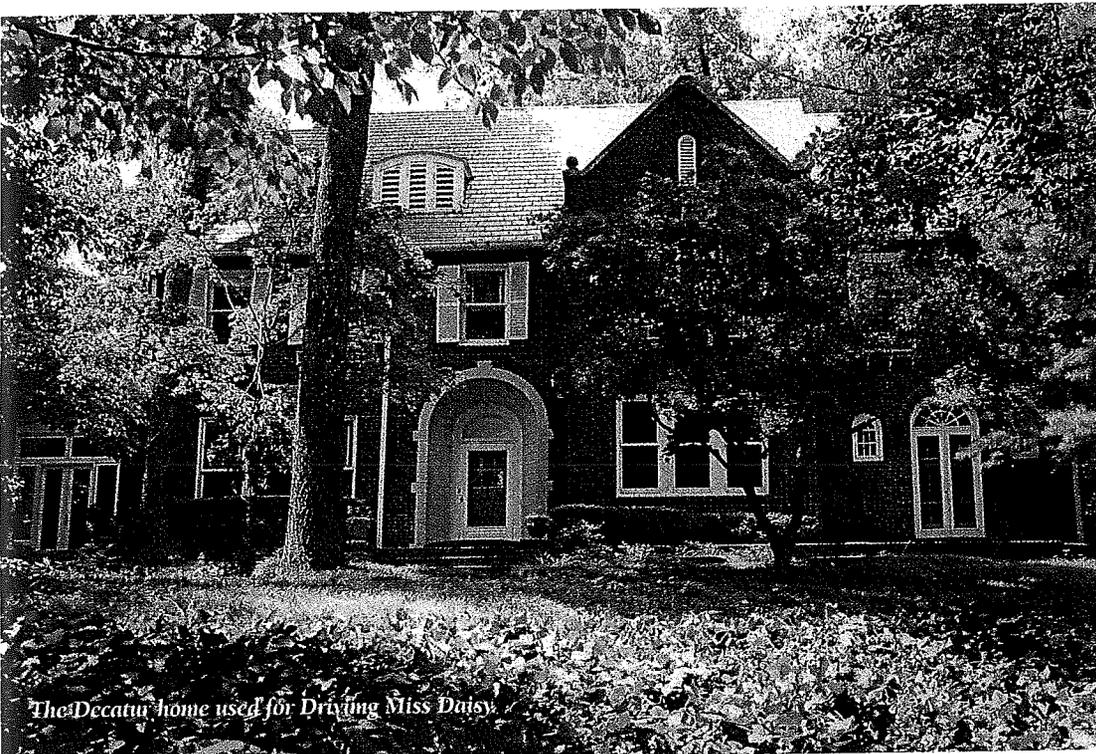


Films in Georgia

by A. Richard Langley



The Decatur home used for *Driving Miss Daisy*.

One of my favorite lines from the movie *The Accidental Tourist* (1988), is travel writer Malcolm Leary's (William Hurt) response to his wife's (Kathleen Turner) inquiry on how his latest trip to Atlanta was: "About the same... Peachtree Road, Peachtree Center, Peachtree fire hydrant." A very fitting quote, as Atlanta is as obsessed with "Peachtree" monikers as Hollywood is with Atlanta—and Georgia—as a film and television locale. "Tourist" is just one of a bounty of movies and TV shows that have been set in, filmed in, and/or referenced to Atlanta and other Georgia cities. The most famous example is *Gone With the Wind* (1939). Other examples and facts about their stars, makers, Georgia locations, and other connections follow.

Sharky's Machine (1981): Shot in Atlanta (most notably at the Peachtree Plaza Hotel), was Burt Reynolds' directorial apex. Reynolds is an Atlanta vice cop who falls for a crime-connected call girl (Rachel Ward) he has under surveillance. The voyeurism angle was a precursor to the many voyeur-themed films of the late '80s and early '90s (e.g., *Sex,*

Lies and Videotape, Bad Influence.)

"Designing Woman" (1986-1991): Created by President Clinton's Arkansas chums, Linda Bloodworth Thomason and Harry Thomason, "DW" features four women (including Delta Burke, Dixie Carter, and Annie Potts) that hurl acerbic barbs at each other while running an interior design firm. After the first two brilliant years, the quality of the writing deteriorated as quickly as the cast dwindled.

"In the Heat of the Night" (1988-1993): Shot partly in Covington and based on the eponymous 1967 Oscar-winning film. As a sheriff in a small southern town who must contend with racial tension and shady politics, Carroll O'Connor sheds his Archie Bunker image from "All in the Family." He is ably assisted by the late Howard Rollins (*Ragtime, A Soldier's Story*). Sadly, Rollins' offscreen problems detracted attention from his dynamic acting and led to his being fired from the series.

School Daze (1988): Director-writer Spike Lee's (*Malcolm X, Mo' Better Blues*) incisive and humorous take on class and gender strife at a black southern university (the majority of the film was shot at Morehouse University near downtown Atlanta). His next and best film, *Do the Right Thing* (1989), is a

more sprawling look at multiracial class and gender conflicts.

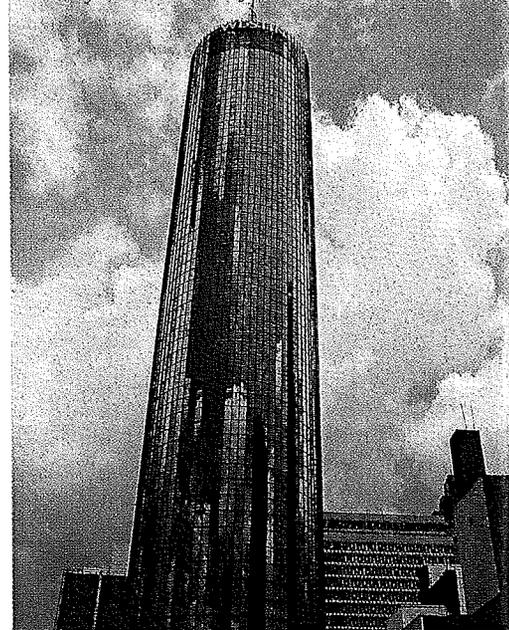
Driving Miss Daisy (1989): As a cranky, old Southern woman who reluctantly hires and befriends an amiable black chauffeur (Morgan Freeman), Jessica Tandy won a long-overdue Academy Award. Dan Aykroyd is surprisingly effective as her caring son in this shot-in-Atlanta drama.

Wild at Heart (1990): In director David Lynch's ("Twin Peaks," *The Elephant Man*) loopy and violent road picture, Nicolas Cage is Elvis-obsessed Sailor, a just-released convict, and Laura Dern (*Lynch's Blue Velvet, Jurassic Park*) is Lula, his slinky and lively girlfriend. They roam the country together, unwittingly attracting the deadly attention of numerous undesirables, some of whom have been put to task by Lula's jealous mother, Marietta

(Dern's real-life mom, Diane Ladd). In addition to Marietta being named after a well-known Georgia City, the film has another Georgia connection in Lula's wanton confession to Sailor in a cheap bar: "You better ride me back to the hotel. You got me hotter than Georgia asphalt."

Fried Green Tomatoes (1991): Starring Jessica Tandy and based on Fannie Flagg's eponymous novel, this

Peachtree Plaza Hotel where *Sharky's Machine* was filmed.





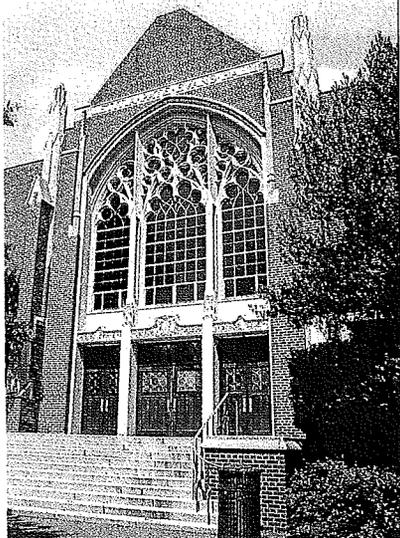
Bried Green Tomatoes revolved around The Whistle Stop Cafe.

quirky drama has two women from different generations conferring on life and love in their respective eras. Filmed mostly in Georgia, locations include: Juliette; Fayetteville; Zebulon, Pike County; and Senoia.

Boxing Helena (1993): Shot mostly in Atlanta, it has another significant Georgia connection: Athens native Kim Basinger reneged on appearing in this film and the producer sued for and won a nearly nine million dollar judgment (later overturned). Otherwise, save the surprisingly effective performances of Julian Sands as a surgeon who becomes obsessed with his "patient," Basinger's fill-in Sherilyn Fenn ("Twin Peaks," *Wild at Heart*), and first-time writer/director Jennifer Chambers Lynch's (David's daughter) twisted tale of unrequited obsession and dismemberment is forgettable.

Scream 2 (1997): One of the few sequels equal to or better than the original film, this film is for those who like horror with a sense of self-depreciation and mordant wit. Neve Campbell (*The Craft*, "Party of Five") and Courteney Cox ("Friends") reprise their roles as Sidney, the heroine-in-distress, and Gale, the intrepid, ratings-obsessed news reporter. Sidney has moved from the scene of the first film's carnage and is now attending college (much of the movie was shot at historic Agnes Scott College in Decatur). A film-obsessed maniac who wears an Edvard Munch "Scream" inspired mask is still terrorizing Sidney and her chums — new and old. **N**

Scream 2 was filmed at Agnes Scott College.





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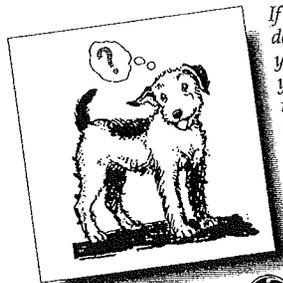
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