McClellan with Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside as the new Commander of the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln had grown impatient with McClellan's slowness to follow up on the success at Antietam, even telling him, "If you don't want to use the army, I should like to borrow it for a while."

December 13 - Army of the Potomac under Gen. Burnside suffers a costly defeat at Fredericksburg in Virginia with a loss of 12,653 men after 14 frontal assaults on well entrenched Rebels on Marye's Heights. "We might as well have tried to take hell," a Union soldier remarks. Confederate losses are 5,309. "It is well that war is so terrible - we should grow too fond of it," states Lee during the fighting.

1863

January 1 - President Lincoln issues the final Emancipation Proclamation freeing all slaves in territories held by Confederates and emphasizes the enlisting of black soldiers in the Union Army. The war to preserve the Union now becomes a revolutionary struggle for the abolition of slavery.

January 25 - The president appoints Gen. Joseph (Fighting Joe) Hooker as Commander of the Army of the Potomac, replacing Burnside.

January 29 - Gen. Grant is placed in command of the Army of the West, with orders to capture Vicksburg.

March 3 - The U.S. Congress enacts a draft, affecting male citizens aged 20 to 45, but also exempts those who pay \$300 or provide a substitute. "The blood of a poor man is as precious as that of the wealthy," poor Northerners complain.

May 1-4 - The Union Army under Gen. Hooker is decisively defeated by Lee's much smaller forces at the Battle of Chancellorsville in Virginia as a result of Lee's brilliant and daring tactics. Confederate Gen. Stonewall Jackson is mortally wounded by his own soldiers. Hooker retreats. Union losses are 17,000 killed, wounded and missing out of 130,000. The Confederates, 13,000 out of 60,000. "I just lost confidence in Joe Hooker," said Hooker later about his own lack of nerve during the battle.

May 10 - The South suffers a huge blow as Stonewall Jackson dies from his wounds, his last words, "Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees." "I have lost my right arm," Lee laments.

June 3 - Gen. Lee with 75,000 Confederates launches his second invasion of the North, heading into Pennsylvania in a campaign that will soon lead to Gettysburg.

June 28 - President Lincoln appoints Gen. George G. Meade as commander of the Army of the Potomac, replacing Hooker. Meade is the 5th man to command the Army in less than a year.

July 1-3 - The tide of war turns against the South as the Confederates are defeated at the

Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania.

July 4 - Vicksburg, the last Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River, surrenders to Gen. Grant and the Army of the West after a six week siege. With the Union now in control of the Mississippi, the Confederacy is effectively split in two, cut off from its western allies.

July 13-16 - Antidraft riots in New York City include arson and the murder of blacks by poor immigrant whites. At least 120 persons, including children, are killed and \$2 million in damage caused, until Union soldiers returning from Gettysburg restore order.

July 18 - 'Negro troops' of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment under Col. Robert G. Shaw assault fortified Rebels at Fort Wagner, South Carolina. Col. Shaw and half of the 600 men in the regiment are killed.

August 10 - The president meets with abolitionist Frederick Douglass who pushes for full equality for Union 'Negro troops.'

August 21 - At Lawrence, Kansas, pro-Confederate William C. Quantrill and 450 proslavery followers raid the town and butcher 182 boys and men.

September 19/20 - A decisive Confederate victory by Gen. Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee at Chickamauga leaves Gen. William S. Rosecrans' Union Army of the Cumberland trapped in Chattanooga, Tennessee under Confederate siege.

October 16 - The president appoints Gen. Grant to command all operations in the western theater.

November 19 - President Lincoln delivers a two minute Gettysburg Address at a ceremony dedicating the Battlefield as a National Cemetery.

November 23-25 - The Rebel siege of Chattanooga ends as Union forces under Grant defeat the siege army of Gen. Braxton Bragg. During the battle, one of the most dramatic moments of the war occurs. Yelling "Chickamauga! Chickamauga!" Union troops avenge their previous defeat at Chickamauga by storming up the face of Missionary Ridge without orders and sweep the Rebels from what had been thought to be an impregnable position. "My God, come and see 'em run!" a Union soldier cries.

1864

March 9 - President Lincoln appoints Gen. Grant to command all of the armies of the United States. Gen. William T. Sherman succeeds Grant as commander in the west.

May 4 - The beginning of a massive, coordinated campaign involving all the Union Armies. In Virginia, Grant with an Army of 120,000 begins advancing toward Richmond to engage Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, now numbering 64,000, beginning a war of attrition that will include major battles at the Wilderness (May 5-6), Spotsylvania (May 8-12), and Cold Harbor (June 1-3). In the west, Sherman, with 100,000 men begins an advance toward Atlanta to engage Joseph E. Johnston's 60,000 strong Army of Tennessee.

June 3 - A costly mistake by Grant results in 7,000 Union casualties in twenty minutes during an offensive against fortified Rebels at Cold Harbor in Virginia.

June 15 - Union forces miss an opportunity to capture Petersburg and cut off the Confederate rail lines. As a result, a nine month siege of Petersburg begins with Grant's forces surrounding Lee.

July 20 - At Atlanta, Sherman's forces battle the Rebels now under the command of Gen. John B. Hood, who replaced Johnston.

August 29 - Democrats nominate George B. McClellan for president to run against Republican incumbent Abraham Lincoln.

September 2 - Atlanta is captured by Sherman's Army. "Atlanta is ours, and fairly won," Sherman telegraphs Lincoln. The victory greatly helps President Lincoln's bid for re-election.

October 19 - A decisive Union victory by Cavalry Gen. Philip H. Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley over Jubal Early's troops.

November 8 - Abraham Lincoln is re-elected president, defeating Democrat George B. McClellan. Lincoln carries all but three states with 55 percent of the popular vote and 212 of 233 electoral votes. "I earnestly believe that the consequences of this day's work will be to the lasting advantage, if not the very salvation, of the country," Lincoln tells supporters.

November 15 - After destroying Atlanta's warehouses and railroad facilities, Sherman, with 62,000 men begins a March to the Sea. President Lincoln on advice from Grant approved the idea. "I can make Georgia howl!" Sherman boasts.

December 15/16 - Hood's Rebel Army of 23,000 is crushed at Nashville by 55,000 Federals including Negro troops under Gen. George H. Thomas. The Confederate Army of Tennessee ceases as an effective fighting force.

December 21 - Sherman reaches Savannah in Georgia leaving behind a 300 mile long path of destruction 60 miles wide all the way from Atlanta. Sherman then telegraphs Lincoln, offering him Savannah as a Christmas present.

1865

January 31 - The U.S. Congress approves the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, to abolish slavery. The amendment is then submitted to the states for ratification.

February 3 - A peace conference occurs as President Lincoln meets with Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens at Hampton Roads in Virginia, but the meeting ends in failure - the war will continue. Only Lee's Army at Petersburg and Johnston's forces in North Carolina remain to fight for the South against Northern forces now numbering 280,000 men.

March 4 - Inauguration ceremonies for President Lincoln in Washington. "With malice toward none; with charity for all...let us strive on to finish the work we are in...to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations," Lincoln says.

March 25 - The last offensive for Lee's Army of Northern Virginia begins with an attack on the center of Grant's forces at Petersburg. Four hours later the attack is broken.

April 2 - Grant's forces begin a general advance and break through Lee's lines at Petersburg. Confederate Gen. Ambrose P. Hill is killed. Lee evacuates Petersburg. The Confederate Capital, Richmond, is evacuated. Fires and looting break out. The next day, Union troops enter and raise the Stars and Stripes.

April 4 - President Lincoln tours Richmond where he enters the Confederate White House. With "a serious, dreamy expression," he sits at the desk of Jefferson Davis for a few moments.

April 9 - Gen. Robert E. Lee surrenders his Confederate Army to Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at the village of Appomattox Court House in Virginia. Grant allows Rebel officers to keep their sidearms and permits soldiers to keep horses and mules. "After four years of arduous service marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources," Lee tells his troops.

April 10 - Celebrations break out in Washington.

April 14 - The Stars and Stripes is ceremoniously raised over Fort Sumter. That night, Lincoln and his wife Mary see the play "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theater. At 10:13 p.m., during the third act of the play, John Wilkes Booth shoots the president in the head. Doctors attend to the president in the theater then move him to a house across the street. He never regains consciousness.

April 15 - President Abraham Lincoln dies at 7:22 in the morning. Vice President Andrew Johnson assumes the presidency.

April 18 - Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnston surrenders to Sherman near Durham in North Carolina.

April 26 - John Wilkes Booth is shot and killed in a tobacco barn in Virginia.

May 4 - Abraham Lincoln is laid to rest in Oak Ridge Cemetery, outside Springfield, Illinois.

In May - Remaining Confederate forces surrender. The Nation is reunited as the Civil War ends. Over 620,000 Americans died in the war, with disease killing twice as many as those lost in battle. 50,000 survivors return home as amputees.

Appendix 6: Reconstruction Timeline: 1865-1877

- 1865** Thirteenth Amendment approved in January. Ratified in December. Abolished slavery in the United States.
- Congress establishes Freedmen's Bureau in March to provide assistance to the emancipated slaves.
- Assassination of President Lincoln, April 15. Vice President Andrew Johnson becomes president.
- End of the Civil War (April 9, 1865). Lee surrenders to Grant.
- President Johnson presents plans for Reconstruction.
- Benjamin Butler, notorious Union General in the Civil War and advocate of rights for African Americans, elected to Congress as a radical member of the Republican party.
- Mississippi enacts Black Code.
- Joint Committee of Fifteen on Reconstruction created.
- Ku Klux Klan created in Tennessee.
- 1866** Civil Rights Act passed despite Johnson's earlier veto.
- Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution approved by Congress.
- Memphis race riot/Massacre (May 1).
- Freedmen's Bureau responsibilities and powers expanded by Congress. Legislation is vetoed by Johnson but Congress overrides his veto.
- New Orleans Race Riot/Massacre (July 30).
- 1867** First Reconstruction Act passed over Johnson's veto.
- Second Reconstruction Act passed over Johnson's veto.
- Third Reconstruction Act passed over Johnson's veto.
- Republican convention in New Orleans. Party platform includes equality for African-Americans.
- 1868** Former slave, Oscar J. Dunn, elected lieutenant governor of Louisiana.
- Fourth Reconstruction Act passed.
- Fourteenth Amendment ratified. Entitles all persons born or naturalized in the United States to citizenship and equal protection under the laws of the United States.
- Francis Pickens elected secretary of state in South Carolina. Holds office from 1868 to 1872.

Thaddeus Stevens, radical republican and supporter of land for Freedmen, dies.

John W. Menard of Louisiana elected to the United States Congress. Menard is barred from his seat by white members of Congress. When Menard pleaded his case to be seated, he became the first Black representative to speak on the floor of the House.

James J. Harris and P.B.S. Pinchback are the first African American delegates to a Republican convention. They support the nomination of Ulysses S. Grant for president.

1869 Former Union General Ulysses S. Grant becomes president. Although allied with the Radical Republicans in Congress he does not provide strong leadership for Reconstruction.

1870 Hiram Revels elected to U. S. Senate as the first black senator.

Jasper J. Wright elected to South Carolina Supreme court.

Fifteenth Amendment ratified. The Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gave the vote to all male citizens regardless of color or previous condition of servitude.

Joseph H. Rainey, first black member sworn in as member of U. S. House of Representatives. December 12, 1870.

1870 - 71 Forty-first Congress. Two black members in the House of Representatives including Robert Brown Elliot from the 3rd District in South Carolina.

1871 Forty-second Congress. Five black members in the House of Representatives: Benjamin S. Turner of Alabama; Josiah T. Walls of Florida; and Robert Brown Elliot, Joseph H. Rainey and Robert Carlos DeLarge of South Carolina.

Act to Enforce Fourteenth Amendment (Ku Klux Klan Act).

1872 Freedmen's Bureau abolished.

1872 - 1873 P. B. S. Pinchback, acting governor of Louisiana from December 9, 1872 to January 13, 1873. Pinchback, a black politician, was the first black to serve as a state governor, although due to white resistance, his tenure is extremely short.

1874 Blanche K. Bruce elected to U. S. Senate.

Robert Smalls, black hero of the Civil War, elected to Congress as representative of South Carolina.

1873 - 75 Forty-third Congress. Six black members in House the House of Representatives.

1875 - 77 Forty-fourth Congress. Six black members in the House of Representatives.

1875 March 1--Civil Rights Act enacted by Congress. It provides blacks with the right to equal treatment in public places and transportation.

The Supreme Court later declared this Act unconstitutional.

Blanche Kelso elected as Senator of Mississippi. He is the first African-American Senator to serve a complete six year term.

1876 U. S. Senate votes not to seat P. B. S. Pinchback.

Wade Hampton inaugurated as governor of South Carolina. The election of Hampton, a leader in the Confederacy, confirms fears that the South is not committed to Reconstruction.

1877 Rutherford B. Hayes inaugurated President of the United States.

1877-79 Forty-fifth Congress. Four black members in House.

Last federal troops leave South Carolina effectively ending the Federal government's presence in the South.

Robert Brown Elliott yields office of attorney general of South Carolina.