Greater Atlanta Area

Downtown Atlanta.

Throughout the history of Georgia filmmaking, the city of Atlanta has had a starring role. It has doubled as New York City in “The Fighting Temptations,” “Sweet Home Alabama,” and in the television pilot for “October Road.”

The Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel’s Sundial Restaurant was featured in “Sharky’s Machine,” and the hotel also became known for the location of a record setting stunt. The 220 foot freefall by stuntman Dar Robinson is the longest outdoor freefall stunt, completed without wires, carried out for a commercial film. Shot in the spring of 1981, the film was based on the novel by William Diehl, a writer for the Atlanta Journal. In addition to shooting several scenes at the Westin, “Sharky’s Machine” also shot at Lakewood Fairgrounds (sets for interior scenes were built there), Callanwolde Fine Arts Center, The Hilton Hotel, the Hyatt Regency, Underground Atlanta, and the Castleberry Hill warehouse district.

The Chuck Norris film “Invasion USA” also shot huge action sequences on the streets of downtown Atlanta. The Fairlie Poplar historic area in downtown Atlanta was used for scenes in “The Real McCoy,” starring Kim Basinger. The Rialto Theatre in the same neighborhood hosted the finale concert of the 2005 film “The Gospel.”

The Hebrew Benevolent Congregation Temple, located at 1589 Peachtree Street NE. was depicted in the Academy Award winning Best Picture “Driving Miss Daisy.” In the film, Morgan Freeman drives Jessica Tandy to “The Temple” but when she arrives she learns it has been bombed. Although in the film version one is lead to believe it is 1966 or later, this building was actually bombed in the middle of the night on Oct. 12, 1958 by foes of the civil rights movement. Rabbi Jacob Rothschild was an ardent supporter of integration and the civil rights movement.

The Tabernacle, a former church turned concert venue, was used for the Beyonce Knowles, Cuba Gooding, Jr. feature “The Fighting Temptations,” as well as the home of the Democratic National Convention in HBO’s Emmy Award Winning “Warm Springs. Right around the corner, the 2008 thriller “One Missed Call” built an elaborate train bridge in the gravel lot in front of Phillips
Arena so that they could throw a body into an oncoming computer-generated train.

The opening and closing scenes of “Smokey and the Bandit” were shot at the old Lakewood Fairgrounds in southeast Atlanta. The Spanish Colonial style exhibition buildings were originally built for the Southeastern Fair in 1916, which operated until 1978. The old grandstand in the film still stands, but is now covered in kudzu and is in disrepair. Lakewood was also used for the film “The Real McCoy” starring Kim Basinger.

Warner Bros. chose the Cascade Family Skate roller rink at 3335 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive for their 2006 release “ATL.” The huge multi-bulb Cascade sign on the front of the building was added by the filmmakers, but left behind for the rink’s use.

**The West End**

The West End District was the first locally designated historic district in the City of Atlanta. Pieces of the campuses of Morris Brown College, Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spelman College, which make up the Atlanta University Center, can be seen in the 2007 smash hit “Stomp the Yard,” the Mathew McConoughy film “We Are Marshall,” the college band film “Drumline,” and the Spike Lee film “School Daze.” Tyler Perry, a Georgian who has shot all of his film and television projects in and around Atlanta, chose a home in the West End neighborhood to be his famous “Madea” character’s house, and he makes references to the neighborhood in his shows. The West End was also featured prominently in the film “ATL.” It is also a pioneer neighborhood for the Beltline project in Atlanta, with the first model mile slated to be completed by the end of Spring 2008. The model mile will consist of the biking and walking path, the improvement of White Gordon Park, and one new park behind Brown Middle School.

**Piedmont Park**

This beautiful 85 acre park was seen in the 1994 film “Fluke” and in the 2004 film “The Clearing” starring Robert Redford, Willem Defoe and Helen Mirren. The park is located approximately 2 miles northeast of downtown Atlanta and runs along 10th Street (a block west of 10th & Monroe Avenue to a block east of 10th & Piedmont Avenue) and Piedmont Avenue (12th & Piedmont to just before 15th & Piedmont) in midtown Atlanta. The park is open daily from 6:00 am until 11:00 pm.

**The High Museum of Art**

The High Museum’s Richard Meier designed building was named one of the “Ten Best Works of American Architecture of the 1980’s” by the American Institute of Architects. The 135,000 square foot building was also chosen to be the perfect
insane asylum for Hannibal Lecter in 1986’s “Manhunter,” the prequel to “Silence of the Lambs.” In November of 2005, three new buildings designed by Renzo Piano more than doubled the size of the High Museum to 312,000 square feet. The High is located at 1280 Peachtree Street between 15th and 16th Streets in Midtown Atlanta.

**Castleberry Hill**

The Castleberry Hill neighborhood is located adjacent to and southwest of the downtown Atlanta central business district. It was featured in the Emilio Estevez, Mick Jagger, Anthony Hopkins film “Freejack,” and was the location of Cuba Gooding’s loft in “The Fighting Temptations.” Dan Ackroyd’s office was located in the Fulton Supply Warehouse in “Driving Miss Daisy.” Some of the warehouse scenes in the Brad Pitt, Juliette Lewis thriller “Kalifornia” were also shot in Castleberry. The neighborhood has been a federally recognized historic district since 1985 and became a City of Atlanta Landmark District in 2006. The area near the intersection of Peters Street and Walker Street is home to a growing number of art galleries, restaurants, and loft residences.

**Stone Mountain Park**

Stone Mountain is the world’s largest free-standing piece of exposed granite in the world. Located on 3,200 acres of natural beauty, the park features a wide variety of fun family activities including a beach, golf, paddle boats, a locomotive, a period old west town, and much more. In the 2007 smash hit “Stomp the Yard,” the guys ran up the mountain while training for their big dance competition. In the feature “Fled,” Stephen Baldwin and Lawrence Fishburne fight in the sky buckets while going to the top of the mountain.

**Jonesboro**

Downtown Jonesboro was featured prominently in the original “Smokey and the Bandit” – it played as downtown Texarkana, where Burt Reynolds and Jerry Reed are hired to pick up 400 cases of Coors beer. The sign on the 1867 depot that reads “Texarkana” in the film once again reads “Jonesboro” and is the home of the Jonesboro Welcome Center.

**Decatur**

A ten minute drive from downtown Atlanta, Decatur has been the home to plenty of filmmaking. The picturesque Adams Street houses can be seen in the pilot and first season of “October Road” as well as the Denzel Washington film “Remember the Titans.” Agnes Scott College was featured in both “Scream II, as well as Alan Alda’s “The Four Seasons.” The nearby Druid Hills neighborhood was also home to Jessica Tandy’s character in “Driving Miss Daisy.” The opening and closing scenes of “Remember the Titans” take place at the Decatur Cemetery at 229 Bell Street. The Emory University campus was
used for the 2000 film “Road Trip” as well as for the graduation scenes in the Sean Penn directed 2007 project “Into the Wild.”

Athens, Crawfordville, Clayton

Athens, GA was the setting for the Shawn Cassidy bicycling series “Breaking Away,” perhaps because it is one of the most bike-friendly areas in the United States, with some of the bicycling circuit’s top-ranking riders choosing Athens as their training ground. Athens is surrounded by countless miles of surrounding rural roads, and there are opportunities to amateur riders of any skill level. The Athens Twilight Criterium, drawing over 30,000 spectators, is a nationally-famed nighttime race, hosting eight separate race classes and 150 cyclists competing in the main event, the men’s criterium, a 60-km course around downtown Athens. The University of Georgia campus was also used in the film “Road Trip.”

The period main street town of Crawfordville, GA has provided the backdrop for numerous films including “The Neon Bible,” “Stars and Bars,” and “Sweet Home Alabama.” The town hosted Reese Witherspoon, Josh Lucas and the big street festival in “Sweet Home Alabama,” and Heavy’s Bar-B-Que served as the country bar in the film.

In 1972, a young Burt Reynolds was cast in a small feature based on the James Dickey novel “Deliverance.” The success of that film, which also starred Jon Voight and Ned Beatty, led to the creation of several whitewater rafting companies on the Chattooga River, near Clayton, Georgia, where the film was shot. To experience the river as they did (well, not exactly as they did), contact the Rabun County CVB at (706) 782-5113 to get a list of local whitewater rafting companies. Clayton was also a backlot for the western “The Long Riders.”

Covington, Madison, Rutledge, Conyers, Oxford

About 25 miles out Highway 20 East from Atlanta, you will find the little town of Conyers, Georgia. Scenes of “Dukes of Hazzard” were filmed in Conyers, as well as the Civil War reenactment scene in “Sweet Home Alabama,” which was shot at the Georgia International Horse Park, at 1996 Centennial Olympic Highway.

About 10 miles further East on Highway 20, you will see the town square of Covington, GA which may seem familiar to you due to the number of projects the town has hosted. The Covington town square and the Newton County Courthouse were both featured prominently in “Dukes of Hazzard” and “In the Heat of the Night.” The parade scene in “Remember the Titans” also took place in the town square. Just north of Covington at 290 Flat Rock Road is
the home of the original “Boar’s Nest Bar-B-Que,” featured in “The Dukes of Hazzard.” The Boar’s Nest building now houses a church.

The Oxford College of Emory University in Oxford, 38 miles east of Atlanta, was featured in the opening credits of “Dukes of Hazzard” as the jump site for the General Lee, the brothers’ car. For the release of the 2006 movie version of “The Dukes of Hazzard,” MTV came to Oxford to jump the original car from the television show.

Hard Labor Creek State Park in nearby Rutledge served as a primary location for “Friday the 13th: Jason Lives,” “Poison Ivy,” and “Little Darlings.” Rutledge and nearby Newborn were also featured in the 2007 film “Good Intentions.”

Just down 20 East from Oxford and Covington is the little town square of Madison. Known for antique shopping and an amazing historic district, Madison was also the hometown for the critically acclaimed television series “I’ll Fly Away.” Scenes from “Road Trip” and “My Cousin Vinny” were also shot in Madison. The plantation Bonar Hall was used as FDR’s hospital in the Emmy winning HBO Special “Warm Springs.”

**Griffin, Monticello, Newnan, Senoia, Juliette**

The picturesque main street town of Griffin, GA has been the backdrop for numerous period films, including “Selma, Lord, Selma,” “Stroke of Genius: The Bobby Jones Story,” “Boycott,” “Miss Lettie and Me,” and “Driving Miss Daisy.”

The Jasper County Courthouse in Monticello is famous for its scenes in the 1991 Joe Pesci, Marisa Tomei, Ralph Machio film “My Cousin Vinny.” Monticello is also the hometown of country music legend Trisha Yearwood.

You can’t even talk about Georgia film locations without mentioning Juliette and the film that put it on the map—“Fried Green Tomatoes.” In 1991, Juliette was a kudzu covered town with only one business remaining. Today, it is a thriving homage to its film career—from the Whistle Stop Café, to the dozen or so antiques and “Fried Green Tomatoes” memorabilia stores, it is well worth a trip to spend a day. The film also shot some scenes in Senoia, just northwest of Juliette. The baptism scene in “The Fighting Temptations” took place at beautiful Starr’s Mill, and Josh Lucas’ waterfront home in “Sweet Home Alabama” was just up the road in Peachtree City. The Kevin Costner and Ellijah Wood film “The War” also shot in Senoia, as did the 2006 feature “Broken Bridges.”

**Warm Springs, Columbus, Carrollton**
On April 30th of 2005, HBO aired “Warm Springs,” a movie made in Warm Springs, GA about Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s belief in the healing powers of a South Georgia spa resort, and his work to turn it into a center for the aid of polio victims. The film starred Kenneth Branagh as Roosevelt, Cynthia Nixon as Eleanor Roosevelt, Kathy Bates as physical therapist Helena Mahoney, and Tim Blake Nelson as Tom Loyless. The film was directed by multiple Emmy award winner Joseph Sargent.

“Warm Springs” shot at the Little White House, where FDR spent much of his time, and at the rehabilitation pools, which are both within the Georgia State Parks’ Roosevelt’s Little White House Historic Site. The Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation and FDR State Park were also featured in the film.

The producers strove to make sure that many of the physical details were as authentic as possible. For example, Kenneth Branagh, as Roosevelt, is seen driving the very same specially-equipped automobile that FDR was taught to drive at Warm Springs. The cottage that Roosevelt stays in during the film is one of the cottages FDR actually stayed in, and the swimming pool where the patients swim is the actual therapeutic swimming pool at Warm Springs, refurbished by the production team specifically for the film. The film was praised by the critics, and won five Emmy Awards out of an astounding sixteen nominations, including Outstanding Made-for-Television Movie, Best Supporting Actress in a Made-For-Television Movie and Best Original Score.

The military base at Fort Benning was used in the Mel Gibson film “We Were Soldiers.” “We Were Soldiers” is a 2002 war film that dramatized the Battle of Ia Drang in November 1965, the first major engagement of American troops in the Vietnam War. It is based on the book We Were Soldiers Once ... And Young by Lieutenant General (Ret.) Hal Moore and reporter Joseph L. Galloway, both of whom were at the battle. Fort Benning was actually the unit’s base of operation, and the film recounts not only the unit training and leaving for battle, but of the families left behind at the base.

Columbus’ River Center for the Performing Arts was the location for the big gospel music choir finale in “The Fighting Temptations” starring Beyonce Knowles and Cuba Gooding, Jr.

Carrollton and nearby Whiteburg were used for the 2007 thriller “Conjurer,” which starred “Dukes of Hazzard” alum John Schneider.

**Cartersville, Rome, Summerville, Woodstock**

The northwest corridor of the state has also seen its share of filmmaking. Cartersville was used as a location in “Fluke,” “A Simple Twist of Fate”
starring Steve Martin, and “The Mosquito Coast” starring Harrison Ford and River Phoenix. Cartersville was also one of the primary locations for the Sidney Portier television movie “The Secret Life of Noah Dearborn.” The Martha Berry House on the Berry College campus at 2277 Martha Berry Highway in Rome was chosen for “Sweet Home Alabama” as Reese Witherspoon’s Alabama plantation, where she hoped the reporters would believe that she was raised.

When period rolling stock is needed, such as a 1900’s steam train, the train depot in Summerville is a great place to shoot. “Warm Springs,” “Fled,” and the 2007 film “Heaven’s Fall” all utilized the period depot combined with the Tennessee Valley Authority’s trains, which runs a route down through Summerville on the Chattooga & Chickamauga Railway, a 19 mile short line railroad operating from Chattanooga-to-Hedges, Georgia.

Kenny Rogers’ first movie "Six Pack" filmed on location at Dixie Speedway located in Woodstock, one mile west of I-575 on Highway 92 or 6 miles east of I-75 at 150 Dixie Drive. Dixie Speedway is a 3/8-mile banked clay oval that hosts weekly stock car racing along with special events including Outlaw Sprint Cars, Monster Truck Nationals, Lucas Oil Dirt Late Model Series, Demolition Derbies, and Thrill Shows throughout the season. There is racing every Saturday night, May through October, consisting of many heat races and preliminary rounds followed by main events and features.

**Savannah and the Georgia Coast**

Over 85 films have been lensed in Savannah, including 10 Academy Award winners.

Following the success of the best selling book by John Berendt, “Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil,” the film of the same name shot in Savannah in 1996. Directed by Clint Eastwood, with a cast of Kevin Spacey, John Cusack, and Jude Law, the project served as an ode to the town and its colorful residents. Mercer House was the scene of the shooting death of Williams’ assistant, Danny Hansford, the story that is retold in “Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil.”

The Mercer House (now called the Mercer-Williams House Museum) is located at 429 Bull Street and stands at the southwest end of Monterey Square, in Savannah, Georgia. It was designed by New York architect John S. Norris for General Hugh Weedon Mercer, great-grandfather of Johnny Mercer, the songwriter. Construction of the house began in 1860, was interrupted by the American Civil War and finally completed around 1868 by the new owner, John Wilder. In 1969, Jim Williams, one of Savannah’s earliest and most dedicated private restorationists, bought the house after a decade of vacancy since being used as the Savannah Shriners Alee Temple and restored it. The house is currently owned by Dorothy Kingery, William’s sister, and is open to the public.
On the Hull Street side of Chippewa Square, one will see the original backdrop for the bench that “Forrest Gump” sits on while recounting his amazing life to anyone who will listen. The bench is no longer there, but it is now housed at the Savannah History Museum at 303 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Love’s Seafood Restaurant was also picked as a location in the 1993 Tom Hanks, Sally Fields hit. Love’s is located at Highway 11 South at King’s Ferry, on the banks of the beautiful Ogeechee River.

In the historic district, Robert Redford rolled back the clock to the 1930’s in the historic city market area on West Congress for the golf film “The Legend of Baggar Vance,” starring Matt Damon, Will Smith and Charlize Theron. Famed director Robert Altman shot scenes for the Kenneth Branagh, Embeth Davitz vehicle “The Gingerbread Man” on River Street. Ben Affleck and Sandra Bullock can be seen running down a treelined drive in Savannah in “Forces of Nature.”

Savannah’s Roundhouse Railroad Museum, a National Historic Landmark since 1978, was used in filming the movie "Glory" in 1988. Thirteen of the original structures survive, including the blacksmith shop and the brick mason shop. Now the State Museum of Railroad History, the complex is owned by the City of Savannah and has been operated since 1989 by the Coastal Heritage Society. Five of the buildings house permanent exhibits, including the roundhouse with its operating turntable. Visitors can see steam and diesel locomotives, rail cars, steam-powered machinery, model railroads, and a 126-foot brick smokestack with privies around its base. The “Roundhouse” is open for self guided tours 10:00 am to 4:00 pm daily. At 601 W. Harris Street in downtown Savannah.

The tree-lined drive up to Wormsloe Plantation at 7601 Skidaway Road was featured in the John Travolta, Madeline Stowe film “The General’s Daughter.” Just inside the park at Wormsloe, there is a Visitor Center. This is the entrance to the trail you will follow to get to Wormsloe, plus a small museum and gift shop. The trail (total walk 1.0 miles), when walked in a counter-clockwise direction, takes you first to an interpretive area where many of the demonstrations and reenactments are held. The path then follows the river bank to the remains of the 1793 home. This is the site where Jones built his first home and fort. There is also a scenic overlook of the Skidaway River and a small family graveyard that may be visited.

Today in Savannah, it is local celebrity chef Paula Deen that is the biggest tourism magnet for the city. Deen serves an average of 1,100 customers a day at her restaurant “The Lady and Sons,” due to the popularity of her two Savannah-lensed Food Network television shows “Paula’s Home Cooking” and “Paula’s Party.”
Savannah is not the only coastal town that has hosted film projects. The country club used in “The Legend of Baggar Vance” was the Jekyll Island Club. The driftwood beach in “Glory” was also found on Jekyll Island. Brunswick, GA and St. Simon’s Island were both used in the Alex Haley miniseries “Roots,” and the Jon Voight film “Conrack.”