

north carolina | angela blue

Living history in Elizabeth City

Museum of the Albemarle hosts behind-the-scenes look at 'Gone with the Wind'

"You can always tell a lady by how she eats in front of folks like a bird, and I ain't aiming for you to go to Mr. John Wilkes' and eat like a field hound and gobble like a hog," Mammy exclaims as Scarlett O'Hara calmly ties a bow underneath her chin to hold her broad hat in place. "Fiddle-dee-dee," Scarlett replies as she prances around the room in her ball gown. "Why is it a girl has to be so silly to catch a husband?"

This scene from *Gone with the Wind* where Mammy dresses Scarlett for the Twelve Oaks barbecue resonates with me as I gaze at the actual wide-brimmed hat with emerald sash that Scarlett wore. Around the corner is the dress worn by Bonnie Blue, and just a little farther is the tattered uniform of Ashley Wilkes.

It might sound as if I've traveled back in time to the movie set of this classic film, but this is the next-best thing. Through Dec. 31, a traveling exhibit — "Reel to Reel: The Making of *Gone with the Wind*" — awaits visitors at the Museum of the Albemarle in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. The exhibit allows visitors to go behind the scenes of this famous film and view authentic memorabilia up close.

Some of the most notable rarities of the exhibit

include the dress that Scarlett wore when she was attacked at Shantytown, the typewriter that screenwriter Sidney Howard used for the script, and the Academy Award that Vivien Leigh won for her role as Scarlett.

Addressing cultural change

One especially fascinating aspect of *Reel to Reel* is that it addresses the cultural changes happening in the 1930s when the movie premiered. Some believed that the film glorified slavery, and they boycotted it. Even Clark Gable, who played Rhett Butler, almost boycotted the premiere in Atlanta because actress Hattie McDaniel (Mammy) wasn't allowed to attend.

The museum's education coordinator, Charlotte Patterson, explains that the exhibit is important to the history of Elizabeth City and the region. "This definitely affected a lot of people, and it really changed the way people think about the South," she notes. "We can interpret how life was not only in the Civil War but during the filming of the movie; how life has changed. If you didn't grow up with some of these things, you really don't get a feeling for how far we have come."

The Museum of the Albemarle will host a show-

ing of the film on Dec. 15, exactly 74 years after the movie's premiere in Atlanta on Dec. 15, 1939.

More to enjoy

After visiting the exhibit, explore Elizabeth City, located on the Pasquotank River. Known as the Harbor of Hospitality, Elizabeth City is one of the friendliest places to visit, whether you're traveling to the area by car or boat.

Spend some time kayaking or canoeing on the tea-colored river with River City Outfitters as you discover some of the area's most beautiful wildlife scenes. Then take in some gorgeous scenes indoors at The Center, Elizabeth City's hub for all things art. Finally, enjoy a relaxing stay at Elizabeth City B&B, where hosts Ray and Maureen Donnelly will make you feel right at home with their pleasant company, delightfully decorated guestrooms, and unforgettable breakfasts that will surely inspire a return visit.

Learn more

Elizabeth City Tourism: discoverec.com
 Museum of the Albemarle: museumofthealbemarle.com

